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THE
ROMANCE OF HISTORY.

Spain.

BY DON T. DE TRUEBA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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1837.

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BY DON T. DE TRUEBA.

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY J. K. MEADOWS.

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HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

John the Second.

A.D. 1407. John was scarcely two years old, when, by the premature death of his father, Henry the Third, he mounted the throne of Castile. By the late King's will, the Queen and the Infant Don Ferdinand were appointed regents of the kingdom during the minority of John. His mother, who loved him to excess, had been indefatigable in the cultivation of his mind—hence he possessed a degree of erudition, which at that age passed for great learning. John became very fond of letters, and he left several compositions, both in prose and verse, not destitute of merit.—But these advantages were attended with a lamentable evil. John, wholly devoted to his favourite pursuit, neglected the study of public affairs, and acquired habits which, however honourable in a private gentleman, were not suitable to a king, especially at that turbulent age. Hence that incapacity for directing the helm of state, which led to the selection of a person capable of the task ; and hence, also, the extraordinary favouritism of Don Alvaro de Luna. The unprecedented degree of power to which this individual rose, his eventful life and tragic death, form the most prominent features in the reign of John the Second. The grandees of the land soon cherished a rancorous jealousy against the favourite, whose singular bravery and high capabilities they justly dreaded. From this moment began those internal dissensions which caused so many calamities in the state.

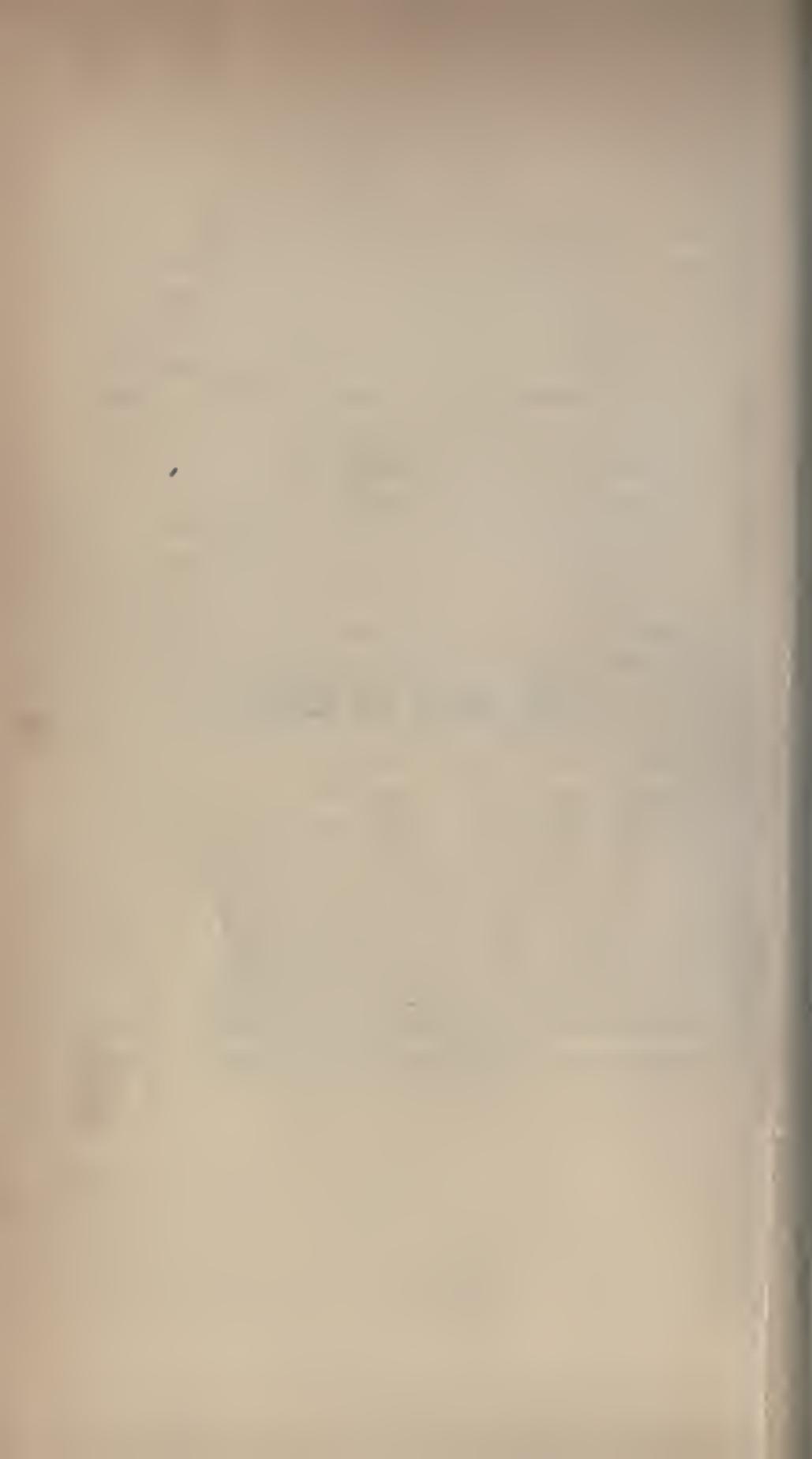
1420. A consequence of this powerful league was the confinement of the King, under pretext of guarding his person from the influence of Don Alvaro. This daring act was com-

mitted by Henry, the Infant of Aragon, who had secretly formed the idea of seizing on the crown. Don Alvaro de Luna however, with great sagacity, contrived to take away (1423) the young King from Tordesillas. John at length caused his cousin Henry to be seized and imprisoned, in which state he remained two years. It was on this occasion, and to recompense the zeal which Luna had shown for the King, that the latter made him High Constable of Castile. But the whole of this reign continued to be a fierce contention between the party of the Infants of Aragon and Don Alvaro, who strenuously supported the cause of the King against the factious grandee.

1453. The influence of Luna began to decline: his arrogance, and the incessant importunities of the nation, at length wrenched from John the order for his arrest. Zuniga accomplished this service, after a short resistance from the servants of Luna. A sort of tribunal, composed of the bitter enemies of the Constable, was named to judge and sentence him: this was done in the most unjustifiable manner; and the great Don Alvaro de Luna, after having served the King most faithfully, died on the scaffold. Nay, his funeral rites were performed by charity!

1453. John did not long survive this tragedy. Though he possessed a cultivated mind, he was a very weak prince; nor was his character redeemed by generosity;—the fate of Alvaro de Luna attaches a great stigma to his memory, at the same time that it affords a terrible lesson to mankind.

The Fate of Luna.



ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE FATE OF LUNA.

The Fate of Luna.

IN a mood of gloomy irresolution, King John the Second of Castile was pacing an apartment of his palace; the Infanta Isabel of Portugal, to whom he had been recently married, observed his every movement with watchful care, resolved to avail herself of the influence which she possessed over the mind of the weak King. She had been urging the ruin of the most powerful subject in the State,—the celebrated Don Alvaro de Luna, the High Constable of Castile. But John, in opposition to the general voice of his grandees, supported the cause of his favourite Luna, though the excessive feebleness of his character served to render those exertions in every way less effectual.

“The whole nation, my Liege,” said the Queen, “loudly demands the disgrace of this arrogant and presumptuous man: the grandees, the prelates—every class of the state detests Don Alvaro, and the tranquillity of the kingdom requires his sacrifice.”

“The sacrifice of whom?” cried John, in a fit of generous resolution, which unhappily he could

not long sustain,—“the sacrifice of the man who has served the Kings of Castile most faithfully, most devotedly;—the man who, whilst my factious nobles supported the traitorous tyrant of Aragon in his unjust pretensions, alone failed to join with them against their lawful sovereign;—the man who alone stood by his King, defended him from traitors, and even delivered him from confinement!”

“Ay, my Liege,” answered the Queen with a smile; “and wherefore did Don Alvaro show this zeal for the King? Because, whilst he defended the cause of the sovereign, he was forwarding his own views of ambition;—because, whilst he affected to uphold the interests of Don John of Castile, he was vigilant in strengthening those of Don Alvaro de Luna.”

“Such, in sooth, are the accusations of his enemies,” answered the King; “but they are actuated by a rancorous jealousy against the High Constable. His superior abilities mortify their pride, and his power galls their ambition.”

“Fatal have been those abilities to the kingdom,” said the Queen, “since they led him to the attainment of that power, which, with good reason, awakes the alarm of the nation. The indignation of your grandees is most just, Don Juan. They perceive that their King wears that dignity only in name; whilst an ambitious subject, a pri-

vileged favourite, exercises unlimited power, and arrogates to himself all the attributes of the crown. With sorrow and shame they behold the humiliation to which the King of Castile and the whole nation are reduced. They bitterly lament that an overbearing individual should keep in servile thralldom this generous and powerful nation. Fie, my Liege, fie! — art thou, in sooth, anything in the state but a painted image, an airy phantom, an unsubstantial shadow? and is this meet?—and can you complain of the turbulent state of the kingdom, when, by one small sacrifice, it is in your power to remedy the evil?”

The pliant disposition and fatal weakness of the King began to give way before the pressing importunities and specious arguments of Isabel. His irresolution increased; he seemed almost decided to decree the arrest of his favourite Don Alvaro, when the arrival of the Bishop of Avila, for the moment, stopped the conversation, and delayed the catastrophe of the High Constable. But the Queen was much elated with the success which her unremitting endeavours were daily acquiring; for by her perseverance she had brought the mind of the King to the most favourable tone for her designs. She felt an inward conviction that, though the arrest of Luna might be delayed, it could not possibly be averted. This flattering persuasion made her pursue her task with addi-

tional resolution, whilst she was strengthened in her exertions by the formidable league of the nobles who had entered into the conspiracy against Don Alvaro.

It might be supposed, from this disposition of the Queen against the High Constable, that she had strong reason to cherish inimical feelings, and that the object of such sentiments had been guilty of some unpardonable offence against her. The case, however, was totally different: the man, in the pursuit of whose ruin she laboured with such industrious malice, had not been otherwise culpable than by having procured for her the crown of Castile. This benefit she now resolved to repay with the blackest ingratitude; and the motives that led her to adopt such a line of conduct, though ungenerous, were perfectly natural.

Don Alvaro, consulting the interest of the King and the nation, had induced his master to marry the Infanta Isabel of Portugal, in preference to Fredegonda, a French princess, for whom the King felt a strong affection. The cabals of the Portuguese, added to the influence, nay the irresistible authority which the High Constable held over the Sovereign of Castile, made him acquiesce in his desires; and, contrary to the general expectations, though greatly to the delight of the plotting grandees, the French princess was discarded, and Isabel chosen to share the throne.

But no sooner had this event taken place, than the new Queen gave evident proofs of her hostile intentions towards Luna. She had amply availed herself of his power for the attainment of her wishes ; but, now that these wishes were fulfilled, she resolved to avail herself of the means they afforded her, to crush the man to whose agency she was indebted for her triumph.

Arrogant and ambitious, the Queen was determined to exercise absolute control over her husband. The attendance of Don Alvaro on the King was most prejudicial to her schemes, and his removal, therefore, indispensable. Such speculations had indeed occupied her mind previously to the nuptials ; but, being endowed with no common share of precaution, she proceeded in her work without giving Don Alvaro a glimpse of her duplicity, until it was too late to counteract its fatal tendency.

Isabel, as soon as she became Queen of Castile, most zealously entered into the cabals against the High Constable. So efficient a help raised the most flattering expectations among the grandees, who now began to perceive the success with which her exertions were likely to be crowned. The King grew cold towards his favourite ; several acts were performed without his advice and concurrence ; nay, John could dispense with his company for many successive days. These symptoms

excited some suspicions in the breast of Luna; but he was too bold and daring, and his mind too vast and active, easily to be discouraged by the intrigues of his enemies. Don Alvaro had implicit confidence in his own power, and treated the manœuvres planned for his destruction with perfect scorn.

But the strength of his enemies was growing more alarming as their number became greater. There was scarcely a man of any consequence in the kingdom who had not avowedly professed himself the foe of the High Constable. But, as if the storm which was constantly brewing against the fated person of one man was not sufficiently strengthened by the machinations of the natives, even foreign aid came to augment the power of the conspiracy. The partisans of Fredegonda considered that princess deeply wronged, and justly enough attributed her injuries to the influence and exertions of Don Alvaro. They resolved, accordingly, to level their revenge against the obnoxious individual; and in this intention they were confirmed and assisted by the unwearied efforts of the aggrieved lady.

Feelings of baffled ambition and rankling jealousy, in powerful union, worked up her mind to ideas of implacable revenge. The loss of a crown was a subject of deep regret to a woman who, confident in the love of the King, had in-

dulged fond anticipations of success. She eagerly joined the party of the Countess of Ribadio and the Zunigas, who were accounted the most redoubtable of Luna's adversaries. Young Zuniga, the nephew of the Count of Valencia, had conceived a violent passion for the Princess. Her charms, indeed, were no small stimulant to the ardent and enthusiastic spirit of a young cavalier, who considered her, besides, the victim of Don Alvaro's intrigues. Beauty, pity, love, and a variety of considerations, rendered the Princess an object of absorbing interest in the estimation of young Zuniga, and he unhesitatingly declared himself her champion. Fredegonda was not displeased with the attachment of the cavalier, and secretly resolved to make that passion subservient to her plans of vengeance.

The task of persuading her lover to undertake the most daring acts was one of small difficulty. In one of their private interviews, Fredegonda availed herself of his infatuation to counsel the boldest measures.

"Your professions of love are, indeed, repeated and warm," she said, with an enchanting smile; "yet, were I to require a trying proof of your attachment, you would perhaps shrink from the execution."

"Doubt me not," cried Zuniga ardently. "Demand something of most perilous undertaking,—

something insurmountable — impossible ; nothing shall deter me from the attempt : — death alone shall be able to arrest my career of exertion to please, to avenge you !”

“ And yet my enemy triumphs in security,” she said, with a sigh of disappointment.

“ But his triumph draws to an end,” answered Zuniga confidently. “ The tyranny of the minion shall not long oppress the nation. No, the ruin of Luna is decreed.”

“ And when is that fate to be accomplished ?” interrupted Fredegonda impatiently. “ Alas ! day after day dawns but to deceive our flattering hopes.”

“ The conspiracy against the High Constable grows every instant more powerful. So much exertion must be crowned with success ; but if the progress of the league is yet too slow to satisfy your wishes, speak, oh ! Fredegonda ! speak, and the devoted Zuniga will dare all, to do thee service.”

“ Dare all ! Know you the extent of that promise ?”

“ I make it with a full consciousness of its awful responsibility ; and yet I make it confidently — unhesitatingly.”

“ Well, then, some bolder measure must be attempted than the toilsome scheme of wearying the mind of the King into an assent for the arrest of Luna.”

“Unfold your wishes; they shall be obeyed.”

“The influence of the Count of Valencia, your uncle,” proceeded Fredegonda, “is as vast as his hatred for our common enemy is deeply-rooted. The Count can summon a numerous body of brave warriors into the field.”

“Yet his infirmities,” interrupted Zuniga, “will prevent him from becoming an efficient leader.”

“I would have it so,” eagerly replied Fredegonda. “The command of this troop I would intrust into the hands of an active leader. Vigour is now wanting, not dilatory measures.”

“And amongst the leagued grandees, whom would you choose to head the enterprise?”

“You,” answered the Princess.

“Heaven! is it possible?—whilst so many other more able and more influential men——”

“Cease!” interrupted she with impatience; “give me a denial, but frame no excuses. If thou art too prudent, or rather too pusillanimous——”

“Hold, Fredegonda; affront me not: in thy service I will attempt the most daring acts. It is no timid consideration that deters me, but my apprehension of incapacity to conduct so responsible an undertaking.—But if your wishes are such——?”

“They are,” said Fredegonda. “I can repose more confidence in you than in the principal grandees of Castile.”

“Then it shall be so!” cried the young cavalier

enthusiastically: "I will launch forth into open rebellion, and risk my life in thy cause. This moment I shall begin to prepare for this bold campaign. Farewell!"

He left the presence of his mistress with an alacrity in accordance with the warmth of his desires to serve her, and the activity of a youthful mind. Fredegonda had displayed consummate skill in the choice she had made of a leader to head the revolt. The youth and inexperience of Zuniga might argue rashness in such an election; but perhaps it was that very youth and inexperience that would contribute most materially to the success of the scheme. It was only by intimidating the weak mind of the King that his consent for the deposition of Luna could be effected, at least with a promptitude suitable to the wishes of Fredegonda; and on whom could she place more implicit confidence than in her impassioned—her devoted lover?—who would more blindly run into peril?—who more willingly expose his fortune and his life?—nay, who could have a more powerful inducement to act, and more alluring attraction to persevere, than the man who would consider every danger braved—every trouble and privation endured, as so many steps advanced in the career of affection—as so many claims obtained upon the heart of the object of his adoration?

Such were the considerations that actuated the

conduct of Fredegonda, which, far from evincing imprudence, argued much justness of perception. She was perfectly satisfied with her choice and sanguine of success, if, indeed, such an issue was at all to be expected from the cabals against the High Constable. But who was this fated individual — this object of universal aversion, that put into motion so many agents to effect his downfall? — By what offences had he rendered himself amenable to so fearful a sum of public hate and animadversion? — His crime was his fidelity to the King, and the tribute which his great abilities and important services necessarily and properly obtained from that monarch.

Don Alvaro de Luna, High Constable of Castile, one of the most extraordinary names that adorn the page of history, had risen to a degree of power and influence in the kingdom never attained before. The weakness of the King, the circumstances of the times, and the brilliant abilities of Luna, laid the foundation of that fortune which created as much astonishment in the nation at large, as poignant envy in the leading characters of the state. He was the descendant of a noble family, and his ancestors had done great service to Henry of Trastamara, the founder of the present dynasty. This consideration had induced the successors of Henry to look with esteem and favour on the members of that house, who became henceforward

constant attendants at court. King John, whilst yet a boy, was by this means thrown continually into the company of the youthful Luna, whose winning manners and incipient ability cemented that strong attachment which was the foundation-stone of the mighty elevation which was to distinguish the favourite at a future period. The indulgence of the King, and the talents of Don Alvaro, were not long in bringing to maturity the seeds of greatness which had already been sown: the former, by affording to the Infants of Aragon an opportunity of pushing forward their ambitious schemes; and the latter, by supplying a successful barrier against their encroachments.

A series of clandestine intrigues, and of open acts of revolt, soon began to mark the reign of John; but the sagacity of his minister as easily baffled the one, as his courage crushed the other. The services which Luna rendered the King were great and repeated; and, indeed, it may be matter of doubt if that indolent sovereign would have been enabled to preserve his crown, unaided by the exertions and the genius of this great man. Inclination, gratitude, nay self-interest, thus combined to raise the favourite to the dangerous elevation he attained.

All this time the most powerful engines were set to work, in order to effect the ruin of the High Constable. The very services which he had ren-

dered the King, were the causes which induced many to pursue him with their hatred; whilst others conceived that even the services of Luna, great as they were, could not justify the degree of power which he had arrogated to himself. With respect to his abilities, they were regarded by many with jealousy, and by not a few with dread; but Luna, with an activity of mind and a strength of purpose suitable to the occasion, knew how to oppose and conquer his enemies, and derive fresh advantages from every defeat.

The groundwork of his ruin, however, though slow in its progress, was sure in its effects. The endeavours of the Queen grew every day more fatal; nor were those of the other conspirators less powerful in their way. A general outcry was raised against the High Constable, and the whole nation rang with vows of hatred and sounds of imprecation. It was at this critical moment that young Zuniga, at the head of a considerable body of troops, appeared in the vicinity of Burgos. The avowed intent of this assembling of men in arms was to wage open war against Don Alvaro, and deliver the King and the people from his oppression. The numbers of the malcontents daily increased, whilst the Queen and the rest of the conspirators about court grew more importunate and more daring in their remonstrances to the weak monarch.

But this feeble and ungrateful man wanted no longer any very powerful stimulus to make him acquiesce in their wishes. With the levity and fickleness natural to a weak intellect and an indolent disposition, he now perceived that Luna had really assumed an immense preponderance over the state ; and he felt piqued at his own imbecility, that had permitted the subject to acquire such a degree of power. But the imbecile King did not at the same time consider that Don Alvaro's ambition, though boundless, was such as not to be prejudicial to the crown. It was true that he had amassed great wealth, yet it was a fortune earned at the expense of many year's incessant toils and important service. It was also true that he steered the helm of government with absolute control, but that helm could not find a better pilot to direct its operations ; and the consciousness of such ability, if it could not justify the arrogance of the High Constable, might certainly in a great measure have excused it. But John, while his vanity was sensitively alive to the encroachments of which his favourite had been guilty, consigned to oblivion the immense benefits which pleaded the cause of the High Constable.

He at length signed the order for the arrest of Luna, and sent a messenger to Zuniga to advance with his troops and seize upon their victim. These machinations were carried on with the

greatest secrecy; for, though the conspiracy was so vast and of such magnitude as to count the sovereign and every leading man in the state amongst its members, yet such was the dread which the courage and genius of Don Alvaro excited in the breasts of every one, that the utmost prudence was deemed necessary in the prosecution of their plans. These intrigues, however, were not matured in so complete a security as to escape the observation of their object. He was well acquainted with the number and the strength of his enemies; yet, with a fatality peculiar to great minds, he affected to despise them when he ought to have adopted measures for his safety.

The troops of Zuniga he thought he might disperse at pleasure, as he had on former occasions done with regard to other mutinous assemblages. Thus was he losing those precious moments which he ought to have employed either in providing the means of a suitable defence, or in securing those for effecting a timely retreat. Nay, at this crisis, when ruin hovered round his head, when every element of destruction was ready to explode with raging violence, the threatened victim was leisurely making plans to chastise the insolence of his enemies — those enemies whom he ought certainly to have subdued, before he presumed to think of punishment.

In the darkness of night, Zuniga, having received instructions from the King, cautiously entered the town with the troops under his command. Private orders were then issued and circulated amongst the citizens, requiring them to hold themselves ready in arms, as the safety of the King and State imperiously demanded such a precaution. This was no sooner ordered than executed. The general aversion entertained against Luna, most efficiently seconded the intentions of the King's advisers; and there was scarcely a man who did not quickly seize his weapon and prepare for the expected crisis. Every street and square, every gate and outlet from the town, were strongly barricadoed and filled with men-at-arms; whilst the troops of Zuniga were chosen to attack the dwelling of the High Constable. Such were the mighty preparations made, that an uninformed observer would have supposed some fearful revolution was on the point of exploding; yet were such alarming measures adopted against one single individual. Perhaps the proceedings of this night were the greatest tribute rendered to the character of Luna.

Diego Gotor, a servant devotedly attached to the High Constable, had observed the unusual bustle about the streets; for, with all the precaution of the conspirators, a great mass of men within the precincts of a city could not well be mar-

shalled without creating some tumult and confusion. Gotor came running into his master's presence, and, with earnest zeal, conjured him to fly.

“What alarms thee so much, good Diego?” demanded Don Alvaro, with composure.

“My Lord, the state of the town bodes no good. I have been informed, besides, that Zuniga has arrived with his troops.”

“Well?” said Luna with calmness.

“That cavalier must have come with some design against your person. Everything renders such suspicion admissible.”

“I doubt not the inimical intention of Zuniga and the rest of the nobles; but I despise their malice.—This mighty bustle,” he added, with a contemptuous smile, “will vanish with the rays of the sun on the morrow.”

“Be advised, Don Alvaro,” returned Gotor most anxiously: “let not a confidence in the King's regard and obligation to you induce you to neglect an opportunity of escape, ere this is rendered totally impossible.”

“Escape!” cried the High Constable, in a haughty tone of voice. “Don Alvaro de Luna has never condescended to avail himself of so paltry an experiment; and certainly the plots of discontented traitors, and ignorant foolish citizens, shall not impel him.”

“The King!” interrupted, despondingly, the faithful domestic: “alas! he has forgotten all the services done by Don Alvaro.”

“No,” answered the High Constable, confidently, “I absolve him of such ingratitude. The King may be momentarily deceived; but will not persist in his error when this is made known to him.”

It was in vain that Diego Gotor, and a page named Morales, a youth of singular quick parts and much beloved by Luna, urged their master to disguise himself, and evade the pursuit of his enemies. He remained unconquerable in his resolution. A blind confidence in his power urged him to prefer his own opinion to those of his most attached adherents; and, besides, there was something so humiliating to his haughty spirit in the idea of flying from his enemies, that he indignantly discarded it from his mind. At night, therefore, as if nothing unusual was about to take place, he retired to his repose with his accustomed confidence; but the event soon proved that the fears of Gotor and Morales were well founded.

Every precaution being taken by the conspirators, Zuniga's troops surrounded the mansion of Luna, as early as five o'clock in the morning. The faithful adherents of the High Constable, who had been on the alert, as soon as they saw the assemblage below, ran to warn their master of his danger.

“Awake, my Lord,” cried Morales, in consternation; “the house is surrounded.”

“By whom?” inquired Luna, with some surprise.

“By your enemies; they imperiously demand the doors to be thrown open to them.”

Don Alvaro hastily left his couch, undecided what plan to adopt; but his faithful servants had proceeded without his knowledge to defend the house. From the windows, Gotor, Morales, and others, began to use their cross-bows, and succeeded in stretching several of the besiegers breathless on the ground.

Zuniga, enraged at this resistance, cried out,—

“Let Don Alvaro de Luna appear to hear our summons, or this building shall be immediately consigned to the flames!”

The High Constable, with great dignity of deportment, now made his appearance at the window. He was hailed with a tumultuous shout of hatred and scorn. He, however, remained inflexible and unmoved at this demonstration of hostility; and when the first ebullition had abated, in a calm resolute tone of voice, proceeded to address the leader of the assemblage.

“What mean you, Don Alvar de Zuniga,” he demanded sternly, “by coming in this mutinous manner to besiege my dwelling?”

“My mission is sanctioned,” proudly answered Zuniga, “by a warrant from the King.”

“The King!” exclaimed Luna in amazement. “Nay, my Lord, this is some wise contrivance to beguile me into your power.”

“Behold!” said Zuniga, exultingly, as he presented the document to the view: “and now surrender immediately, or you shall be accounted a rebel and a traitor to the King, and treated as such.”

Don Alvaro now perceived the effects of his infatuation. John had indeed given him up to the hatred of his enemies. To effect an escape, even if the pride of Luna had permitted such a course, was now totally impracticable; and to attempt a regular defence would be as ineffectual as it was rash. In this dilemma, and on the strength of a solemn promise made by Zuniga, that his person should be treated with all consideration and respect, the High Constable surrendered, and his dwelling was instantaneously occupied by the besiegers.

“You are my prisoner, Don Alvaro,” said Zuniga. “Take it not amiss that I should require the delivery of your sword.”

“I can take nothing amiss now,” bitterly answered Luna. “From the moment that the King joins in the conspiracy against his faithful servant, nothing else that may occur can excite surprise or indignation in the breast of Luna. Here is the sword you demand. Oh! could the King remember that it is the sword which has so often and so effectually defended his crown, he would not per-

haps have wrested it from that hand which was the most deserving to grasp it.”

Don Alvaro made no resistance to the commands of Zuniga; he gave up his sword, and suffered himself to be closely confined to one of the principal apartments of his dwelling. But, as if his person was not sufficiently secured by the strong guard at the hall, two sentinels were posted in sight of the High Constable, with the strictest instructions not to allow him to communicate with any one in secret. The aspect which affairs were assuming was sufficiently gloomy, yet that extraordinary man, whose pride had accustomed him to bear both greatness and misfortune—pleasures and privations,—fondly indulged the hope that the King would soon cherish in his heart more favourable sentiments. He still reposed unbounded confidence in his own powers; and by a single interview with John he expected to see his enemies discomfited, and himself replaced in his former exalted station.

The joy of the leagued nobles at the success of their plots was unlimited; and they proceeded forthwith to exhibit it in the most indelicate and insulting manner. Bands of music patrolled the streets, and the populace were instigated and bribed to pour the bitterest reproaches and the most contemptuous abuse on the head of the High Constable. The Bishop of Avila celebrated a mass of thanksgiving with great pomp, at which not

only all the principal conspirators, but the King himself was persuaded to attend. A solemn theme was chanted, the bells rang an enlivening peal, and every demonstration of public joy was made, as if the most splendid victory had been obtained.

Indeed, the downfall of the favourite was considered in no other light by his inveterate enemies. No triumph that could have been gained over the Moslem, however glorious in the achievement or beneficial in its results, could have afforded half so much satisfaction as the ruin of this single individual. The clamours of the exulting public called De Luna to the window, from which, with unaltered looks, but with feelings of deep scorn, he contemplated this exhibition of popular animosity. Soon after, he perceived a gorgeous procession: it was the King accompanied by the Bishop of Avila and the rest of the courtiers, who were coming from mass. The splendid train passed immediately below the window against which Don Alvaro was reclining. The King, either from shame, remorse, or some other sentiment, did not attempt to look upwards; but the Bishop, more daring, cast a glance on the well-secured foe. The rage of Don Alvaro was inflamed at the insolence which could not be contained within the limits of propriety; and looking fiercely at the bishop, and at the same time leisurely stroking his beard, cried in a loud tone:—

“By the rood! most reverend prelate, but you shall pay me very dearly for this, some day!”

“Nay, Don Alvaro,” answered the Bishop in an exculpating tone, “you are strangely mistaken,—I have no hand in this.”

“We shall examine that anon.”

“By the character I bear, my lord, you wrong me! I am as innocent of your arrest as the King of the Moors.”

Don Alvaro kept his eye fixed on the retinue until it vanished from his sight. He passed in strict review every one of the persons that composed it, and already determined on the punishment that each foe should receive upon his liberation. In this confidence he lived three days, when he began somewhat to abate in his sanguine expectations. He saw no symptom indicative of any change in the King's mind in his regard. At first, his arrogance felt highly indignant, and vented deep complaints against the ingratitude of the man whom he had so faithfully served. But he soon regained his composure, for his pride directed him to adopt a line of conduct different from that which common individuals indeed have followed under similar circumstances. An exhibition of impotent rage or weak despondency, on his part, would have added to the triumph of his enemies, and he was resolved to contribute in no manner to heighten their satisfaction.

He resolved to request an interview with the

King, and for this purpose sent a message by his most devoted partisans, to crave in respectful terms the desired boon. But John had already been apprised of this design, and, no doubt, well prepared for the part he was to perform. The Queen was resolved to follow up her success, and not to rest until she had, by all the means in her power, irretrievably crushed her former benefactor. Aware of the power which would be placed in the hand of Don Alvaro, if he were suffered to see and speak to the King, it was her primary consideration to exert her utmost endeavours to prevent such a meeting. John was incessantly besieged by her importunities and that of her party; and the fact of denying even what was unjust, became, to the weak and worthless monarch, an irksome task. Accordingly, partly teased into consent, and partly instigated by a mean spirit of jealousy at the usurped power of his favourite, he tamely acquiesced in the cruel desires of the cabaling throng by which he was surrounded; and, when the messengers from Don Alvaro de Luna made their appearance at the palace, he peremptorily refused the requested favour.

The disappointed friends of the High Constable, with feelings of alarm, perceived the degree of influence which his enemies exercised at court, and the extent of danger which menaced the illustrious prisoner. With the most lively expression of sor-

row they reported the failure of their mission to Don Alvaro; nor did they, by a mistaken zeal for his peace of mind, endeavour to disguise the true posture of his affairs. The prisoner received their mournful communication with surprise and indignation. He was unprepared for such manifest and shameless ingratitude on the part of the King. It was true that he was surrounded by his own sworn enemies, who would, no doubt, paint him in the blackest colours to the sovereign. And it was likewise true, that the effect of patient perseverance is fatal, on a weak, indolent, and timorous person; yet, making every possible allowance for all these circumstances which militated against the suit of Don Alvaro, still there was not sufficient ground to make him suppose, that so simple a request as that of being heard in vindication would be denied. Nay, even could any real crime (which there was not) have been laid to the charge of the High Constable, the consideration of such important services done to the crown ought to have made the possessor of that crown proceed with some leniency towards the man who was once his dearest friend—always his most faithful servant.

Seeing his hopes of obtaining an interview frustrated, Don Alvaro de Luna next resolved to write a letter to the King: in this idea he was the more strongly confirmed, as he was soon convinced that

any fresh attempt to speak to the ungrateful John would prove as abortive as the first. The vigilance of his keepers seemed to redouble, and the countenances of his adherents and friends gradually assumed a more sombre kind of expression.

“Thou dost look ominously sad to-day, my good page,” said Don Alvaro to Morales, observing unusual signs of sorrow in his faithful attendant.

“Alas! my Lord,” answered the page, “strange rumours circulate about the town, that you are on the point of being removed to Portello, where you will be guarded with greater rigour.”

“It is indifferent to me where they remove me; but yet, ere every possibility of my writing to the King is taken away, it is but prudent I should set about the task.”

He immediately put his design into execution, and forthwith indited that letter to the King of Castile, so remarkable for the eloquence of its contents, and the little effect it produced. The tenour of the epistle was as follows:—

“Forty-five years of my life, my Lord King, have been consecrated to your service. How faithful my devotion has been to your interest, it will be needless to recount. Nor can I form a complaint of ingratitude on your part; the favours you have shown me being still greater than my

deserts, and certainly more than my desires. To my prosperity only one thing was wanting, and I neglected that which was the security of my future life. I ought to have been cautiously selfish, and have retired from court in due time, and in a private station have enjoyed the rewards of my services and the proofs of your munificence. But I had the generosity or presumption to continue in active life as long as I thought it was so required by the state of my king and the necessities of the country. O King, I deceived myself!"

The letter continued to speak of the riches he had acquired, and the distribution he had made of them, together with other topics concerning his past actions. The King perused this letter with very little of that emotion which it was calculated to produce. So far had his jealousies and his timidity been played upon by the enemies of Don Alvaro de Luna, that, whilst reading that declaration of his faithful servant, he totally lost sight of the truth of the services mentioned in the letter. His answer was accordingly harsh to a person of the Constable's character and previous conduct. Even supposing he was now an obnoxious individual, could the King forget that Luna had been the dear companion of his youth, his protector in after-life, and the defender of his rights on all occasions? The King did forget all; and, far from making the slightest opposi-

tion to the intentions of his enemies, he quietly suffered them to proceed in their schemes to effect his destruction.

The idea of bringing the High Constable to a trial was now seriously contemplated. The King finally gave his consent to the proceeding; and the election of a competent court to try the delinquent was next determined on. During the progress of an affair in which none but the most rancorous and implacable enemies of Don Alvaro were engaged, it was not to be expected that any degree of moderation, or show of justice, would be displayed—the election of the members that were to constitute the tribunal to examine the charges urged against the High Constable, was a mere mockery of judicial procedure.

The crimes of which Don Alvaro de Luna stood accused were singular, and never before urged against any other individual. He was charged with having been a tyrant, without specifying any particular act that could in a court of justice claim that name; and of usurping the royal authority, without stating in what such usurpations consisted, or how the crime was committed. But the whole trial was as broadly illegal as it was atrociously ridiculous. Yet this strange tribunal, composed at once of accusers and judges, found the High Constable guilty of

the crimes preferred against him, and condemned him to lose his head upon a scaffold.

It was now the anxious desire of Don Alvaro's enemies to see the sentence pronounced against him carried into immediate execution. Prudence advised speed in this act; for the wavering mind of the King might, in a moment of regret, be prompted to revoke the sentence, and grant a pardon to his minister. This was indeed the only circumstance which they had now to dread; and they were not mistaken in their apprehensions. When the warrant of death was presented to the King for his signature, the atrocity of the deed required of him seemed to bewilder his mind. He stood for a moment absorbed in a gloomy stupor.

"Leave that fatal document on the table," he said, after a short pause, addressing himself to the officer.

"Yes, my Liege; but it is the opinion—"

"Enough!" interrupted John, with more resolution than he had ever evinced before. "Obey my commands, and begone!"

The King paced the apartments in a very agitated manner. At intervals he cast a melancholy glance on the warrant waiting on the table for his sanction, and a pang of sorrow shot to his inmost heart as he reflected on the sacrifice which

was required of him; the former days of Don Alvaro were called to view, and the King was affected at the prospect of having to sign the death-warrant of the man whom, of all others, he had most sincerely loved.

But, on the other hand, other thoughts of a very different tendency arose to perplex his meditation. The enthusiasm congenial to youthful attachments had lost its warmth in the frost of advanced years. Speculating prudence, peevish jealousy, and the long train of chilling qualities consequent in a timorous mind, filled it with the poisonous whispers of suspicion. He considered that his minister had been really guilty of crimes which deserved a severe retribution. The people complained of his oppressive acts: he had offended the grandees by his overbearing haughtiness, and had largely encroached on the authority of the crown. These John imagined to be subjects of deep reflection to a sovereign: to pardon a man judged and condemned in a regular form of justice, would be to afford the nation a just motive for insubordination.

These conflicting sentiments excited an extraordinary emotion in the heart of the King. He had not courage to adopt any alternative, or the cause of Don Alvaro might have gained considerably by delay; but, unfortunately, his enemies were constantly on the alert, and to any symptom in his

favour, they were sure to put a competent check. Whilst the sovereign of Castile was in his irresolute mood, the Queen, duly apprised of what had happened, entered the apartment, firmly bent on the prompt decision of Luna's fate.

“ And can what I hear be true, my Lord King ?” she exclaimed with feigned surprise. “ You demur in giving your sanction to the punishment of a criminal. Are you aware of the danger you are provoking against your own head? What! will neither the clamours of a whole nation, the crimes of that fatal minister, nor the humiliating degradation to which he had reduced his King, persuade the infatuated monarch of Castile to let justice take its course with regard to the delinquent? Pardon the wretch convicted of so many daring offences, and then tremble for the safety of thy crown! Who will support you, when all the grandees and prelates anxiously await the accomplishment of a doom which you imprudently and unjustifiably delay?”

It was by these and similar remonstrances addressed to the fears of the King, that his ungrateful and cruel consort at length induced him to set his sign and seal to the fatal document.

This object being at length obtained, the next point was to see the sentence executed without loss of time. And to this task the eyes of every one were now anxiously turned. Don Alvaro had

been removed from Portello to Valladolid ; and it was in this city that the awful ceremony that was to end his life was to take place.

The High Constable received the intimation to prepare for death with that manly fortitude and elevation of mind which so strongly marked his character. From that moment he no longer endeavoured to attempt aught in order to avert his doom. The little success of his former applications to the King made him loath to try the same experiment again. He at last clearly perceived the terrible power of his enemies, and it was too late to counteract it ; the moment for opposition was past. Any attempt to serve his sovereign, on the part of the condemned minister, would savour of weakness and pusillanimity, and, without remedying his misfortune, would only tend to aggravate it by adding to the joy and triumph of his enemies. Considering, therefore, the term of his mortal career as unavoidable, he devoted himself to meet that fate with the becoming sentiments of a great man and a Christian, rather than to essay aught in order to delay the event.

Meantime the city of Valladolid was thrown into the deepest excitement at the news of the approaching execution. In the principal square a scaffold was raised, and a splendid carpet of black velvet was spread upon it, in consideration of the high rank of the individual who was there to suffer

death. A large crucifix was placed in front of the stage, and, everything being ready for the mournful ceremony, the officers of justice proceeded to the prison of the High Constable. The sentence of death was again repeated to him, as well as the crimes by which that doom had been incurred. Don Alvaro spoke not a word, but answered the accusation with a sad though tranquil smile. He had spent the morning in devotion with his confessor, and had but recently received the holy communion, when the messengers of death made their appearance in the prison.

Shortly after, the sound of trumpets disturbed the air, and announced the hour of execution; but the High Constable heard the ominous summons unappalled. He appeared, for a moment, plunged in profound prayer; but the next, starting up with a resolute animation, he said, in a calm voice, "Lead on to the scaffold—I am ready."

The procession immediately began its march. A herald went first, proclaiming, in a loud voice, the crimes for which the exalted personage was about to suffer; a body of troops forming two ranks, and with the beating of muffled drums, accompanied the Constable, who, with a countenance as placid and serene as if he were marching to some scene of triumph, came next in view, mounted on his mule. The trappings of this, as well as the habiliments of Don Alvaro, were black, as was also

the habit of his confessor, who rode by his side. The domestics of Luna, habited in deep mourning, followed their ill-fated master with an expression of the most unbounded sorrow.

The multitude which had collected to behold this extraordinary execution was immense. Not only the inhabitants of Valladolid, but those of the neighbouring towns and villages, had thronged to the former place, in order to witness with their eyes an event which they could scarcely believe within the limits of human possibility. Their hate for the Constable vanished in the very moment that they saw him riding, for the last time, not as an arrogant minister and a master of the nation, but as a condemned man to meet his doom. A sensation of awe, mingled with horror, pervaded the expectant multitude, which stood with wide-open eyes of wonder around the scaffold. As the Constable drew near, a half-suppressed murmur of pity was heard on every side.

The illustrious victim, having arrived at the goal of his mortal career, dismounted, and ascended the fatal steps of the platform with a firm pace and dignified composure. He cast a look on the vast multitude assembled there, and stood for a moment wrapt in reverie. Amongst the congregated crowd he perceived one of the principal adherents of Don Henry, the Infant of Aragon, whose struggles to deprive the King of Castile of his

crown had been victoriously baffled by the genius and activity of the Constable. In a clear, firm tone of voice, he said, addressing the partisan of Don Henry:—

“Tell thy master to reward the services of his faithful servants in a different manner to the King of Castile!”

He then observed his devotedly-attached attendant, the page Morales, who had followed his master up to the very scaffold. The affliction in which he saw this faithful being immersed, affected him deeply. His own stern nature appeared softened at the sight. He cast a melancholy look on the youth.

“Alas! my poor boy!” he said, “thou owest me but little; yet, how different is thy conduct from that of the King, whose obligations to me are so manifold! And where now are the many persons whom I have served in the days of my power? Alas! I see no one here, none but a poor domestic, who has received but few and trifling favours from his master!”

He then took off his hat, which, together with his gold ring, he gave to Morales.

“Receive this, my young friend, and keep them in mournful remembrance of thy unfortunate master.”

As the page took the sad pledges, he burst into such a deep and harrowing cry of sorrow, that the

whole assemblage was moved, and sounds of general lamentation filled the air. This testimony of public sympathy, though expressed so late, and so unavailing in its effects, yet served to throw a cheering halo over the dying moments of the victim. A melancholy smile played on his proud lips, and he placed his hand fervently on his heart, in token of his acknowledgments for the popular sensation in his fate. He then examined the block to which his head was to be affixed, and drew from his bosom a black ribbon, which he kissed, and then gave to the executioner, that he might bind his hands.

After this task had been performed, he approached the crucifix, and remained for a few moments in fervent prayer; after which, with unchanged countenance and composed resolution, he laid his head upon the block, and, with one single stroke, it was severed from the body. The executioner then held the bloody token to the public view; but the ghastly sight was greeted with shouts of horror and sounds of absorbing lamentation. Every one seemed now to regret the fate of that man, against whose ruin they had been so assiduously and unremittingly urged to conspire. His brilliant qualities, his indefatigable exertions, in protecting the kingdom against the ambition of the Infants of Aragon, and his constant services to the King, passed in quick review, and his

aaults and excesses were cast into the shade by the dazzling splendour of his merits.

Who was there in Castile capable of filling the place left vacant by the great man who had thus been brought to an untimely end? None. Personages would present themselves with all the arrogance and ambition of the late minister, without possessing his genius to plead in vindication. It was now perceived, and loudly proclaimed, that the Constable had been a victim sacrificed to the jealousy and fears of nobles less gifted with abilities, less favoured by success in their undertakings. But, alas! the conviction came as late as their regret was unavailing, and the tears which were given to the fate of Don Alvaro were, perhaps, the most poignant rebuke against both the King and the mass of the people, who had thus allowed themselves to be the dupes of envious and caballing men.

The head of the dead minister was exposed for some time; but the indignant cries of the public caused the bleeding trophy to be removed. The remains of the great, the powerful, the munificent Don Alvaro de Luna, were interred, at the expense of public charity, in the cemetery destined for the robber, the murderer, and other desperate malefactors. This is, perhaps, the most awful circumstance in the career and end of the Constable, and the most striking lesson to posterity. The

man who had been absolute master of Castile in life, left not in death wherewith to defray the expenses of the humblest and poorest burial rites!

Thus perished Don Alvaro de Luna, master of Santiago, and High Constable of Castile. Few instances does history present of an elevation and power equal to those of this extraordinary man. The degree of favour which he experienced from his sovereign was unparalleled till his time. But it must also be admitted, that no minister had, until that period, exhibited higher powers for government, greater activity and success in his undertakings, or more undeviating fidelity to his master. With such brilliant claims to the admiration of the public, and to the particular gratitude of the King, the arrogance which marked the latter portion of Luna's career ought certainly to have found some excuse. But if two things are essentially precarious in their nature, they are the gratitude of a weak monarch, and the prosperity founded on the people's estimation. The latter may partly be excused, in the hatred which they ultimately evinced towards the minister. He was depicted to them as the spoliator of their liberties, as the enemy of their rights. Thus, their ignorance only could be impeached, not their gratitude. But what palliation can be found for that king who incurred the latter reproach in its blackest colour?

Such was John the Second, King of Castile. The execution of the great man to whom he owed the preservation of his crown, will ever be a stigma upon his name. John survived but a short period his minister and once dearest friend. He perceived that the sacrifice he had permitted failed to produce the desired effect of tranquillizing the kingdom; and he died with feelings of remorse, the 21st of July, 1454.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Reign of Henry the Fourth,

FROM 1454 to 1479: A PERIOD OF 25 YEARS.

A. D. 1454. Upon the accession of Henry to the throne, hopes were entertained of the rule of a good and able prince; but those expectations were soon miserably disappointed. It was soon found that Henry was as much under the control of his favourite Paches, as his father had been under the influence of Luna. This paved the way to fresh disturbances in Castile. But what gave the greatest scandal in the kingdom, and led to the formation of a powerful conspiracy, was the appointment of Don Beltran de la Cueva, *Mayordomo Mayor* (Minister of the Household), and conferring on him the title of Count of Ledesma. Don Beltran, the favourite of Henry, was the reputed lover of the Queen, whose licentious conduct gave but too just a foundation for the most unfavourable surmises. On the Queen's being brought to bed of the Infanta Juana, the King was anxious to have her recognised as his heir to the crown. The child, however, was generally believed to be the bastard offspring of Don Beltran, on which account she was stigmatised with the surname of the *Beltraneja*. A most powerful league was now made amongst the nobles to dethrone the king, and call his brother, the Infant Don Alonzo, to the crown.

1464. Towards this period, one of the most singular scenes recorded in history took place at Avila. A general meeting

of the nobles and the people was convened. There, in a spacious plain, a scaffolding was erected, where a figure, representing the king, was placed. The prelates and grandees then proceeded to the deposition, which they did by ignominiously throwing the figure from the throne, and placing thereon the Infant Don Alonzo. This act was premised by several ceremonies, as well as reading the sentence of the king, and the crisis which brought upon him the disgrace. Henry collected his army, and went to meet the rebels at Olmedo. Soon after, however, Don Alonzo died, which seemed to present an occasion for a suspension of hostilities; but the nobles proceeded to call the Infanta Isabel, who afterward became so justly celebrated, to the throne. Henry consented to the exclusion of the *Beltraneja* from the crown, and she was immured in a nunnery, but appeared reconciled to the Infanta Isabel.

1474. He at length died, affording a striking example of indolence and imprudence. His reign is one of most singular occurrences. The memory of Henry has been exposed to much contempt—more, perhaps, than he merited. He was good in heart; but his excessive weakness of character, indolence, and prodigality, led to the scandals that marked and disgraced his reign.

The Dethronement.

“ It is the curse of kings, to be attended
By slaves.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE DETHRONEMENT.

The Dethronement.

A HANDSOME and gallant cavalier was crossing the throng that filled the hall of the palace of King Henry. His dress, composed of the richest silk and brocade, glittered with the profusion of gold and precious stones with which it was ornamented; and his bearing was that of one conscious of power and importance. The timid expectants of royal favour — the hungry petitioners about court, officiously opened a passage as this exalted individual drew near, and put themselves to a thousand inconveniences to show their respect and admiration for so great a personage.

It was, indeed, highly edifying to see the humble looks, and hear the words of profound esteem and congratulation, which greeted the favoured individual.—“It is the Count of Ledesma,” was buzzed about in wondering murmurs of approbation; and those who were unacquainted with the Count until then, suddenly found themselves filled with the deepest sentiments of zeal and respect for his person. The great man seemed scarcely to notice the prodigious sensation which his appearance produced on the needy or the am-

bitious. He received those attentions as due to him by right, and accordingly deserving neither surprise nor gratitude.

A group was standing near the principal entrance of the palace. It was composed of three cavaliers, who, from their outward appearance, seemed to be persons of consequence. As they perceived the Count approaching, they suddenly invested their countenances with a most supercilious gravity.

“Here comes that worm! that wretch! that abomination!” said one of them in a low rancorous tone.

“Hush, my Lord of Benavente!” returned another: “let us disguise our feelings until proper time to call them forth.”

The Count of Ledesma drew himself up as he came near the group. He was fully aware that he could not expect from the proud and independent grandees, of which it was composed, the same show of deference that had recently welcomed his appearance in another quarter. But the Count had by this time learnt to be as proud and arrogant as any noble in the land, and had also most religiously resolved to return their scorn with an equal share of contempt. An exhibition, therefore, most amusing, no doubt, to the uninterested observer, now took place between the two parties, equally conscious of pride, and as

charitably determined to evince their hatred for each other. The Count of Ledesma carried himself more stately than ever; and the grandees placed themselves in the most contemptuous attitude they could devise. The Count cast upon them, as he passed, a look of mingled pity and defiance; and the look was received by the trio with three most impressive smiles of derision.

“The proud, unmannerly beggar!” muttered the Count of Benavente, when the obnoxious individual had passed. “Could the grandees, the prelates, and the people of Castile, have ever supposed that they should be insulted by so worthless a fellow!”

“It is, in sooth, a vile degradation,” returned Don Pedro Giron, the master of Calatrava. “The base-born springald grows more insolent every day: — it is high time to curtail his usurped pretensions.”

“All in good time, my Lord,” interposed gently the Count of Palencia. “Affairs are now in a propitious train to begin operations; and let not an imprudent step precipitate to aught which may be prejudicial to the success of our undertaking. The new Count of Ledesma is indeed as arrogant as our unworthy King is weak, and our Queen licentious. And this arrogance, weakness, and licentiousness, shall receive their competent award. Fail not, my Lords, to attend the meeting which

takes place to-night at the mansion of the Archbishop of Toledo. All the disaffected grandees of Castile are convened, and decided measures are to be determined on to devise some speedy remedies for the growing evils of the land. Therefore, my Lords, your attendance is indispensable, and, accordingly, expected at the assembly."

"We will not fail," said every one eagerly; and, after a short conversation, they separated until the hour appointed.

The Count of Ledesma — the object of the hatred and scorn evinced by the above-mentioned grandees — was a man, who, though not of the base origin which some wished to ascribe to him, was of humble, and not gentle birth. Previous to his obtaining the title of Count, he was known by the name of Don Beltran de la Cueva. From a very subordinate station, he had risen to the highest favour with the King, and possessed the greatest influence over his mind. Hence he lived at court in the double capacity of minion and minister to his sovereign, and in this respect might bear some resemblance to the great Don Alvaro de Luna, who had enjoyed an equal situation in the foregoing reign. But in this alone could any resemblance be traced between these two personages. Don Beltran was neither distinguished by the abilities which shone in the person of Luna, nor could he found his claim to the favour of his sovereign

on the strength of the services which that ill-fated individual had rendered. The talents of the Count of Ledesma were of a very subordinate description; and the list of his services yet remained to be made.

Indeed, the whole worth of the Count seemed to be circumscribed to the possession of a handsome figure and an insinuating address. And it was on the strength of these superficial and secondary merits, that the vast fabric of his present greatness solely reposed. It was by means of these advantages that he rose from the humble capacity of page to the King, to that of his confidential minister; and by the same personal attractions he won the attention of the Queen. The first favourable impression which he made on the bosom of his sovereign was soon ripened into a strong attachment, which, already noted for the irregularity of her conduct, she scrupled not to indulge.

Such was the foundation of the new Count's greatness, and such the services by which he obtained a place of power and honour, equal almost to that enjoyed by the celebrated Don Alvaro de Luna. But if any thing could add to the strangeness and rapidity of Don Beltran's elevation, it was that it should be the work of King Henry the Fourth, a prince who had constantly sided with the nobility against his late father and the beloved minister. He had been one of the most furious

enemies of the Constable, and one of those who most loudly criminated the King, in suffering the absolute dominion which that personage exercised over the State. Yet this very prince fell into the same fault which he had formerly censured; only that his fall was marked by an ignominy which could not be attached to the conduct of King John, his predecessor. That monarch devoted to favour and power a descendant of an illustrious family,—a man distinguished by abilities which had no equal in the nation—known by an intrepidity second to none amongst warriors—rendered meritorious by a series of most important services. The favourite of King John was the first man in his kingdom, and consequently the most deserving of such distinction. The favourite of his son and successor was a needy adventurer, undistinguished by any particular merit, and indebted for his elevation solely to the indolence of his king, and the shameful amours of his queen.

It is therefore not surprising that the nobles of the land should feel the deepest indignation against the minion. If the rule of such a man as Don Alvaro de Luna had been irksome and unendurable to most of the present grandees, how much more ought their pride to be wounded, when they considered the character and services of the new favourite? They were accordingly fired with shame and resentment; and those feelings were perfectly

justifiable under existing circumstances. But some of the first personages of Castile had deep reason of complaint against the King. The Archbishop of Toledo and the Marquess of Villena had both been disgraced and removed from his person, to make room for Don Beltran, who now assumed the direction of affairs, held until this moment by these lords. The title of Count Ledesma was bestowed on the new minister, and every mark of honour and distinction lavished upon him.

King Henry the Fourth, with many vices, scarcely possessed a redeeming quality. Totally incapable himself, both from his natural indolence and want of proper talents, to conduct the affairs of the State, he soon found his dominions a prey to the intrigues of his ambitious subjects, the evil of which he increased, as well as the general discontent, by heaping new favours on the principal object of popular resentment. But there was another momentous circumstance to arouse the working flame of revolt, in the bosoms of the disaffected grandees. The Queen had given birth to a daughter, the Infanta Doña Juana. This child, it was universally believed was the adulterous offspring of the Queen's partiality for Don Beltran; —hence the new-born was immediately stigmatized with the name of Beltraneja, by which she was known and designated ever after; but the King gave immediate orders for the solemn acknowledg-

ment of the Infanta Juana, as his heir to the crown. This was the signal for the labouring storm to burst forth. The nobles loudly raised their voices against such a proceeding, and further incensed by the imbecility of the King, and the presumption of his worthless favourite, they resolved to adopt the most vigorous measures to check the progress of the evil.

This was the origin of those clandestine meetings, held at the dwelling of the Archbishop of Toledo, to which all the leading characters in the land were invited. It was yet early in the night when a numerous assemblage of grandees, prelates, and other individuals of distinction, were congregated in the appointed place. The Archbishop himself, one of the most injured of the discontented, addressed the meeting in a speech in which his wounded feelings powerfully seconded the effect of his eloquence. But there was no necessity for argument, where conviction was unanimously felt; nor, indeed, was there aught necessary to inflame the indignation of men who were agitated by the most violent emotions. Never was there an assembly so much in unison with respect to their views, and yet so embarrassed as to the method of carrying them into effect. Most of the nobles were for adopting those violent measures which alone they considered adequate to the urgency of the matter in debate; but the cla-

mour and the confusion which prevailed threw a great obstacle in the way of their operations.

At this moment, a man of commanding aspect and haughty bearing entered the place. His appearance proved effectual in establishing order. Suddenly, the overpowering din that prevailed was hushed into a gentle murmur, whilst the eyes of every one were directed towards the stranger, who, casting around him a look of superiority, took his station by the side of the Archbishop. The individual who had produced such a change in the conduct of the debating grandees, was the Marquess of Villena, a name rendered celebrated in Spanish history, no less for his ambition than for the vast powers of his mind in the conduct of intrigue.

The Marquess being one of the disgraced ministers, and cordially hating the Count of Ledesma, whom he considered a successful, though a most unworthy rival, was, naturally enough, one of the most active conspirators, as well as one of the most influential; indeed, his ardent mind and restless disposition had given the primary impulse to the present machinations. It was by his advice that his friend and colleague the Archbishop had convened the present meeting; and it was also his opinion that would have the greatest influence in determining a plan of operation. The Marquess was conscious of all this, and his entrance, there-

fore, into the hall of debate was marked by the pride of power, and the consciousness of importance. He lost no time in addressing his companions:—

“My noble Lords and good friends!” he said, “the moment is arrived to put in practice an idea which has long occupied my mind. The blind infatuation of the King, and the overbearing insolence of his base minions, render such a step indispensable. Think not that a feeling of private resentment actuates my conduct, when the general good of the nation is so materially involved in this affair; and lend, therefore, a favourable attention to my proposal.”

“Speak!” said the leagued nobles with unanimity.

“Without loss of time,” continued Villena, “an embassy, composed of some of the principal men in the State, must be sent to the King, to represent, in the name of the nation, the causes of discontent with which it is afflicted; and this done, to demand an immediate redress of the grievances of the land: this redress can only be obtained by the dismissal of Don Beltran de la Cueva, lately dignified with the title of Count of Ledesma, not only from office, but from the side of the sovereign. This must, therefore, be the first point to be granted,—the rest must be the Royal promise for the exclusion from the succession to the crown

of Castile that illegitimate child, the *Beltraneja*. Should the King refuse his sanction to these two principal demands, it will be fruitless to enter into minor details, but better immediately to quit the Royal presence."

"And then, most noble Villena?" demanded the impatient Benavente.

"Then!" replied the Marquess of Villena with a cold smile, "we must make every possible preparation for the dethronement of Henry, and the nomination of the Infant Don Alonzo to the throne of Castile!"

"Heavens! what say you, my Lord?" cried the Marquess of Santillana. "Do you really expect that we should succeed in so daring an undertaking? Would the nation take part in so awful a ——"

"Peace! my Lord of Santillana," interrupted Villena sternly. "We are now assembled to provide against present evils, not to consider whether the remedy is pregnant with danger. Certainly, we cannot flatter ourselves that such an enterprise is to be carried on without danger and toil; but let any true Castilian ingenuously answer me, if there can befall the nobles of the land a sorer calamity than the one which now weighs so heavily upon them? The probable loss of our fortunes—nay, of our lives, cannot be a sufficient reason to deter us from the sacred duty of vindicating our rights,

and delivering the people from the base thralldom of a worthless upstart, the vile pander of the King, and still viler paramour of a shameless Princess. Castilians! this must no longer be. Never was the nation sunk to such an abyss of ignominy: the dominion of Don Alvaro de Luna was a state of glory and honour, compared to this. Yet if that great man, deserving as he might be, was deemed liable to the punishment of death for his usurpations and excesses, what retribution shall we consider adequate to this despicable minion—this prodigy of evil, that throws a stain upon the whole nation? Let us not demur a moment, when the crisis is at hand for active operations; and if the means of persuasion prove unavailing, those of force must be resorted to.”

The Marquess of Villena spoke with great warmth; and indeed he was the person most interested in the ruin of the King's favourite. Feelings of resentment and humbled pride united themselves to the sentiment of regard for the public welfare, by which alone the grandee affected to be actuated. His ambitious mind looked with rancorous jealousy upon the increasing greatness of his rival; and he was eager to commence a struggle from which he expected to regain his lost station. Should the King not accede to the propositions of his grandees, the Marquess had fixed on the Infant Don Alonzo as the fittest person at

once to fill the throne, and at the same time to shower upon him unbounded favour, in due recompense for such essential services. The scheming brain of Villena had been deeply at work since the nomination of Don Beltran. Intrigue was his element; and surely he could never more assiduously devote himself to the task of plotting, than at the moment when he considered himself deeply wronged by his sovereign, and disgraced in the opinion of the nation at large.

All the leagued nobles were not, however, animated by the same sentiments. Though the present and the foregoing reigns might be justly denominated the rule of the favourites, and though a spirit of faction and cabal prevailed in the higher classes of the state, yet several of its members sincerely bewailed the degradation of their country, and anxiously prayed for a reform. The views of Villena, therefore, though in a great measure instigated by private interest, bore such a semblance of public zeal, that the proposal made by that nobleman was readily admitted by his companions. That very moment a deputation was named to carry the complaints of the Castilian nobles to the foot of the throne. The embassy was composed of the Archbishop of Toledo, the Counts of Alba, Benavente, and some others of the most zealous members of the league. The Marquess of Villena, with great policy, forbore

being concerned in an act of which he was the main spring, and had been the first adviser.

On the following day, the commission proceeded to the fulfilment of their charge. They presented themselves in the palace with ostentatious ceremony, and delivered the object of their embassy in a respectful yet decisive tone and manner. The King was at first shocked and scandalized at the presumption of his nobles, in coming thus to dictate to their sovereign; but the resolute demeanour of the messengers soon awoke in the weak mind of Henry sentiments of alarm and fear. They represented in the strongest terms, that the greatest excesses were committed in the administration of justice; that he himself and the whole nation were labouring under the vile servitude of his favourite Don Beltran; and to these complaints they added a numerous list of others equally vexatious, though not so important and alarming.

The fearless manner and hostile attitude of the commissioned nobles, led the irresolute monarch to enter into some negotiation, which might at the same time disarm the malcontents, without, nevertheless, granting the plenitude of their demands. To this effect, he pretended to take the matter into deep consideration, and returned a most conciliating answer to the deputies of the league. Hereupon a regular negotiation was entered into between the parties, by which it was stipulated that

the King should deliver the Infants Don Alonzo and Doña Isabel from their prison at Segovia; that the first should be declared heir to the crown, upon his marrying the Infanta Juana, surnamed the Beltraneja, as soon as she became of a competent age; and finally, that the Count de Ledesma should be removed from his important station near the King's person.

A perfect reconciliation seemed now to have taken place between Henry and his nobles. The Infant Don Alonzo was immediately liberated from his confinement at Segovia, and placed at the disposal of the Marquess of Villena. The other heads of the treaty, however, were not fulfilled; nor indeed did the King intend to perform his promise. It had been wrung from him by the imperious necessity of the times, and when immediately threatened by a furious storm. But no sooner had the impending cloud passed away, than the false Henry, deluded with the hopes of a more cheering horizon, neglected to accomplish what he had religiously sworn. The Count of Ledesma remained in the same station as before. His oppression was as despotic, and the scandal he afforded as insulting, as ever. Nor was any reform introduced into the other branches of administration, which had furnished grounds of complaint. The prodigal generosity of the King to his unworthy and low-born favourites, continued on the

same scale ; and even his show of cordiality towards the Infants his brothers, was liable to strong suspicion.

Nor could this be otherwise. The Count de Ledesma, exercising the same unbounded influence in the King's councils, could not be expected to lose any opportunity of urging this weak sovereign to thwart the intentions of the malcontents. In each one of the nobles he beheld an inveterate foe, whom no concession on his part could conciliate. The total disgrace of the favourite alone would satisfy them ; and the object of so deep an animadversion, aware of the dangers which surrounded him, strained every effort to provide against them, while he had the means.

The league, exasperated at the non-fulfilment of the conditions agreed upon, now assumed a more hostile aspect. They perceived that the Count of Ledesma was not to be routed but by actual force. He contrived to govern the King with the same absolute sway. His insolence, at the continuance of success, grew more overbearing, and the State was plunged into greater confusion than it had ever been before.

At this juncture, the Marquess of Villena was engaged in clandestine debates with the Infant Don Alonzo, to persuade him to accept the crown of Castile, which the nobles were so disposed to secure for him.

“What should deter you, Infant?” said the wily Villena. “It is the voice of the nation sorely oppressed, and basely insulted, that calls you to the throne. All the grandees, all the most pious prelates in the kingdom, form part of our league; and the people at large will rejoice at an event as glorious as it is necessary.”

It was no difficult task to induce the Infant Don Alonzo to accept the sceptre;—that is, indeed, an offer against which even the ties of blood have but seldom proved a sufficient guard. But if ever revolt wore the aspect of a just struggle, it was in the present instance. Those of the leaguers who were really actuated by the sentiment of patriotism, deserved the unfeigned gratitude and thanks of the nation; but how far that pure motive could be found unalloyed by more selfish views, in a league composed of such ambitious men as the Marquess of Villena, it would be difficult to ascertain. The pretext of the revolt, at least, was good; and a good pretext is as much as is usually required in the undertaking and prosecution of any human action.

The Marquess of Villena communicated to his companions his success with regard to the Infant. He had at length, though repugnantly, acceded to his desires, which were those of the nation; the prince would accept the crown, and it now only remained to obtain him the possession of the pro-

mised gift. The league had considerably increased in strength ; scarcely any important name in the State being absent from its list. The Archbishop of Toledo, and other illustrious prelates, formed part of it ; as well as the Master of Calatrava, the Grand Admiral of Castile, the Marquesses of Villena and Santillana ; the Counts of Haro, Palencia, Alba, and Benavente ; Don Diego Lopez de Stuniga, and a host of other noblemen and gentlemen of influence.

The consciousness of power emboldened them to proceed with a degree of effrontery never before paralleled. They were conspirators in broad day ; and instead of the secret whispers of cautious plotters, they adopted the loud outcries of factious mutineers. The people they perceived ripe for revolt. The nation had indeed been, during the whole of the present reign, in a state of ferment ; but owing to the duplicity of the King, and the temporizing wishes of some members of the league, the match had not been yet applied to the mine. The moment, however, was at length arrived. The Crown of Castile had been promised to the Infant Don Alonzo ; it was now necessary to execute such a promise ; but it could not be expected that Henry, feeble and indolent as he was, would tamely lay down the insignia of royalty by virtue of the league's summons to that effect. Another plan was therefore counselled and de-

cided upon. The opinion of Villena prevailed, and it was resolved that the nobles should instantly proceed to the dethronement of the King.

Daring as the act was, the singularity of the circumstances with which it was accompanied was still more striking. One of the members of the league proposed, that the nation should be summoned to appear in the plains of Avila, to witness the deposition of an unworthy monarch ; and that the nobles, prelates, and the rest of the discontented should be present at the ceremony, to give it the appearance and sanction of a national decree and undertaking. The proposal was immediately adopted, and instructions were forthwith scattered throughout the provinces of Spain, inviting every one to Avila ; but, at the same time, as promptitude and decision were the soul of the enterprise, the leagued grandees wisely thought to carry the ceremony of deposition into immediate execution. Villena and his principal associates collected as many of their retainers as possible ; and these, together with numerous adventurers and malcontents, formed the show of an army sufficient to protect the operations of the league.

A spacious stage was erected in the plains of Avila. On this platform a magnificent throne was constructed, surmounted with the arms of Castile, and bearing every possible resemblance to that of the King, with the difference of being made upon

a scale of greater magnificence. On this throne was placed an image, representing Henry wearing the crown, with the sceptre in his hand, and the sword of justice by his side. The figure was attired in the royal robes, and all the insignia of kingly dignity were employed to decorate it. A gallant body of troops surrounded the stage to protect it, bearing the banner of Castile displayed in gorgeous array, besides the pennons and coats-of-arms of all the leagued nobles.

A vast multitude had collected to witness so extraordinary a ceremony. A constant murmur of surprise was kept up, but the daring nobles augured nothing ominous to their enterprise from the state of public feeling. Indeed, some of the spectators appeared disappointed that there were no figures of the Queen and Don Beltran, and that only that of the King was to take a part in this curious and singular scene ; but everything being now ready, after hearing mass with great pomp and solemnity, the whole league collected at the entrance of the church, and proceeded with great state and ceremony towards the spot where the extraordinary drama was about to be performed.

Every one of the party was habited in splendid attire ; a band of martial instruments preceded the procession, and a numerous train of attendants made up the rear. In this manner they advanced towards the scene of action, accompanied by a vast

crowd, which gathered in its progress, while the sounds of music and shouts of congratulation rent the air. The grandees were well pleased to perceive these public demonstrations, and augured most favourably for the issue of their scheme. The Infant Don Alonzo was seen in the centre of the superb procession, and his presence tended to augment the approbation of the public.

Arrived at the stage, all those of the confederates who were to take an active part in the ceremony separated from the rest. Accordingly, the Archbishop of Toledo and two attendant prelates, the Counts of Benevente and Palencia, and Don Diego de Stuñiga, with heralds, alguazils, and a public crier, now mounted the platform, while the rest ranged themselves around with drawn swords. A short space further, the line of soldiers served as a barrier to the vast concourse of people, which increased every moment as the trumpets sounded a loud blast to demand attention. The confused murmurs of the multitude were suddenly hushed into a profound silence, and forthwith the crier, attended by an alguazil, advanced in front of the stage. He then proceeded to read the charges against the King, and the sentence in virtue of which he was to be dethroned.

“Ye Castilians, grandees, ricos-hombres, prelates, knights, squires, and citizens, all hear! The King, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile, being un-

worthy of the crown, which he disgraces by many crimes, it now pleaseth God, by the agency of the confederate nobles, zealous for the prosperity of the kingdom, to punish the guilty sovereign by a merited dethronement. And, among the many charges which stand against Don Henry, the four principal ones deserve special reprobation.

“First. He is unworthy of a crown which he cannot hold himself; for it is not he, but the pernicious Don Beltran de la Cueva, known now as the Count de Ledesma, who rules the nation with a despotic sway, disgraceful to the independent spirit of the Castilians. Therefore, as the King cannot preserve his crown, it is meet that it should grace the brow of another more capable and worthy to wear it. Let, then, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile lose the crown.”

Here the crier stopped, and the Archbishop of Toledo, with great solemnity, advanced towards the image of the King, and tore the crown from its head. This act was received with joyous applause. The prelate then retreated to his place, and the crier resumed his station as before. He proceeded to the next article of the charge.

“Secondly. The King, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile, is unworthy of wearing the sword of justice, since he neglects a proper use of it for his subjects. It is by the voice of favourites that the most partial decrees are obtained, to the prejudice

of the good and deserving. It is, therefore, meet that the sword of justice should no longer be disgraced by hands so unworthy of holding it. Let, then, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile lose the sword of justice."

Again the public crier ceased. The Count of Palencia then approached the image, and, with indignant gestures, wrenched the sword of justice from its side. Another shout followed, after which the following charge was read.

"Thirdly. The King, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile, is unworthy of the sceptre. To hold this with honour to the State, a prince should be bold and righteous, and Henry, from his weakness and indolence, and his profuse waste of the revenues of the State, is undeserving any longer to hold the sceptre. Let Henry the Fourth of Castile, therefore, lose the sceptre."

The ceremony proceeded as before. The Count of Benavente approached the effigy, and snatched the sceptre from its hand. After which, the announcement of the fourth and concluding charge was begun.

"Fourthly. The King, Don Henry of Castile, is unworthy to sit on the throne which he occupies. For that prince has been guilty of many acts of treachery, and especially of the imprisonment of the Infant Don Alonzo, his rightful heir and successor, whom the unjust Don Henry is labouring

to exclude from the crown by base artifices, the which he disgracefully attempts, in order that the illegitimate child, called *La Beltraneja*, should ascend the throne after his decease. But God will not permit such shame and dishonour; and the confederates will provide in time that the throne be filled by him to whom it is due by right of birth as well as by merit. Let, then, Don Henry the Fourth of Castile be hurled from the throne."

This was immediately done by Don Diego Lopez de Stuñiga, who fiercely siezed the image and threw it headlong from its seat. Hereupon the confederates lifted up the Infant Don Alonzo on their shoulders to the public view, and, placing him on the throne which the effigy of the King had lately occupied, proclaimed him Sovereign of Castile. The proclamation was received with universal shouts of joy and applause. The Infant was invested with all the insignia of royalty, and the Archbishop of Toledo did homage to him by kissing his hand. The Marquess of Villena followed the example; then came the Master of Calatrava, the Count of Palencia, and the rest of the confederates in rotation. The new King was then mounted on a superb milk-white charger, splendidly ornamented with gold and silk trappings, and attended by the gorgeous retinue of the confederates. The procession paraded the plains and the streets of Avila, amidst the acclamations of the

multitude, and the day of this extraordinary dethronement was spent by every one in feasting and rejoicing, the leagued grandees no longer doubting the complete success of their enterprise.

As soon as intelligence was received at court of this daring act, the King, despite of his natural indolence, was roused to an unexpected degree of vigour and resolution. The effrontery of his grandees appeared to him so open, and at the same time so alarming, that the most vigorous measures were necessary to check the disastrous progress of the revolt. Henry was yet in the possession of power, and, inflamed by the affront which had been put upon him, he determined to exert every endeavour to chastise the insolence of his factious subjects. In this resolution he was farther confirmed by the Count of Ledesma, who, feeling the deepest apprehensions for his own safety, strove to arouse the energies of the King to exertions hitherto unknown to that weak monarch. Henry was also more determined than ever in his favourite scheme of assuring the succession of the crown to the Beltraneja, the unfortunate pretext for the disturbances; and having collected a numerous body of troops, after various marches and cautious movements, he at length met the confederates near Olmedo.

A brisk engagement took place, in which, despite of the bravery of the Infant's army, the

royalists obtained the victory. The disaffected, however, persisted in their former intention, and continued to alarm the kingdom by sowing the seeds of discord, and keeping alive the flame of civil dissension. But an unforeseen accident disconcerted their plans of operation: the Infant Don Alonzo died at this juncture, thus leaving them without a rallying point. Nothing daunted, however, either by the successes of the King's troops, or this unexpected calamity, the confederates commissioned an embassy to proceed and offer the crown to the Infanta Doña Isabel, whom they now considered the rightful owner of the throne, as heir to her brother.

The Marquess of Santillana and the Count of Benavente, with a suitable retinue, then set out for Avila, where Doña Isabel then lived, and expressed the wishes of the grandees and the rest of the nation, that she should assume the sceptre of Castile. The answer of the generous princess surprised and disconcerted the ambassadors. She resolutely refused the offered crown.

“What, my Lords! do you so far forget your duties as Castilian gentlemen, as to come and propose that I should deprive the lawful possessor of the crown? No; as long as Henry lives, Isabel shall not sanction any proceeding prejudicial to his rights. After his death, however, I shall readily mount the throne. Let this be solemnly

promised by the King, and the child be discarded from the succession to which it has no claim."

This resolution of the Infanta at length induced the confederates to lay down their arms, and enter into negotiations with the King. Henry appeared most favourably disposed to come to an amicable arrangement, and the articles of the treaty were immediately drawn up. The confederates promised to swear allegiance to the King, under the following conditions:—That the past occurrences should be consigned to oblivion, and the estates and appurtenances confiscated to the crown returned to their former possessors. That the prisoners held by the King for political transgressions should be immediately pardoned and set at liberty. And, lastly, that the Infanta Doña Isabel should be solemnly recognised, and declared lawful successor to the throne of Castile.

The King acceded to all these conditions, and peace was momentarily restored to the nation. The Infanta, notwithstanding the protestations and rage of the Queen, and the regret and sorrow of Henry, was publicly acknowledged as the rightful heir to the kingdom. The apparent tranquillity of the State was, however, of short continuance. It was difficult for men accustomed to intrigue to abandon their favourite pursuit. The Marquess of Villena, the most skilful and diplomatic of all the party, enjoyed an extraordinary degree of

favour with Henry, who began to look on the Count of Ledesma with coldness and indifference ; but the Archbishop of Toledo, and other grandees, began to be alarmed at the rising greatness of their former companion, whom they accused of ungenerous duplicity and exorbitant ambition.

Thus, the remainder of this unhappy reign was made up of the same cabals and jealousies, the same struggles for power and influence, which had distinguished its commencement. Henry died shortly after at Segovia, where, previously to his dissolution, he allowed the Infanta Isabel and Ferdinand of Aragon, to whom she had been recently married, to visit him. A most cordial reconciliation appeared to have taken place ; but the King, with that versatility peculiar to his character, and to the surprise of all, declared the Princess Juana, the Beltraneja, his successor to the throne.

King Henry was the last sovereign of the male line founded by Henry of Trastamara. He was certainly the most unworthy of all ; and the disgraceful scandals which had marked his weak and calamitous reign, could not fail to heap scorn upon his memory.* Seldom or never had such a frenzy of revolt and ambition actuated the grandees of

* He has, notwithstanding, found apologists, who declare him to have been a pious prince and a lover of peace. He, however, took very inefficient measures to secure the tranquillity of the kingdom.

the land ; but their plots, and the singular dethronement to which they condemned their King, were not perhaps without beneficial results : — the exclusion of the Beltraneja led to the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, the most fortunate event for the prosperity of Spain that had as yet been recorded in its history.

**Union of the Crowns of Castile
and Aragon.**

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Joint Reign of Ferdinand, surnamed the Catholic, and Isabella.

A. D. 1474. On the death of Henry the Fourth, the kingdom of Castile was thrown into great confusion:—two competitors started up for the Crown, in the person of the Infanta Isabella, and the Beltraneja, and they were both supported by powerful parties. Some of the principal nobles hastened to Segovia, accompanied by the Bishop of Toledo, to do homage to the new Queen, Dona Isabella. On the other hand, the new Marquess of Villena, a worthy successor to his father with regard to his ambition and intriguing temper, hurt that the Mastership of Santiago should have been denied to him, took the strange resolution of adopting the party of the Beltraneja. The same course was pursued by the Archbishop of Toledo, who considered himself not sufficiently honoured by the new Queen. Thus, by a strange vicissitude of fortune, the despised and almost forgotten Beltraneja found herself at the head of a powerful party, commanded by the most influential men in the kingdom.

1476. The King of Portugal, as ambitious as any other personage of this most factious and turbulent period, accepted the hand of the Beltraneja in marriage, and then appeared on the Spanish frontier to claim his title to the crown of Castile. He penetrated into Placencia without opposition, and there, strange to relate, he was united to that Princess

in the presence of some of those confederates who had formerly so strongly opposed her legitimacy. The party was daily gaining strength, and arrived even as far as Peñafiel. But the Count de Benavente, a nobleman who had been undeviating in his principles from the commencement of the confederacy, and was strongly attached to the new Queen, took the command of her troops; and despite of the inferiority of his forces, he fought most gallantly at Vattanas, but was at length compelled to yield. Ferdinand, however, routed the Portuguese, and the rebels, who were compelled to sue for pardon. The unfortunate Juana, the Beltraneja, after a life of constant misery and affront, retired at length from a world where she had known so much sorrow, and ended her days in the convent of St. Clara at Coimbra, her marriage having been previously annulled by the Pope. Thus peace was restored; and the whole kingdom at length recognised the Queen Dona Isabella.

1479. King John the Second of Aragon being dead, his son Ferdinand succeeded to his throne, and the union of the two crowns—a union so beneficial to Spain—took place. The nation now began to recover from the continual dissensions and fatal disturbances which had afflicted it during the two preceding reigns. The prudent administration and good qualities of the joint sovereigns soon conciliated the affections of the people, and a period of unusual prosperity seemed prepared for their extensive dominions. The strength and vast resources which the union of Aragon and Castile gave to the King and Queen, made them resolve upon the grand undertaking of completing the downfall of the Moorish power in the Peninsula. The whole extent of the Moslem rule was limited to the kingdom of Granada. The juncture, too, was most favourable to the views of the Christians: the Moors were divided and weakened by the civil feuds of the two powerful families of the Zegries and the

Abencerrages ; the city of Granada was in great disorder ; and its conquest, considering the vast resources of Ferdinand and Isabella, could scarcely be deemed doubtful.

1482. Hostilities were accordingly begun with great spirit and activity ; and after a term of nine years, employed in unremitting struggles, the victorious arms of Ferdinand and Isabella were at length enabled to lay siege to the city of Granada (1491), the last stronghold of the Moorish power. After a siege of eight months, spent in a vigorous defence, the city surrendered, and the dominion of the Moors in Spain fell for ever. This memorable and fortunate event increased the resources of Ferdinand (1492) ; but, being a politic prince, he began to view with a jealous eye the amazing power which the Masters of the orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara exercised in the nation, and resolved to wrest it from their hands, which he did by assuming the right of administration.

Ferdinand and Isabella were now masters of almost all the Peninsula, besides a great portion of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, their dominion extending even to the coast of Barbary. But, as if the power and prosperity of the land were not sufficient, another event, and that, too, the most memorable in modern history, took place, to augment the greatness and the glory of Spain. This was the discovery of the New World by Christoval Columbus, a Genoese, who, having vainly solicited the aid of the English, French, and Portuguese sovereigns toward his undertaking, made an offer of his services to the Spanish court, which accepted them ; and one of the most glorious and extraordinary of adventures was thus undertaken, and successfully achieved, by Spaniards under the guidance of Columbus.

1493. As a drawback, however, to such a series of prosperity and splendour, the Inquisition was instituted in Spain at the suggestion of Torquemada. The good fortune which

attended the reign of the King and Queen was also greatly embittered by the loss of their son and heir ; and the madness of the Princess Joana, whose passion for Philip, the Archduke of Austria, her husband, contributed greatly, it is reported, to the melancholy event. Philip treated his wife with indifference ; and she felt the keenest pangs of unrequited love. Queen Isabella saw with painful anxiety this domestic calamity, and her heroic spirit sunk at length into a morbid state of disappointed feeling, which carried her to the grave (1504). She left the crown of Castile to Joana, but appointed Ferdinand regent, until their grandson Charles should attain his twentieth year. Philip felt hurt at this arrangement, and a war of intrigue commenced ; but the talents of the celebrated Cardinal Ximenez de Cinneros, who, from a poor friar, had risen to the post of principal minister, defeated these machinations.

1513. This year the crown of Navarre was annexed to that of Castile ; and the following one was remarkable for the death of Gonzalo de Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, whose extraordinary courage and military talents in the wars of Italy had filled Europe with admiration.

1516. Ferdinand died at Madrigalejos, and was buried in the Alhambra, by the side of his Queen. He was a prince of great abilities for government ; prudent and courageous ; but somewhat tainted with suspicion and bigotry. During his reign, Spain made rapid strides towards that elevation which enabled her, in that of his successor, to display a degree of power and greatness never before paralleled.

The Downfal of Granada.

———Altis urbibus ultimæ
Stetere causæ an perirent
Funditùs. HORAT.



ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE DOWNFALL OF GRENADA.

The Downfal of Granada.

DEEP was the mourning and great the lamentations that filled the famous city of Granada, closely besieged by Ferdinand and Isabella with the flower of Spanish chivalry. But the situation of the Moorish capital was rendered in a tenfold degree more distressing by a recent intestine tragedy. The Moors had been for some time closely pressed on every side by the victorious Christians; all the cities and towns of any importance had already been taken by storm, or had surrendered; and of the vast and powerful Mohammedan dominion in Spain, Granada alone remained, as a last stronghold; but even this was about to fall under the combined efforts of Spanish prowess, and the dreadful feuds that divided the Moors.

Ferdinand had caused the village of Santa Fé to be erected close to the besieged city, and had also summoned all the knights and troops of Castile and Aragon to assemble there to effect the conquest of Granada. The Moors had attempted a sally, and were repulsed with severe losses; but, instigated by the valorous Muza and other chiefs,

they continued the defence of their last city with a resolution worthy of a better fate. At this moment a general alarm spread itself over Granada; lamentations were heard on one side,—fierce vows of revenge and appalling curses on the other. The tribe of the Abencerrages had received the greatest affront by the treachery of the rival Zegries. Mohammed had persuaded the King that those noble knights were secretly attached to the Christians, and meditated the surrender of the city. But to heighten the horror, and provoke more fiercely the vengeance of Abu-Abdalla, the false Moor, backed by other Zegries, had instilled the rankest feelings of jealousy into the too susceptible heart of that monarch, and had made some specious, though unfounded, assertions respecting the infidelity of the Queen, whom he depicted as burning with a violent and criminal passion for Albin-Hamad, the Chief of the Abencerrages.

The enraged King, in conjunction with the Zegries, devised a diabolical plan of revenge, which was to be carried into effect against all the principal men of the tribe. For this purpose, the Abencerrages were invited to a meeting in the Alhambra; but, as they came to the hall called the Court of the Lion, thirty-six of them were barbarously butchered, and the slaughter would have continued, had not a boy given the alarm, and the Abencerrages quickly assumed arms in their de-

fence. They attacked the Alhambra, and, in a desperate engagement between them and the traitorous Zegries, about three hundred of the latter were killed. The threat of vengeance seemed to be slackened for a time; but the Abencerrages, justly exasperated at the atrocious deed, resolved to pursue a revenge fatal to the Moors in general, and disgraceful to themselves. They resolved to quit Granada, and, crossing over to the Christian camp, join in arms against their own countrymen. Early the next morning, therefore, a splendid and numerous cavalcade was assembled at the Plaza de Bibarrambla; and Abenamar, Sarracino, Reduan, and other principal Abencerrages, with a vast quantity of retainers, and even citizens, were prepared to depart the city, carrying along with them their families and their wealth. But, at this moment, a cavalier was seen galloping with headlong speed along the street, and he entered the square just as the assembled crowd was about to take their departure. The Abencerrages soon recognised in the new-comer the gallant Muza, the most deserving and bravest knight of their tribe.

“Moors, whither are ye going?” cried the warrior with warmth. “Is this well? — what demon blinds your better judgment? — Stay, reflect ere you take a rash determination, of which you may, alas! too late repent.”

“It is in vain, brave Muza,” answered Abenamar calmly, “to endeavour to dissuade us from our fixed purpose. We will no longer remain in a place stained with the blood of our brothers, profusely and treacherously shed. No; we will withdraw to the Spanish camp, which is composed of true knights, though Christians by faith. There at least we shall not be hourly exposed to the fiendish machinations of the false Zegries.”

“Holy Prophet!” exclaimed Muza with noble indignation. “Do I hear aright? Can, indeed, the most noble Moors of Granada contemplate such a horrid design! What! are your cravings of revenge to be indulged to the detriment of your country and religion? Turn, infatuated men!—turn from so disgraceful a thought! Let our private feuds and dissensions, which, alas! have already been too fatal to our cause, be postponed to another opportunity; or, if your thirst of vengeance be not satisfied, satisfy it now here. This moment, strike the Zegries,—destroy yourselves. But, oh! never, never let the stranger, your enemy, interfere in your quarrels, much less make him an ally against your own countrymen!”

“Muza,” resolutely replied Abenamar, “we applaud your noble zeal, but cannot be shaken from our design. After the disasters, the horrors, that have lately filled this unfortunate city, no

hope can be entertained of any future tranquillity. The quarrel between us and the false King, who ordered the slaughter of our brethren, can never, never be accommodated. Granada is fated to yield—the downfall of the Moorish empire is at hand. We cannot avoid the approaching doom, and will not tarry in a den of lawless miscreants.”

“ Shame, Moors, shame!” exclaimed Muza, wildly; “ could such words be expected from the Abencerrages? If we cannot prevent the downfall of our country, we can at least lay down our lives in her defence. Think on the heroic conduct and honourable resistance of your ancestors, when they were at length compelled to succumb to the Christian power! Toledo sustained a glorious defence. The Moors of Cordova fought with an intrepidity worthy of the warriors from whom they claim descent. Seville — oh! remember Seville, that memorable siege, in which the Moor, though vanquished, was esteemed and respected by the Christian! All the capitals of the Moorish states in this Peninsula, that have preceded our times, if conquered, were never disgraced; and shall the conduct of Granada—Granada, the last remnant of the Moorish dominion, be less heroic in her defence than Toledo, Cordova, or Seville? Whilst all our predecessors have fallen with honour, shall our end only be accompanied by disgrace? Oh! Abencerrages, pause

again, I pray ye to pause, ere you bring such ignominy upon your memory."

But it was in vain that the gallant Muza used every argument to dissuade his companions from their fatal purpose. Abenamar, Reduan, with a mighty throng of Moors, took their course towards the gate of Elvira, and were soon perceived going down the Vega, in the direction of the Christian camp. Their departure was attended with the most lamentable results. A sombre gloom pervaded all the inhabitants of Granada. Groans and curses were uttered in the bitterness of grief, and every one considered the defection of the Abencerrages as the death blow to the Moorish power. The people ran about the streets in the wildest consternation: they despaired of being able much longer to withstand the attacks of the Christians; and the prospect of being shortly bereft of their property, and compelled to migrate from their city, filled them at once with the deepest sorrow and mortification.

The patriotic Muza strove to raise their drooping spirits, and took prompt measures to check the feeling of despondency which he considered so prejudicial in their situation. He then hastened to the Alhambra, and sought the presence of the King, whom he found pacing, in a sombre mood, one of the splendid apartments of the palace. The ferocious Abu-Abdalla seemed to be scarcely satisfied with the frightful revenge which he had

inflicted on Albin-Hamad and the other Abencerrages, but to be still meditating further means for prosecuting his vindictive plans. Muza, in a mixed tone of anger and contempt, exclaimed,—

“ It is well, King of Granada ; you are, no doubt, indulging unworthy thoughts, whilst the safety of the city is mortally threatened. By your fatal disposition, by that rancour and jealousy so unfounded and so disgraceful, you have lost the best support of your crown. Have no clamours disturbed your gloomy and fearful meditations ? Hath your lethargy to the public weal been so profound, that not even the most awful calamity could break it ? ”

“ Yes, clamorous noises have come to my ears,” sullenly muttered the King. “ They are, no doubt, the rebellious expressions of the Abencerrages, who continually disturb my city.”

“ Fear not,” replied Muza with a sarcastic smile ; “ they will disturb this city no longer.”

“ Ay,” returned Abu-Abdalla ferociously, “ I will take good care.”

“ They have taken that trouble from thy hands, most provident King,” answered the Moor scornfully.

“ What mean you ? ”

“ The whole of the Abencerrage Knights, except myself, are now speeding towards the Christian camp ! ”

“ What ! by the Prophet, this last step con-

firms their treason. The warnings of my faithful Zegries were just.—Pity," he added with a savage regret—"pity that the whole race was not destroyed in the Court of the Lions!"

"Does our perilous situation excite no other thoughts?" cried Muza. "Still your thoughts are fixed upon revenge, when a dismal blow menaces your throne and our liberty. Know you, that with the discontented Abencerrages, more than a thousand Moors have gone to increase the ranks of our enemies?" Know you, that we have scarcely soldiers enough to cover a defence of the city, and that most of them have been rendered cold and indifferent to their duty, from the disgust which your conduct is so well calculated to inspire?"

"Forbear, Muza, forbear," cried the King, enraged. "Trust not too much upon thy influence over the Moors, thus far to insult thy master. Your services, great as they may be, shall not afford you a protection from the just wrath of an insulted monarch."

"That wrath I despise," said Muza contemptuously, "as much as I would despise the approbation or any other feeling of Abu-Abdalla. Farewell! I leave you to meditate new projects of fiendish revenge. I go to provide for the public safety."

Saying this, he turned from the King in an

abrupt and scornful manner, and left the Alhambra with a reckless composure. The passions of Abu-Abdalla were now aroused to a pitch of frenzy. The taunts so lavishly and fearlessly dealt by Muza provoked him to madness. He would willingly have slain the bold Moor: but he dared not attempt aught against the life of the only man whose vigour could serve as a prop to his throne. The dereliction of the Abencerrage knights also filled him with rage and apprehensions: the destitution of the city was already calamitous, even without this additional disaster. But in the midst of these gloomy speculations that concerned public affairs, other thoughts of a more private, but perhaps more engrossing, tendency, stormed the breast of the agitated King of Granada. The supposed infidelity of his Queen still engendered the most venomous desires in his heart. The death of the unfortunate Albin-Hamad had not soothed his revengeful disposition; and in the departure of the Abencerrages, he conceived that he saw a striking proof of the guilt of their innocent companion.

Deeply impressed with this idea, he resolved on the death of the guiltless Queen, and in a tumult of rage, jealousy, and revenge, he rushed to intimate his dreadful resolution to his victim. He found the Sultana plunged in the most profound affliction: but her sorrows, instead of affecting her

perfidious husband, served to irritate him the more. He could not conceive that the grief of the Queen arose from the foul accusation laid against her, but ascribed her tears and melancholy sighs to a sorrow occasioned by the death of Albin-Hamad. Acting under this impression, the savage King cried out—

“Grieve not so deeply, fair Sultana! — thy sorrow shall soon have an end. I can conceive that life must be hateful to thee without the society of thy beloved Albin-Hamad; and I accordingly, in the abundance of my generosity, have resolved to ease thee of the burthen with all convenient speed.”

“Oh, Heavens! what mean these words?” said the Queen in great agitation. “What fearful deed meditate you now?”

“Nay, why this alarm?” returned the King with a ferocious look. “Death must surely be the most valuable boon I can confer on thee. Besides, I will inflict a death symbolical of an ardent affection! — this will please thee; — and the flame of love shall be only destroyed by another fire.”

“Oh, horror! horror!” wildly shrieked the wretched Queen.

“Yes, adultress! — yes, false woman!” fiercely returned the King, changing his tone, “that shall be thy fate; and, unless in the term of three days thou canst — which is impossible—procure cham-

pions to vindicate thy innocence, thou shalt be burnt publicly in the Plaza Nueva."

This intimation filled the unfortunate Queen with feelings of unmitigated horror and despair. Abu-Abdalla had explained how the Abencerrages had quitted the city; and she could not expect to find champions to assert her cause amongst the Zegries, her accusers, and the rest of the tribes, who were now devoted to the interests of the cruel King. In this emergency, a Christian girl, to whom she was extremely partial, and by whom she was constantly attended, suggested an expedient to draw her from this difficulty. The confidante proposed that a letter should be sent to Don Juan Chacon, a gallant Spanish knight, requesting him to undertake the defence of the innocent. The imminency of her danger induced the Queen to adopt a measure which, in any other circumstances, she would have considered as wild and chimerical; and, encouraged by the assurances of her faithful attendant, she wrote the letter, and intrusted it to the Christian girl, who promised it should be delivered in safety to the knight.

Meanwhile, the camp of the Spaniards was aroused to great joy by the arrival of the Abencerrages, and the other Moors of Granada. Ferdinand and Isabella could not but consider their defection as extremely favourable to their cause, and it afforded strong proofs of the disunited, and con-

sequently weakened, state of the besieged. Abenamar and the other knights were received with a brotherly cordiality by the flower of the Christian chivalry, and at no other period could the Spaniards have boasted of a greater number or of more deserving knights. Ponce de Leon, Aguilar, Gonzalo de Cordova, the Alcayde de los Donceles, Chacon, the young Cortes, the Master of Calatrava, Añigo de Mendoza, and a numerous host of other equally distinguished heroes, stood before the walls of that city, the inhabitants of which never heard their names pronounced but with feelings of admiration and dread.

It was night ; and Don Juan de Chacon had retired to his tent, when a soldier placed a letter in his hand. The surprise of the cavalier was not slight when he perceived it was addressed to him by the unfortunate Queen of Granada, and that she humbly requested him, as a true knight, to fly to the protection of the innocent and the wronged. Don Juan was not long in making up his mind with regard to the course he was to pursue ; and he did what every man, possessing the real sentiments of honour, would do, whenever a female appeals to him for protection. He accordingly immediately sent a promise, that, at the appointed day and hour, he would appear in the lists with three of his most trusty companions, to do battle against the four false Zegries, authors and sup-

porters of the vile and cruel slander. This done, Chacon next turned his thoughts upon the choice of the other champions, which was no easy task in a camp where so many valorous and deserving knights were to be found. However, he at length determined upon those whom he conceived best suited to the adventure, and early the next morning proposed the subject for their approval.

“Sirs!” he began, “it must be admitted that the state of Granada is very critical, and that the atrocious conduct of the Zegries is almost unparalleled. By my troth, it is hardly conceivable that their innocent Queen should be condemned to be burnt alive.”

“Burnt alive!”

“Yes, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, such must be her fate, unless she find four champions willing to fight in vindication of her innocence. And, alas! she is not likely to find them among the Moors remaining now in Granada.”

“Unfortunate Queen!” exclaimed Ponce de Leon.

“She deserves compassion,” returned Chacon; “but, instead of useless regrets, we must, like true knights, hasten to her defence. She is the victim of a black calumny; and it would be a fearful stain upon the honour of knighthood, that a Queen should be basely sacrificed to jealousy and revenge, whilst there are hundreds of brave knights at hand to prevent the catastrophe. I have received

a letter from the unhappy Queen, by which she commends her sorrowful case to my valour and discretion. I want three companions and——”

“I would most gladly be one,” quickly interrupted Ponce de Leon, “if I saw no obstacle to the affair.”

“And I another,” said Don Alonzo de Aguilar. “But how shall we be able to effect our purpose?”

“What can be the difficulty of the enterprise?” demanded Chacon. “In so sacred a call, who can demur and call himself a Spanish knight—nay, a man, if——?”

“No one!” returned the Alcaide de los Donceles. “No one that could, through motives of safety, policy, or other selfish causes, refuse himself to so honourable an adventure. But she being a Moor——”

“For shame, Sir Knight!” cried Chacon warmly. “A Moor! She is a woman in distress; and that is the only name by which she claims our services.”

“Truly and nobly spoken,” returned Aguilar. “And none of us would act otherwise; but yet we are under the orders of Ferdinand and Isabella; and think you, Don Juan, that they would consent to our adventure? would they not apprehend some new treason from the Zegries, to which we might fall a sacrifice? Could this difficulty be removed, I am ready to bare my weapon in defence of the Queen of Granada.”

“I say the same,” repeated Ponce de Leon.

“I have another objection to start,” observed the Alcayde. Think you, Knights, that the Moors will be foolhardy enough to allow four Christian cavaliers to come within the city, and that, too, in order to protect the object of their deep aversion?”

“That is observed in good judgment,” returned Chacon; “but the difficulties proposed are not insurmountable; nay, I can remove them.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the three cavaliers joyfully.

“Yes; we must leave the camp without giving the King any notice of our intention, and we must appear in Granada under the disguise of Turkish knights; and, for this purpose, we will enter the city by the opposite side of that which looks to the camp.”

The Spanish cavaliers were not unwillingly persuaded to undertake an adventure to which they were but too ardently inclined. They, therefore, conceived the expedients proposed by their companions perfectly reasonable, and determined to put them into immediate execution. The Turkish attire was soon procured, and the knights having secretly left the camp, took another direction, in order to enter Granada by the southern gates.

Meantime, the city was thrown into great excitement; the fatal day dawned, and yet no champion had appeared to defend the cause of the accused

Queen. The lists were pitched in the Plaza de Bibarrambla, which was surrounded by men-at-arms; and a platform was erected, covered with black, from which the Queen was to behold the issue of the battle. Early in the morning, the place was crowded with spectators;—the coming event, indeed, fully absorbed the attention of the inhabitants; and many of those who were previously disposed against the unfortunate Queen, appeared moved and affected by the dreadful catastrophe which they considered at hand. Thus, when she was taken from the Alhambra, and carried in a litter through the streets of Zacatin to the dreadful scene, the balconies were covered with weeping matrons and damsels; whilst even the Moors, who saw the melancholy procession pass along, were softened, and wished that even at this late hour she might find champions to assert her cause. Indeed, low rumours began to circulate that some of the tribe of the Gomeles would attempt some desperate deed; and apprehensions were felt for the safety of Granada.

In awful silence, disturbed only by deep groans and weeping, the Queen and her mournful retinue arrived at the Plaza de Bibarrambla, where she took her station on the black platform, together with her female attendants, all of whom, as well as herself, were clad in deep mourning. Soon after, Mahomad, the accuser, entered the lists, accom-

panied by Hamet, Gomel, and Mahardin. A burst of martial minstrelsy proclaimed their arrival; and the challengers began to parade the place with looks of supreme arrogance. No defender of the Queen appeared; and every one was astonished that she should have been so negligent in choosing her champions, or that there should not be found knights willing to adopt her quarrel.

In this state of suspense some time wore away, when a loud and prolonged note was heard from a bugle, and presently four Turkish cavaliers made their entrance into the Plaza with great ceremony. They were superbly clad, and their resplendent armour, together with their noble bearing, bespoke them knights of no small importance and circumstance. One of them approached the platform, and in the Moorish tongue made his courtesies to the Queen, signifying in a confident manner, that her innocence should soon be cleared, and her accusers punished. The Christian girl immediately recognised Don Juan Chacon in the speaker, and made no doubt that the other fictitious Turks were his companions. The hopes of the Queen suddenly rose; whilst the perfidious Zegries, little aware of the redoubtable antagonists against whom they were to engage, prepared for the fight with great spirit, and in full confidence of success. At the sound of trumpets the engagement commenced. Don

Juan Chacon rushed against Mahomad, the accuser; and a desperate conflict began, in which their lances were soon broken, and they betook themselves to the sword, the better to engage in close and mortal combat. Don Alonzo de Aguilar, with that gigantic strength for which he was remarkable, having applied spurs to his fiery charger, galloped headlong against Hamet, and, with a single stroke of his lance, hurled him from his seat as if he were a child. The Alcayde de los Donceles and Ponce de Leon were fiercely battling against their opponents; their encounter was longer protracted, but the advantage was clearly observable on the side of the champions.

The contest continued for some time, till at length the traitor Mahomad and his companion Hamet were seen weltering in their blood. The two other Zegries were also on the point of sinking under the mighty blows of their opponents; when Mahomad, finding his end rapidly approaching, desired to speak to Muza, and then confessed that the Queen was innocent. Soon after, he breathed his last; as did also his confident, Hamet. Muza proclaimed aloud the dying words of the traitor, and the battle was finished as much to the satisfaction of the two surviving Moors as to any one, for they felt that a fate similar to that of their companions inevitably awaited them.

The enlivening strains of instruments now greeted

the victorious Turks, whilst the greater portion of the spectators filled the air with their joyful cries. The humbled and abashed Zegries kept a sullen silence, and retired from the lists, carrying with them their slain companions. The conquerors then came in front of the platform, and making their respectful obeisance, disposed themselves to quit the city, which they did despite of the earnest entreaties of Muza and the friends of the Queen, who were desirous to show all respect and gratitude to the fictitious Turks.

Chacon and his companions returned to the Christian camp; but their secret expedition fared the usual fate of most secret affairs, and when discovered and bruited about, produced the most powerful sensation both amongst Christians and Moors. The former were filled with a satisfaction as great as the dread and alarm which stormed the breasts of the latter. The inhabitants of Granada trembled more deeply for the safety of their city; whilst the fierce Abu-Abdalla repented too late the errors of his previous conduct. He now endeavoured to conciliate the favour of his people; but, except the gallant Muza, he perceived no man of consequence enter zealously into the cause in which the interests of so worthless a King were concerned. A few days after the conflict in vindication of his Queen, intelligence was brought that she had withdrawn to the Christian camp

with a numerous train of attendants. Exasperated and alarmed, Abu-Abdalla now turned to the faithful Muza for consolation and advice.

“ Ah, King !” said Muza sadly, “ but too late you perceive the disastrous effects of cruelty and imprudence. I will not, however, lose that time in rebukes which is necessary for action. To-morrow the plains of the Vega shall see the Moor Muza make the last desperate effort in defence of his fallen country.—To-morrow I shall save Granada, or lose my life in the attempt.”

The gallant Muza was true to his promise. He assembled the dispirited Granadians, and strove to arouse their energy by an enthusiastic speech, in which he announced that the Prophet would come to their aid. The Moors resolved to make a last desperate attempt in defence of their city ; and accordingly, under the command of Muza, not only the knights and troops, but even the peaceful citizens, rose up in arms and sallied from Granada in strict military order. The Christians, as they perceived the armour glancing in the rays of the sun, and the gay pennons fluttering in the wind, raised a shout of joy at the prospect of the coming contest. Eager further to distinguish themselves, as well as to achieve the conquest of the last Moorish capital, the Spanish warriors advanced to the engagement with an ardent spirit and a confident bearing, which were sure omens of victory.

The conflict was desperate. The Moors were inspired by a sort of wild frenzy, and the example of Muza, who plunged with fearless intrepidity into the thickest of the enemy's ranks, stimulated his followers to more than human exertions. But the term of the Moorish empire was arrived, and no power, however great, could lengthen it. Muza, with despairing looks, perceived his troops beginning to give way. Don Manuel Ponce de Leon was the foremost in pressing the alarmed Moors. Muza resolved to stem the progress by encountering himself the doughty Christian knight. He rushed to meet him; but he rushed to obtain a glorious death, the fate which he desired next to victory. His fall was the signal of defeat, and the Moors were pursued with dreadful slaughter to the very walls of Granada, in which they took shelter, full of horror and despair.

Abu-Abdalla, having lost the last hope of being able to defend his city, now determined to make a treaty as advantageous as he could, before it was too late. In this, at least, he showed his prudence. The negotiations commenced, and it was agreed, that at the end of sixty days the surrender should be effected. Those days were spent by the inhabitants in exhibiting their absorbing sorrow. In every place the desponding Moors were seen hurrying about, uttering dismal lamentations, and casting melancholy looks on their magnificent mosques, palaces, and streets. The fatal day ar-

rived, and the Christians, in great pomp and ceremony, approached to take possession of the city.

Abu-Abdalla, with a slender retinue, came out to meet Ferdinand and Isabella, whom he perceived arrayed in splendid attire, suitable to the occasion, and surrounded by the flower of the Christian chivalry. With sorrowful looks, and a breaking heart, the fallen King delivered the keys of Granada to Ferdinand, who, in his turn, intrusted them to Count de Tendilla, whom he had appointed governor of the city. The Moor then took leave of his conqueror, and went to join his family at Padul, whence it was his intention to cross over into Africa. He was powerfully affected; and as he cast a lingering look on the capital of the kingdom which he had lost, the tears flowed down his stern countenance. His mother, Zorago, observed this exhibition of grief, and, in a tone of mixed anger and affliction, she cried—

“Alas! my son, well mayst thou weep now like a woman, for the loss of that city which thou hast not been able to defend like a man.”

Meantime, Ferdinand and Isabella made their triumphant entry into Granada, amidst the joyous shouts of the conquerors and the groans of the vanquished.

I.

There was a crying in Granada
When the sun was going down,
Some calling on the Trinity,
Some calling on Mahom;

II.

Here pass'd away the Koran ;
There in the Cross was borne ;
And here was heard the Christian bell,
And there the Moorish horn.

III.

Te Deum laudamus
Was up th' Alcala sung ;
Down from th' Alhambra's minarets
Were all the crescents flung ;

IV.

The arms thereon of Aragon,
They with Castile's display ;
One king comes in in triumph,
One weeping goes away.

V.

Thus cried the weeper, while his hands
His old white beard did tear,—
“Farewell, farewell, Granada !
Thou city without peer.

VI.

“Woe, woe, thou pride of Heathendom
Seven hundred years and more
Have gone, since first the faithful
Thy royal sceptre bore.

VII.

“Thou wert the happy Mother
Of a high renown'd race ;
Within thee dwelt a haughty line
That now go from their place ;

VIII.

“Within thee fearless knights did dwell,
Who fought with mickle glee—
The enemies of proud Castile,
The bane of Christientie.”

Ferdinand and Isabella made their glorious entry into Granada on the Feast of the Epiphany, the 6th of January 1492. This glorious achievement put an end to the Moorish dominion in Spain; and thus was ultimately effected the downfall of that enemy, who had had possession of the land for the space of nearly eight centuries. There is scarcely a period recorded in the history of nations of more constant warfare between the same people; nor do any annals present a series of more striking events and heroic achievements, the tenacity of the Moors being only excelled by the courage and perseverance of the Christians. In reading the pages of Spanish history, we find, but with few exceptions, that all the grand battles were won by the Christian warriors. The same honourable proportion was observable in lesser actions; and the Christian kings and knights that distinguished themselves in this protracted and glorious contest, are as numerous as they are justly renowned. The conquests of Valencia, Seville, and Granada, are invested with all the attributes of attractive romance. And if the dreams of chivalry were ever realized, this realization must be sought for amongst the names of Pelayo, Bernardo, the Cid, Alphonso the Noble, Ferdinand, and others equally deserving of admiration.

After the conquest of Granada, Spain prepared to reach the summit of that elevation which, in

the succeeding reign, was to dazzle and astonish the world. The rule of Isabella is also rendered illustrious in history by the discovery of America. With regard to that Queen, "taking her all in all," she may justly be accounted the first in the line of female sovereigns. Many will, no doubt, oppose to her as her equal, or perhaps superior, Elizabeth of England; but the impartial observer will make some distinction between her who, with the courage and prudence of a man, possessed the amiable attributes of her softer sex, and her who, of the man, had only the colder virtues, and, of the woman, nothing but the weakness and foibles.

Sovereigns of the House of Austria.

A. D.

. . . . Philip and Joanna.

1516. Charles the First, better known as the Emperor Charles the Fifth.

1556. Philip the Second.

1598. Philip the Third.

1621. Philip the Fourth.

1665. Charles the Second.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Reign of Charles the First,

COMMONLY CALLED THE EMPEROR CHARLES THE FIFTH,
TO HIS ABDICATION :—FROM 1516 to 1556.

A.D. 1516. On the death of Ferdinand the Catholic, his grandson Charles the Fifth, then little more than sixteen years of age, ascended the throne. The reign of this sovereign may be considered as the most worthy of study, as it was that in which Spain arose to her greatest splendour and elevation; and, on the other hand, it was also that in which severe encroachments were made on the liberties of the people.

1517. Charles landed at Villaviciosa, in Asturias; and Cardinal Ximenes, who had been Regent during the King's absence, went in advance to meet him. He fell sick in the way, and soon after died in unmerited neglect, notwithstanding the important services he had done the State. The commencement of Charles's reign was rendered memorable by the wars of the *Comunidades* of Castile.

1520. Charles assembled the Cortes of Castile at Santiago, in Galicia,—an insult deeply felt by the Castilians; and several cities refused to send their Deputies to a meeting not convened according to the established laws of the country. Charles, exasperated at this, threatened them. The Deputies of Toledo, Salamanca, Seville, &c. then refused to give their vote to the object for which they were called. The King, with a despotism to which the Castilians were not accus-

tomed, banished the Deputies of Toledo, who evinced the greatest resolution in the debate. This step alarmed their constituents, and the city declared itself in open revolt. Don Juan de Padilla, a young gentleman of birth, an enthusiastic lover of liberty, put himself at the head of the *Comuneros*, or Commons; the Bishop of Zamora and the inhabitants soon joined in the revolt, and, in a short time, the country was threatened with a civil war. The *Comuneros* of Madrid assumed the reins of government. Padilla then waited on Joanna the dowager Queen, and, representing the tyranny which the King exercised over the nation, invited her, in its name, to take the Crown. The King, at the prospect of so alarming a danger, sent a powerful army against the *Comuneros*, who, after various fortunes, were routed at Villanar. Padilla was wounded, taken, and, the very next day, executed with some of his chiefs.

1525. But even after his death, the *Comuneros* of Toledo gallantly continued the contest, commanded by Dona Maria Pacheco, the heroic widow of Padilla, who, when the inhabitants surrendered, fled into Portugal.

The vast power possessed by the Emperor Charles excited the jealous fears of other potentates, but no one felt more inclined to measure his strength with the colossus of Spain, than the chivalrous Francis, King of France. He began by contesting his rights to the Duchy of Milan. Charles resolved to expel the French from Italy, and united in a league with the Pope Clement the Seventh. The campaign began with equal eagerness and valour on both sides; but, after other various events of minor importance, a grand battle took place near Pavia, a place besieged by Francis, and defended by Don Antonio de Leyva. Notwithstanding that the number of the French was superior, they were completely defeated. The merit of this splendid victory was chiefly ascribed to the young Marquis of Pescara. Francis lost above ten thousand

men, and he himself, with his principal chiefs, was taken prisoner. Soon after, a formidable league was formed by most of the sovereigns of Europe against Charles; the Pope himself, so recently the ally of Charles, was now amongst the confederates. The Emperor, irritated, sent part of his troops to Rome, under the command of the Duke of Bourbon. This gallant general being killed in the commencement of the siege, was succeeded by the Prince of Orange, who took the city, and committed the greatest havoc and devastation for the space of seven days.

1527. The Pope fortified himself in the castle of St. Angelo, but was compelled to surrender at the end of a month, after accepting the conditions of the conqueror.

1529. After a variety of movements, in which the fortune of the Emperor generally prevailed, Francis and his allies, tired of competing with so formidable an enemy, signed a treaty of peace at Cambray, by which it was stipulated that, upon paying a certain sum, the Dauphin and his brother should be liberated.

1534. The Emperor soon found himself involved in another war. He espoused the cause of Muley Hassan, the King of Tunis, who was harassed by the famous corsair, Haradin Barbarossa. The Emperor laid siege to the fortress of Goleta with a navy consisting of four hundred sail, furiously assaulted and took it, and then pursued Barbarossa to Tunis, the garrison of which, according to some historians, amounted to a hundred and fifty thousand men. He completely routed the barbarian, who, in revenge, resolved to set fire to the prisons, where about twenty thousand Christians were imprisoned; but these, by an effort of desperate courage, burst their chains, and delivered the town to Charles. (1535.)

This expedition procured the Emperor a greater degree of glory and power than he had ever attained till then. The fame of his warlike exploits, his magnificence, and un-

bounded dominion, spread throughout Europe, and became the theme of general admiration.

1538. Upon his return to Spain, after so many hardships and military adventures, the Emperor assembled the Cortes at Toledo, and requested a fresh supply of money for his present necessities, and also that a tax should be imposed on every article of consumption. Against these demands the nobles and prelates strongly protested : the King was enraged, and from that time the liberties of Spain may date their ruin. A dreadful blow had already been inflicted in the war of the Comuneros, but now the mischief was consummated ; only two deputies from the eighteen principal cities in the kingdom were allowed to meet. These Cortes became the mere servants of the Crown ; and from that moment the spirit of the ancient Cortes was totally lost to the country.

1539. Charles had next his attention drawn towards the Netherlands, which, on account of heavy taxes, showed a spirit of discontent, which broke out at Ghent ; but this revolt he immediately quelled, and, after exacting a heavy contribution, he built a citadel to check the future turbulence of the Flemish, and then hastened to Germany, where his presence was requisite.

1543. Whilst the Emperor was engaged in his foreign expeditions, the Spaniards were adding immense possessions to his crown by the conquest of Peru. Three brothers of the name of Pizarro, and other adventurers, had, after incredible hardships, conquered vast territories. Shortly before this the great empire of Mexico was subjected to the Spanish dominion by Fernan Cortes. The extraordinary courage, activity, and endurance exhibited by these adventurous men, baffles description, and bears all the character of romance, blended with the truth of history.

1556. Whilst the name of Charles occupied every tongue, he suddenly abdicated the crown in favour of his son, Philip

the Second, and retired to the convent of St. Justin, where he died tranquilly the following year. The history of the Emperor Charles the Fifth fills up the most splendid and striking period in the annals of modern nations. Spain was then in the zenith of its glory and greatness : the conquest of the New World alone was a matter of almost incredible wonder. Charles was a politic statesman and a great warrior. He certainly used an arbitrary sway in Spain, and inflicted dreadful blows on the liberties of the land ; yet the splendour of his actions, and the glory he attached to the Spanish name at the time, served greatly to diminish any discontent at the diminution of freedom at home.

Padilla and the Comuneros.

“ Ce fer dont nos tyrans sont armés et couverts,
Ces rapides coursiers qui sous eux font la guerre,
Pouvaient à leur abord épouvanter la terre :
Je les vois d'un œil fin, et leur ose insulter.”

VOLTAIRE, *Alzire.*

Padilla and the Comuneros.

PERHAPS the most heroic attempt made in defence of liberty against despotic sway, recorded in Spanish history, is that which was boldly undertaken by Don Juan de Padilla and the *Comuneros* or *Commoners* of Castile. Padilla, whose name is sacred amongst the martyrs of liberty, was a young cavalier of great abilities, enthusiastic temperament, and extraordinary courage. His hatred of oppression was clearly evinced, even on the most trivial occasions. Indeed, nature had endowed him with a soul that would have graced the ancient worthies of Greece and Rome; yet his patriotic spirit was unalloyed by the admixture of those baser ingredients which are but too often found in the character of professed republicans. Nor was his courage guided by those stern and even ferocious dictates of the old warriors. To the reckless intrepidity of a hardy soldier, he united the polish of courtly manners; nor did his ardent character ever lead him into any of those excesses by which enthusiasm is so often instigated.

Such was the man whom the *Comuneros* of Castile chose for their leader, when they resolved to

oppose, by open violence, the arbitrary measures which the Emperor Charles the Fifth, in contempt of the ancient laws of the country, scrupled not to adopt. But the titles of Padilla to the post he now occupied were rendered doubly sacred from the circumstance that he was the first man of note who raised the cry of liberty in Castile. Padilla had established his head-quarters at Valladolid, to which city the Comuneros flocked from every side to follow the standard of freedom. But a serious obstacle opposed their operations: the want of money was at that time sensibly felt in Spain. The ruinous wars carried on by the Emperor had, in some measure, drained the land of specie. Besides, the junta were afraid of laying heavy contributions on the people; so that, from these and other various causes, Padilla found the necessity of providing some means to remove so grave an inconvenience.

This was accomplished by a female, by name Doña Maria Pacheco, the worthy spouse of Padilla. This extraordinary woman, the first heroine of that land where heroines have never been wanting in all ages and occasions, resorted to a bold expedient to smooth the difficulties under which her husband laboured. She assembled the women at Toledo, having previously ordered that they should appear habited in deep mourning. Her commands were promptly obeyed; and early in the morning

the Zocodover was crowded with a multitude of females in gloomy attire.

Doña Maria Pacheco soon appeared, surrounded by the wives of the principal *Comuneros*, all bare-footed, clad in dark apparel, and displaying every symptom of sorrow.

“My dear and brave countrywomen!” she said in a firm voice, “the defenders of the liberties of Castile are now impeded in the progress of their sacred enterprise for want of that coin which the despotic Emperor has so lavishly used in foreign wars, and in pampering foreign favourites. The exigencies of the State require some bold measure to be taken. Our coffers have already been drained in support of the glorious cause. Wealth is now nowhere to be found but in the cathedral and other places of worship. Start not at the proposition I wish to make: it is daring, and at first sight may appear sacrilegious to the timorous minds of the many; yet our destitute situation admits of no other alternative. And Heaven will surely forgive an act prompted by the most sacred reasons. Women of Toledo! follow me boldly, and let the gold and silver ornaments with which the churches are encumbered be converted into coin, to provide for the necessities of the State.”

This proposal was received without a dissentient voice by the female multitude. The ascendancy which their leader held over their minds was un-

limited, and even the most timid and sanctimonious easily conceived that the saints in Heaven could in nowise be offended with the liberty about to be taken with their effigies on earth, or with the gold which, idle on the altars and shrines, could be turned to the greatest use in forwarding the views of freedom. Yet such a step was not taken without some feelings of awe;—for as the gloomy procession bent their course towards the cathedral, they humbly beat their breasts, and called on the pardon of Heaven for the expedient which they were compelled to employ. The scruples of conscience were, however, silenced by degrees, and the work of spoliation commenced. No regiment of sacking conquerors, no troop of experienced plunderers, could have achieved their task in so short a time, or in a more complete manner. The booty was immense, but without a solitary instance of personal appropriation; the whole of it was applied to the sacred purpose for which the collection had been undertaken.

Padilla and the Comuneros being enabled to take the field by this timely subsidy, lost no time in prosecuting their designs. The whole country was in a ferment. The city of Zamora had openly revolted, and placed the venerable Bishop Acuna at the head of the Comuneros: nearly all the principal cities in the kingdom followed this example; and in Madrid, the malcontents had proceeded to

remove all the functionaries acting by the Emperor's nomination. Padilla next succeeded in obtaining an interview with Doña Juana, the dowager Queen, to whom he represented the arbitrary conduct of her son, and invited her, in the name of the people, to assume the crown. Juana was solemnly recognised as the Sovereign of Spain; and every public transaction of the Comuneros was undertaken in her name. The enthusiasm of the Castilians was at the highest pitch; and the war was prosecuted with alternate success, but undiminished resolution.

Padilla had taken possession of Torre-Lobaton, when intelligence was brought that the royalist army, commanded by the Counts of Haro and Oñate, was advancing by the most rapid marches. The superiority of the enemy's forces made the leader of the Comuneros sensible of the necessity of retreating to some place where they might present a suitable defence—a task which was not easily to be achieved at Torre-Lobaton. The city of Toro offered all the advantages desirable, and to this place Padilla resolved to conduct his men. The retreat was begun in strict order, though in the most expeditious manner. The Comuneros, fearing a surprisal before they had time to reach Toro, hastened on, despite the fatigue under which they laboured.

Meantime the royalist chiefs, having received

due information of the enemy's movements, suddenly ordered a numerous body to intercept their retreat, by meeting them in front, whilst the main army commenced a vigorous pursuit. The morning had been excessively sultry, and the troops of Padilla, worn out with the fatigues which they had been compelled to undergo, and being in a great measure composed of citizens and peasants unaccustomed to the discipline of military service, began, though unwillingly, to evince the distress which they were compelled to endure. Padilla ordered his army to halt in the road leading to Villanar, and granted an hour of repose, to enable the drooping soldiers to acquire sufficient strength to pursue their retreat. Meanwhile he called around him Bravo, Maldonado, Pimentel, and other principal Comuneros, and bringing them apart from the troops—

“ My brave companions !” he said, with a resolute though melancholy voice, “ I am afraid we shall not be able to effect an orderly retreat into Toro. A spy has just arrived with intelligence, that the enemy cannot now be long before he appears in sight. Should this be really the case, to proceed in our first resolution would be highly imprudent. Our troops would soon bear the semblance of a flying crowd, rather than a retreating army. Besides, in their present condition, to proceed on our march would only augment their dis-

tress, without forwarding our views. I think it will be next to an impossibility to reach Toro in safety without coming to a battle."

"That remedy I should have counselled from the beginning," replied Bravo, a fiery impetuous captain. "Be assured, Don Juan, that our retreat from Torre-Lobaton will prove fatal to our cause."

"Hush!" interrupted Maldonado; "thy rashness and choleric temper, Bravo, will always lead thee to the most violent expedients. We could not sustain a regular siege at Torre-Lobaton; and to have risked an engagement with such unequal forces, would have been the work of madmen, not of soldiers."

"And what will it be now?" returned Bravo with a bitter smile. "We are still compelled to meet those unequal forces, and with the additional disadvantage of having to oppose them with men sinking under the accumulated evils of exhaustion, thirst, and want of repose."

"This is a matter of necessity, not of choice," observed Pimentel, "and it is not fair, Señor Bravo, to establish an argument upon results. When we quitted Torre-Lobaton we were not aware that the enemy was so near, nor could anticipate the rigour of the heat, and therefore were not presumptuous in supposing that we could reach Toro in safety. However, since our expectations have

been frustrated, instead of repining against our past conduct, let us adopt such as may be proper to serve us in this predicament."

"Well spoken, Pimentel!" cried Padilla; "my conscience does not reproach me for any act in which I have engaged for the interest of the cause. If I have erred, the fault must be attributed to my excessive zeal. Let us now, since the occasion grows so urgent, instead of giving way to despondency, rouse ourselves to the most earnest endeavours."

At this moment a rumour was heard, and a man was seen hurrying from the out-post.

"The enemy!—the enemy!"—was the word of alarm. The whole army was thrown into commotion. Padilla advanced in front, with his principal officers, and in a loud and animating voice exclaimed—

"Comuneros of Castile! the moment for retreat is past—the foe is in sight; and it shall never be said that we fly before the tools of oppression. To entrust our cause to the event of a battle is now inevitable. I need not excite your courage, nor remind you of your duty. Castilians! you fight for your sacred rights—rights acquired by the valorous achievements for which this land is rendered celebrated. A foreign prince now governs the country; not with the moderation which our old kings were wont to do, but with an iron rod,

to which the Spaniards have never, until now, been exposed, and which they will not tamely endure, if a spark of the ancient spirit of the old Castilians still animates their descendants. Our liberties are trampled upon—our Cortes treated with insult and contempt—the riches of the land lavished upon foreign courtiers and greedy adventurers. Charles considers Spain only as a convenient mine—a source whence he and his favourite attendants may draw a plentiful harvest. It is time to undeceive them, and to let them know that this land is noted for productions of greater worth—the independent spirit and the courageous hearts of its sons. Comuneros! show yourselves worthy of the glorious Castilians from whom you are descended. Fight like heroes—die like freemen!”

This address was greeted with shouts of approbation by the army, which, despite of their exhausted condition, now made ready for the fight with heroic intrepidity. Some large broad and scattered drops of rain began to fall. The soldiers saw these welcome messengers of the coming shower with deepfelt joy,—they would allay the parching thirst with which they were oppressed. The enemy was presently seen advancing to the charge. Padilla placed his troops in battle array, and, with undaunted resolution and coolness, awaited the attack of the royalists, who alone filled the air with acclamations, which were im-

mediately returned by the cries of "Liberty! and Castile!"

Shortly after the enemy came up, and a brisk engagement ensued; but the valour of the champion of freedom vigorously repulsed the mercenaries of Charles. The Count of Haro then gave orders for the whole army to advance to the attack, which was immediately done: the conflict now became animated, and was vigorously sustained on both sides.

"Strike down the rebels!" cried the royalist leaders.

"Fight for your liberties!" exclaimed the Comunero chiefs.

The battle was bravely maintained, notwithstanding the superiority which the Emperor's troops had over their enemy in number and discipline. But, unfortunately for the Comuneros, a furious wind now rose, which impelled the torrents of rain with headlong force directly against their faces. And thus the storm, which they had hailed as a most welcome boon, proved a most serious impediment in the combat. The Comuneros were soon unable to direct their blows, while the enemy, aided by the stormy wind and pouring rain, fought in perfect security. This afflicting circumstance was, in the event, most fatal to their cause. Despite of their desperate exertions, the royalists were gradually gaining

ground, and symptoms of disorder became discernible in the Comunero ranks.

Padilla called out, with a voice of enthusiasm, to his companions, to strain their energy in this crisis. He himself performed prodigies of valour; but he did not so fearlessly despise danger with impunity. He was wounded on the thigh, and fell. The battle continued for some time; but the Comuneros were at length defeated, and a terrible confusion followed. Bravo was taken, fighting desperately by the side of the purple standard; and several other leaders shared the same fate. Padilla, in the general confusion, had succeeded in dragging himself towards a hedge, where he lay concealed in the most pitiable condition, suffering at once from his wound, fatigue, and, what was to him more galling, the mortal blow which his glorious cause had received.

The report of his death circulated among both the conquerors and the vanquished. Some, however, asserted that he had effected his escape; but the Count of Haro was not to be satisfied with idle rumours and uncertain reports. He knew too well the importance of such a man as Padilla, not to resolve immediately to use every endeavour to ascertain his fate. He gave strict orders that a minute search should be commenced in the field of strife, and entrusted this task to his most confidential officers. Dead or alive, it was of the highest

moment that the General of the Comuneros should be brought to his enemy, who fondly expected to terminate the war by the death or capture of this famous chief. The search was immediately begun, despite of the rain which still fell with violence, and the wind which blew with equal fury.

The field of battle presented a most sickening sight. The incessant water which fell, as it washed the bleeding corpses, ran along the country an ensanguined stream, carrying in its course several mournful tokens of the contest. In some marshy places the bodies of the dead and wounded were actually covered and hidden under water, whilst in a small lake, formed in a hollow spot, tokens of the strife were seen floating about in confusion. The prodigious rain rendered the task of searching extremely difficult ; but, animated with the hope of a reward, the soldiers continued their duty with great alacrity, sometimes wading knee-deep through water, at others plunging boldly into places encumbered with mud and obstructed by the slain. At length success crowned their endeavours: a soldier cried out that he saw a man resembling the chief of the Comuneros. At the grateful sound, an officer and several followers hastened to the spot.

By the side of a hedge, bushy, retired, and nearly covered with water, a Comunero was indeed seen crouching, and endeavouring to keep himself

concealed ; but he was dragged from the hollow in which he had taken shelter, and a burst of congratulation broke from the royalists, for it was indeed the leader of the Comuneros that had fallen into their power—the gallant and unfortunate Padilla, whom they dragged from that miserable place of refuge. The situation in which he was found would have excited compassionate feelings even amongst his enemies. His wound bled profusely. He was soaked in the moisture of mingled rain and blood. He appeared ready to sink under this accumulation of evils, whilst a tremor in his frame, occasioned by the chill of the water, added to the misery of his appearance. Yet his countenance, though squalid and distorted with pain, preserved that noble expression for which it had been noted. The fire of his eye was dimmed, but not quenched ; and the glance which he cast on his captors was one of noble sorrow blended with heroic resignation.

Padilla was carried in this wretched condition to the commander of the royalists, amidst the triumphant cries of his enemies. The epithets of rebel, traitor, and other degrading appellations, assailed him in his painful course ; but he returned no other answer to these tokens of aversion, than a tranquil smile of conscious rectitude. When he arrived in the presence of the Count of Haro, a melancholy scene took place. Padilla found his

companions, Bravo and Maldonado, prisoners like himself; and the greeting of the unfortunate patriots was one of the most painful nature, though not perhaps unmixed with satisfaction. The meeting of friends, under severe misfortune, always conveys a feeling of mournful pleasure. Padilla's wound having been dressed, he was thrown into a cart, together with other suffering men of his party, and conducted, under an escort to Villalar.

The conquering army soon entered that place, filling the air with their acclamations, and leading their prisoners in a rank. The inhabitants, however, responded not to these cries of exultation. The sight of heroic misfortune seldom engenders other sentiments, in unprejudiced minds, but those of compassion and respect; and the sight of the suffering but undaunted Comuneros inspired these feelings in the most lively manner. On the following day it was intimated to Padilla and his chief adherents, Bravo and Maldonado, that they were to suffer death. They received this intelligence with stern composure.

"It is well," said Padilla firmly. "Nothing now remains to fulfil our duty to our country than to die with the same noble resolution that we have defended its rights."

The Count of Haro then entered the place where Padilla was confined previous to his being led to execution.

“Don Juan,” said the Count, “your bravery and abilities merit my sympathy, however your crime may call for the severe award I have decreed. Confess your guilt; implore your pardon from the Emperor; and though your lot cannot be amended, yet such a proceeding will be advantageous to your family.”

“My Lord Count!” said Padilla resolutely, “I will not stain the glory of an honourable life by an unworthy end. The confession which you propose, not all the tortures that can afflict human nature shall extort from me. I have stood up in arms for the defence of the rights of Castile, which I saw trampled upon by a foreign prince, either little conversant with our old constitution, or else knowingly and willingly despotic. In either case, my conduct in opposing tyranny was not only justifiable, but praiseworthy. Would to God that the grandees of Castile had not, on this occasion, forgotten the independent spirit of their ancestors! You yourself, my Lord Count, bear a name rendered sacred in our history by many glorious achievements,—how you have been prevailed upon to adopt your present conduct, I cannot surmise. But mark me well! the day will come when our descendants, as well as those of the rest of your class, will deeply lament the hour in which the grandees of Castile either made common cause, with an arbitrary ruler, to crush the liberties of their land, or looked with apathetic indifference

on the struggles of their more patriotic countrymen. With regard to my family, I have no boon to crave, save that this letter be delivered to my wife; happily she and her offspring partake of the noble sentiments by which I am actuated. I bequeath to them a name of glory and pride, not one of shame and disgrace."

After this he spoke no more:—he shook hands with his brave companions, and was then led to the place of execution. His composure and noble bearing affected the spectators of the melancholy scene. When they arrived at the scaffold, a herald came in front of the platform, and proclaimed that Don Juan de Padilla, Don Juan Bravo, and Don Francisco Maldonado, were to die the death of traitors, as rebels to their liege Lord the Emperor.

At this announcement the fiery temper of Bravo could not be restrained, and he cried with great indignation—

"It is false! we are no traitors and rebels, but true gentlemen and good Castilians:—traitors are those who have shamefully betrayed their country, and brought us, good patriots, to this end."

"Peace! peace! my honourable companion," said Padilla, addressing himself to Bravo in a tone of kind reproof. "Let them say on; idle words cannot stain our honour. Yesterday, we were bound to exhibit the courage of Castilian gentle-

men;—to-day, we must die with the meekness becoming good Christians!"

Thus ended the gallant Padilla. His death was considered as the signal for the suspension of hostilities. Indeed, the victory obtained at Villalar, and the catastrophe by which it was attended, induced Valladolid, Segovia, and other towns, to lay down their arms. But Toledo still held out with undiminished spirit. This heroic constancy was owing to the widow of Padilla, who, with a magnanimity and resolution that would have done honour to any of the stronger sex, resolved to maintain the *Comunero* war. The fate of her husband, to whom she was tenderly attached, instead of awaking a womanish sorrow and despondency, which might weaken her purposes, served, on the contrary, to stimulate her to a degree almost of enthusiastic frenzy. She, therefore, availed herself of every means that she thought conducive to arouse the energies of the Toledans.

With this impression, after she had caused the letter which Padilla had sent her, together with one enclosed in it for the inhabitants of Toledo, to be copied and circulated through the city, she had recourse to another powerful expedient. She caused her orphan son, clad in deep mourning, and mounted on his father's mule, to be led through the city. Before him was carried a large standard, exhibiting a representation of his patriotic

father's death, and a cavalcade of staunch adherents brought up the rear, filling the air with cries of liberty and revenge. The Toledans, inflamed by this means, determined to maintain a vigorous resistance against the Emperor, however their means might have been weakened by the submission of every other city. Toledo was closely besieged, and the inhabitants suffered immensely from privations of every sort. The pardon offered by Charles, added to the calamities already suffered, induced many to clamour for the surrender of the town. But a new and unfortunate event now added to the difficulties of the widow's situation. The Flemish bishop of Toledo being dead, and a Castilian nominated in his stead, the body of the clergy, who had till then proved staunch adherents of the cause, now changed sides, whilst the populace, wearied of suffering, peremptorily cried that Toledo should surrender.

In this emergency the heroic widow of Padilla, and her still faithful Comuneros, withdrew to the citadel, the defence of which they resolved to maintain with dauntless resolution. Nothing could intimidate the heroine. On every side she heard the voice of discontent, and saw the people ready to submit to the Emperor; yet she persisted in her resistance, despising the pardon which had been promised in the first instance.

She sustained a vigorous siege in the citadel;

and when she perceived even her most faithful adherents sinking under the apprehension of the doom they could not hope to prevent, the widow, with a sort of frenzy, strove by her words to stimulate them to persevere in her desperate undertaking.

One night, one of her zealous partisans came to her in the utmost agitation.

“ Well, Mendoza,” she said sternly, “ dost thou also come to announce thy resolution to submit to the despot, and thus outrage the memory of thy slaughtered friend ?”

“ Lady,” replied Mendoza, “ my sentiments are but too well known to you to require any comment. If my life could contribute in the least to the furtherance of our cause, you will readily believe that Mendoza could not hesitate to sacrifice it in so glorious an enterprise. But my hope is now lost, and, unless we surrender, the citadel will either be taken by force, or, what is more probable, will be betrayed by its defenders. They conceive our case hopeless, and are determined——”

“ To be slaves,” interrupted the widow of Padilla, with a bitter smile. “ It is well ! Let their wish be accomplished. I, at least, will never be indebted for any boon to the oppressor of my country and executioner of my husband.”

“ What course mean you to adopt ?”

“ Death would be now to me the most gratifying

event ; yet die I must not,—for I ought to subject my inclination to my duty. My son demands my care. I will fly into Portugal, and there teach him to hate tyranny ; and, perhaps, some day—But this is no time to indulge in idle fancies, Mendoza.” She then added composedly, “ Thou wert the sincere friend of Padilla,—wilt thou accompany his widow to the frontiers of Portugal ? or is it decreed that I must be abandoned by all ? ”

“ Sooner perish than entertain the thought ! ” answered Mendoza with warmth. “ I was myself about to propose flight, and for this purpose have procured some disguises which may be conducive to its accomplishment.”

Hereupon he produced two coarse dresses of peasants, with another for the child. By the aid of these the heroic widow of Padilla, her infant son, and their noble companion, were able to reach Portugal in safety—not, however, without encountering numberless perils in their way. A general pardon was proclaimed in favour of the Comuneros, and the war ended ; but the widow would never accept the amnesty, nor for a single moment entertain the idea of returning to her country,—but died an exile in the Portuguese dominions.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Reign of Philip the Second.

FROM 1556 TO 1598.

A.D. 1556. The extraordinary abdication of Charles the Fifth, and his retirement from the world, called his son, Philip the Second, to the possession of his splendid crown and vast dominions. Spain had now arrived at the summit of its greatness; but, following the natural process of human affairs, that never remain stationary, having no further grandeur to attain, it was obliged to descend. Hence it may be considered, that the first symptoms of decline were seen in the reign of Philip the Second, one of the most memorable, not only with regard to the importance, but also for the number of the events that rendered it conspicuous.

1557. The first striking event of Philip's reign was the splendid victory of St. Quintin, obtained over the French. The Duke of Savoy commanded the Spanish army, and the King himself was present at the battle. The defeat of the enemy was complete, and the greatest panic pervaded the French nation. Indeed, Philip, had he pursued his advantage, might have arrived at the very gates of Paris; but from some unaccountable idea, he signed a treaty of peace, by this means foregoing the power he had obtained by one of the most memorable battles ever fought. The King found himself soon involved in the important war with the Netherlands.

Some vigorous measures adopted in religious matters by Margaret Duchess of Parma, who governed those provinces, caused the people to revolt,—an event which was also matured by the discontent of the Counts of Horn and Egmont. The Low Countries, therefore, revolted, and the famous Duke of Alva, the greatest commander of his time, was entrusted by Philip with the enterprise of reducing the rebels to subjection.

1567. The Duke of Alva, therefore, took the military government of the provinces, at the head of ten thousand veterans, to enable him to quell the rebellion. Upon his arrival in the Low Countries, Alva began to show extraordinary zeal for his employer; but at the same time he used measures of such excessive rigour, as to fill the inhabitants with horror, without effecting their reduction. He caused both Egmont and Horn to be executed. He committed several other excesses, which widened the breach between the provinces and the parent kingdom, and produced the formation of the states of the United Provinces (1571). Whilst the rigorous conduct of the Duke of Alva, despite of his warlike exploits, was paving the way for the loss of the territories entrusted to his command, another event threatened the power and called for the attention of the King. This was the rebellion of the Moriscoes of the Alpujarra (1572), who, enraged at some decrees issued for their conduct and regulation, now determined to assert their independence, and went so far as to name King, Don Fernando de Valor, one of their converted fellow-countrymen, under the title of Aben-Humeya, from whom it was believed that he claimed descent. This war was carried on during two years with fierce animosity. The Marquess of Mondyar and Don Juan of Austria were successively employed against the Moriscoes. The latter general succeeded in quelling the insurrection. Meantime Philip had recalled

Alva from the government of the Low Countries, which was first given to Requesens, and then to the Duke of Parma, one of the most gallant and worthy personages of the time. But the losses were irretrievable, and conciliating measures came too late.

1585. However, whilst Philip was losing part of his territories in one quarter, fortune unexpectedly bestowed upon him the crown of Portugal, vacant by the singular fate of the King Don Sebastian, during his disastrous expedition into Africa. This addition to his dominions might soothe Philip for losses sustained in other parts. But a new calamity was not slow in putting his fortitude to the severest trial. Philip had resolved to wage war against Elizabeth, the Queen of England, because she had lent assistance to the rebels of the Low Countries. The King determined on the bold project of invading England, and for that purpose prepared a mighty fleet, superior to anything which had been seen before, on which account the sounding title of the *Invincible Armada* was bestowed upon it (1588). This formidable armament was, however, almost totally dispersed and destroyed by Effingham, powerfully seconded by the elements, which contributed mainly to the dispersion of the Spanish navy. When the notice of the catastrophe was conveyed to Philip, he, with extraordinary magnanimity, exclaimed—"I sent them to war against the English, not against the winds and storms."

1598. Philip, wearied with the destruction brought upon his armies by the wars in the Netherlands, and the enormous sums he was obliged to spend, at length resolved to abdicate that sovereignty in favour of his daughter Isabella, upon her marriage with the Archduke Albert; and, on the 6th of May of this year, signed the deed of abdication. This measure, however, did not produce on the provinces all the effect that was expected. Meantime, the internal affairs of Spain

had given the King some uneasiness. He committed a daring and unjustifiable deed, in encroaching on the liberties of Aragon. Antonio Perez, his own secretary, whom he suspected of being his rival in the affections of the Princess of Eboli, sought refuge from his vengeance in Zaragoza. Lanuza, the justiza, refused to deliver up Perez, upon which an army was sent against him, which, after a fierce contest, succeeded in surprising the city. Vagar, the royalist general, caused Lanuza to be put to death without any form of trial. Perez made his escape into France. Philip then formally abolished the Aragonian constitution. The persecution of Antonio Perez was one of those deeds which did Philip little credit. The story of the Infant Don Carlos, supposed to have been killed by order of the King, is well known. Still, it would be rash to throw on Philip the dark odium of that affair. By the useful labours of Llorente, it has lately been ascertained that Carlos was half insane, and totally destitute of those romantic attributes with which his memory has been invested.

1598. Philip died on the 13th of September, after a long reign,—a reign which may rank amongst the most memorable recorded in history. Many important events took place in his time; and the battle of St. Quintin and Lepanto would alone suffice to carry the name of Philip to the remotest posterity. Philip was a bigot, and certainly cruel in many of his proceedings. His suspicious and reserved temper also rendered him unamiable; but still his talents, and fortitude under misfortune, made him a personage worthy of much consideration.

Mountain King.

“ La licenza

Di que' barbari erranti è omai sì grande,
Ch' in guisa d'un diluvio, intorno senz
Alcun contrasto si dilata e spande.’

TASSO.

ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE MOUNTAIN KING.

The Mountain King.

THE mountains of the Alpujarra, which extend from Granada to the Serrania de Ronda, form a chain of high and wild recesses, which are fit haunts for the lawless and the desperate. To these solitary and barren passes had the descendants of the Moors fled as a place of safety, when unwilling to subscribe to the demands of the Christians, or impelled by the hopes of again asserting their independence and forming themselves into a nation. Soon after the conquest of Granada, the seeds of discontent became discernible amongst the vanquished Moors. It is supposed that the indiscreet religious zeal of the conquerors was the primary cause of these alarming symptoms; but it is also not improbable that the hatred they bore the Christians was the main-spring of their desires, which only wanted a pretext to be set in motion.

They soon appeared in a state of open revolt; but were baffled in all their efforts. Not even the victory which they obtained at Sierra Bermeja—a victory which was attended with the melancholy

death of the famous Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the complete defeat of his troops—could long resist the powerful and victorious armies of the Spaniards. The rebellion was soon quelled: some of the ring-leaders were punished; others went over into Africa; whilst a few accepted the proffered pardon, and the great mass affected to repent of their revolt, though they inwardly cherished the idea of making another attempt as soon as occasion should offer. Most of the malcontents inhabited the villages on the flanks of the Alpujarra mountains, and some lived in wild caverns and miserable huts; by which means they acquired habits of hardihood and desperation, which fitted them for the pursuit of war; but they had no competent leader to conduct their operations or head their troops. Since the disappearance of El Feri de Benastepar, no man had appeared endowed with capabilities sufficient to undertake so momentous an enterprise; and when the Moors, or rather Moriscoes, as they were now called, fixed their eyes upon the descendants of their old kings and chiefs, their expectations, even in that quarter, were miserably deceived.

Some of them had withdrawn from Spain; others had perished, or their existence was unknown; whilst those on whom hopes could be placed had embraced the Christian religion, and were enrolled in the classes of Spanish nobles and gentlemen. Amongst these there was an uncle

and a nephew, who, it was reported, and generally believed, were descended from Aben-Humeya, a grandson of Mahomet, whose offspring had, in remote times, ruled in Cordova, and other provinces of Andalusia. But till chance should present them with a leader, the Moriscoes secretly continued the preparations for a revolt; and their hopes were daily increased, as their rage became more and more inflamed by the oppression with which they imagined themselves to be treated by the Spaniards.

At this juncture, it was observed that one of the descendants of Aben-Humeya above-mentioned repeatedly visited several retired villages of the Alpujarra mountains, especially that portion of them which is called *Sierra Nevada*, from being constantly covered with snows, and which is situated near the city of Granada. This personage was now known by the Christian appellation of Don Fernando de Valor, *el Zaguer*,* to distinguish him from Don Fernando de Valor, his nephew, who was the more direct descendant of Aben-Humeya. *El Zaguer*, though he had embraced Christianity, was suspected to have adopted this course more from worldly motives than from sincerity and conviction. He was very rich, and possessed extensive lands, especially along the Alpujarras, from one of the villages of which, Valor, both he and his nephew derived their surname.

* The younger, or the less.

In several conversations with the Moriscoes, he had given strong hints of his wishes to make an attempt at independence ; yet, being a prudent man, he would not too far compromise himself, without some probability of his projects being carried into effect. He had sounded the disposition of his nephew, Don Fernando ; but, to his sorrow, he had discovered him to be sincerely attached to the Christians, and that he even prided himself on being one of their nobles. Don Fernando was a young man, gay and dissipated, and consequently much taken up with the pursuits of the court, where he found more attractions than could be derived from an arduous and laborious undertaking.

But an important event now occurred, which kindled a hope in El Zagner that his nephew might be brought over to his views. The father of Don Fernando had, for some trivial offence, been treated with undeserved rigour ; nay, it was even suspected that one of the witnesses against him had perjured himself. The son complained to King Philip the Second, but received no redress : being fondly attached to his father, he took the affair much to heart, and indulged a melancholy greatly at variance with his natural temper. His uncle availed himself of this opportunity to infuse into his bosom the sentiments with which he was himself inflamed. He depicted in vivid colours the injustice which the King had committed against their noble family,

and the obligation under which they lay of avenging such affronts. The ardent temper of the young man easily imbibed the subtle arguments of his uncle; and from that moment he devoted himself to the pursuit of revenge.

One night he appeared in the presence of his uncle in the greatest disorder. His eyes were haggard, his looks wild, and his habiliments stained with blood. He evinced considerable agitation, and bore every mark of having committed some desperate deed.

“It is done!—oh! uncle, it is done!” he muttered in a sombre voice.

“Well, Fernando, what means this emotion?”

“Look!” said the nephew, pointing to his blood-stained weapon,—“look! it is the blood of one of the traitorous villains who accused my good father: I have killed him with my own hand.”

“Fear not, Fernando; thou hast acted as became the injured scion of a most noble lineage,” said El Zager, with looks of pleasure.

“Alas! my uncle, often have you repeated that word to my ear; and perchance it is your constant suggestions that have impelled me to this desperate and bloody act. But yet, I know full well that I have incurred deep guilt and awful danger; you cannot deceive me in this.”

“Nor is that my intention,” calmly replied El Zager. “Should this deed be proved thine own,

thy death must follow on a scaffold. The cruel King will rejoice to have an opportunity of cutting off a descendant of that illustrious race that once had sovereign sway over these territories. No, my dear nephew, I will not flatter thee—imminent danger indeed threatens thy life.”

“And what course can I pursue?” inquired Don Fernando in anxiety. “The King’s officers will proceed to an investigation of this deed, and I can no longer remain tranquil in my own dwelling; it is on this account that I fly to you for advice.”

“And thou hast done well,” returned the uncle in the same calm voice.

“I know,” said Fernando, “that you will afford me shelter and protection—in that confidence I came hither.”

“Shelter and protection!” cried El Zagner, in a significant tone. “By Heaven! I can offer thee something still better.”

“Nay, sir, I cannot understand you.”

“It is a mighty boon that I shall offer for thy acceptance, shouldst thou have courage to accept it.”

“Courage, uncle?” muttered the astonished young man. “Surely you do not think me destitute of that quality?”

“I do not,” returned El Zagner; “and it is for that reason that I shall not scruple to make thee the splendid, though dangerous, offer of which I speak.”

“ Speak, sir ; explain this mystery. What boon is this ? ”

“ A crown ! ” answered the old man with enthusiasm.

“ Heavens ! it cannot be : — a crown ! what crown can I aspire to ? ”

“ Ay ! a crown ! ” repeated El Zagner. “ I offer thee a crown, to which thou art entitled by birth. Though appalled in the Christian garb, and decorated with Christian names and fashions, thou art descended, my nephew, from the illustrious race of Aben-Humeya, one of the grandsons of the holy Prophet whom we, in evil hour, have forsaken. Nay, start not, my boy ! I am a Christian in name, but not in heart. ”

“ This is indeed strange ! ”

“ And yet it is true.—I am a Moor, a true Moor, though now the name exists no longer in Spain, but is sunk into the corruption of Morisco—a title of reproach:—ay, a Moor am I, and one who bears as deep a hatred to the Christians as in times when our forefathers held power over the lands which now support us in ignominious slavery ! ”

“ What words are these ? We have been enrolled in the Spanish nobility, and rank amongst the grandees of the state. ”

“ A curse—a black curse on the degrading favour ! ” fervently exclaimed El Zagner, whilst his eyes sparkled with fire—“ a curse on the fatal

hour that we were reduced to think ourselves honoured by distinctions conferred by men who, in former times, were the scorn of the followers of the Crescent!"

"But our religion ——"

"Cease, foolish boy, cease!" eagerly interrupted the uncle. "There is no religion but the true one—the religion of the holy Prophet, for which our ancestors fought, for which they gained renown most glorious in this world, and bliss eternal in Paradise. But thou, oh, my nephew! young and gay, and having formed friendships and connexions with Spanish cavaliers, cannot well understand these sublime mysteries; and I must address myself to the more material part of thy reason."

"You speak in parables, kind Sir."

"The secret will soon be unfolded.—Speak! Wouldst thou be a king?"

"Surely some delusion mocks my senses with this splendid vision."

"It is no delusion. A crown awaits thee, if thou hast courage to conduct a glorious enterprise. Yes, thou shalt wear the crown of the Moorish race, which, sunk as it now is, will some day rise in triumph and prosperity. The crown that now awaits thee is not, in sooth, one of ease and delight, of pleasure and wealth. Thou shalt be king only of the Alpujarras—a sovereign over these

wild and awful passes ; but, from being the Mountain King, thou shalt at last be the monarch of Granada and Cordova, and hold dominion where thy ancestors ruled before."

He ceased, and cast an anxious look on his nephew, to see what effect the tempting offer would produce upon his mind. The ardent spirit of youth, and the ambition of Don Fernando, received this intelligence with evident pleasure. His eyes glistened with joy, and a smile of pride, at approaching greatness, sat upon his lip. Yet the pleasurable sensations which now occupied his heart were not without some alloy. Ever and anon a cloud of gloom crossed his brow, and he seemed to feel some pangs of remorse. He remained plunged in a deep reverie for some time, until he was disturbed by El Zaguer.

"Well," said the old man, "and dost thou hesitate? Art thou craven enough to refuse so glorious a destiny? Shame on thee! I thought thee endowed with a more manly spirit.

"That spirit is mine!" proudly cried the young cavalier; "but say, my uncle, is there much honour attached to an apostate? Ay! that's the word — a vile apostate! for I was born a Christian, and educated as such, though my parents were once Moriscoes.—I am a Christian."

"Forbear! forbear! repeat not that odious word," sternly interrupted El Zaguer. "If some

fatality hath willed it that our illustrious name should be defiled by such titles, think not it is a disgrace to shake off the foul sin when occasion offers. No; the abomination rests in persevering. But enough. I grieve to see that arguments are necessary to persuade thee to thy duty. Give thy answer. Say thou wilt not renounce the Christian—for that includes also a renunciation of the crown,—then another more worthy in character, though not so illustrious in birth, shall wear the distinction.”

He ceased for a moment. The nephew was perplexed with a variety of conflicting thoughts. The proposition had been so abrupt, so unexpected, and was withal so extraordinary, that he could not collect his ideas to form a resolution. The glittering prospect of a crown, even a poor one, fired his ardent imagination; the promise of absolute sway, even over mountains, flattered his pride; and the spirit of adventure, mixed up in so great an enterprise as that of restoring the empire of the Moslem in Spain, was so much in accordance with a brave and youthful mind, that the proposition of El Zaguer was a subject worthy of important attention. On the other hand, there was something repugnant—something base, in the idea of apostasy. Don Fernando de Valor, though particularly distinguished neither for fervid piety nor for fanatic zeal, felt that the renun-

ciation of the creed in which he had been born and educated, entailed a dereliction and betokened a weakness which would brand him with shame. He could not deceive his heart so far as not to see that ambition, the thirst of power, and not conviction, would bring about his conversion to the faith of the Moslem.

El Zagner, observing the wavering state of his mind, hastened to obtain a decision favourable to his views, by presenting other arguments in addition to those which he had already brought forward.

“Besides,” he continued, “what hast thou to expect now? Is not thy alliance with the Christian King broken, by the death of one of his subjects? Does not this deed render thee liable to the hatred and vengeance of the dead man’s friends and kinsmen? — will not every one attribute this act of retribution as decisive of thy tendency to the ideas of thy father?—for, as thou knowest, he lies in prison upon an accusation of plotting against the State. What art thou now? —an outlaw, a fugitive, a criminal; — nay, start not; such is the character which thou bearest, and will bear if thou dost prefer the ignominy of such a situation to the glory of that of being the restorer of the Moorish empire.”

Don Fernando mused profoundly for a few moments,—it was the last struggle of his conflicting

feelings: then with a resolute tone of voice—"Say no more, sir," he cried, "I am resolved."

"Well!—am I to hope that thou art worthy?"

"I shall follow your advice in all things," interrupted the young cavalier.

"Heaven and the Prophet bless thee, my son!" ejaculated El Zaguer in transports of joy. "I knew that the blood of Aben-Humeya would not for ever stagnate in thy veins, but that it would be kindled when the moment called to action."

"What course am I to pursue?"

"You must follow me fearlessly to the Alpujarra mountains."

"I will," firmly replied his nephew.

"This very day we must depart—the moments are precious, and the event of thy conversion too important to be long a secret from thy brave countrymen. Be ready—in a few hours we depart—to-morrow thou shalt be a king."

"But whither will you lead me?"

"To the house of a powerful Moor, until now the head of the revolt, but one who will immediately do homage, and yield obedience to thee.—Hast thou never heard of El Hardon?"

"What! that hoary villain! that murderer!"

"Peace, peace! foolish boy!—what words are these?" cried El Zaguer fiercely. "Where didst thou learn such a character of El Hardon, the most brave of the Moors?"

“His bravery I do not dispute,” returned Don Fernando, “but his crimes are manifest—he has been found guilty of the murders of more than twenty Christians in cold blood!”

“And as many crowns will he receive in Paradise,” said El Zaguer with calmness; “the sacrifice of the enemies of our faith is most acceptable to God! but thy frivolous heart cannot, alas! well comprehend the light while yet immersed in Cimmerian darkness.”

“But El Hardon,” continued Don Fernando, “however deserving of honour you may consider him, is now strictly pursued by the officers of King Philip, whose vigilance it would be difficult to evade, and their power as difficult to oppose.”

“It is that, O my nephew! which compels us to strike the blow ere the favourable opportunity is past. The Moriscoes are already prepared, and only wait for the word of command to rise up in arms and fight desperately for their liberty and religion.”

El Zaguer now made his preparations for departure: he took all his wealth, which he placed upon beasts of burthen, and collecting his retainers and domestics, only awaited the approach of night to set out for the mountains. The hour being arrived, the party, consisting of about twenty persons completely armed, and with stout hearts, left the dwelling of El Zaguer, and, with the utmost silence and caution, directed their

course to their intended destination. They all, save one, evinced the most unbounded joy in their looks and words—all, save one ; for, to the amazed heart of Don Fernando de Valor, the whole affair wore the aspect of a ruffianly expedition. The known character of El Hardon for ferocity, filled him with horror ; and he perceived that he had bound himself to become the leader of desperate outlaws and prowling vagabonds, decorated with the pompous title of liberators. The idea was fearful to a young heart unaccustomed to the toils and desperation of such roving adventurers ; but it was too late to retreat. The moment for choice was gone : he had resolved, and must abide by his resolution. Besides, Don Fernando was naturally ambitious ; and the prospect of absolute command, even over a people of such a lawless description, was flattering to his heart, and hope whispered in his ear indistinct promises of future greatness, till he soon plunged in a delightful reverie, which represented him as the first King of the restored kingdom of Granada and Cordova. In these various and contending speculations, Don Fernando de Valor and his companion arrived at a wild and dismal place, where El Zaguer desired them to halt.

“ We are arrived,” he said : “ behind that rock stands the dwelling of Hardon,—let us dismount, and proceed cautiously, for in this precipitous spot horses are not only superfluous, but dangerous.”

The place, indeed, in which they now found themselves, was awful to contemplate. It was one of the most solitary corners of the Alpujarras. Above, the summit of the mountain appeared covered with everlasting snows; and the shapeless clumps of trees, the huge rocks, and irregular ravines with which this gloomy scene abounded, intercepted the view of the plains below. After some toil, they reached an uncouth, though capacious tenement, almost buried in the wild shrubs that grew around in unfettered luxuriance. El Zagner and his companion were welcomed with much respect and satisfaction by the occupants of this place, who amounted to about twenty-six persons, the heads of the conspiracy and their families. El Zagner, shortly after his arrival, addressed the meeting in a long and eloquent speech, detailing the grievances with which they were oppressed,—the cruel decree of Philip forbidding them to wear their own costume, or speaking their language,—the still more humiliating orders, that their women should go unveiled in public, and that their baths, one of the attributes of their religion, should be destroyed. To these principal causes of complaint were added others of lesser note; such as the private acts of vengeance and injustice exercised against the Moriscoes, and the scorn with which they were regarded by the Spaniards.

The speech of El Zagner produced the desired

effect upon the assembly ; and when he reiterated the proposition, which he had already made in a previous meeting, that a king should be elected, it was received with general approbation. The eyes of all were fixed on Don Fernando de Valor, as the person destined by fate to be their Sovereign. The uncle then spoke in praise of his kinsman, whom he depicted as most devotedly attached to the cause, both by inclination and necessity. He explained fully the good disposition of Don Fernando, and his readiness immediately to embrace the Mohammedan creed.

“ It is well,” said Abenfarax, a person of note amongst the conspirators. “ Let us now, in the name of the Prophet, proceed to the election of the King of Granada and Cordova ; for such are the titles that belong to Aben-Humeya, recently Don Fernando de Valor.”

Hereupon, the ceremony of election was begun with curious ceremonies. The whole of the assembly divided itself into four portions, each of which placed itself on one of the four sides of the apartment. The widowers formed one class, the married men another, the bachelors a third, and the last was composed of women. This division being made, the Faqui, one of the chief priests, read an ancient prophecy, which was corroborated by certain words of the Koran, as well as by signs and omens in the course of the stars. This pro-

phesy foretold and promised, that the liberty and redemption of the Moorish name should be achieved by a young man of royal descent, who would be baptized, and a renegade from his faith, or that he would publicly profess that of the Christians.

“Such is the purport of these sacred and mysterious words,” said the Faqui, after a pause; “and ye see, my countrymen, that the circumstances concur in Don Fernando de Valor, who has been a Christian, though a descendant of the royal race of Aben-Humeya; besides, the date assigned by the prophecy agrees with the present time: let us, therefore, not delay the fulfilment of the decrees of Heaven.”

After this, Don Fernando was bereft of his Christian attire, and dressed in a mantle of purple. His neck was bound with a crimson scarf, which fell also over his back. Abenfarax then spread four banners on the ground, one to each quarter of the globe. The elect prostrated himself, and prayed over the banner, his face always towards the East. He next made a solemn oath to defend the banner, to live and die in the faith of Mahomet, to protect his new kingdom and his subjects. Having performed these ceremonies, Aben-Humeya stood up: Abenfarax came forward, and, in the name of the assembly, did homage to the new King, by kissing the ground on which he stood.

The elected Sovereign of the Moors was then

raised on the shoulders of his new subjects, and carried along, whilst they cried aloud, " Heaven protect and exalt Mahomet Aben-Humeya, King of Granada and Cordova !" After which, according to the ancient rites of the Andalusian kings, Aben-Humeya was considered duly elected, and every one paid him the respect due to a sovereign.*

The Mountain King, for such was the most appropriate title that Aben-Humeya could receive in the infancy of his race, then proceeded to name the indispensable officers of the State. He placed Abenfarax at the head of the judicial department, and he named his uncle, El Zaguer, commander-in-chief of the troops, though, on account of his advanced age, he appointed competent lieutenants to aid him in his laborious post ; in the same manner, he filled other departments in the state ; and everything was carried on as in the election of a sovereign to a mighty and flourishing empire.

The first symptom of the bursting storm was the commission of an atrocious act, at the instigation of El Zaguer. Such was the assassination of Herrera and thirty other cavaliers, who, staying for the night at Cadiar, were murdered in cold blood whilst they lay asleep. This sanguinary deed was soon followed by others equally expressive of the hatred of the Moriscoes to the

* The description of this election is copied literally from the historian Mendoza.

Christian Spaniards. The revolt was thus clearly declared, and the whole of the Alpujarras rose up in arms.

King Philip the Second, occupied at the time in projects of ambition, and profound political schemes, at first treated the intelligence of the revolt of the Moriscoes with indifference and contempt. Conscious of his vast power—certain of the abilities of his generals, and the courage and discipline of his troops, he fondly flattered himself that he should be able to quell the rebellion at any time, without difficulty. In this case, however, that profound sagacity for which his mind was distinguished, and the suspicions congenial to his temper, seemed to be wanting to his speculations. The conspiracy of the Moriscoes daily gained ground, and grew so rapidly in importance, that the Spaniards, alarmed at the increasing rebellion, and affrighted at the horrid deeds that marked its progress, gradually left the vicinity of the Alpujarras, and fled into the towns and cities for protection.

Numerous complaints now reached the throne, and the King at length opened his eyes to the sense of danger. The Marquess de Mondejar was appointed to take the command of an army, and speed to stifle the rebellion. When that general, however, arrived at the seat of war, he was surprised at the rapid strides which the

revolution had made in so short a period; and he also perceived that it was not an indifferent task that the King had entrusted to his care. Besides the strength which the Moriscoes derived from their numbers, the position which they enjoyed in the mountains, and the enthusiasm by which they were animated, their efforts were farther seconded by the aid which they received from the Turks, and the States on the coast of Africa. Elated with success, and confident of enlarging his means of defence, Aben-Humeya no longer circumscribed his operations to petty sallies against straggling parties of the enemy, but dared to meet the foe in open field and regular battle. He vigorously charged Don Diego Quesados, one of Mondejar's captains, and drove him from Tablate, obliging him to make a hasty retreat to Dureal.

From this moment an inveterate, fierce, and frightful war began so stamp its iron impress upon the vicinity of the Alpujarras. Animated by the prosperous auspices in which the rising for independence had commenced, and cheered by the voices of their priests, the Moriscoes were roused to a pitch of enthusiasm capable of bearing down any opposition. But that enthusiasm, joined to their rancorous hatred against the Spaniards, and the thirst of vengeance for past affronts and miseries, led them to the commission of acts as fright-

ful as they were unnecessary. They seldom gave quarter but to such of their enemies who, from want of physical strength or moral courage, could give them no ground for apprehension; the rest they unmercifully sacrificed to their frenzy, sparing neither age nor condition, and having their minds firmly bent on a war of extermination. This fanatic zeal and rancorous spirit instigated the perpetration of atrocious deeds, even against those who did not fight against them, which filled the mind with horror, and made the Moriscoes appear more in the light of ruthless assassins and miscreants, than heroic defenders of liberty and independence. A general and indiscriminate persecution was begun: but the fury of the rebels was more peculiarly directed towards the ministers of the Christian religion, whom they justly considered the advisers and promoters of the hard decrees pronounced against them. Thus, any priest or monk that fell into their power was sure of being sacrificed to their revenge; and they devised the most ingenious acts of cruelty, to heighten the miseries of their victims, and satisfy the wild cravings of their rage.

They profaned and burnt down the Christian places of worship, and exhibited every mark which they considered expressive of their abhorrence for the religion of their enemies. Upon the taking of Guecija, they burnt a monastery, and

hurled vast quantities of boiling oil against the friars, many of whom perished in excruciating tortures. At another time, they seized the rector of Alairena, and having surrounded him with gunpowder, they set fire to a train, and he was blown and shattered into pieces in the air. His curate they stripped naked, and burying him in the earth to the waist, they chose the rest of his body as a mark to direct their missiles. In fine, their acts of cruelty were so horrible and repeated, that they fired the hatred of the Christians, who, in their turn, resolved to show no mercy to the savage enemy. By this means the war was conducted on both sides in a manner which betokened more the feelings of wild savages, than rational enemies and soldiers.

Aben-Humeya, though elated at the enjoyment of power, and allured by sanguine hopes of firmly re-establishing the dominion of the Moors in Spain, could not but feel some pangs of conscious guilt when he reflected on the desperate course which he had embraced. Not cruel by disposition, he shuddered at the acts committed by his lieutenants on the unfortunate Christians that fell into their power. Nor was he a true believer in the Koran. A succession of unexpected circumstances had led him to embrace a creed, and to adopt a course of life, which, but a few months since, he would have considered it scarcely within the bounds of possibility

that he should follow. This idea constantly pursued his imagination, and embittered even the moments of triumph and command. The black image of apostasy rose with ghastly aspect before him, in wild dreams, and prophesied some fearful catastrophe against his fated person.

He strove to banish the gloomy intruders from his mind, and essayed to deaden the feelings of remorse, in the absorbing excitement of warlike deeds. He distinguished himself in every encounter with that enemy whom he could not hate; but upon his retiring from the field of strife, the most poignant reflections perplexed and tormented his breast. In the leaders of the enemy he often recognised some old companion, and an impartial examination made him confess the superiority of the Spaniards over the enraged outlaws whom he conducted to battle. He had been a distinguished subject of the first nation of the world at that period, and a thought would intrude itself, that the station which he had foregone was preferable to the one he now held.

Such distracting reflections rendered the Mountain King moody and reserved. A dismal gloom sat upon his brow. After the defeat which he sustained near Orgiba, in which he lost six hundred men, while the Spaniards sustained the loss of only seven, the melancholy of Aben-Humeya increased, and the suspicions and alarm of the Moriscoes were

awakened ; they began to look on their King with distrust, and some of them even entertained strong wishes to see the sovereign authority invested in another person. A secret spirit of cabal soon spread amongst the leaders of the Moriscoes, and they all resolved vigilantly to watch the conduct of Aben-Humeya, that they might discover some pretext to conspire for his deposition.

But such an opportunity did not easily present itself. The Mountain King, though gloomy and apparently discontented, always adhered faithfully to his duty. His conduct in the field of battle, and his behaviour towards his subjects, were both unimpeachable ; and this circumstance, for a long time, thwarted the machinations of the disaffected. The war continued with unbated animosity. The Moriscoes were generally routed and dispersed by the superior discipline and courage of the Spaniards ; but they soon rallied again, and renewed the contest with unimpaired strength, and seemingly with undiminished numbers. But these losses, though they could not be ascribed to any want of courage or ability in the Mountain King, tended nevertheless to augment the disaffection which already prevailed.

The most turbulent and discontented were the auxiliary Turks, who, accustomed to beard and rule over their own king, could not willingly endure the irksome restraints under which Aben-

Humeya endeavoured to keep them. To these malcontents were soon added some of the chief officers of the Moriscoes, and, amongst others, El Zaguer, who began to entertain strong suspicions of the fidelity of the king to their cause; nay, some even went so far as to insinuate that he was in secret negotiation to betray them to the enemy. Such surmises and rumours, however destitute of foundation, contributed greatly to alienate the esteem and respect of the Moriscoes from the suspected ruler. They were the more disposed to credit what was circulated in prejudice of Aben-Humeya, as they had always regarded his conversion with mistrust. The King clearly perceived the unfriendly disposition of his subjects; and this circumstance added much to the melancholy which embittered his existence. But his ruin was to be produced by causes which he did not foresee; and private revenge hastened a catastrophe which he apprehended from the impulse of public discontent.

The Mountain King had a sworn and implacable enemy in the person whom he was persuaded to consider his most devoted friend. This individual was his own kinsman, Diego Alguacil, a Morisco, who enjoyed the unbounded confidence of Aben-Humeya; and the reason which induced him to cherish this rancorous feeling towards the man whom he professed to esteem, was the frenzy of disappointed love. In one of the sallies made

against the Christians, Alguacil had killed a Spaniard, and carried away his widow, a woman of extraordinary beauty and accomplishments. The fair Aldonza was indeed an object of admiration to all those who beheld her, and Alguacil soon felt the warmth of a most violent passion. She, however, scornfully rejected the addresses of a man unworthy in her sight, and with equal horror refused the offer of a hand stained with the blood of her late husband. Alguacil, enraged by disappointment and inflamed with wild desire, resolved to gain by force what he could not acquire by persuasion. Aldonza, however, baffled his vile intention, and, seizing a favourable opportunity, she effected her escape from the dwelling of her oppressor, and hastened to implore the protection of the Mountain King.

Aben-Humeya was no less struck with the charms of the fair suppliant, than moved by her distress. He immediately granted the shelter which she sought, and ordered her to be treated with due respect and consideration; and soon felt, himself, the power of Aldonza's beauty. The emotion he derived from the contemplation of her charms and the attractions of her society, was soon ripened into a strong and devoted attachment. His respectful attentions—his favours to the Christian, were redoubled, and he at length made a tender of his love and hand, and, with

unbounded delight, saw his wishes crowned with ample success. The affection became absorbing on both sides, and Aben-Humeya, amidst the gloomy thoughts that often distracted his mind, always fled for solace and consolation to the company of his dear Aldonza. But this circumstance served to confirm the suspicions of his disaffected subjects; they saw him infatuated for a Christian woman; and the ascendancy which she possessed over his mind made them suppose, and not without apparent reason, that it would redound to the prejudice of their cause.

The Mountain King, impatient at the turbulent spirit perceptible in his subjects, directed his thoughts to quell by rigour what he ought to have calmed by softer means. He was soon considered in the light of a despotic tyrant: some even asserted that he was guilty of many rapacious acts unworthy of his station. The supposed grounds of discontent became more numerous every day, and the spirit of revolt spread with alarming rapidity. Nacoz, in the district of Granada, and Malique in that of Baza, openly threw off their allegiance, and declared themselves independent of the Mountain King. This example was soon followed by other leaders, all of whom began seriously to turn their thoughts upon a successor to Aben-Humeya, whom they resolved to depose.

✓ In this critical juncture, Alguacil, who had been

absent on some expedition, presented himself before his kinsman. The traitor, notwithstanding the deep aversion which he entertained for Aben-Humeya, ever since that King was preferred to him in the affections of Aldonza, had kept a show of cordiality, which pleased the deluded sovereign. They had continued to live in the same habits of union and friendship which had distinguished their lives before the moment when, according to the natural order of things, they must have become foes.

“The Prophet defend the most glorious Aben-Humeya!” said Alguacil with an artful smile. “I am overjoyed to meet thee in that state which is most grateful to thy wishes.”

“I thank thee deeply, good kinsman,” answered the King; “but perhaps my condition now is far from being a subject of joy and congratulation.”

“What mean these words? what can ruffle the peace of mind of Aben-Humeya?”

“Many and serious causes,” replied the Mountain King, in a tone of regret. “Alas! Alguacil, since thy absence, I have seen much reason to excite my alarm and disturb my peace.”

“Thou dost astonish me with such information,” returned Alguacil with feigned surprise. “I should scarcely believe it possible that the late disasters should make the manly spirit of Aben-Humeya

droop, or cause him to despair in the success of our glorious undertaking.”

“Peace, man, peace!” interrupted Aben-Humeya; “it is not reverses, which may be remedied—losses, that may find redress, that throw anxiety into my bosom. I fear not the small temporary triumphs of the Christian arms, and I apprehend nothing from the Spaniard.”

“From whom, then, do thy fears take their birth?”

“From my own subjects,” painfully replied the King.

“Heavens! what say you?”

“The melancholy truth. Oh, Alguacil! in thee I can repose my full confidence; yes, thou art the only faithful depository of my fears; thy friendship to me——”

“Is deep and profound,” interrupted the false friend, smiling;—“it is, in sooth, a friendship seldom found amongst men; and most thankful am I for the good opinion with which my kind relative and potent master deigns to honour my poor deserts.”

“I rejoice in thy coming, Alguacil,” resumed Aben-Humeya, in a more tranquil tone and manner, “for I shall be able to treat with thee on the affair that now engrosses my attention; and perhaps thou wilt suggest advice adequate to the occasion.”

“Speak, my King! unfold thy fears, and be assured that my counsel, if not inspired by wisdom, will at least be prompted by zealous attachment.”

“Well then; learn, if indeed the fatal truth is yet a mystery to thee, that I am in hourly apprehension of losing both my crown and life.”

“It cannot be. By the Prophet! some wild phantasies oppress thy fancy, or thou wouldst not utter these words.”

“I utter them,” proceeded the Mountain King, “in full conviction of their truth and reality; the spirit of revolt and disaffection, which had already begun to appear at thy departure, has assumed a threatening attitude during thy absence.”

“Yes, I have learnt that Nacoz, Malique, and Garral, have declared themselves rebels to thy authority, and traitors to their country; but yet their defection cannot be attended with any fatal results to thy crown. Thou hast power to put down this disturbance, and make the factious return to their duty, or lose their heads.”

“Alas!” resumed Aben-Humeya despondingly, “my power is not so great as thou art inclined to suppose. Amongst my most confidential chiefs, the spirit of disaffection is discernible. The evil seems epidemic, by the progress which it has made in a short time.”

“And dost thou really suspect,” demanded the false Alguacil, “that there is aught in contemplation against thy constituted authority?”

“ Yes, such is my firm belief; an occasion is only wanting for the storm to explode.”

“ Would they deprive thee of the crown?” inquired the cousin with a show of alarmed zeal.

“ Ay, and of my life also.”

“ Heaven and the Holy Prophet forefend! But thy apprehensions, O Aben-Humeya! greatly magnify the danger. Is there no one to whom thy suspicion attaches more especially?”

“ None,” answered the Mountain King. “ I foresee that some blow will be struck against me; but who, when, or how that blow is to be dealt, I can form no just surmise.”

“ At all events,” returned Alguacil, “ it will be prudent to be prepared for the danger.”

“ What dost thou advise?”

“ I must write orders for the body of faithful Moriscoes who are now at Cadiar, to come immediately here, and I will myself instantly depart to collect my devoted adherents, in case it should be necessary to brave an open attack from the malcontents.—Does this plan meet thy approbation?”

“ It does most fully,” replied Aben-Humeya.—“ And now, as usual, I want thy ministry in writing the order, since, by a strange fatality, I know not the accomplishment of writing.”

Alguacil immediately wrote a letter, addressed to Aben-Aboo, a kinsman of the King, and who commanded at Cadiar. Aben-Humeya put his

seal to the document, and despatched a trusty messenger with it.

“It is well,” said Alguacil. “Now, I must to my duty. No time is there to be lost: Farewell! When next we meet, O King! it will be, I hope and pray, under very different circumstances.—Farewell, most potent Aben-Humeya!”

With this they separated. The Mountain King was much pleased with the zealous alacrity displayed by his cousin, and put the firmest reliance on his good services. But the traitor Alguacil was little deserving of the sentiments entertained in his regard by his deluded relative. No sooner was he out of the royal presence, than he gave vent to the malignant joy which swelled his breast.

“Thou art lost,” he muttered ferociously, while a demoniac flash shot from his eye. “Nothing can save thee, for thy doom is fixed, and cannot fail in its execution. Soon shall all my wrongs be avenged!—soon the thirst of vengeance shall be appeased! Fatal was the hour thou didst see Aldonza! and more fatal still, when thou wast made happy in joys that were as many poisoned tortures to the burning heart of Alguacil; but this heart, so torn by contending and fearful passion, shall soon allay the fever with which it is oppressed. The Moriscoes are ripe for the deed; and, fortunately, Aben-Humeya has made himself

as odious to his subjects as he is hateful to me. Two days more, and the tyrant shall fall; two days more, and the vows of the Moriscoes and the injured Alguacil shall be accomplished to their widest extent."

Full of confidence and satisfaction, he hastened to carry his diabolical plans into effect. The letter which he had written to Aben-Aboo was one of a very different tendency from that which the King, at his own instigation, had desired him to indite. Instead of requiring his immediate attendance near his person, with the troops under his command, instructions were given in that fatal document for the clandestine slaughter of Alguacil, and the party that accompanied him. The letter was couched in the most insidious terms, declaring that the public good, as well as the private satisfaction of the King, required these instructions to be followed without remorse. The letter specified that Alguacil and his attendants would arrive at Cadiar shortly after the messenger who carried the fatal despatch, and his doom, and that of his companions, might be easily accomplished when they were immersed in slumber.

Alguacil now, attended by about twenty adherents, hastened to Cadiar, giving it out that he was sent thither with instructions from the King. He made all possible haste, as it was necessary, for the success of his dark schemes, to arrive in that

place as soon as possible after the messenger that carried the letter. It was the object of Alguacil to excite in the generous heart of Aben-Aboo sentiments of horror and dismay. That leader had already been clandestinely offered the crown, in the room of Aben-Humeya, whom, having rendered himself unworthy of the dignity, it was deemed expedient to dethrone. Alguacil had been the principal agent in this clandestine and factious negotiation; but notwithstanding his subtlety and intriguing abilities, he was baffled in his expectations, by the disinterestedness of Aben-Aboo. This loyal chief not only opposed the wishes of the malcontents, but vigorously declared his intentions to abide by his duty. The plotters were thus disappointed, but did not despair of carrying their iniquitous plans to a successful termination.

Aben-Aboo was a gallant young man, strongly attached to the cause of the Moriscoes. He was remarkable no less for his undaunted bravery, than for a deeply-rooted aversion against the Spaniards. These circumstances, added to his generous disposition, the consideration he enjoyed among the chiefs, and the respect with which he was regarded by the people, caused the eyes of the malcontents to be fixed upon him as the most proper successor to the Mountain King. Besides, though Aben-Aboo discovered neither thirst of ambition,

nor taste for caballing, he might be susceptible of attack on another side,—for the man never existed that could offer a complete defence to the batteries of pride, vanity, or interest, in the thousand shapes which they can at pleasure assume. He who cared not to be a king through the cravings of ambition, would be persuaded to accept the dignity under the name of a service rendered to his country—the pride of being useful would fill the place of any other less dignified passion.

The messenger with Aben-Humeya's letter arrived at Cadiar, and having delivered his despatch, he retraced his steps back. Aben-Aboo read the document, but was thunderstruck at the contents: the treachery required of him was so black, so cold, so vast, that his generous heart shrank from the idea; and the tone of levity and refined cruelty in which the letter was couched, rendered the treason still more abominable.

Aben-Aboo had yet the letter in his hand, and was pacing his apartment in a musing reverie, when the noise of approaching horsemen was heard, and presently a gallant party of Moriscoes alighted at the entrance of his dwelling. Before the chief had time to ascertain who the newcomers might be, Alguacil suddenly presented himself to his view. He came with an air of composure and content, and approached to embrace his kinsman, with his usual affability of

manner. His sudden presence increased the agitation of Aben-Aboo. He stood before him—the man whom it was commanded should be sacrificed. The unsuspecting manner in which he advanced to meet his doom, heightened the horror of the event; and the consideration that he had always been a staunch adherent of Aben-Aboo and the Morisco cause, augmented the feelings of compassion engendered in the breast of that chief. His emotion therefore was so powerful, that, upon the entrance of Alguacil, he remained with his eyes fixed on him, without being able to utter a word.

Alguacil, in his turn, affected to be amazed at such singular tokens. He cast a look of mingled alarm and surprise on Aben-Aboo, and, in a tone of voice expressive of much emotion, proceeded to address him.

“In the name of the Holy Prophet! tell me, O Aben-Aboo, whence springs this excitement that I see depicted on thy countenance?”

“It is nothing, good cousin—it will soon wear away: thy arrival was so sudden—so unexpected——”

“Yes, it was as you say,” resumed Alguacil with composure. “I myself had no idea that I should appear in thy presence so soon. But I am come hither by the command of the King.”

“Ha!” cried Aben-Aboo; “and bring you no orders?”

“None.”

“No despatches—no instructions for me?”

“No, none. The King ordered me to depart for Cadiar with the utmost diligence; he said that a messenger preceded me to tell the purport of my coming.”

“Heavens, what treachery!” muttered Aben-Aboo in a low tone; whilst the wily Alguacil proceeded, as if unconscious of any danger—

“Yes, Aben-Humeya has commanded that I and all my party should pass the night here—adding, that my business will be settled by the following day.”

“Indeed!—business!”

“Yes—though I am puzzled to divine what sort of business he can mean. You, however, will instruct me!”

Aben-Aboo was horrified at the calm atrocity of the measure. His agitation increased—Alguacil took advantage of the circumstance, and continued—

“By the Holy Prophet! some horrid mystery is here. In the name of Heaven, my good kinsman, tell me what has happened to cause such extraordinary sensations.”

“Yes, as thou sayest,” returned the chief—“a horrid, a diabolical mystery renders me aghast.”

“And what can this dreadful secret portend?”

“It concerns thee, and thy party.”

“Can it be possible? What connexion can

there be? But that is the King's letter, if I mistake not?"

"The King's letter—good Heavens! then you are acquainted with this letter?" returned Aben-Aboo in amazement.

"It was written in my presence, by a Morisco in the confidence of Aben-Humeya," replied Alguacil with *sang-froid*; "for you know that our potent King is unacquainted with the art of writing, from which circumstance much inconvenience often occurs. But, my good kinsman, how you do gaze in wonder at that scroll!—why, if it were a most sacred and powerful talisman, it could scarcely produce a stronger impression upon you."

"It is a dreadful talisman."

"Indeed!—dreadful! why dreadful? I should have imagined it contained the King's instructions concerning the kind of service in which I was to be employed upon my arrival at Cadiar."

"Deluded young man!" cried Aben-Aboo, much moved.—"Learn that the diabolical scroll contains the decree of thy death."

"Merciful Heavens! surely you mock my credulity."

"Take it and read—convince thyself."

"Most sacred Prophet!" exclaimed Alguacil, raising his eyes to Heaven and returning the letter to Aben-Aboo. "Canst thou permit so abominable a treason? wilt thou suffer so dark and ruthless a tyrant longer to exist?" Then, in a

calmer tone, he added, "What crime have I committed to deserve such a doom?"

"Alas! I know not: perhaps Aben-Humeya has suspicion that——"

"That I know him to be a lukewarm Moor," interrupted Alguacil,—“or rather, a concealed Spaniard—an enemy to his faith and race. Yes, he suspects this, and with strong motives. I make no secret of my opinions, when they tend to the interests of my country,—and I shall willingly sacrifice my life in its defence. Ah! the false King knows my adherence to our cause, and my distrust of his sincerity; besides, in the true spirit of a tyrant, he dreads the man whom he is conscious of having deeply wronged, and wishes to make a victim of him by a dastardly treason. Such are the fruits which we are to expect from the rule of Aben-Humeya!—Who can be safe under such a monster? Oh! Aben-Aboo, if you knew the friendly manner in which he has of late behaved!—if you had seen the fraternal embrace with which we parted! Never was falsehood more deceitful—never did deep treachery wear a more seductive appearance!"

"I am bewildered," exclaimed Aben-Aboo; "for I confess that such a depth of baseness and malignity I never did expect from my cousin. To me he always seemed frank, open, and generous, however violent or vindictive;—of crime I might think him capable, but not of baseness."

“ Yet you have abundant proof of both in thy hand,” said Alguacil, “ and you must prepare for the worst. There can remain no doubt, that the false King meditates some fiendish betrayal against the Moriscoes, and that he is desirous to pave the way by removing those whom he suspects of being the firmest obstacles to his designs. He sacrifices me to-day, — to-morrow, a similar fate will attend Aben-Aboo. Alas! unless we prevent the calamity in time, ere long it will rage to boundless extent, and will involve the Morisco cause in utter ruin.”

Aben-Aboo was powerfully affected by the insidious speech of his relative ; there was a speciousness of truth in what he uttered ; and his zeal and professions to the interests of the country had been so fervent and repeated, that the unsuspecting chief readily believed the insinuations of Alguacil, and conceived the horror and disgust with which they were intended to inspire him. That his own life was threatened, he had no difficulty in believing, though he had not lent himself to the suggestions of those who wished to place him on the throne. The mere fact of its having been offered to him, if known, was sufficient to engender the rage and inflame the vengeance of the tyrant. His position was therefore critical ; and this consideration, added to the more important one of the country’s safety, made Aben-Aboo conceive a total abhorrence for

the King. He accordingly resolved to join the malcontents under Nacoz.

“It is well resolved,” cried Alguacil; “but we ought immediately to proceed to the deposition of the tyrant,—nay, his life could scarcely be sufficient retribution for his oppression and crimes.”

Alguacil had no difficulty in inflaming the rage of his own party to a suitable degree; nor were the troops at Cadiar slow in catching the spirit of revolt and revenge. The place soon became a scene of confusion; and it was in vain that Aben-Aboo endeavoured to pacify the Moriscoes by promises of speedy redress. They began to cry aloud for the head of the tyrant and concealed Christian; and they desired to be immediately led to inflict their vengeance on the King.

“Oh! Aben-Aboo,” said Alguacil, “resist no longer the general wishes of the people, when they are so just and beneficial to the cause,—accept the crown.”

“Never!” firmly replied Aben-Aboo, “while the present owner wears it. I shall withdraw to Baza and join Nacoz, but will take no active part in the revolt.”

“It is meet the tyrant should perish.”

“Not by my arm, or with my aid,” calmly returned the chief. “It will be fruitless to persuade me to an action which my heart hates and my conscience disavows. Of the unworthiness of

Aben-Humeya to be our chief, I am fully convinced; yet it is not from me, his nearest relative and the friend of his boyhood, that his punishment should proceed."

"Thy scruples, noble Aben-Aboo," replied Alguacil, "do honour to thy character, though carried to an unjustifiable degree: however, we will not urge thee to aught contrary to thy inclination. Remain thou inactive, if such be thy desire, while I and my companions hasten to achieve the fall of the tyrant, and the liberation of my country from his ignominious thralldom."

The clamours and disorder of the troops had during this time continued with redoubled fury; but no sooner was the intention of Alguacil made known to them, than the cries of discontent were changed into shouts of approbation. Accompanied by about three hundred men, he without delay took the road towards Andarax, where Aben-Humeya at the time sojourned. These troops were in their march augmented by a reinforcement of Turks, under the guidance of Husceni, a captain of note, and disaffected to the King. They were all firmly resolved on the murder of Aben-Humeya; but, that certain success might attend their undertaking, they were instructed by Alguacil to proceed with prudence and discretion. The garrison of Andarax, if they advanced with an avowedly hostile attitude, might be tempted to oppose their entrance

into the town, into which they could obtain ready admittance by adopting another course. Nay, they might proceed undisturbed to the very entrance of the King's residence, as the troops of Aben-Aboo might be supposed to come to augment the defence of the place.

Such were the artful speeches of Alguacil to his companions, while he himself full well knew that they would meet no impediment, Aben-Humeya being firmly persuaded that the letter sent to Aben-Aboo contained instructions for the immediate arrival of his troops. This skilful and deep plot, Alguacil fondly anticipated would be crowned with complete success; and in this persuasion he proceeded, full of joy, towards Andarax. As he had told his companions, upon the mere announcement of who they were, the gates of the town were thrown open, and they proceeded to form in the market-place. Alguacil again cautioned them to preserve the utmost order and tranquillity, as upon this the success of their design mainly depended. To the Turks he promised great treasure, if they succeeded in their attempt against the King, whom he depicted as having amassed enormous wealth by his rapacious disposition and arbitrary extortions. This prospect inflamed the cupidity of the Turks; and in hopes of indulging in their avarice, they readily acceded to what was required of them.

Alguacil, having given the necessary instructions to the chief of the conspirators, then proceeded alone to the dwelling of Aben-Humeya, and met with a most cordial reception from the King.

“My kind cousin and best subject,” he said, embracing him, “this promptitude is really surprising;—I did not expect thee so soon.”

“Could I evince less activity, when engaged in thy service?”

“How vast is my obligation to thee, for so faithfully fulfilling my commission!”

“Nay, Aben-Humeya, rest assured that no gratitude is due to me, as in all this I do nothing but consult my interests.”

“Generous man!” exclaimed the King, “those words speak fully the merits of thy character.”

“Yes, they are sincere,” replied Alguacil smiling.

“And what forces bring you?” inquired the King.

“Three hundred Moriscoes blindly devoted to my will;—they, as you know, belong to the troops at Cadiar. Dispositions, necessary for the public good, have hindered Aben-Aboo’s arrival here, with the rapidity that has marked my operations; but he is on the way, at the head of five hundred zealous soldiers, and will, no doubt, make his appearance by the morrow.”

“His arrival will be welcome as thine own.—The spirit of the troops here is growing worse.”

“You distress me by the intelligence; but yet we shall be able to withstand those who would oppose *me*.”

“Only the half will oppose thee, should the crisis, God forbid! take place.—The forces here amount to about two thousand; one half mutinous—the other, yet faithful to their duty.”

“That’s enough for my purpose,” said Alguacil significantly. “With the three hundred zealous followers that I lead, and the two hundred Turks under Husceni, whom I have brought over to my party, added to the thousand——”

“Yes, you can depend upon that number,” interposed the Mountain King confidently. “Then the arrival of Aben-Aboo——”

“It will scarcely be necessary,” said the traitor with a malignant smile; “I am sufficiently strong without his aid.”

“Thy confidence dispels every fear from my mind.”

“Now, Aben-Humeya,” resumed Alguacil in a calm voice, “aware, as thou art, of the danger that surrounds thee, until we find some pretext to remove from Andarax those who excite thy suspicions, we must commit the guard of thy important self to the care of those on whom we can chiefly confide.”

“I have followed that plan constantly, and the fifty men below——”

“May be very faithful,—I do not doubt it,”

interrupted Alguacil ; “but surely they cannot inspire *me* with a confidence equal to that which the men I bring from Cadiar do ; therefore, the safety of thy person from henceforward must be entrusted to their keeping. All the posts of trust, and especially the guard of thy mansion, shall be immediately committed to them.”

“Thy will shall be law,” returned Aben-Humeya ; “make every arrangement according to the dictates of thy prudence.”

“I will most amply,” replied his relative with the same treacherously placid smile ; “and in that opinion, lull thyself into sweet repose.”

The traitor then took leave of the King, and hurried to make the necessary dispositions for the execution of his fiendish plot. The posts of importance at Andarax were forthwith occupied by his most devoted followers, whilst the guard of the party was entrusted to the care of the most determined in their aversion against Aben-Humeya ; and amongst whom the subtle Alguacil took special care to include the twenty Moriscoes who had accompanied him to Cadiar with the pretended object of being slaughtered by order of the King. Every arrangement being thus concluded, the conspirators waited for the darkness of night to carry their fell design into effect. The prudence of Alguacil was so efficiently seconded by the strict adherence of the Moriscoes to his in-

structions, that no one, except those immediately connected with the plot, had a suspicion of the horrid deed in contemplation.—Thus passed the remainder of the day.

Night came, and the King with a tranquil mind withdrew to his chamber at the accustomed hour. Unconscious of the awful danger that hung over his head, he tranquilly resigned himself to the arms of repose, and was soon immersed in a profound slumber. Watchful of their prey, the conspirators, at the hour of midnight, prepared to strike the blow. Alguacil, the Turk Husceni, and half-a-dozen more of the ringleaders of the revolt, proceeded in silence to the mansion of their fated victim. As everything was arranged beforehand, they found no impediment to arrest their progress. They gave the signal agreed upon, and the outward sentinels instantly allowed them to pass. In this manner they penetrated into the hall, where they remained a few moments in consultation.

At this time Aben-Humeya was rudely disturbed in his sleep by a violent shaking of the arm. Half asleep, he fancied he heard a voice that bade him rise. He opened his eyes, and perceived his dear Aldonza, in a paroxysm of grief and alarm, standing by his couch.

“Rise! rise! Aben-Humeya,” she muttered in a low but impressive tone. “There’s treason here. Rise! oh, my Lord! or you are lost!”

“Nay, my Aldonza, what means this overpowering agitation? Surely thou art under the control of some dismal vision.”

“Alas! my suspicions are too just,” returned the fond female in agony. “At this moment, I hear the murmur of several voices in the hall—they bode nought but misfortune.”

“Wherefore think thus? If my guards are not disposed to sleep, let them talk. What matters it? As long as the sentinels do their duty, the rest of the men may employ their time as they wist. Therefore, dispel thy fears, my gentle love.”

“I cannot. Oh! my Aben-Humeya, I suspect the fidelity of that smooth Alguacil. Mark me!—his attachment to thee is as false as his heart is deep and scheming. Besides, the love I bear thee is abundant cause to make thee hateful in his eyes.”

“Banish such ungenerous surmises from thy mind. I have good proof of his sincerity.”

“Heavens! the rumour below increases. Hark! I hear the voice of Alguacil.—They approach.—Hear! hear their steps!”

“It is strange,” said Aben-Humeya. “What can they wish at this time of night? Let them come. Perchance they mean to give warning of some impending danger.”

He had scarcely finished, when the door of the apartment was thrown open, and Alguacil with

his companions entered the room. Their looks too soon gave indication of the horror of their design. A savage pleasure glistened in the eye of Alguacil, and a horrid smile of triumph curled his lip. The conspirators fixed their ferocious glance on the devoted victim, and a burst of simultaneous joy issued from their breasts. Aldonza, in the wildest affright, came forward, and in a frantic voice exclaimed—

“What mean ye, miscreants? Begone!—tremble for the results of your temerity! Begone!”

“Peace! peace! foolish woman,” cried Alguacil in scorn. “Our moment is arrived. The doom of yon tyrant is fixed, and no human power can prevent it.”

“Just Heaven!” cried the King in bewilderment, “can this be really true? Alguacil, my cousin, my confident! and art thou then a traitor?—is this well of thee?”

“Traitor! I am no traitor,” proudly replied the Morisco; “but a man insulted, wronged, and seeking just revenge. I am no villain, but a true Morisco, conspiring against a tyrant and a concealed Spaniard, under the garb of a Moslem.”

“Cease, cowardly miscreant!” exclaimed Aben-Humeya; “nought in nature can excuse thy abominable betrayal.”

They now advanced to secure their defenceless prey. Aldonza, in her affright and anxiety to

preserve his life, threw herself between him and his enemies, and, in an agony of the wildest despair, embraced her wretched friend, who by this means was prevented even from the small aid that he could derive from his weapon and personal strength; and the last mournful satisfaction, that of wreaking his vengeance on his foes, and gracing his downfall with the blood spilt in his defence, was denied to the helpless Aben-Humeya. He was quickly secured, and easily bound in the rudest manner. The piercing cries of the despairing Aldonza, far from mitigating the ferocity of Alguacil, contributed to kindle more fiercely his revenge—those rending lamentations bore the strongest proofs of her love for Aben-Humeya; and what impulse is there more effectual in hurrying on the vindictive cravings of jealousy and disappointment?

When the Mountain King observed that there was no possibility of escaping his doom, and ascertained that the conspiracy was most extensive, he resigned himself to his destiny with stern composure and a smile of bitter scorn. He was thrown into a dungeon until the morning, when it was resolved to put him to death, as the conspirators were so powerful that they dreaded nothing from those who might still be devoted to the King. But his situation, for the few hours allowed him previous to his death, was one of exquisite torture.

With feelings of sorrow and regret, he recalled to mind the events of his past life. His apostasy from a religion which he believed, and the nation which he had once loved, filled his fevered imagination with sombre visions. By having listened to the suggestions of revenge, and the pernicious counsels of his uncle, the fanatic El Zaguer, he had been induced to commit that crime which was the primary cause of the series of events in which he found himself irresistibly and progressively involved. He cursed his violent temper, and the influence of El Zaguer. He bitterly imprecated the dreams of ambition that had persuaded him to listen to the desires of that Morisco, and the infatuation which induced him to accept the dangerous dignity conferred upon him by the rebels, and now left him equally spurned and condemned by Moriscoes and Spaniards. On both sides he bore the aspect of a renegade—both would detest him as a tyrant—both would despise him for being unfortunate. Wherever he turned his thoughts, he perceived nought but a gloomy waste of disgrace and despair. Every poignant feeling that can torment a man, crowded mercilessly to his heart; and to all the pangs of remorse, shame, and an ignominious death, were superadded the keenest shafts arising from his love of the wretched Aldonza, whom he now saw under the control of her ruthless enemy.

In this dreadful conflict of thought and feeling did the late King spend the moments previous to his final doom. The morning at length came. At a very early hour he was led forth, amidst the scoff and maledictions of the Moriscoes, to the market-place, where he had the additional mortification of seeing Alguacil, and other leaders of the revolt, waiting with impatient joy the completion of the sacrifice. From every quarter the wretched Aben-Humeya heard himself assailed with the epithets of tyrant ! false Moor ! Spaniard ! Christian ! and every other term which the popular fury could invent by which to express their scorn and indignation. Aben-Humeya beheld the vast concourse, all uniting in testimonials of aversion, but bore the awful trial with intrepid resolution. It was intimated to him, that being unworthy of the crown, Aben-Aboo was to succeed him.

“ Rebels ! monsters ! ” he cried indignantly, “ accomplish your work. I well deserve this fate for having abandoned the faith of Christ for your own barbarous creed. Yea, I merited well this calamity, when I exchanged the character of a Spanish noble for that of a leader of lawless ruffians and fanatic rebels. With regard to my successor, Aben-Aboo, let him beware ; for the king of such subjects may well prepare for a doom similar to mine. Revenge and ambition made me

the degraded King I am ; but I die with the conviction, that your enterprise shall not prosper, and that your ruin is at hand. Hear, all, my dying declaration. My name is Don Fernando de Valor, and I die a Christian and a Spaniard.”

He was not allowed to say more — those last words increased the frenzy of his enemies ; and they proceeded to his execution, by tying a rope round his throat ; two strong men took each end of the rope, and pulling in a contrary direction, they inflicted a barbarous and painful death. Fierce shouts of exultation accompanied his last frightful convulsions, whilst his starting eyes, blackened features, and terrific contortions announced the writhing agony and approaching dissolution of the victim ; the air rang with a promiscuous and deafening clamour of mingled curses and congratulations.

After the awful end of Don Fernando de Valor, the crown of the Alpujarras was, by almost unanimous consent, given to Aben-Aboo, whose accession to the dignity had been preparing, even in the lifetime of the late king. His bravery and known zeal for the faith of the Prophet made him a general favourite with the Moriscoes. Hence their chiefs and towns, which had revolted from Aben-Humeya, readily submitted to the jurisdiction of the new sovereign. His elevation was celebrated with the same ceremonies that had

accompanied the election of his unfortunate predecessor. The most favourable auguries were formed of his reign ; and, indeed, he soon evinced such abilities for government, such intrepidity and martial endowments in the field, that justly confirmed those flattering anticipations.

But fortune soon began to declare against him : though he carried on the war with great animation, the strength of the Moriscoes rapidly declined. The appearance of the famous Don John of Austria in the scene of action began to be felt. He routed the rebels in several encounters, and reduced most of the towns to subjection. Others, upon the offer of an amnesty, threw down their arms, and the rebellion was every day becoming weaker. Aben-Aboo gallantly held out to the last ; but the prophecy of his predecessor was fulfilled. A deep treason was concerted amongst his own men, who sold themselves to the Christian commander, and murdered their leader. With his death, the Morisco war ended, and the country regained that tranquillity which had been so savagely disturbed during two years of appalling calamities, atrocious deeds, confusion, bloodshed, and disaster.

The Secretary Perez.

ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE SECRETARY PEREZ.

The Secretary Perez.

THE iron features of Philip the Second exhibited a deeper gloom than usual. His eye was lighted up with the sombre flash of calm malignity, and in the curl of his lip the bitterness of a jealous and haughty soul was clearly discernible. He paced the apartments of the palace with an agitated step. Despite of his strength of mind and powerful exertions, he could not regain that inward tranquillity which he vainly attempted to make apparent, and his courtiers readily attributed these painful demonstrations to the influence of political events. The losses in the Low Countries, and the catastrophe of the Invincible Armada, might indeed give serious cause of alarm and agitation to the monarch; but it was not the affairs of the State that now engrossed the soul of the King, or cast a shadow over his countenance.

No—that soul, which had braved with magnanimous fortitude the severest blows of fortune, was now become its victim, by yielding to the instigations of love, jealousy, and revenge. Philip, who could act like a king, was not proof against the weakness of a man; and he afforded a striking proof

of the violence of his feelings, however cold and austere the expression of his countenance. Whilst Philip was plunged in this deep and painful reverie, his secretary, Antonio Perez, craved admittance. He appeared before the King with the utmost caution, and evinced, by his looks, much agitation. The King upon his entrance suddenly checked the fearful expression of his features, and by a ghastly smile welcomed Perez, apparently with the warmest cordiality.

“ Well, Perez,” he said calmly, “ shall our common enemy meet his award?”

“ Yes, sire, the wretch has but few hours to live,” answered Perez with great emotion : “ the wrongs of my sovereign shall be redressed.”

“ And thine, my good Antonio,” softly interposed the King. “ Don Juan de Escovedo has always been thy inveterate foe.”

“ I know him too well,” replied the Secretary : “ his aversion to me springs from my zeal to serve my sovereign.”

“ Escovedo is a traitor !” muttered Philip ; “ and as such, it is but prudent he should forfeit his life. But say, Perez, are the necessary dispositions——”

“ Sire,” interrupted Antonio Perez, “ two men, deserving of implicit confidence, only wait for the last order to strike the blow ; they are entirely devoted to your interest.”

“ To thine, Perez,” gently interposed the King.

“Thou knowest that political considerations render it indispensable that I should not be implicated in this affair. What hinders me from inflicting upon Escovedo the death of a traitor by sending him to the scaffold? Nothing but reasons of policy: such a step, in the present state of the kingdom, would be most fatal; Escovedo being the private secretary and intimate friend of Don Juan of Austria, his public execution could not be effected now without producing serious inconvenience in the State.”

“I understand, Sire,” said Perez, “and I warmly applaud the prudence of your Majesty. A secret death shall be inflicted on Escovedo, and in such a manner that not the remotest suspicion shall attach to any of the parties concerned in the act.”

“Well,” said the King in a serious tone, “let the deed be done this very night. Escovedo must come to me on subjects relating to the Low Countries: I will detain him to a late hour; let your men be on the alert—the rest requires no comment.”

“It shall be done,” answered the Secretary.

“Farewell, my good Perez,” said the King with a treacherous smile, “and rely on the favour and amity which Philip bears thee for thy zeal and services.”

The Secretary kissed the proffered hand of his sovereign, and with great respect withdrew to for-

ward the execution of the plot. But no sooner was he out of the presence of the King, than the latter, casting a terrible glance towards the door, gave vent to the expression of the most malignant feelings.

“Go, vile traitor!” he muttered, “go, wretch, pave the way to the doom of one miscreant, who is to be the precursor of thy own: go, deluded fool, but not more deluded than criminal towards thy king. A curse on my infatuated blindness to the man, that I should have made him the confident of my soul! A curse on woman’s treachery and duplicity; and yet I cannot accuse her so deeply as this worm, this reptile, this monster of ingratitude, whom I have fostered in my bosom, only that he might plant his scorpion sting in my soul, and blast my happiness for ever!—Oh! but my revenge shall be as deep, as appalling, as ever injured monarch dealt towards an insolent and treacherous subject and a rival: a rival!” he added, with redoubled emotion, “a rival! Antonio Perez, the rival of Philip of Spain! there is something worse than death in the thought. Oh! he shall dearly pay the accursed blandishments of his mistress! the deceitful wanton—the smiling syren! Oh! that my hate for her could be as profound and dark as the revenge that awaits her lover!”

Here the coming of the Inquisitor General, who

came to treat on affairs of religion, interrupted the ebullition of frenzy which issued from the King's boiling breast. Philip, with a powerful exertion, regained his composure, and postponed the indulgence of his angry feelings to a future occasion.

The foregoing scene was the result of a discovery the most fatal to the fond anticipations of Philip. There was in his court a lady of the name of Mendoza, and widow of the Prince of Eboli. This woman was as remarkable for her beauty as for her ambition. Her talents were of no ordinary description, and she had succeeded so far in enslaving the haughty will of the King, that it was generally believed the infatuated monarch would at length make her the partner of his throne. Neither the age of the King, his appearance, nor temper, was such as to produce a real attachment in the bosom of a female, much less such a one as the Princess of Eboli; but the allurements of a crown were too dazzling to be resisted, and the proud nature of the ambitious lady already rioted in the prospect of unlimited power and splendour. She exerted, therefore, every endeavour to arrive at the summit of her wishes, and one of the auxiliary means which she employed was the agency of Antonio Perez, which, from his constant attendance on the King, no less than the regard which Philip felt for his servant, offered great probability of his being a most efficient ally.

Antonio Perez was a young man of winning manners, who, from a very indifferent station in life, and a slender fortune, had been elevated by Philip to a post of great value and importance in the State. A natural quickness of parts, a profound reserve, and an unbounded zeal for his master, had endeared him so much to the King, that he made him not only the depositary of his public schemes, but the confidant of his private thoughts. The secret of the King's love had, from the commencement, been entrusted to Antonio, and his agency required in serving its interests. By this means the Secretary found himself the confidant of both parties, and admitted to the utmost confidence and constant society of the Princess. And now an event took place, which none of the three personages concerned in this intrigue had ever anticipated. Yet it was natural in its origin, and excusable in its effects.

The continual society of the Secretary gave the Princess frequent opportunities of appreciating the charm of his manners and the powers of his mind. The seeds of a violent passion were sown in her bosom, which, in due time, ripened into an irresistible attachment. Nor was Perez indifferent to the attractions of the Princess. He also drank, insensibly, the intoxicating draught of love, rendered doubly sweet by the ingredients of vanity with which it was mixed. The idea of being the

rival, and the successful rival, of so exalted a man as Philip, almost turned the brain of his Secretary ; yet he had sufficient prudence and sagacity to conduct himself in such a manner as not to excite the suspicions of the King, which he knew would be followed by the most terrible results. He, however, flattered himself that a favourable juncture would offer itself to effect his union with the Princess, and, at the same time, enable him to take refuge in some foreign court.

Meantime, the mind of the lady was in a state of perplexing uncertainty. Pride and love, inclination and ambition, struggled fiercely for the mastery over her bosom. She could no longer disguise from herself that Antonio Perez was now indispensable to her happiness ; but, on the other hand, she could not entirely expel from her mind the glittering prospects of power which were held out to her. She formed a new resolution each succeeding day, which was again sure to be altered by a fresh impulse. The King, either from political considerations, or some other motive, delayed to make a tender of his hand. This served to advance the interests of his rival ; but still the Princess continued in her irresolution.

At this time, Juan de Escovedo, the Secretary of Don John of Austria, requested the King to send more troops to that leader, who, though affecting to serve the cause of Philip, meditated, it

was rumoured, the ambitious design of shaking off his authority, and establishing an independent government. Antonio Perez, both from feelings of private enmity towards Escovedo, and by the dictates of duty towards his sovereign, strenuously opposed the desires of the enemy, and was, indeed, the most effectual counsellor in dissuading Philip from such a course. This proceeding naturally enough excited the rage of Escovedo, and inspired him with ardent wishes of revenge. He, for some time, watched indignantly for the means of carrying his vindictive plans into execution, and at length succeeded in procuring an opportunity. By some unfortunate chance Escovedo perceived the mutual understanding which existed between his enemy and the Princess of Eboli. Nothing could be more directly conducive to the success of his plans. By unremitting perseverance and immense exertions, he succeeded in getting one of the letters of Perez to his mistress into his possession, and, bounding with joy at so propitious an event, he hastened to avail himself of the power which it afforded him.

Acting upon this idea, he craved admittance to the King, on the plea that a secret of most momentous importance to the State required an immediate interview. Philip granted the request, and Escovedo, with looks of profound humility and sorrow, presented himself to his sovereign.

“ Well, sir,” inquired the King, in an austere tone of voice, “ what secret is this that is so imminently to affect the nation ?”

“ Sire,” replied Escovedo calmly, “ your Majesty is surrounded by deep designing traitors.”

“ The brood is plentiful in my dominion,” said the King ; “ but what new instance is there to cause my solicitude ?”

“ The delinquents are those most favoured by your Majesty,” continued Escovedo,—“ those on whom the King places unbounded trust.”

“ Proceed,” said the King, unmoved.

“ Nay, had I not positive proof——”

“ Peace, peace, sir !” interrupted Philip ; “ the names—give me the names of the guilty.”

“ Antonio Perez !” answered Escovedo, firmly.

“ Antonio Perez ?” repeated the King in amazement : “ what ! has the ungrateful wretch betrayed the affairs of the nation ?”

“ No, Sire,” continued the informer ; “ his treason is of a more private character, though not the less criminal and base.”

“ What mean you ?”

“ He wrongs the confidence of his King !”

“ How ?—Speak !” said Philip, impatiently.

“ By supplanting him in the affections of a false woman !”

“ A false woman ! What say you, villain ? Speak ! declare the whole mystery ! This suspense is hellish torture !”

“ Yes, Sire, that false woman is the Princess of Eboli !”

“ The proof—the proof !” cried the King, in frenzy ; “ give me the incontestable proof, or thy head shall answer for the assertion !”

“ Here is the proof !” returned Escovedo, with composure, at the same time handing the fatal document to the enraged monarch.

Philip seized the letter with fierce eagerness, and cast a hurried glance over its contents. The expression of his features was terrific ; yet the conflict of contending passion, though violent, was of short duration. A cold malignant smile curled his lip, and he proceeded, with apparent tranquillity, to peruse in a more attentive manner the fatal paper.

“ Thou art right !” he then said, in a slow sombre tone ; “ their guilt is beyond doubt : Philip has been the dupe of the two beings on whom he has bestowed the most numerous marks of his kindness and affection ! This is a useful lesson !”

He paused for a moment, and then, casting a scrutinizing look on Escovedo, continued—

“ Canst thou swear that this secret is known to thyself alone ?”

“ Yes, Sire. Certain signs in the mutual conduct of Perez and the Princess induced me to watch them with that alacrity which so base a treason demanded, and I obtained possession of that blasting evidence by the effect of casualty.”

“By what casualty?” inquired the King.

“It was in the possession of Ines, one of the maids of the Princess; she was devoted to my interests—a bribe did the rest.”

“Knowest thou,” resumed the King, in a fearful voice and manner, “knowest thou, Escovedo, the awful responsibility to which thou hast subjected thyself?”

“I am ready to answer with my life for the truth of what I have advanced,” replied Escovedo, undauntedly.

“’Tis well!” returned the King, with fearful calmness; “now let an impenetrable veil cover this hellish treason.”

“Yes, Sire.”

“Mark me, should a word escape thee on the subject, think on the keenest tortures which thy imagination can suggest — they shall be comparative felicity to those I shall inflict!”

“My duty and prudence stand in no apprehension.”

“Now withdraw, until thy presence is necessary to my plans.”

Escovedo then retired. The chaos of jarring thoughts that now stormed the mind of the King, baffled description; a thousand plans of revenge presented themselves to his distempered fancy, but they were all discarded as incompetent to his purpose. He felt himself humbled, despised, and dis-

appointed; his pride was galled to see that he should have been overreached by a young man, brought up under his fostering protection, and schooled by himself in the science of intrigue. The personal advantages of his rival rendered him doubly hateful in his eyes; and, with regard to the Princess, he was thunderstruck — petrified at the shameless duplicity of her conduct. It was but a day since a most cordial, a most loving interview had taken place; and in that interview he had almost resolved to bestow upon her the honour of his hand and crown. Such horrid duplicity filled the King with hatred, shame, revenge, and all the most disastrous passions of human nature. He resolved that the Princess should end her days in a convent; yet, as he feared both her sagacity in eluding a capture, and her influence if attacked by violent means, he prudently made up his mind not to use any precipitation in conducting the affair.

With regard to Antonio Perez, his views were different; he had, from the first moment that his treason was made known, resolved upon his death: nothing short of such a sacrifice would content the burning spirit of revenge that inflamed the King. Yet, he well perceived that he had no power to inflict a public doom upon his rival. However indifferently he had answered to the trust reposed in him with regard to Philip's private affairs, he had been, nevertheless, most rigid in his adherence to

the duties of his public station. No accusation on that head could therefore be successfully brought forward against him, and, to attempt any arbitrary measure, without some shadow of pretence to justify it, even the powerful Philip had no inclination to venture upon. Under such circumstances, it only remained to involve the fated Secretary in some private crime which might naturally procure for him the punishment due to his other transgression. It was now that one of the most diabolical schemes that ever entered the mind of man inspired the imagination of the revengeful King; he resolved to avail himself of the enmity subsisting between Antonio Perez and his accuser to work their common ruin. Escovedo, as the confidant of Don John of Austria, had always been an object of aversion and distrust to Philip, and his suspicious temper easily led him to discover a plotter against his interest in a man who, possessing abilities, yet refused to make use of them in subservience to his absolute will. Such had been the case with his natural brother, Don John, and, consequently, with his faithful secretary, Escovedo. Not being able therefore to attempt aught to the detriment of the former, he determined to let his anger fall upon the weaker foe; and an opportunity was now presented of destroying two obnoxious individuals, without appearing himself implicated in the transaction.

But if the idea was deep and horrible, the means by which he intended to carry it into effect were still more detestable and appalling. He began by assuming an uncommon show of affability and kindness towards his Secretary, and then suddenly turning himself upon him, he exclaimed—

“It must be confessed, Antonio, that you have a most powerful and bitter enemy in Escovedo. Indeed, were I not so certain of your fidelity to me, as most fortunately I am, the wily intriguer might have seriously injured you in my estimation.”

“Surely he has not been forging any slander to ruin me?”

“He has,” calmly replied the King, “and the vilest of slanders too. For such, indeed, must I account any insinuations which tend to render thy integrity suspected.”

“In what manner, Sire?”

“Why, the imprudent man has thrown out hints that the Princess of Eboli looks upon you with an expression of regard not to be mistaken.”

As he uttered these words, the King, in an indifferent manner, affected to look out at the window. By this artifice two ends were accomplished: he was confirmed with regard to the truth of Escovedo’s statements, if they needed any corroboration, and at the same time he afforded Perez an opportunity of regaining his composure, so as not to betray himself and alarm suspicion.

“Nay,” resumed Philip in the same indifferent manner, “he even gave me to understand that you were not indifferent to the esteem of the Princess.”

“Sire, what proofs could he——”

“Proofs! — None,” answered the monarch calmly; “but he promised that his vigilance could not be long in procuring them. I, however, treated the matter in the way which it deserved: I know you too well, Perez, to suppose that the prudence which characterizes you would allow you to run headlong into so dangerous an experiment—one, in sooth, pregnant with direful consequences. Besides, the hatred which Escovedo bears thee, and which was apparent in his words and actions, sufficiently points out the degree of credit which I am to attach to his subtle insinuations.”

“The traitor!” muttered Antonio Pérez.

“Ay,” proceeded the King composedly, “’tis well that I know the degree of confidence which I can repose in thy fidelity, else very disastrous consequences might ensue.”

“Sire, to my fidelity,” replied Perez, “and to my zeal in the service of your majesty, I pride myself in having afforded no small testimony. The hatred which Escovedo bears is quite natural. Incapable to make any impression, either to allure me from my duty or to terrify from it, he appears to have resolved the ruin of the man whom he could not seduce.”

“Escovedo,” interposed Philip, “is a most dexterous disciple of his master. Like him ambitious, and like him intriguing, he has long attracted my attention, and is now creditor to my just indignation.”

“His guilt merits, indeed, ample punishment,” replied the Secretary.

“He shall meet with it,” answered the King.

This assurance was highly gratifying to Perez. He now perceived that the ruin of his enemy was indispensable to his own security. He was the possessor of a fatal secret, and he would not fail to pursue Perez with all the advantages which such a circumstance afforded him. The Secretary, therefore, earnestly wished for the death of Escovedo, and, suspecting that the sentiments of the King were not more friendly towards that individual, he ventured to observe in an humble manner—

“Sire, it would ill become me to direct your superior judgment, yet the repeated delinquencies of Escovedo deserve the whole weight of the severest justice.”

“Such are my own ideas,” returned Philip with the utmost composure, affecting, however, concern for the necessity of adopting such rigorous measures, “and distressing it is to my mind to be compelled to sanction any dreadful decree; yet, when a perilous alternative presents itself, I must balance for a moment the course I must pursue:

The danger of the State is involved with the caballings of this Escovedo. He must be checked in his progress."

"A perpetual confinement."

"No, he must die."

Perez could not conceal his joy at the intelligence.

"Yet," continued the King, "as his master, Don John of Austria, ought not to be too far provoked at this precise period, the death of Escovedo must be secret. The execution I leave entirely to thy care. See that the traitor dies without delay."

This was a task which, however dreadful and repugnant to the feelings of the Secretary at any other time, became in the pressure of circumstances indispensable to the safety of the Princess as well as his own. Perez accordingly received the instructions of the King, and having secretly brought two desperate bravoës from Aragon to perform the act, soon announced their presence, as it has been above narrated.

Philip now indulged the most flattering hopes, that he had secured a most ample revenge, and that he should, by a stroke of dark policy, rid himself at once of a rival and a plotter. He sent for Escovedo, announcing that he had business of importance to transact. That ill-fated man came full of joy, in the confidence that the implied busi-

ness could refer to nothing but the accusation he had made against his enemy, Perez.

“Escovedo,” said the King in a grave tone, “I have called you in secrecy, not to alarm the suspicions of my base enemy, before the time for action arrives: your information has opened my eyes to the criminal conduct of my Secretary. A man, who can injure his King in the most sacred affections of his heart, will not scruple to involve him in any disastrous political acts; I have, until now, listened blindly to his advice, relating to the views of your master, Don John of Austria: Perez has represented his conduct, and your own, as so suspicious, and the proposed plans so inimical to the interests of my kingdom, that I have not hesitated to offer the vigorous opposition which you have invariably seen.”

“Sire,” replied Escovedo with glee, “my heart felt confident that your Majesty was deceived by artful misrepresentations, and often grieved to behold the ascendancy which a false subject had assumed over the counsels of his generous sovereign.”

“But I am awakened from the delusion,” returned Philip artfully, “and will no longer judge by any other views than my own. Under these circumstances, I wish to revoke the absolute denial which I have given to Don John of Austria’s designs and proposals.”

The false King in the most cordial manner proceeded to entertain the deluded Escovedo with pretended vows of compliance until a late hour, when it had been previously agreed the devoted man should meet his fate.

“’Tis waxing late,” said Philip, “and I would retire to rest: let us postpone the further discussion of this matter until to-morrow; and, in the mean time, keep a strict watch over the words and actions of my treacherous Secretary.”

“Sire, I will consider myself bounden by a most sacred duty so to do: to-morrow, I will receive your Majesty’s instructions.”

“Till then, farewell, my good Escovedo,” said the King with a deceitful smile, “and may your dreams be as happy as I could wish my own to be!”

“Your Majesty’s kindness is equal to the wisdom of your counsel,” replied Escovedo, in a transport of pleasure, at the prospect, both of the downfall of his enemy and of his own future admission to the royal favour. Full of these pleasing anticipations, he quitted the palace; but he was no sooner out of sight, than the wily King called some of his attendants.

“Vazquez, Figuerva,” he then said, in apparent emotion, “I know not what ails Escovedo, yet it strikes me powerfully that some fearful design hangs on his mind, or else that he is pursued by some ominous presentiment. His absence of

thought, his strange demeanour in our recent interview, afford just ground to my apprehensions. Go instantly, and follow him cautiously at some distance, so as not to alarm suspicion: perhaps this precaution is needless, perhaps I cherish idle fears, yet no harm can accrue from this excess of prudence. Go, then, and carefully observe my instructions."

The attendants were about to depart, when the King advised them not to neglect their arms. They then quitted his presence, and followed Escovedo, whom they perceived retreating from the palace at a steady pace, which little indicated any violent agitation; but Philip felt the greatest apprehension that his plot should miscarry, and, pacing his apartment in the utmost impatience, resolved not to retire to repose until the fate of Escovedo was decided.

Vazquez and Figuerva, in the mean time, proceeded to follow Escovedo at a distance, when, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, they perceived two men close suddenly upon him. A struggle, a momentary one, took place—a dying groan was heard, and a body fell heavily on the ground. The two emissaries of Philip had not lost their time, for before the victim was dead they were close to the assassins, and raised the hue and cry. Appalled at this unexpected event, the miscreants were for some time undecided whether

to make a defence, or fly. This irresolution facilitated their capture.

The neighbourhood had been alarmed by the cries of Vazquez and his companion; a concourse of people were instantly seen running about the streets, and flocking to the scene of action; and, the ruffians perceiving that every attempt to effect an escape would be fruitless, determined to maintain their ground with the courage of despair, against the increasing enemy. But, their boldness could not avert their fate; they were soon overpowered, and, strongly bound with irons and handcuffs, were immediately conducted to prison: the tumult gradually subsided, and Vazquez and Figuerva proceeded to acquaint the King with the tragic event, the unfortunate Escovedo dying without being able to make any declaration. The assassins' blow had been mortal and prompt.

The King, upon receiving intelligence of the murder, evinced the utmost surprise and indignation, and commanded that the assassins should be immediately conducted to his presence: this order was obeyed without delay, and, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the two culprits found themselves in the presence of the sovereign.

He exhibited the deepest anger in his looks, as he proceeded to interrogate the desperate ruffians.

“Miscreants!” he said—“what fiendish impulse could excite you to the commission of so foul a

deed? — Declare your accomplices immediately, ere the secret is extorted from you by the most excruciating torments.”

“ I don’t care how soon I confess !” said one of the murderers, in gloomy indifference.

“ Was it a love of sordid gain,” resumed the King, “ or the instigation of private revenge, that led you to this assassination ?”

“ Twenty-five doubloons was our price,” said the other, with reckless unconcern.

“ Declare the name of the wretch who offered the bribe.”

The villain hesitated a moment and cast a doubtful look on his companion. The King in greater violence proceeded—

“ Declare the name of the traitor, I say, or, by heaven! ye shall immediately be placed on the rack !”

“ Well, well,” darkly murmured one of the miscreants; “ I see no necessity for undergoing those favours, so we may as well declare the name of our employer at once.”

“ Ay,” returned the other, “ we faithfully acted to our agreement, and ’tis no fault of ours if fate proved against us.”

“ Peace, wretch! Spare observations, and give me the required name.”

“ It is that of Don Antonio Perez, your Majesty’s Secretary.”

“Just Heavens! can this be possible?” cried the King, in seeming bewildered incredulity. “Villains, attempt not to deceive me, for tortures unparalleled in human suffering shall be your award, should you try such experiments on the King of Spain.”

“We have no interest now in speaking false,” muttered the informant in a sullen tone of voice; “and so I repeat and swear that we have killed Don Juan de Escovedo by the desire and according to the instructions of Don Antonio Perez.”

Philip ordered this avowal, as well as the rest of the examination which followed, to be noted down by the proper officer. The event also took place in the presence of several witnesses, and thus he felt himself justified in adopting the step which he took. With looks of the most profound regret he ordered his Secretary to be arrested and thrown into prison, and gave strict instructions that the two assassins should be kept in the most rigorous confinement, inaccessible to any person, even a priest or friar, without a special permission from himself.

The first glimmer of morn had scarcely shed a faint indistinct light over the still slumbering earth, when the mansion of Antonio Perez was surrounded by a party of armed men, the leader of which thundered at the door for admission. The Secretary, startled from his sleep, could not surmise the object of this early alarm. He caused the

door to be opened, and a minister of justice, followed by some soldiers, quickly entered the room.

“Don Antonio Perez,” cried the Alguazil, with an air of importance, “you are my prisoner.”

“Your prisoner, Señor Argote?” exclaimed the astonished Secretary. “I cannot comprehend the meaning of this strange proceeding.”

“Yes, Master Secretary,” returned the official personage, “I come to arrest you in the King’s name—now offer the least resistance at your peril.”

“I mean to offer none,” replied Perez, scornfully, “and I treat your menace and fictitious importance with all the contempt which they deserve.”

“That’s nothing to the purpose, Master Secretary,” returned the other with a malignant grin. “Now, dispose your worshipful person to follow us without further delay.”

“What is the crime imputed to me?”

“You shall hear it anon—if so be your memory is so forgetful. Come along, Señor Perez.”

“And whither do you lead me?”

“To a very snug place,” quoth the Alguazil; “where you shall not want as much space as three yards in circumference can afford, and as much light as can conveniently force its way through the crevices of a stout double wall.”

“This violence is unprecedented,” replied Perez, indignantly.

“Ay, violence is the order of the day,” observed

the Alguazil, with a significant smile; "and it is your having followed its dictates that brings you to the present pass."

"I am conscious of having done no wrong."

"Oh! Heaven bless you, who says you have? Surely it would be high imprudence, and insolence to boot, to bring such an accusation against a man of your integrity and right good standing. Certainly a murder or so is a mere trifle."

"Murder!" ejaculated Perez.

"Ay, murder—or how, in the name of all the saints! do you call that act by which a man receives a passport to the other world, without the intervention of law and medicine; such a passport, for example, as the unfortunate Don Juan Escovedo has been provided with by your superabundant care? Ah! it seems that the sound of that name awakens no very agreeable sensations in your heart!"

Antonio Perez, though at the first announcement of the cause of his imprisonment he felt an anxiety perfectly natural in his case, yet, on more mature reflection, gained an absolute composure over his feelings. He now supposed that his agents had been detected, and betrayed his name, and that the King had ordered his arrest rather to prevent any disturbance from this perilous business, than for any other object whatever. He felt assured that ere long the doors of his prison would be thrown open to him, and that the King himself

would connive at his escape. With this soothing hope he suffered himself to be cast into a frightful dungeon, without evincing any symptoms either of alarm or horror.

The day passed away without the least incident; but when night threw her sable mantle over Madrid, the Secretary firmly believed that the means of escape from his prison would be afforded him. In this expectation he counted with patience every successive hour, yet no prospect of deliverance presented itself. At length, at the awful hour of midnight, the door of his narrow dungeon was cautiously opened, and a person carrying a small lantern came into that tenebrious receptacle. He gazed on the stranger, but what was his amazement when he recognised the Princess of Eboli, in the person that entered the darksome prison!

“Merciful Heavens!” he exclaimed; “must I credit my eyes?—Is this no deceitful illusion?—You here, Princess?”

“Yes, Perez, to effect thy liberation,” answered she, with a melancholy but collected voice. “This very moment thou must quit this prison, and fly to Aragon, thy country, there to demand the rights of a trial, and of being heard in thy defence.”

“What mean you, lady?” inquired the astonished Perez.

“That thy life will be the sacrifice if thou dost not follow my advice—the murder of Escovedo——”

“ Was committed by order of the King,” indignantly interrupted the Secretary. “ And he cannot surely dare to pursue his agent for having fulfilled his instructions.”

“ But the treacherous despot will,” answered the Princess. “ I know Philip too well not to be ready to expect the most frightful perfidies, if he thinks them necessary to his dark views of revenge or policy.”

“ Yet, how can he criminate me, when I can divulge the fatal secret?” observed Antonio Perez.

“ Perchance thou wilt never have an opportunity of divulging it,” returned the Princess, “ unless thou eagerly seize the present one. Even then I should not counsel such a proceeding, for the hatred of Philip is dreadful, and will certainly, at some time or other, fall heavily upon its object.”

“ But how have you been able to enter this place?” demanded Perez, in surprise. “ If the King is evilly disposed towards me, such an event appears to me inexplicable.”

“ Listen, Perez,” she returned mournfully; “ I have now a power which, alas! may not last a single day more. This very morning I had an interview with the King, which gave me cause for the most dismal forebodings. He appeared more affable and affectionate in his attentions than I had ever before seen him, and yet there was no particular reason for such unusual demonstrations. Thus, the tyrant was overreached by his excessive

prudence. I watched the expression of his eye—deceit, dark, malignant, unquenchable, was announced in the flash that lighted its expression. His words too were modelled by the advice of refined deceit; in the very tones of his voice I found duplicity. With the previous information I had from you, of his entertaining suspicions of our mutual attachment, it is not strange that my efforts to investigate the real tendency of the King's speculations should prove void of success. Believe me, Perez, what my fate may be I cannot yet surmise, but a secret and cruel death will be thy punishment for having won the heart of the Princess of Eboli. The fate of the Infant Don Carlos is a dreadful precedent to us; let us, therefore, not lose a moment which we may too lately regret. With regard to the means by which I have gained access to this prison, they are not difficult to be imagined. As it is yet universally believed that I enjoy the unbounded favour of the King, I have found no difficulty in penetrating into this place of gloom. I announced myself as coming by desire of the King, and I presented, besides, the signet which Philip, in a former moment of love, gave to my possession. This valuable token the King has forgotten to deprive me of as yet, and to this fortunate circumstance you owe your liberation. Should, however, the present occasion be neglected, you may believe me, it will never again present

itself; follow, therefore, my advice, and fly into Aragon this very night. The liberties of that province are now under the safeguard of the righteous Justiza, Don Juan Lañuza, and he will not suffer you to be put to death in his territories, without the privilege of a trial and a defence."

The words of the Princess of Eboli made a deep impression on the Secretary; and it required, indeed, no exertion of eloquence to point out the course he was to adopt. He ardently thanked his generous mistress for her services, and, conducted by her, he obtained a free passage into the street. He hastened to his house, took an affectionate, perhaps a last farewell of the Princess, and mounting a stout and fleet horse, fled with the utmost speed toward the frontier of Aragon.

When the escape of his Secretary was made known to the King, his anger and disappointment knew no bounds. He evinced an extraordinary degree of agitation, for he feared that his victim was for ever freed from his toils. However, with the promptness of decision which marked his character, he ordered the Marquess of Almenara, one of his most faithful adherents, to proceed to Aragon, and, either by stratagem or open force, to seize upon Perez, and bring him immediately to Madrid. Almenara departed with a competent body of troops to fulfil his commission, whilst the King, with that artful and diabolical policy in

which he was so fully conversant, lodged an accusation against Perez, before the tribunal of the inquisition. This frightful expedient was indeed the most available that Philip could pursue towards the furtherance of his schemes without any danger of compromising his own person.

The proceedings of the Holy Office were carried on with the utmost secrecy; none of the parties were allowed to know the accuser, the witnesses, or any other individuals connected with the trial; and the profound mystery which accompanied all the affairs of the dismal court, made it almost a matter of impossibility for the accused ever to offer a competent defence to screen them from punishment. Thus the inquisition was a most fearful engine in the hands of the despotic rulers of Spain; and Philip, aware of the advantages which he had already received from it on former occasions, confidently determined to use it on the present. Antonio Perez was accordingly accused of being secretly attached to Calvinistical tenets, and charges of public malversation were added to the principal one of dereliction from the established religion of the country.

Meantime Perez having arrived in Zaragoza, delivered himself up into the hands of the Justiza, and signified his readiness to undergo the process of a trial for the crime imputed to him in the murder of Escovedo. Lañuza, the Justiza of Ara-

gon, ordered him to be confined until the day appointed for his trial. But Almenara had lost no time in his mission, and before that day arrived, he appeared in Zaragoza, and intimated to Lañuza that the prisoner should be given up to him. He said that Antonio Perez was accused before the holy tribunal, and it was therefore to the prison of that tribunal that he should be committed. Lañuza refused to comply with this demand. The prisoner laboured under a charge of murder, and until this trial should be ended, he could not suffer a new procedure to be established. Almenara threatened, but Lañuza remained unconquerable in his determination, and the inhabitants loudly applauded this energy in their magistrate to preserve the liberties of Aragon free from violation.

Almenara, enraged at this opposition to the commands of the King, now considered himself justified in using the most violent means for the execution of his charge. Accordingly, one morning he presented himself at the head of a strong body of veterans, before the prison, where the Secretary was confined. He attacked the guard, burst the gates open, and, rushing into the place, seized upon his prey, whom he conducted in triumph to the dungeons of the inquisition. This outrage could not be looked upon with servile timidity by the spectators of so flagrant and disgraceful contempt of justice. Some persons began

to excite the popular indignation, by exclaiming that a desperate attempt was made against the rights and liberties of Aragon. The clamour spread widely through Zaragoza, and a tumultuous throng, equipped in the irregular armour which the suddenness of the occasion could present, rushed furiously to rescue the prisoner from the power of Almenara.

The din and uproar increased dreadfully, it seemed as though a general insurrection was about to ensue ; but what surprised Almenara more particularly, and aroused his anger to a pitch of frenzy, was the consideration that Lañuza and the other authorities took no step to quell the tumult, but on the contrary appeared to sanction it by their indifference and forbearance. He accordingly signified his resolution to charge the multitude, unless they dispersed immediately. His threats were received without fear, and answered with general shouts of scorn and defiance. The popular fury was inflamed to the most fearful height, and, far from being intimidated by the threatened attack of the formidable foe, they resolved to be the first aggressors.

A terrible conflict was the consequence. Almenara, despite of the discipline and valour of his troops, could but ill oppose the repeated attacks of an infuriate mob, who, instead of being awed by the death of many of their companions, seemed

to acquire additional strength and resolution from that very circumstance, as vast numbers of fresh combatants poured in from every side. Part of the garrison made common cause with the people, and Almenara soon found that he had brought himself into a situation of great hazard and difficulty. He redoubled his exertions, but his troops perceiving the fierce resolution and increasing numbers of the enemy, began to evince an inclination to cease the struggle. Almenara, exasperated, called upon them to do their duty, when, fortunately for the termination of the contest, he received a mortal wound, and Antonio Perez was rescued at the very gates of the inquisition, and carried back to his former prison.

Intelligence being conveyed to Philip of the failure of Almenara's attempt, and of the melancholy results by which it had been attended, swore that Aragon should rue for this violent opposition to his royal commands. He declared that province to be in a state of insurrection against the lawful sovereign, and gave immediate instructions for the preparation of a powerful army to invade it and chastise the heads of the rebellion. Don Alphonso Vargas was intrusted with the conduct of this formidable body, and he lost no time in making his appearance on the borders of Aragon.

Lañuza perceiving the imminency of the danger which threatened the territories over which he

ruled, and, on the other hand, resolved to preserve the rights of the province unviolated, convened the people in the principal square, where he read to them the laws of Aragon, and showed how its liberties were about to be trampled upon by the invasion of the King's troops. The people, with one accord, sent forth a shout of indignation. It was unanimously resolved to meet this aggression with a suitable resistance; the enthusiasm of the inhabitants soon spread through the whole province, and crowds of combatants repaired to its capital to fight for the conservation of those rights which the King scrupled not thus daringly to violate. Perez had, in the mean time, been interrogated; and as it appeared evident that the King showed the eagerness to seize him, in order to conceal his own participation in the murder of Escovedo, he was remanded for a future trial; but the people, considering him as the unfortunate victim of a despotic master, rescued him a second time from prison, and he succeeded in making his escape into France, where he remained for some time in security.

Meanwhile, Vargas had attacked Zaragoza, which, notwithstanding the heroism and resolution of its defenders, began to experience the distress consequent on want of provisions, as well as the disadvantages under which they laboured on account of not having competent leaders to direct their military operations. Thus, after a gallant

resistance, the city was one night surprised by treachery, and Vargas immediately seized the person of Lañuza, as well as every one of the principal individuals who had embraced the cause of opposition. But this was not the only, or the most galling misfortune which the Aragonians were compelled to witness and undergo. They had certainly not expected that any particular leniency would mark the conduct of a ruthless and vindictive King towards those who had opposed his arbitrary authority; yet no one was prepared to be a spectator of the dreadful event which followed the capture of the city, in the fate of the Justiza Lañuza, who had endeared himself to the people by his magnanimous conduct in the defence of their rights.

That illustrious individual, without even the formality of a mock trial, was ordered out for immediate execution. Horror-struck, the inhabitants beheld this mournful catastrophe. Lañuza died with the manly resolution which had uniformly distinguished his previous conduct; and his fellow-countrymen, with groans of bitterness and despair, contemplated the doom of one, in whose fate they justly considered that of the liberties of the province to be involved. Vargas was not satisfied with this rigorous measure, but caused the mansion of the Justiza to be committed to the flames, and his property confiscated to the crown. Besides this, he declared the Justiza and his prin-

cipal associates traitors and rebels, and had the bleeding head of the former exposed to public view like that of a felon; but the people, instead of contemplating that melancholy testimonial of the end of their freedom with the sentiments which Vargas would have wished, regarded it with the most profound respect, and poured the warmest benedictions on the martyr of liberty.

Philip approved the conduct of his general, whom he ordered to remain in the disaffected province until every sign of revolt should disappear. He next proceeded to abolish with due solemnity the constitution of Aragon, the decree for which was promulgated amidst the bitter complaints and inward curses of the people who could not, alas! prevent such a calamity. Philip received, by this means, some consolation for the disappointment of his hopes with respect to the death of his Secretary. He banished the Princess of Eboli from court, confiscated the property of Perez, and neglected no opportunity of exercising towards his relatives and friends that vindictive spirit which had been baffled by his victim.

The celebrated Secretary passed the remainder of his days in France; where, notwithstanding the esteem inspired by his great talents, he lived and died in the utmost destitution. He often cast a longing look towards his country, but he was doomed never more to see the land where he had presumed to be the rival of his sovereign.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Reigns of Philip the Third and Philip the Fourth,

FROM 1598 TO 1665.

A. D. 1598. Philip the Third succeeded his father at the age of twenty-one, and, according to the desire of the late king, he was immediately married to Margaret, the daughter of the Archduke Charles. The marriage ceremony was solemnized with unusual pomp at Valencia. The expensive wars of Flanders had impoverished the State, and the constant warfare of the preceding reign had caused agriculture and commerce to be neglected; thus the kingdom, which would have required the rule of a prince of extraordinary abilities, could not be expected to prosper under the government of one whose character would have fitted him better for a devout monk than a powerful monarch. He was very pious, but indolent and weak: hence the extraordinary ascendancy which the Duke of Lerma exercised over his mind. The consequences of the King's incapacity for ruling the nation soon became apparent, and his reign must be accounted one of the most ruinous to Spain.

1609. The struggle in the Netherlands ceased, and the independence of those states was recognized. But another important event took place the same year—an event which, according to the opinion of the most judicious and learned men, was one of the most powerful causes of the lamentable decline of the Spanish monarchy. This fatal occurrence was the edict proclaiming the expulsion of the Moriscoes from

the country, which measure was carried into effect with unusual zeal and activity. The law was everywhere proclaimed; and the Moriscoes, to the number of a million, were expelled from the land. The result of this ill-advised regulation was soon evident. The population of Spain, which had been lamentably thinned, both by the continual wars of the preceding reigns and the discovery of America, was now frightfully reduced; and what made the calamity greater was, that the expelled people were the most industrious and affluent of his Majesty's subjects.

1618. The king disgraced his favourite minister, the Duke of Lerma, through the representation and intrigues of his confessor and the Duke of Elzeda. Indeed, this reign was also remarkable for the spirit of intrigue which pervaded the court. Philip now sunk into a state of morbid melancholy, in which he continued until his death, which happened the 31st of March, 1621. His reign was also remarkable for the feats and cabals of the Duke of Ossuna and the Marquess of Bedmar, in Italy.

1621. Philip the Fourth succeeded his father at the early age of sixteen. He gave, however, promise of a fair reign, which unfortunately was not realized. He yielded himself up to the absolute control of his favourite, Don Gaspar de Guzman, Duke of Olivares, who was one of the most unfortunate in the list of Spanish statesmen. He first proved his influence over the king's mind by procuring the execution of Don Rodrigo Calderon, Marquess of Siete Iglesias, and the agent of the Duke of Lerma. He next exercised his revenge or policy against the Jesuit Alcaza and the celebrated Duke of Ossuna, who was thrown into a dungeon, where he finished his career. Olivares, by some strange fatality, or by the most extraordinary violation of the dictates of common policy, involved the nation in a series of disastrous wars, at a time when it would have been desirable for Spain

to have remained in peace, even at some sacrifice. The gradual decline of the kingdom during the preceding reign, instead of being checked by a happy administration, was accelerated by the mistakes of the present ministry. The sums of money which were necessary to carry on the war in the Netherlands and Italy, caused Olivares to lay a heavy tax on the Catalonians (1640), which produced a fatal insurrection.

But whilst this intestine commotion called the attention of the king to the east of his dominions, he was threatened with the loss of the west for ever. The Portuguese grew impatient at the taxes levied upon them for conducting the wars of Philip; and an order issued by Olivares, commanding that a considerable body of troops should proceed from Portugal to aid in quelling the rebellion in Catalonia, was the signal for a new disaster. The Portuguese resolved to declare themselves independent of the Spanish crown, and elected John, Duke of Braganza, to the throne of Portugal, having assassinated Varconcelos, who directed the affairs of that kingdom in a despotic manner.

1648. But, as if the reign of Philip the Fourth was to be remarkable in history for the dismemberment of his dominions, the United Provinces were also declared independent by the treaty of Westphalia.

1659. Another celebrated treaty during this reign is that of the Pyrenees, which consists of a hundred and twenty-five articles, the principal of which are those which declare these mountains to be the natural barriers of the kingdoms of Spain and France, and those which relate to the incapacity of the Infantas, who intermarried with the royal family of the latter kingdom, to receive the crown of the former. Olivares was dismissed from office, and Don Luis de Haro assumed the reins of government; but it was too late; the mischief produced by the late administration was irreparable; and the

kingdom continued to languish until the death of the king, which happened the 17th September, 1665. Philip the Fourth was a patron of letters, and a poet himself, and many distinguished writers and painters flourished in his reign.

The Fortunes of Calderon.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns,
What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins ?

POPE.

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The Fortunes of Calderon.

THE life of Don Rodrigo Calderon afforded an extraordinary instance of the caprice of fortune. This man had risen from the humble station of a domestic in the establishment of the Duke of Lerma, to the post of his confidential secretary, in which office his quick natural parts, singular activity of mind, deep cunning, and extraordinary effrontery, were useful to his master, whose confidence he gained by degrees, until he established himself firmly as a public character.

The elevation of Calderon was as rapid as it was unprecedented. He governed Lerma, who, in his turn, held absolute dominion over the King ; by which means the parvenu might be said to possess unbounded power in the nation. He was soon made secretary of state, and admitted to the confidence of his sovereign. He was subsequently ennobled, made Count de Oliver, and then Marquess of Siete Iglesias, having in his various employments accumulated vast wealth. It would be superfluous to enumerate the list of services and merits by which he arrived at the enjoyment of so

splendid a destiny ; but, at a time when a spirit of intrigue ruled the court, and commanded a weak monarch, it is not difficult to conceive that he who possessed the capabilities requisite for manœuvring, had a decided advantage over real unobtrusive talent and worth. But, besides the merits which Calderon possessed, and by which he had contrived to mount the ladder of fortune, he had other means of advancement. They were, certainly, not very honourable ; but, in the career of ambition, a man seldom pursues a direct line, and Calderon, indeed, was never afraid of the above-mentioned annoyance, but toiled perseveringly, without minding, for a single moment, any humiliations. Thus, at the same time that he served the King in the capacity of secretary, he was no less useful to the prince, his son, in that of a pander to his pleasures. Young Philip, who afterwards became sovereign of Spain, was as dissipated as could be desired by Calderon, to display both his zeal and his capabilities to serve. The Prince soon felt a great predilection for a man so complaisant and devoted ; nor did the King find any objection to this attachment, since he considered it conducive to the improvement of the young Prince in the science of politics. The Duke of Lerma, who afterwards became a pious cardinal, was not completely ignorant of the good service which his confidant was rendering the Prince ; but still arguing upon a jesuitical principle, since then exploded, he

saw no great harm in encouraging a little mischief, that great good might result.

The Duke of Lerma, having such powerful reasons to offer in vindication of Calderon, very obligingly winked at the commission of these small peccadilloes. The Prince was tenderly loved by his father, and accordingly possessed great influence over his mind: it was therefore a very important point to preserve his favour by every possible means. Thus was Calderon, by a most happy pliability, both of character and talents, enabled to be serviceable to the four principal persons in Spain: the King, the Prince, Lerma, and Don Rodrigo Calderon; and his zeal and industry were in accordance with the multiplicity and variety of his avocations. In the same day he could intrigue for Lerma, arrange the State, amuse the King, and gratify the Prince. He was equally skilful in transacting the affairs of the nation and the affairs of the heart, and would, with equal readiness, accompany the King in his morning devotions, and attend the Prince in his nocturnal expeditions.

It was a dark December night when Calderon and the Prince sallied forth, closely muffled and disguised, bent on a plan which had for some time occupied the meditations of both. This exploit was nothing less than that of smuggling a nun out of a convent. A young girl, of family and connexions, had suddenly abjured the world, to the

astonishment of all Madrid. They knew her to be tenderly attached to Don Martin Fonseca, a young gentleman of birth, but of very slender fortune. Their union was opposed by the parents of Beatriz, and it was generally believed that the unfortunate girl had been obliged unwillingly to enter the gloom of a cloister. Fonseca was known to Calderon on account of the exertions which he was making to obtain a decree from court for the liberation of Beatriz, ere she professed. He had, however, been completely unsuccessful in his attempts, and Calderon advised him to take Beatriz from the convent; which counsel, Fonseca, instigated by love and despair, resolved to adopt. He found means to communicate with his mistress, and determined upon a plan for her escape from the convent and flight to France.

Fonseca seeing Calderon apparently attached to his interests, and knowing him also to be a man of great resources and power, readily made him his confidant, and took no steps without a previous consultation with the secretary of state. The lover, in one of his transports of grief and love, deluded by a spark of excusable vanity, showed the portrait of Beatriz to his counsellor. This was a most imprudent act — Calderon was struck with the surpassing beauty of the young nun, and his active mind soon harboured thoughts, dangerous to the happiness of the deluded and impas-

sioned lover. He continued, however, to beguile Fonseca with professions of zeal for his interests, and concerted with him the plan for the abduction of the nun from the convent. A night and hour were fixed upon; the consent of Beatriz was obtained; and every preparation made to carry the scheme into practice.

Don Martin Fonseca was to proceed, attended only by Calderon, to the garden of the convent, from which they were to penetrate into the chapel, where the nun was to await them, concealed in a confessional since the hour of the night orisons. The porter had been bribed, and a master-key made to open the back-door of the chapel, while another friend and the brother of Fonseca were to be in readiness, with horses at that side of Madrid which points to Fuencarral, where the straight road to France could be taken.

These several arrangements being made, the appointed night was anxiously expected for the accomplishment of the design. The beauty of the nun had from the first suggested the idea to the perfidious Calderon, that she would be a most desirable offering to his young and royal master. A scheme as daring as it was deep and treacherous, soon occupied his mind. He determined to avail himself of the confidence reposed on him by Fonseca, to carry his deceitful plans into effect; he possessed the master-key, was known to the porter

of the convent, and with a little of that effrontery of which he had so plentiful a stock, he made no doubt he should be able to get the nun into his power.

Calderon had praised her beauty in such glowing terms to the Prince, that it was no difficult matter to fire his imagination, and excite an ardent desire in his heart to be acquainted with Beatriz. He accordingly followed implicitly the instructions of his unprincipled monitor and favourite, and had not scrupled to embark in an enterprise full of danger, beset with difficulties, and threatening the most disastrous results.

“A most fitting night this for our adventure,” remarked the Prince; “what say you, Rodrigo?”

“What should I say? that the moon and stars are on our side, since they so complaisantly withdraw their light, that we may carry on our gallant exploit without fear of detection.”

“Rodrigo,” said the Prince, after a pause, “I have often had proof that thou art a most skilful rogue, and very fortunate withal; yet I feel I know not what about my heart, which tells me that the present adventure is the wildest and most perilous we have ever yet encountered.”

“And, what matters it, Señor,” said Calderon, coolly, “as long as we are sure of coming away victorious? and of this I cannot bring myself to entertain a doubt.”

“ I am not so sanguine. Besides, our pranks have become rather notorious of late ; and should my royal father——”

“ God save the mark !” cried Calderon, laughing, “ you surely fear nothing from that quarter, as long as Don Rodrigo Calderon has absolute command over the King, Lerma, and the whole nation ! Come, we are near the spot.”

“ Smuggling a nun,” quoth the Prince, in a mood of mixed pleasure and alarm ;—“ it is a bold enterprize.”

“ Why yes,” replied the secretary, unconcernedly, “ it would afford the ingenious Lope de Vega a most glorious plot for one of his plays ; though, by the bye, I think that *Phœnix of geniuses** now upon the wane. Besides, since he has arrayed himself in clerical habiliments, his sportive muse is silent ; and we have the dullest *Autos*† that ever made a reasonable man gape and fall asleep ; yet they suit the religious taste of the King, and therefore it is meet *Autos* should be written, acted, and reasonable men sent to sleep.”

“ Why yes,” said the Prince, “ the *Phœnix* himself goes to sleep with a vengeance—*dormitat Homerus* ; but then there’s thy namesake, Calderon, making a prodigious stir ; and there is also that marvellous wit, the hair-brained, coxcombical Moreto, giving promise of future excellence.”

* Name given to Lope de Vega. † Religious Dramas.

“ And then there is your gracious self,” interposed Calderon, with an obsequious bow. “ So I think at some future period you may turn the present adventure to account. But let us quicken our pace, or we shall be too late for the appointment. I promised Fonseca to go and fetch him at half-past eleven—how he will start when——”

“ But, harkye, Rodrigo, should he in his impatience hasten to the spot instead of waiting for thy arrival?”

“ Dispel such apprehensions, Señor—the thing cannot be. He conceives that the whole success of the plot rests entirely with me, and he would be afraid to deviate an atom from the path which I have marked out. But here we are arrived; now comes the most delicate part of the business.”

They had now reached the convent, when the clock struck the midnight hour; the darkness was complete, and the stillness that reigned around, together with the lugubrious sound of the bell, might inspire very different thoughts from those which actuated the Prince and his conductor. With great caution they groped their way to the back wall of the convent, where they indistinctly perceived a shadowy form moving slowly to and fro.

“ See you nothing, Rodrigo?” whispered the Prince; “ there’s a figure close to the gloomy wall—should it be Fonseca?”

“ Hush, my Liege, and follow me. There is no danger—that individual is not the lover.”

“ Who then ?”

“ Why, the porter, who is on the look-out for us. Now, hold your peace, and let me do all the rest.”

He then coughed twice.

“ Blessed be Heaven!” said the figure, suddenly halting.

“ And all the saints,” muttered Calderon.

“ Don Rodrigo, is it you, sir ?”

“ Yes, Benito, and I applaud thy zeal ; we are, as thou seest, just in time for the reverberation of the last sound of midnight—it yet tingles in the ear : now let us make good speed, for the night air blows too keenly to stand here upon idle parlance. Besides, these Madrid winds play the devil with an honest man’s lungs.”

“ Come on, then, my honoured cavalier,” said the false porter ; and Calderon and his companion advanced towards a narrow gate, which was opened by their guide.

“ Now, my Liege,” said Don Rodrigo softly to the Prince, “ keep closely muffled, lest this clown should recognise the deceit before it is desirable—he imagines all the time that you are Don Martin Fonseca.”

Calderon now provided himself with a small dark lantern, and half groped his way to the chapel ; the Prince followed him closely, and in this manner they arrived at the desired spot. Cal-

deron then applied his master-key; the door was gently pushed open, and the adventurous intruders gained admittance into the place of worship. A solitary lamp hung in the middle of the chapel, which conveyed but an insufficient and gloomy light to the shadowy objects around. The images of the saints frowned awfully, niched in their altars, and everything was calculated to inspire sensations of dread and respect; but Calderon was not a man to allow the indulgence of such feelings, especially when he was engaged in an adventure that required a very different tenor of mind. He made up to a confessional, from which a female figure was seen issuing slowly and cautiously.

“Beatriz, be of good courage,” said Calderon softly, “yonder is Don Martin; come along, and tremble not, for we shall be soon out of the reach of pursuit.”

“Don Rodrigo,” replied the nun in a low tone of mixed alarm and gratitude, “it is indeed an act of most unbounded generosity and friendship in a person of your station to take such interest in our unfortunate destiny.”

“Hush, lady,” said the Secretary, “talk not of gratitude now, but lend me your hand, and let me lead you hence.”

The trembling nun yielded the requested hand, and in the utmost agitation advanced towards the pretended Fonseca.

“There,” gently said Calderon, “take her, Don Martin; but, for mercy’s sake, postpone your mutual vows of love and endearments till we are far from this gloomy spot.”

This advice was followed to the letter; the Prince tenderly squeezed the hand of Beatriz, and she answered the soft pressure with a sigh of mixed tenderness and emotion. They, however, did not attempt to speak, both intent upon flying from the reach of danger with all possible speed. In this manner they gained the outer gate, where the porter was impatiently waiting their arrival.

“Is all safe?” whispered he in agitation.

“Yes, Benito,” calmly replied Calderon, “thou hast nothing to fear. Now, Heaven conduct thy steps, and here is wherewith to help thee in any journey thou mayest think proper to undertake.”

“Thank you, Don Rodrigo,” answered the treacherous porter, “the atmosphere of this convent will be somewhat too hot for my constitution when the present pastime comes to be known, and, therefore, I have made up my mind to set out on my travels with all becoming expedition.”

“’Tis meet thou shouldst,” returned Calderon; “there, there, take the purse; it contains the price agreed upon, with an additional trifle, which I give to testify my gratitude.”

“Heaven bless such generous cavaliers!” muttered the porter. “Farewell, beauteous damsel,

and may you meet all the joys and happiness which you expect!"

The two cavaliers now retreated from the convent with their prize at a brisk pace. Meantime, Don Martin Fonseca was waiting at his house the arrival of Calderon in the deepest agitation. The excitement occasioned by the approaching adventure—the hopes and fears by which his heart was alternately stormed—the uncertainty of his future destiny—the necessity of abandoning his country and friends, together with a variety of other thoughts equally harassing and absorbing, produced the most violent effects upon his mind and conduct. His brother entered his apartment to announce that the horses were ready.

"Well, Martin," said his brother, "everything is prepared—cheer up, for you look as agitated and alarmed as if the plot were sure to miscarry."

"Diego, did not Don Rodrigo say that he should be here exactly at the half-hour after eleven?"

"Yes, but what boots it?—five minutes more or less make no difference, I should imagine."

"Five minutes, brother! why, it scarcely wants ten to twelve, the hour at which we were to be at the place of our appointment: what can possibly occasion this delay in Don Rodrigo?"

"A thousand causes!" answered the younger Fonseca. "Why, you seem to forget, brother

that he has to direct the whole affairs of the State ; for it is well ascertained, that the pompous and ceremonious Duke of Lerma can determine upon nothing without the aid and concurrence of his secretary and favourite."

"There is some strength in that," answered Fonseca ; "but yet, if he is prevented from fulfilling his engagement, why not send word of his inability to afford his assistance to-night? — I can wait no longer, this suspense is dreadful — words cannot convey an idea of the tortures which I now endure: I must hasten to the convent without Calderon."

"What, alone?"

"No, Diego, you must accompany me. Don Fadrique Lopez will proceed to Fuencarral ; you are not wanted there, and I may stand in need of your attendance. Hark ! 'tis striking twelve ; even at the briskest pace, it will take us a quarter of an hour to reach the convent."

"Then let us hasten, in the name of all the saints," said the younger brother.

Not a minute was then lost. As the cavaliers were already armed and equipped for the adventure, they directed, without any obstacle, their course towards the destined spot. Despite of the darkness, they ran rather than walked along the silent and deserted streets : they arrived at the turning of the street that led to the nunnery,

when they perceived three obscure figures advancing rapidly towards them.

“What are those?” muttered Diego; “some marauders, no doubt—surely no holy purpose can bring them here at this hour of the night. We must stop them.”

“By what right?” observed Fonseca. “Why, we may with just as much reason excite the suspicions of those nocturnal rambles; indeed, by their demeanour, they seem to doubt us.”

“Here, then, I post myself,” replied the younger brother; “for something tells me that all is not right.

The strangers boldly advanced; the foremost drew his weapon, and, conceiving that the persons who came in their way were nocturnal prowlers in search of booty, he appeared disposed to dispute a free passage. As he came near them, he accordingly cried out in a reckless and imperious tone—

“Remove immediately, or look to the results.”

“Merciful Heavens!” cried Fonseca. “Don Rodrigo Calderon, is it really you? Can this be possible?”

Calderon remained speechless, thunderstruck at this fatal discovery; and his silence increased the wonder of Don Martin.

“What means this, sir?” he resumed in a severe tone. “You appear abashed, agitated. I have been waiting for you.”

“I was now hastening to your dwelling,” answered Calderon, quickly recovering his self-command.

“Indeed!” returned Fonseca; “and who bring you there for companions? As I am a man of honour, there is a woman!—her attire, too! Who are you, lady?” he added, now elevating his voice.

“O Heavens!—Fonseca! my lord! my love! are you there?” cried the nun wildly. “What mystery is this?—Am I betrayed?”

“Treason! vile treason!” cried Fonseca fiercely. “Oh! Calderon, is this well? Could I expect such dastardly conduct from a man in your station? Miscreant! look upon thy justly-enraged enemy; nothing shall screen thee from my revenge.”

“Nothing but my trusty sword,” answered Don Rodrigo coolly.

“Oh, spare him! do not kill my husband!” shrieked the nun aloud, struggling hard to disengage herself from the arms of the Prince.

The younger Fonseca, in the first pressure of bewilderment, knew not what course to adopt. He thought of attempting the rescue of Beatriz, but, on the other hand, did not like to abandon his brother's side. A desperate combat had now ensued, in which the blind rage of Fonseca could ill contend against the steady courage of his adver-

sary. Diego could no longer remain an idle spectator of the danger in which he saw his brother involved, and joined him in the combat. But his assistance came too late, the struggle had been too fierce to last—Fonseca uttered a deep groan and fell, pierced with a mortal wound.

The despairing cries of Beatriz now redoubled the confusion of the scene. Persons were heard running through the streets to the place of action, and Don Rodrigo perceived that a hasty retreat was advisable before it was entirely frustrated. Besides, the Prince did not feel at ease in his present situation, and had sufficient delicacy to dread a discovery. Seeing everything lost therefore, he abandoned his prize and retreated in the utmost precipitation from the dangerous spot. Calderon was not long in following the example of his master, and they secured their escape; for both the younger Fonseca, and a few persons who had arrived at the alarm, were now too much occupied in attending to the fallen man and his despairing mistress to waste their time in a doubtful pursuit.

Lights were soon procured, and every attention paid to the wounded Fonseca. His mistress filled the air with her piercing lamentations as she tenderly embraced her dying lover. She fixed her despairing eyes filled with tears upon his pallid countenance. A mournful smile was the only re-

turn she could obtain from the unfortunate Don Martin ; death had taken a firm grasp of his prey, and in a few minutes the wretched cavalier breathed his last in the embrace of his still more wretched mistress. But a new sensation speedily occupied the minds of the now greatly increased multitude. The sighs of a nun bestowing such tokens of love, and filling the air with vows and exclamations so foreign to her vocation and so sinful in their eyes, filled them at once with horror and amazement. Some considered the poor wretch to be deprived of her reason ; others, less charitable, attributed her conduct to a depraved disposition. But, amidst the persons that were attracted to the place, there appeared a cavalier who in the despairing maiden recognised his own relative. The whole merits of the case were soon made known to him, and with a heart throbbing at once with shame, horror, and agony, he proceeded to secure the unfortunate Beatriz.

She shuddered when she beheld the dreaded form of her cousin before her. The feeling of shame heightened the pangs of despairing love ; she made an effort to shrink from the grasp of her kinsman ; but, despite of her rending cries and pathetic appeals, she was forcibly carried from the corpse of her lover and safely lodged under the paternal roof. The bleeding remains of the ill-fated Fonseca were then conveyed to his dwelling,

and his brother followed the mournful cortege in the most profound affliction.

Meantime, the Prince and Calderon had gained the palace in perfect safety, and the former congratulated himself that he had escaped a detection which would have extremely mortified his pride.

The deepest secrecy was enjoined on Calderon, who now set his wits to work, in order to screen himself from the storm which he perceived would blow on the morrow. It was but natural to expect that the surviving Fonseca would strain every point to obtain redress or vengeance; but the great power which he derived from his station made the Secretary confident that, provided he could trim up some excuse, however improbable, he should set all his enemy's efforts in abeyance.

But Calderon had relied too implicitly on the constancy of fortune. The invariable success which had attended all his undertakings, had accustomed him to defy danger and to provoke fate. His arrogance was equal to his ambition, and his confidence superior to both, though he was well aware that a powerful cabal was continually at work to procure the downfall of the Duke of Lerma, in whose ruin his own was necessarily involved. The King's confessor was at the head of the plot, in which it was suspected that the Duke of Uceda, Lerma's own son, was deeply im-

plicated. But Calderon affected to despise their manœuvres, trusting confidently to the double influence which he possessed over the monarch and the heir to the crown.

On the day following the death of Don Martin Fonseca, Calderon perceived his patron Lerma in the deepest agitation.

“What ails you, my Lord Duke?” inquired Don Rodrigo.

“Oh! my friend, we are lost,” groaned the minister. “I come from the presence-chamber, where the cold reserve of the King, and the triumphant look of that intriguing Jesuit, his confessor, clearly foretel me that some change is about to take place, in which I am greatly interested.”

“Nay, Duke, your apprehensions carry you too far: the power of the smooth and accursed Jesuit, and that of thy own unnatural son, are not so great as to withstand our own.”

“Calderon,” resumed Lerma, in a grave tone, “what death is this that has occasioned so many mysterious whispers and significant looks about court?”

“If that be the cause of your fears, my Lord,” answered the Secretary calmly, “banish them instantly from your mind; I have provided against that danger. I killed Fonseca myself; he had confidently availed himself of my patronage to

allure a nun from a convent ; I of course affected to be in his interests, but with a subtle artifice contrived to draw the nun from the convent, with the intention of carrying her to her parents, when I was attacked by Fonseca, and in self-defence I slew him.”

“That story will scarcely help thee, Calderon,” said the Duke, with an incredulous shake of the head. “The hatred, both of the court and the people, is even greater towards thee than me ; no one can bear patiently thy extraordinary elevation ; and, mark me well, the fall from such a stupendous height will be terrible and mortal : take therefore good counsel in time, and put a competent space of land between you and your enemies.”

“I cannot conceive the danger to be so imminent. The Prince——”

“Trust not to him when once the tide of fortune is against thee. Nay, to justify his own irregular conduct, you will find him ready to blacken yours.”

The event proved that the fears of the Duke were not ill-founded. His interest declined in an alarming degree, and the favours bestowed upon his ambitious son were equally diminished. The account of Fonseca’s death, and the incessant activity of his brother in exposing the details of that fatal event, became the current topic of the capital, and greatly aided the enemies of the present

ministry to work its ruin. Nor were the friends of Fonseca and the parents of Beatriz slow in exerting their endeavours to arrive at the same result. The unfortunate nun had been reconveyed to the convent, where she lingered out the remainder of her existence in a wretched and never-ending sorrow.

But the principal actor in the dismal drama in which she had borne so melancholy a part was soon to receive the punishment due to his crimes. The Duke of Lerma was dismissed from office and banished from court. He had been sagacious enough to procure a cardinal's hat, and this sacred shelter protected his head from further peril. But far different was the lot of his favourite and creature, Calderon. All those blows, which were averted from his master, were hurled with tenfold violence upon his devoted head. During his power he had contrived to make to himself numerous enemies ; and thus, on the day of his disgrace, an universal joy prevailed in Madrid.

Upon the dismissal of the Duke of Lerma, Calderon having neglected to follow the advice of his patron, was suddenly arrested, loaded with irons, and thrown into a dungeon. His titles and vast wealth availed him not, and he was taught to prepare for a trial, in which the multiplicity and darkness of the charges preferred against him could present no hope of vindication. The unfor-

tunate Secretary was assailed on every side with the imputation of crimes, of which no less than two hundred and forty-four were laid to his charge. However, by the exertions of the Prince, he was declared innocent of the greater part of them, and his head was at all events free from the block, though his person might be subjected to other punishments.

But the enemies of Calderon grew clamorous at the decision of a tribunal which they loudly accused of corruption, and the timid body ordered that the trial of the devoted man should be reconsidered. New accusations were not wanting. He was denounced for innumerable acts of extortion and malversation of the public money whilst in office; of venality in filling the posts under his care; of corrupting the character of the heir to the crown; and of a considerable number of homicides and other capital charges. This second trial proceeded slowly: the unfortunate Calderon was then commanded to prepare for the rack, as the means of making him confess his crimes and declare his accomplices.

Don Rodrigo, at the first intimation of the frightful torments he was to undergo, shuddered with horror; but he soon recovered a stern composure and a firmness of resolution that might enable him to go through the appalling trial with manly deportment. He was subjected to the

most excruciating tortures ; the groans of suffering nature, the convulsion of his frame, the startling horror of his agonized looks, the paralysed features, all indicated the frightful nature of his agony. But it was in vain ; he obstinately persisted in concealing both his crimes and his accomplices. Soon after, the King died. The miserable wretch then fondly hoped that the accession of his former companion to the crown would open the doors of this darksome prison. Alas ! how dreadfully was he deceived in his flattering expectations ! Philip the Fourth, in the splendour of his new dignity, and the hurry of important affairs, totally forgot the misfortunes of his former favourite and devoted confidant.

On the other hand, the new minister, the Count of Olivares, was, if possible, a more bitter and implacable enemy than any other of those who had conspired against the fallen Calderon. Not a single voice was raised in his behalf ; and the King, who might have saved him, either forgot him entirely, or was loth to disoblige his minion Olivares, by attempting anything in favour of his rival. Don Rodrigo Calderon was at length fairly convicted of murder, and condemned to death. This sentence was immediately carried into execution ; but he underwent his fate with such noble resignation and magnanimous fortitude, that the people, who had been recently so horribly exasper-

ated against him, beheld his doom with sensations of sorrow and regret.

Thus ended Don Rodrigo Calderon, Marquess of Siete Iglesias, the story of whose singular elevation and fearful downfall makes a striking episode in the annals of Spain.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

Reign of Charles the Second; the last Sovereign of the House of Austria.

A. D. 1665. CHARLES was only four years old, and of a sickly constitution, when his father died. On this account the regency of the kingdom devolved on his mother, who entrusted the helm of government to the Jesuit Nitard, who was appointed Inquisitor General. The nation was, at this period, in a most deplorable state, and the disastrous effects of the administration of Olivares were everywhere seen.

1668. The independence of Portugal was solemnly recognized, and Alphonso the Fourth acknowledged as King of that nation. On the other hand, the Spaniards were indignant at the elevation and favouritism of Valenzuela, who, from a simple page, had risen to the most unbounded confidence and favour of the Queen Regent. Very injurious rumours began to circulate. The nobility exclaimed loudly against the arrogant minion, and upon the completion of his fifteenth year, the young King was induced to assume the reins of government. Valenzuela was then arrested and banished to the Philippine Islands, while all his property was confiscated, and his titles and honours annulled. Don John of Austria was called to the management of public affairs. The distress of the country [1678] obliged this minister to agree to the treaty of Nimeguen, by which Franche-Comté was ceded to Louis the Fourteenth, and a marriage concluded

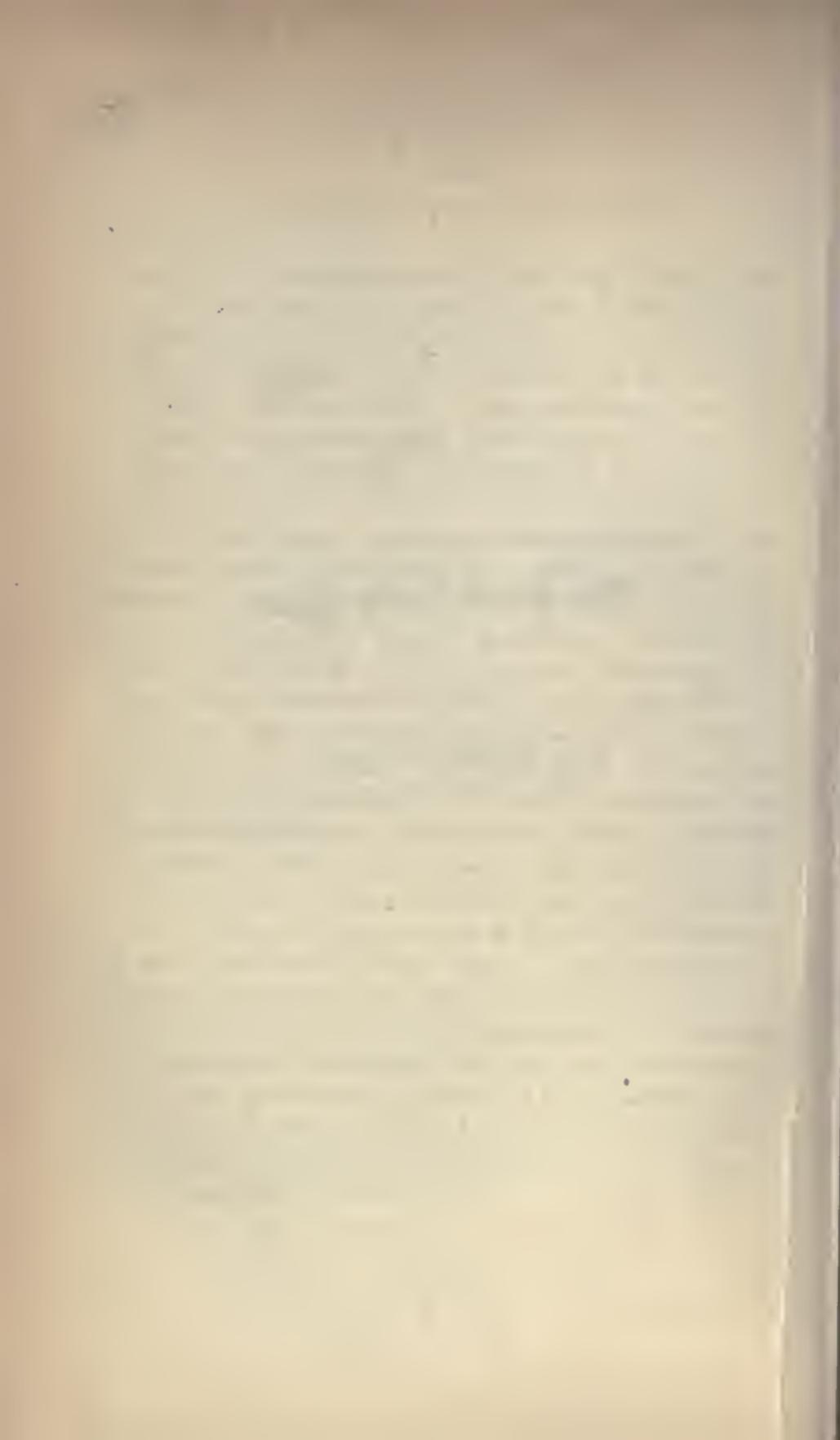
between the King of Spain and Louisa of Orleans, the niece of the French monarch.

1696. The precarious state of the King's health, and there being no heir, brought forward three candidates for the succession to the crown of Spain. These were, the Emperor Leopold, the electoral Prince of Bavaria, and the Dauphin of France. The pretensions of these personages were supported with great spirit by their several parties. A series of intrigues was commenced, unparalleled in the annals of courts. The Admiral of Castile, and the Count of Oropesa, with the new Queen, strongly advocated the claims of the Emperor; while Portocarrero, the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, and Rocaberti, the Inquisitor General, were equally zealous in forwarding those of Louis the Fourteenth in favour of the Duke of Anjou. The four last years of the King's life were distinguished [1697] by the hourly cabals of the parties. But a most extraordinary scheme was now resorted to by the partisans of the French court. It was circulated about, that the King was bewitched by the influence of the Austrian faction, and that Oropesa and his colleagues had possessed Charles with a demon. This extravagant fiction was readily believed, and the King was accordingly exorcised by a German Capuchin, who, by his practices, increased the gloom and malady of the King. After a succession of disgusting manœuvres, the King was at length induced to sign a will in favour of Philip of Anjou, which he, however, did repugnantly, notwithstanding it was the advice of the Pope. The unfortunate Charles died [1700] shortly after this act, and in him ended the house of Austria in Spain; after which, a prince of the line of Bourbon, which reigns at present, ascended the throne.

The Cardinal's Plot.

“ But desperation's force
Will drive a wise man mad.”

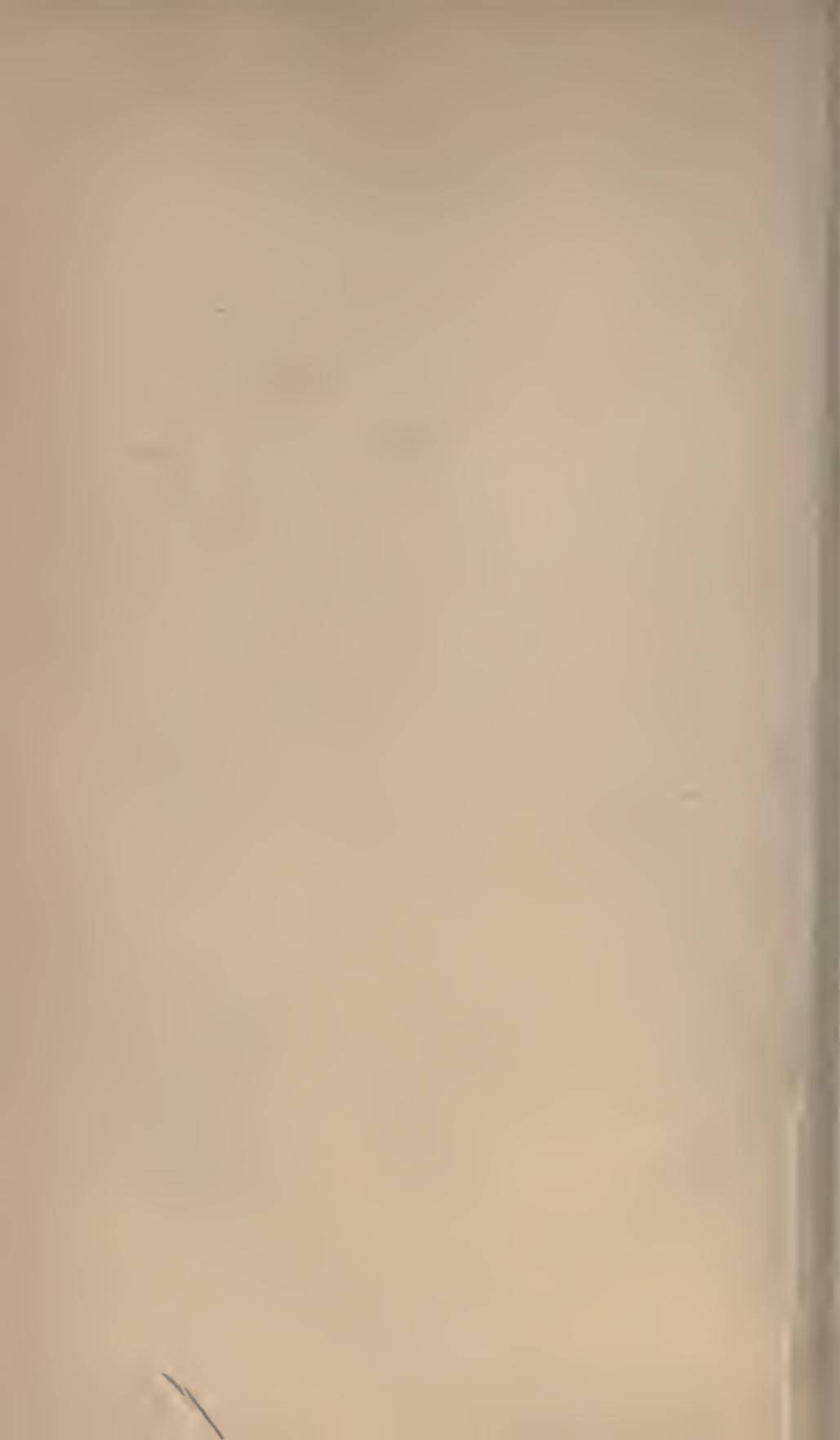
OLD SONG.



ROMANCE OF HISTORY.



THE CARDINAL'S PLOT.



The Cardinal's Plot.

“ TELL me not that, Perico ; I believe neither in sorcery, nor witchcraft, nor idolatry, nor anything of the sort ; it is all a trick — do you hear that ? ”

“ Hear ! good Heavens ! the dead must hear you, Gabriel, if you continue to bawl in that manner ; but let us say no more about it, brother ; for, after all our arguing, and disputing, and clamouring, we shall return to the point from which we started, and be equally in love with our own opinion. ”

“ Oh ! I know that thou art as headstrong as any Biscayan, or thorough-bred Aragonian. Yes, Perico, that's your misfortune ; for, to your preposterous ignorance, you add a tenacity of opinion that's quite astonishing ; then you are such a superstitious fool, I am ashamed of you ! ”

“ And I am ashamed of you, brother, for I am sure you care little about religion. I wonder if you believe in the devil : you believe in nothing. ”

“ Ay, ay, I am an incredulous dog, certainly — a prodigious sinner — because I believe not a syllable of the silly stories told of our poor King, God bless him ! ”

“ Well, God bless him !” said Perico, doggedly, “ for the unfortunate Don Carlos stands in good need of God’s protection, if he is to be delivered from the awful situation in which he now suffers ; ’tis no pleasant guest that tenants his body !”

“ Psha ! Perico, how can you be such a fool ?”

“ Holy Virgin ! Why, you will deny anything, Gabriel. So you don’t believe that our poor King is bewitched ?”

“ Bewitched ?—Nonsense ! no more so than you or I.”

“ You really don’t think that he is tormented with an evil spirit ?” said Perico, with simple earnestness.

“ No, I do not—it is all a trick ; but, mum !”

“ There, there — the old song again ! A trick ! But why should there be a trick ? Besides, do you think it is so easy to deceive so many people—persons, too, very religious and very learned ? And does not the conduct also of the King himself demonstrate that he is bewitched ?”

“ Why, the conduct of Charles the Second,” calmly replied Gabriel, “ demonstrates that he is very, very unhappy, but nothing else.”

“ But what, or who, makes him unhappy ?” observed Perico, with triumphant simplicity ; “ answer me that. Who makes him unhappy but the devil, by whom he is possessed ?”

“ I tell you what, brother, you are quite out ; it

is not one devil, but half-a-dozen or so that cause his unhappiness."

"How's that? God bless me! Half-a-dozen devils, say you! half-a-dozen! How shall so mighty a host be exorcised?"

"Why, really," replied his brother, smiling, "it will be no easy matter to perform that operation on the devils to which I allude. Not all the holy water in Spain will be able to drive them away from the King!"

"Indeed! then his case is desperate! Half-a-dozen devils!"

"Yes," repeated Gabriel, laughing; "one has assumed the semblance of a Cardinal, and goes by the name of Portocarrero; another is a fallow-looking personage, with a very demure look, and occupies no less a post than that of Inquisitor General, and calls himself Rocaberti——"

"Hold, hold, brother!" interposed Perico, alarmed; "you are uttering treason, and, should any one hear us——"

"A third," resumed Gabriel, not heeding, "bears the appearance of a reverend friar, known by the name of Father Froylan Diaz; and this sprite, being the confessor of the King, is the most dangerous of all the tormenting devils."

"Enough, brother, I will hear no more; your language is irreligious, and savours of impiety. Why, you are making light of the names of the

most illustrious persons, and the best of the King's friends too !”

“ The King's friends !” interrupted Gabriel, with a smile of scorn ; “ a [singular method they have adopted of showing their respect and attachment ! And then the mummery of the exorcism, and that stentorian German monk ! Why, he alone is enough to drive the soundest man out of his senses. I have no patience to hear of such things. Well, well ! mark me, Perico, no good will come of these fooleries.”

“ Fooleries ! Holy Saint Joseph defend us ! What call you fooleries, brother ? Why, it is well known that the King is bewitched, and that the persons you so vilely and unjustly abuse are doing all their best to drive the evil spirit away.”

“ By all the Saints, Perico, you are mad ! How came our unfortunate sovereign to be bewitched ?”

“ Why, you know as well as I,” returned Perico, with simple credulity, “ this has been the diabolical work of the Marquess of Melgar, the Count of Oropesa, and other wicked men, who keep the King under their despotic control.”

“ And so the King's friends, as you call them, set that bawling German to torment and worry the unfortunate monarch : and do they bring that singular nun all the way from Cangas de Tineo ? Well, never was a whole people bamboozled in this manner before ! But, as I have said already,

'tis vain to try to convince you, possessing, as you do, such a fancy for all that is marvellous and out of the way; besides, you have been in the service of Rocaberti, and it is very natural you should uphold him and his colleagues."

This dialogue took place between two young men holding subordinate stations in the royal palace. The topic of their conversation was one of universal interest at the time; one that formed the subject of conversation, and engrossed the attention of the most indifferent. Spain was involved in a series of intrigues, unparalleled in history. The King having no heirs, and his ill state of health making it probable that the throne would shortly be vacant, no less than three competitors started up for the crown of Spain: the Emperor Leopold, the Prince of Bavaria, and the Dauphin of France. Of the three, the last, under the protection of Louis the Fourteenth, possessed by far the strongest party in the Peninsula at that moment.

This was owing to the superior talents for intrigue displayed by the agents of Louis, no less than by that monarch's effrontery in infringing the treaties, and enforcing his wishes by violent means. His great power, aided by the instruments which he managed in Spain, gave him a decided superiority over the hitherto more favoured, and certainly more rightful candidate; but, with all

his exertions, he was far from bringing his ambitious schemes to a successful termination.

The Prince of Bavaria dying, one candidate was removed, and the two remaining claimants acquired additional power. The party of Leopold, who demanded the crown for his son, the Archduke Charles, appeared the strongest, and had succeeded in drawing over the King to their interest. This was chiefly ascribed to the manœuvres and influence of the Queen, the Admiral of Castile, the Marquess of Melgar, and the Count of Oropesa, who were depicted as having enslaved the mind of the King. But it was more than probable that his inclination would favour the claims of his own family, rather than those of the French monarch, for whom he entertained no very friendly sentiments.

Meantime, Louis had been fortunate enough to bring over to his party those persons who, by means of their character and station, would by repeated persecutions have the greatest power over Charles. The Cardinal Archbishop Portocarrero, the Inquisitor General Rocaberti, and Father Diaz, the King's confessor, were attached to the interest of the French monarch, and they were most powerful instruments in the hand of the bold and enterprising, no less than profoundly intriguing Louis.

One of the most extraordinary and almost incredible expedients was now resorted to by his party. This was to declare that Charles was pos-

sessed by demons, and that the Austrian partisans were guilty of having bewitched their Sovereign. Strange and ridiculous as this assertion may appear, it nevertheless gained many believers, and was in the sequel greatly conducive to the furtherance of the plans of the King of France. The weak health of Charles the Second, and the melancholy tone of mind under which he laboured, contributed not a little to strengthen so ridiculous an opinion. It rapidly gained ground: the unfortunate Charles was reduced to the most pitiable situation, and his tormentors endeavoured to persuade him that he was really possessed by demons.

Suffering under the pressure of malady, and a morbid sensibility, Charles was reclining in a musing attitude, when Portocarrero and Rocaberti were announced. Though their appearance always produced the most melancholy impression on the King, yet he dared not refuse admittance to such sacred personages. They therefore entered, accompanied by Father Diaz, the confessor, and the most useful member of the cabal.

“Sire,” said the Cardinal, assuming a look of becoming awe, “the people are very anxious to see your Majesty restored to your natural state.”

The wretched Charles uttered a groan, and cast a mournful and imploring look on his tormentors, for he justly anticipated a renewal of the accustomed persecution.

“Alas!” he said despondingly, “my malady

grows worse, and I can scarcely expect to recover—a preparation for death is the only task that must occupy the remainder of my days.”

“That is a resolution most becoming in a Christian prince,” answered the Inquisitor General; “but, Sire, the evil under which your Majesty labours is, alas! of a more dreadful character than mere physical disease.”

“The melancholy of my soul is so deep, so rooted, so overpowering,” returned the King, in emotion, “that no human power will be able to remove it, and restore peace and serenity to my existence.”

“Sire,” resumed the Cardinal Portocarrero, after a brief pause, “we are come, as in duty bound, to exercise the functions of our holy ministry, in order to deliver your Majesty, and to rescue you from the possession of the demons.”

The King stared in wild amazement, but the unabashed prelate calmly continued—

“Yes, Sire, by the good and tender anxiety of your confessor, Father Froylan Diaz, your Majesty must already have been made acquainted with the fatal truth. Your Majesty is bewitched, possessed by demons, and we come now to dislodge the fearful spirits.”

“Nay, your Eminence!” interposed the King, in a mood of agony and affright, “I feel confident that such a calamity has never befallen me, however it may be credited in general.”

“ Alas, Sire,” returned the Archbishop, with redoubled austerity of look and manner, “ you cannot, in your present state, judge for yourself, and must follow the instructions of your friends and devoted servants.”

“ And what come you to advise ?” said the King, in anxiety.

“ Your Majesty must submit to a religious practice, necessary to free you from the power of the dark spirits.”

“ Sir,” cried the King impatiently, “ my attachment to religion cannot be questionable, yet am I continually persecuted to perform religious ceremonies without intermission. Had I been the most guilty of mankind, so many acts of penance and prayer could scarcely have been required of me.”

“ There ! may God protect us !” cried the prelate fervently. “ See ! how the demon rebels against the acts of religion. Oh ! Sire, in the name of Heaven, and for the peace of your soul in this world, and its happiness in the next, I conjure you earnestly to listen to my paternal admonitions, and not reject the comforts of the church, so indispensable in your Majesty’s situation.”

The impressive tone in which these words were delivered, and the deep emotion discernible in the three catechisers, greatly moved the King: his softness of temper, and a natural dread which he had for any violent exertion of his will, induced

him to hearken patiently to the dictates of his monitors.

“ Speak, your Eminence,” he said placidly, “ I am willing to perform whatever you may consider necessary to the purposes of religion.”

“ As I have said,” resumed Portocarrero, gravely, “ your Majesty must submit to a pious practice.”

“ What practice?” demanded the King, with a sad smile.

“ Your Majesty must be exorcised !” replied the prelate.

“ Exorcised ! exorcised !” exclaimed the bewildered monarch.

“ Yes,” returned Portocarrero, in a dauntless tone and authoritative manner ; “ and the ceremony must not be delayed.”

“ Most Holy Fathers !” cried the King, eagerly addressing his monitors, “ in such awful matters it may perhaps be presumptuous in me to offer an opinion, but yet——”

“ Sire,” interrupted the Inquisitor General, with a gloomy and hollow tone that went to the King’s heart, “ what rebellion is this ? Do I not perceive the workings of the fearful demon ? Are we so blinded by prejudice, or so ignorant in theological matters, as not to see things in their proper light ? Sire, in the name of our Mother, the Church, whose child you are, I charge you to comply with her mandates ; any revolt against her authority shall be awfully visited on your head.”

The King was chilled, petrified at the imperative tone and terrific manner of the Inquisitor. A crowd of gloomy apprehensions thronged to his suffering heart, his mind was distracted with fearful images, and by the repeated machinations of the prelates he at length began to believe that he was really bewitched. He therefore made no further opposition to their wishes, but signified his readiness to be exorcised. This task devolved on the Father Confessor, who was already thoroughly instructed by his superiors as to the manner in which he was to proceed in the ceremony, and the questions he was to put to the King. They endeavoured, by working on the superstitious fears of Charles, to make him confess that he was really under the influence of magic, and that the authors of his calamity were the Admiral of Castile, Melgar, Oropesa, and the other chiefs of the Austrian party. By this plan they hoped to succeed in crushing the influence which those noblemen had over the King, and by removing them from court, the field would be left unembarrassed for the prosecution of ulterior intrigues.

Charles, indeed, bereft of the support of his counsellors, must, it was thought, fall an easy prey to the schemes of the French cabal; and the deplorable state into which he had sunk was highly favourable to the manœuvres of the Cardinal and the Inquisitor. The King, a timid and conscientious man, however he might oppose himself to

the desires of Louis, would at length yield to the thunders of the church, while the influence of Melgar and Oropesa over his mind, added to the dictates of his own heart, rendered the operation of intriguing extremely difficult, and called for the agency of some extraordinary and appalling means. The powers of religion, or rather of superstition, were accordingly summoned to the aid of the French party. To remove the obnoxious and powerful individual from the side of the monarch, was the grand stroke of policy; and as this consummation could never be effected by natural means, the Cardinal proceeded to employ the singular expedient of exorcism.

This was performed with the most awful solemnity by Father Diaz, the confessor. But, despite of all his endeavours, despite of his strict adherence to the subtle instructions given him by his superiors, the attempt proved totally unsuccessful. The King could not be brought over to confess that the Count of Oropesa and his associates were the authors of his misery. The friar went on exorcising in the best possible style, but to no purpose. Charles was most provokingly restive on the very points it was desired he should concede. Whenever any question tending to criminate the Admiral of Castile, the Marquess of Melgar, or the Count of Oropesa, was put to him, he resolutely and unhesitatingly answered in affirmation of their innocence.

Father Diaz reported the ill-success of his attempt to his employers: they were greatly disappointed; affected to be shocked, and resolved to persevere in despite of fate. The exorcist informed them that the King, though very pliant in everything else, would not admit that the partisans of the house of Austria had bewitched him. This was excessively provoking; no one cared how pliant Charles might be in any other point, if he should stubbornly oppose the precise one that it was meant he should concede. The Austrian party being the demons that the Cardinal and his associates wished to exorcise, it was indifferent to them whether or no the King remained in the power of other evil spirits, as long as those, most obnoxious, continued unexpelled.

The exorcism, however, of Father Diaz was not, in some respects, totally unproductive of good. If they did not attain the summit of their expectations, they at least succeeded in driving the unfortunate King into a state which bordered on melancholy madness. In such speculations the most fortunate result, next to that of forcibly convincing the reason, is that of destroying it: in the same manner that we see a skilful general rendering his cannon useless when he cannot make a better use of them. Thus far the enterprise of the prelates and their agent had been attended with success. A few more operations, and they might confidently expect to render the King as mad as they could

desire for their purpose. This flattering idea soothed a little the disappointment of the party; the success of their scheme was certainly delayed, but it could not fail to crown their labours in the end.

The wretched Charles soon gave strong proofs of the marvellous effects of the exorcism. It would appear, from external evidence, that the demons, instead of being repulsed, had increased in number, as well as in malignity toward their victim. His hypochondria was ten times more profound; he uttered dismal groans, grew restless and peevish, and now and then afforded symptoms of incipient mental aberration. His sincere friends became really alarmed, whilst the partisans of Austria, imagining that the unfortunate King was drawing to the term of his mortal career, redoubled their exertions to induce him to make a will declaring the Archduke Charles his successor to the throne.

Inclined as the King was to follow this advice, he had no strength to put it into execution. The Dauphin's party was on the alert, and, however secretly the machinations of one side might be conducted, they seldom escaped the vigilance of the other. Thus a competent check was always provided in time, and by this means the sufferings and trials of Charles were painfully increased. Adhering to their favourite scheme, Portocarrero determined to pursue the exorcising system: but, as the abilities of Father Diaz had not been suffi-

cient for so arduous a task, he now reflected deeply into whose hands he should entrust the important functions. A report was current among the people, that a nun of Cangas de Tineo, who had suffered under a whole legion of demons, had been most successfully freed from her unwelcome guests: the person who performed this admirable work was a German Capuchin friar.

The fame of the deed quickly spread through the country, and became the topic of general conversation. The praises of the Capuchin were everywhere spoken, and he acquired an amazing degree of popular favour. How far he was justly entitled to such tokens of regard and respect, and how far his exorcising capabilities went, no one ever took the trouble of carefully investigating.

The Capuchin was considered by Portocarrero as the very man he wanted for the prosecution of his plans. He summoned him immediately into his presence, and the German was not slow in obeying the intimation. His appearance was such as to impress the Cardinal with the most favourable opinion concerning his capacity for the employment designed for him; the friar's countenance was one of those which cannot be stedfastly looked upon, without indefinable sensations of awe and dread. He possessed a muscular frame, and stentorian lungs; his carriage was indicative of that *humble* pride, perhaps the most pernicious, and his

eye was lighted up with the fire of religious zeal. His visage was long, sallow, and hard-favoured; his beard thick, bushy, and long; his skull large and disproportioned. A rigid austerity sat upon his features, and the impressively gloomy and sonorous tones of his voice contributed to heighten the sensations of awe which his first appearance inspired. Besides this, he possessed a rough natural eloquence, and an irregular enthusiasm of gesticulation, which were considered by the Cardinal as highly necessary to his designs.

Portocarrero signified his wishes to the friar, who most readily undertook to fulfil them, to the best of his power. But the most difficult obstacle was to be surmounted. Though a competent exorciser had been found, it was yet doubtful whether the King would submit to the process a second time. Indeed, he had acquired such a natural dread and horror of exorcisms ever since the experiment was tried upon him, that the bare mention of the thing was wont to throw him into the greatest agitation. It was therefore necessary to proceed with the utmost prudence and tact in the business. The Father Confessor began to play gently, very gently, on the superstitious fears of his penitent. He did not want to frighten him too much at first, lest he should grow impatient, revolt, and brave the danger. A frightful precipice, an impending catastrophe—any peril supremely horrible and

terrifying — arouses the human mind from the very intensity of fear to desperate exertions, which may enable it to effect a fortunate escape. In like manner might the King, seeing himself annoyed and braved by a tormenting friar, be induced, in a fit of despair, to rebel—finding no other means of getting rid of his persecution.

Charles, by dint of perseverance on the part of his tormentors, and weakened by his bodily as well as mental sufferings, at length gave his consent to be exorcised a second time. It was then that the skill of the German Capuchin was called into action. The manner of administering the remedy against the demon, or demons, by which the King was possessed, was singular in the extreme. Every morning before breakfast the unfortunate Charles was obliged to take a proper quantity of blessed oil, in which some holy relics had for some time remained immersed; then the monk, with solemn looks and words, began to exorcise the evil one, summoning him to declare who were the authors of this horrid plot against the King. The contortions, thundering voice, and violent demeanour of the friar, if they did not tend to persuade the King that he was bewitched, served at least so far to intimidate him, that his tormentors obtained at last the object of their desires. The Admiral of Castile and his party were accused of being the authors of the *witchings* practised on their sovereign, and

the declaration was immediately made public, to the great satisfaction of the Bourbon cabal.

Having thus far succeeded in their attempts, the members of the French faction were encouraged still farther to pursue the system they had commenced. The ejection of Oropesa, the Admiral, and of the other friends of Austria, was now certain, if the first blow against them could be followed up by another equally decisive stroke. The inhabitants of the capital were at this time suffering great misery from the want of provisions, and this necessarily engendered discontent. Such a circumstance was too fortunate to be overlooked by a deep plotter, and Portocarrero at once saw how vast would be the advantage gained over his adversaries if he could lead the people to believe that the adherents of Austria were the real authors of this calamity.

The familiars of the inquisition, and other subalterns of Rocaberti, were immediately set to work. Amongst others, Perico most zealously exerted himself in so pious a task. A hungry and discontented populace is never particular about the examination of causes, and their excited fancies are soon taught to ascribe their calamity to any which may be within their power of removal. The Admiral, Melgar, and Oropesa, were therefore publicly accused, not only of having bewitched the King, but of endeavouring to starve his subjects. So grievous an

accusation could not fail to produce a great horror at his name. The passions of the populace had been successfully stirred up, and the effects of the excitement became but too soon apparent.

Early one morning a prodigious crowd assembled in front of the royal palace, and filled the air with cries of discontent. The officers of police endeavoured in vain to disperse the multitude, which grew fierce by opposition and punishment. A wound inflicted on a sturdy ruffian, who was using the King's name in the most unmeasured terms, was the signal to commence operations, and a fierce scuffle ensued, in which several wounds were inflicted, and the agents of authority put down and compelled to retreat. The riot grew more alarming every moment. The most fearful imprecations were hurled against the obnoxious individuals, and the clamour drowned every attempt made to appease their rage.

Meantime the wretched Charles, in an agony of mind, was languishing on his couch, undecided what course to adopt. His state was truly pitiable. Enfeebled by disease, lacerated with mental affliction, tormented by his ministers and execrated by his subjects, worn out, distracted and despairing, he knew not where to turn himself for solace, nor in what quarter to find a remedy to the accumulation of evils that pressed upon him. But the insolence of the rabble every moment became more

daring, and they proceeded to attack the guard of the palace, with an intention of penetrating within its precincts. The charge was successfully repelled; but the mutinous crowd vociferously demanded that the King should make his appearance. The wretched sovereign, however, was not then in a state to comply with their desires, and in this emergency Oropesa advised that some prompt measures should be adopted, or the safety of the King might be endangered.

“ I will appear before the enraged crowd,” said the Queen resolutely and with a bitter smile.

She brushed away from her eyes the tears of grief and indignation with which they were wet, and, assuming a collected deportment, showed herself, unattended, at the balcony. Her presence, at first, was hailed with a shout of approbation, as it was surmised that her appearance was the herald to that of her royal husband. But when the truth of the case was ascertained, very different sentiments burst from the tumultuous throng.”

“ Let the King appear !” cried a hundred voices, in fierce eagerness.

“ The King cannot appear !” replied the Queen, in a melancholy, though sufficiently calm tone of voice.

“ He *must* appear !” vociferated a miscreant, fixing his savage looks on the affected Princess.

This last insolent act made her sensible to all

the poignancy and humiliation of her present state. She was now forced to argue and debate with a crowd of desperate beings, but she had sufficient prudence and strength to smother her resentful feelings, in order to deprecate the raging storm. To the last intimation, therefore, she placidly answered—

“The King is now asleep, and cannot be disturbed.”

“Sleep! Oho, he sleeps!” quoth a facetious rascal, with a dirty leather apron; “I suppose then he has had his dinner!”

“Good excuse, truly!” observed another ill-favoured wretch. “A very good excuse that he should refuse to appear before the nation. Why, if he is asleep, they can awaken him, surely.”

“Ay,” continued a very grave and sententious beggar, “let him awake to the miseries of his people, for he has already slept too long.”

Any further altercation was fruitless. The Queen despaired of her ability to appease the tumult, and, with a heart bursting with insult, agony, and shame, she retreated from the balcony. Charles was then advised to make an effort to appear before the people. The wretched monarch, scarcely able to move from his couch, gave vent to a gush of sorrow at the unremitting indignities to which he was subjected. He, however, made no opposition to what was required of him, and having been assisted to rise, supported by the Queen, Oropesa,

and two or three attendants, he presented himself before his enraged subjects. His appearance would have excited the pity of the most hardened; his countenance was deadly pale, his cheek furrowed, his eyes sunk and expressive of nothing but pain, his form wasted by disease; he was, in short, the very image of insulted dignity and suffering humanity.

“What would you with me?” said he in a feeble voice.

“To redress our grievances,” boldly answered one who seemed to be the ringleader of the tumult.

“They shall be redressed,” replied Charles, with a bursting heart, for he anticipated the sacrifice that would be required of him.

“Then,” resumed the leader of the malcontents, “let the Admiral of Castile, the Marquess of Melgar, and the Count of Oropesa, who are traitors to the King and people, be immediately disgraced and banished from the capital.”

“It shall be done,” faltered out the wretched monarch, nearly sinking under the exertion.

As he could say no more in his enfeebled condition, one of the attendants promised, in his name, that every possible satisfaction should be given, and that the obnoxious ministers should be immediately removed. This solemn promise satisfied the populace, and they expressed their approbation by a tumultuous shout of joy.

The unfortunate Charles was then carried back to his apartments ; but it was found that his fever had increased, and that the late event had contributed materially to afford serious apprehensions for his life. He spent that fatal night in a constant succession of painful groans and bitter complaints against his destiny. The morning found him still more weakened and depressed, nor was the ceremony which he was then compelled to undergo calculated to produce any amelioration. The Admiral, Melgar, and Oropesa came to take their final leave of the sovereign. Their presence produced a lively sensation upon Charles ; he uttered a deep sigh, and cast a mournful glance on his visitors.

Notwithstanding the manœuvres of Portocarrero and the rest of his party, and notwithstanding the strange scene of the late exorcism, he could never be induced to look with distrust and hatred on the individuals whom he was now imperiously obliged to discard from his presence. The separation, therefore, was one of deep sorrow and regret on both sides ; the disgraced ministers perceived that a mortal blow was inflicted on their party, though the Queen remained still to advocate their views, and the King felt an inward dread at the ascendancy which the Cardinal would assume as soon as his rivals were dismissed. His timid mind and enfeebled frame sunk under the fear of the new

persecutions he should be compelled to undergo, and his health by this last event was rendered considerably worse.

On the removal of the Admiral and his colleagues, Portocarrero obtained an absolute control over the affairs of the kingdom. He assiduously devoted himself to his favourite scheme, and sent instructions to the French Court, concerning the progress which their faction was making at Madrid. The next step which the wily Cardinal thought most expedient to the furtherance of his views, was the disbanding of the German guards, a body which, being naturally enough suspected of favouring the Austrian faction, it was highly politic to remove from the court. This measure, it was resolved, should be carried into speedy execution; but the King, on the first announcement, evinced a violent disinclination to such a course.

“ Good Heavens ! am I even to be deprived of my guards ? ” he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul.

“ Sire,” replied the Cardinal firmly, “ the public safety demands this sacrifice of your Majesty.”

“ And what danger do the people apprehend now ? ” inquired the King in an angry tone ; “ have I not acceded to their wishes, and dismissed my ministers ? ”

“ Yes, Sire,” returned the Cardinal, “ but the work would only be half completed, if the German soldiers be allowed to remain at court ; they are

well known for their devoted attachment to the dismissed nobles, and might be persuaded to make some desperate attempt in their favour."

"Your Eminence surely magnifies the danger," said the King, with a sarcastic smile; "you cannot fear now the power of your opponents."

"Besides, Sire," resumed Portocarrero, with important gravity, "the guards have rendered themselves hateful to the public, and some disaster may reasonably be expected. They charged against the public, and killed several citizens, and wounded many others."

"You know, Sir," returned the King, with more than usual resolution, "that the soldiers did that in the fulfilment of their duty; the post committed to their defence was attempted to be forced, and they repelled the aggression, as they were bound."

"Sire," said the Cardinal, with affected indifference, "I do not mean to dispute the justice of their proceedings; I am only anxious to prevent the disastrous effects which that act, however justifiable in itself, cannot fail to produce in the excited multitude. The private quarrels between those soldiers and the citizens are growing very frequent, and every circumstance tends to induce a belief that a more general disorder may be expected."

The persevering tenacity of Portocarrero soon persuaded the King to accede to his demand, and the German guards were accordingly disbanded.

The Cardinal was now master of the court, and arbiter of the nation's fate; still his triumph was not yet firmly assured. The Austrian ambassador continued his intrigues with unremitting industry, and as the Queen was of this faction, the mind of the King was strongly biassed in his former prejudices. Thus was he exposed to the torturing importunities of two cabals, both parties ardently urging him to make a will, and declare as his successor the candidate which they respectively supported. But Charles could not be brought over to make this provision; the wavering state of his mind was singular; his natural timidity, his enfeebled constitution, the dread of having to withstand the discontent of one of the two parties, all made him anxious to defer making his testament till the very last moment. Besides, he had not yet arrived at a fixed determination; if his inclination made him lean towards the Austrian faction, his religious scruples, and the maxims which had been strongly inculcated upon him, turned the scale in favour of the French party.

The importunities of those by whom the King was surrounded becoming every day more incessant and perplexing, and the health of Charles growing worse, he resolved, in order to avoid the first and recover the latter, to fly from court and seek refuge in the Escorial. But his melancholy in this retreat soon became more profound and

absorbing, nor was his health in the least improved by the change. He wandered in a listless hypochondria about the various apartments of the stupendous fabric of the Escorial, but neither society, nor retirement, the repose of smiling gardens, or of spacious and picturesque domains, could alleviate his melancholy or improve his constitution. He then became very fond of religious exercises, and would spend much of his time in chanting the matins and vespers with the friars, and at one time there was a slender hope that it was the momentous glimmer of a fire, that could never be rekindled.

A strange desire took possession of his diseased fancy about this time: he anxiously desired to descend into the pantheon, or vault, where the mortal remains of his ancestors reposed. He conceived, that by this means his relations would be induced to pray to Heaven for his recovery. Besides, he remembered that this pious practice had been resorted to by his father, Philip the Fourth, under similar circumstances. This idea, therefore, having taken strong hold of his mind, orders were given for the speedy, for the awful and gloomy ceremony to take place on the following day. The King, with all his household, attended high mass; after which, in great state and circumstance, dressed in his royal robes, and accompanied by his principal officers, he descended to the pantheon in procession, each person bearing a lighted taper in his

hand. The silence of the place, broken only by the solemn voices of the praying monks, the gloomy lamps which faintly illumined the chilling habitation of the dead, the armorial bearings and sepulchral ornaments that filled that awful dormitory of departed monarchs—all these paraphernalia of death, which met in sickening and terrifying images the eyes of the beholder, were well adapted to create a morbid feeling of dread in the stoutest and most indifferent heart.

The coffin of Philip the Second was opened, and, alas! how little remained of that potent monarch, who had filled the world with the noise of his power, his intrigues, and his cruel acts! It was a spectacle loathsome to behold, yet Charles saw those repulsive remnants of past greatness without horror or emotion. In like manner were the coffins of his grandfather and father laid open to his view, but still they made little impression upon him. The first he never knew, and he was but two years of age when the second died; little emotion, therefore, was excited in his breast by the inspection of their decaying remains, save a sensation of cold and sombre horror. When, however, the coffin of his first wife, Louisa of Orleans, was opened, very different sentiments filled the heart of the suffering King.

Louisa's covering being removed, and the corpse exposed to her husband's view, he was at once

overpowered by mingled sensations of sorrow, surprise, and awe. The mortal remains of that queen were apparently in the same state as when first they had been placed there. But for the cold, expressionless hue of the features, and the stiffness of the limbs, it might be supposed Louisa was enjoying a placid slumber, rather than resting in the unconsciousness of everlasting sleep. Charles was powerfully, painfully moved at the sight. He fixed a solemn, earnest, and melancholy look on that fair image of perishable mortality, and then gave vent to tears.

“Oh! Louisa,” he muttered, in an oppressed tone, “I shall soon follow thee to heaven! Lead me hence—I am ready to sink.”

They hurried him out of the place; but the effects which the scene produced on the mind of the afflicted monarch were such as not to be easily effaced. From that moment his melancholy visibly increased, and he gave signs that his intellect had been impaired. He was constantly haunted by the image of Louisa of Orleans, and every effort made to dispel his overwhelming gloom proved completely unsuccessful. His favourite topic of conversation was death; and often at night he uttered painful cries that alarmed the household. The Escorial became a place fraught with horror; and the King was advised to quit it, and hasten to Aranjuez. This delightful spot, than which

there are few in the world more beautiful and picturesque, failed, however, to produce the desired effect. The smiling gardens and fountains, the umbrageous woods, and all the inexhaustible variety of nature, heightened by the culture of art, were totally disregarded by Charles.

Brooding constantly on the one subject that had taken firm possession of his mind, he beheld everything with a listless indifference, or he contrived, even in the most agreeable object, to discover some analogy with the phantom that pursued him. Death, arrayed in all its gloomy paraphernalia, stood continually before his view; and his morbid melancholy was proof against all the attractions of rural repose and tranquillity. He now, as a last resource, removed to Madrid, in hopes that the glitter and hurry of the metropolis would be effectual in alleviating the absorbing despondency by which he was oppressed. But this attempt was equally abortive with the rest. The capital did not in the least dispel the gloom from his mind, and the cabals which commenced anew contributed also to increase his misery. Both factions now perceived that the King was approaching the term of his mortal career, and that it was high time therefore to induce him to make that testament, which was so anxiously desired, and, until then, so vigorously opposed by the patient.

But the efforts of the Austrian party were growing every day more ineffectual. Portocarrero and

Rocaberti were continually by the side of the King, and they let no opportunity escape, by which any advancement in their design could be assisted. They exercised over the mind of the King the same absolute and despotic sway that had distinguished the adverse faction when in power. They, indeed, might be as justly accused of having bewildered the sovereign, as the Admiral, Melgar, and Oropesa ; for, by working on the King's superstitious terrors, they had so far subjected him to their power, that he seemed disposed to follow, with blind obedience, any instructions which they might think proper to suggest.

As the malady of Charles, both physical and mental, had now become so alarming that no hope could be rationally entertained of his life being prolonged much longer, the Cardinal determined to venture the last blow of the political contest, and complete the victory ere some unforeseen event might start up to prevent it. He approached the King one morning with looks of deep concern, and in a solemn tone began—

“ Sire, though we should never despair, this feeling being contrary to the dictates of Christianity, yet, frail and perishable as we are, it is an imperious duty in us to be prepared for the last extremity :—the state of your Majesty's health is such, as to make it incumbent on me to urge those preparations which——”

“ Yes, your Eminence is right,” interrupted the

King, mournfully. "I am an unworthy sinner, and ought to prepare for death; yet my religious exercises, as your Eminence knows, have not been entirely neglected."

"Other duties," resumed the Cardinal, "are to be fulfilled, besides those imperious on every true Christian. A successor to the crown of these realms must be provided in time, in order to prevent the calamities which such a neglect may occasion hereafter."

Charles gave evident signs of disquietude and pain, as soon as that subject was named: it was the one most disagreeable, and the one that had produced the greatest miseries of his life.

"I know," continued the Cardinal, mildly, "that your Majesty is averse to name a successor. Unfortunately there are two candidates, and however the rights of one may stand in a far clearer light than those of the others, yet it is but meet that your Majesty should have weighed the subject with that prudence which has characterised your life; but the urgency of the measure is now so imperious, that the time for deliberation is passed."

A pause followed, but the King replied not. A look of increased agony was the only acknowledgment which he made to the Cardinal's proposition. Portocarrero continued—

"Sire, you feel a natural repugnance to this act, and, indeed, I cannot but applaud the gene-

rous sentiments by which it is inspired. It is, indeed, a matter of momentous importance, and ought to be referred to the highest authority on the earth. An embassy must be immediately sent to Rome, in order to lay the subject before his Holiness Innocent the Twelfth, and the decision of his superior judgment and piety should be abided by."

Charles, anxious by any means to be freed from the irksome task of deciding, consented to this measure. The Duke of Uzeda was accordingly entrusted with a letter from the King to the Pope, and was instructed not only how he was to act, but to use all possible speed in his operations. Innocent the Twelfth was entirely devoted to the French faction. The Cardinal knew it, and therefore was he so anxious to submit the matter to his decision. He was not deceived in his expectations. The Holy Father returned the answer, that, in his opinion, the crown of Spain belonged to Philip of Anjou, son of the Dauphin of France, as grandson of Maria of Austria.

At length, after various other intrigues, the wretched Charles was persuaded to make his celebrated will. The most eminent persons in the State, as well as the foreign ambassadors, were invited to be present at the ceremony; for, indeed, Portocarrero's faction risked nothing in the advanced stage of the affair; on the contrary, it was highly politic to give as much form and circumstance as

possible to the deed. Charles signed the testament, by which he appointed Philip of Anjou his successor to the throne of Spain, but more by compulsion, as it seemed, than by the spontaneous dictates of his free will. He evinced great repugnance during the ceremony, and his despondency became more absorbing after the act. His sufferings, however, were not of long duration, and he died shortly after he had made this will, on the 3rd of November, 1700. The unfortunate Charles was the last of the house of Austria, and in him may be said to have expired the line of Spanish monarchs who derived their descent from the ancient Goths.

A new dynasty now became possessed of the throne of Spain; but that throne was not easily secured: the memorable war of succession ensued, which, though in the end favourable to Philip the Fifth, was remarkable for many brilliant actions, as well as for the circumstance of having brought to light the military talents and courage of Marlborough, Peterborough, Prince Eugene, and other celebrated warriors.

CONCLUSION.

WE must here conclude the Romance of the History of Spain — a land justly renowned from antiquity for the extraordinary number of great and striking events, no less than for the vast assemblage of illustrious names that have given splendour and interest to its annals. Spain occupies, indeed, one of the most important chapters in the great book of nations, and at one time enjoyed an ascendancy over the politics of Europe, and an extent of territory of which no other empire, ancient or modern, could boast. The history of Charles the Fifth may be regarded as the general history of Europe, America, and parts of Asia and Africa, at that period. From that prodigious elevation Spain has fallen, in a manner that could scarcely have been deemed possible in so short a period. But if its decline has been rapid, it may again rise with almost equal rapidity. Though various considerations have induced us to close the series of Spanish historical tales with the death of Charles the Second, in 1700, it must not be inferred that a want of splendid materials has determined

this arrangement: such a want can never exist in the annals of the favoured land of chivalry and romance. Indeed, Spain was, during the war of independence, the theatre of one of the most glorious contests that can adorn the pages of the historian. The striking events, the deeds of heroism, the romantic adventure to which that memorable period gave birth, afford a wide field for illustration. The heroic—the sublime defence of Saragossa exhibited all the combined attributes of Roman patriotism, and chivalrous interest.

THE END.

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