CHAPTER IX.

Secret Visit of Count Julian to the Arab Camp.—First Expedition of Taric el Tuerto.

When Count Julian had placed his family in security in Ceuta, surrounded by soldiery devoted to his fortunes, he took with him a few confidential followers, and departed in secret for the camp of the Arabian Emir, Musa ben Nosier. The camp was spread out in one of those pastoral valleys which lie at the feet of the Barbary hills, with the great range of the Atlas mountains towering in the distance. In the motley army here assembled were warriors of every tribe and nation, that had been united by pact or conquest in the cause of Islam. There were those who had followed Muza from the fertile regions of Egypt, across the deserts of Barca, and those who had joined his standard from among the sun-burnt tribes of Mauritania. There were Saracen and Tartar, Syrian and Copt, and swarthy Moor; sumptuous warriors from the civilised cities of the east, and the gaunt and predatory rovers of the desert. The greater part of the army, however, was composed of Arabs; but differing greatly from the first rude hordes that enlisted under the banner of Mahomet. Almost a century of continual wars with the cultivated nations of the east had rendered them accomplished warriors; and the occasional sojourn in luxurious countries and populous cities had acquainted them with the arts and habits of civilised life. Still the roving, restless, and predatory habits of the genuine sons of Ishmael prevailed, in defiance of every change of clime or situation.

Count Julian found the Arab conqueror Musa surrounded by somewhat of oriental state and splendour. He was advanced in life, but of a noble presence, and concealed his age by tingling his hair and beard with henna. The count assumed an air of soldier-like frankness and decision when he came into his presence. "Hitherto," said he, "we have been enemies, but I come to thee in peace, and it rests with thee to make me the most devoted of thy friends. I have no longer country or king. Roderick the Goth is a usurper, and my deadly foe; he has wounded my honour in the tenderest point, and my country affords me no redress. Aid me in my vengeance, and I deliver all Spain into thy hands; a
land far exceeding in fertility and wealth all the vaunted regions thou hast conquered in Tingitania."

The heart of Muza leaped with joy at these words, for he was a bold and ambitious conqueror, and, having overrun all Western Africa, had often cast a wistful eye to the mountains of Spain, as he beheld them brightening beyond the waters of the strait. Still he possessed the caution of a veteran, and feared to engage in an enterprise of such moment, and to carry his arms into another division of the globe, without the approbation of his sovereign. Having drawn from Count Julian the particulars of his plan, and of the means he possessed to carry it into effect, he laid them before his confidential counsellors and officers, and demanded their opinion. "These words of Count Julian," said he, "may be false and deceitful; or he may not possess the power to fulfil his promises. The whole may be a pretended treason to draw us on to our destruction. It is more natural that he should be treacherous to us than to his country."

Among the generals of Muza, was a gaunt swarthy veteran, scarred with wounds; a very Arab, whose great delight was roving and desperate enterprise; and who cared for nothing beyond his steed, his lance, and his scimitar. He was a native of Damascus; his name was Taric ben Zeyad; but, from having lost an eye, he was known among the Spaniards by the appellation of Taric el Tuerto, or Taric the one-eyed.

The hot blood of this veteran Ishmaelite was in a ferment when he heard of a new country to invade, and vast regions to subdue; and he dreaded lest the cautious hesitation of Muza should permit the glorious prize to escape them. "You speak doubtingly," said he, "of the words of this Christian cavalier, but their truth is easily to be ascertained. Give me four galleys and a handful of men, and I will depart with this Count Julian, skirt the Christian coast, and bring thee back tidings of the land, and of his means to put it in our power."

The words of the veteran pleased Muza ben Nosier, and he gave his consent; and Taric departed with four galleys and five hundred men, guided by the traitor Julian (1). This first expedition of the Arabs against Spain took place, according to certain historians, in

the year of our Lord seven hundred and twelve; though others differ on this point, as indeed they do upon almost every point in this early period of Spanish history. The date to which the judicious chroniclers incline is that of seven hundred and ten, in the month of July. It would appear from some authorities, also, that the galleys of Taric cruised along the coasts of Andalusia and Lusitania, under the feigned character of merchant barks: nor is this at all improbable, while they were seeking merely to observe the land, and get a knowledge of the harbours. Wherever they touched, Count Julian despatched emissaries, to assemble his friends and adherents at an appointed place. They gathered together secretly at Gesira Alhandra, that is to say, the Green Island, where they held a conference with Count Julian in presence of Taric ben Zeyad (1). Here they again avowed their readiness to flock to his standard whenever it should be openly raised, and made known their various preparations for a rebellion. Taric was convinced, by all that he had seen and heard, that Count Julian had not deceived them, either as to his disposition or his means to betray his country. Indulging his Arab inclinations, he made an inroad into the land, collected great spoil and many captives, and bore off his plunder in triumph to Muza as a specimen of the riches to be gained by the conquest of the Christian land (2).

CHAPTER X.

Letter of Muza to the Caliph.—Second Expedition of Taric el Tuerto.

On hearing the tidings brought by Taric el Tuerto, and beholding the spoil he had collected, Muza wrote a letter to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, setting forth the traitorous proffer of Count Julian, and the probability, through his means, of making a successful invasion of Spain. "A new land," said he, "spreads itself out before our delighted eyes, and invites our conquest; a land, too, that equals Syria in the fertility of its soil, and the serenity of its sky; Yemen, or Arabia the Happy, in its delightful temperature; India, in its flowers and spices; Hegias, in its fruits and flowers; Cathay, in its precious minerals; and Aden, in the

(1) Bleda, Cron. c. 5.
excellence of its ports and harbours! It is populous also, and wealthy; having many splendid cities and majestic monuments of ancient art. What is to prevent this glorious land from becoming the inheritance of the faithful? Already we have overcome the tribes of Berbery, of Zab, of Derar, of Zaara, Mazamuda, and Sus; and the victorious standard of Islam floats on the towers of Tangier. But four leagues of sea separate us from the opposite coast. One word from my sovereign, and the conquerors of Africa will pour their legions into Andalusia, rescue it from the domination of the unbeliever, and subdue it to the law of the Koran (1)."

The Caliph was overjoyed with the contents of the letter. "God is great!" exclaimed he, "and Mahomet is his prophet! It has been foretold by the ambassador of God, that his law should extend to the ultimate parts of the west, and be carried by the sword into new and unknown regions. Behold, another land is opened for the triumphs of the faithful! It is the will of Allah, and be his sovereign will obeyed!" So the Caliph sent missives to Muza authorising him to undertake the conquest.

Upon this there was a great stir of preparation; and numerous vessels were assembled and equipped at Tangier, to convey the invading army across the Straits. Twelve thousand men were chosen for this expedition; most of them light Arabian troops, seasoned in warfare, and fitted for hardy and rapid enterprise. Among them were many horsemen, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds. The whole was put under the command of the veteran, Taric el Tuerto, or the one-eyed, in whom Muza reposed implicit confidence, as in a second self. Taric accepted the command with joy: his martial fire was roused at the idea of having such an army under his sole command, and such a country to overrun; and he secretly determined never to return unless victorious.

He chose a dark night to convey his troops across the Straits of Hercules; and, by break of day, they began to disembark at Tarifa, before the country had time to take the alarm. A few Christians hastily assembled from the neighbourhood, and opposed their landing, but were easily put to flight. Taric stood on the sea-side, and watched until the last squadron had landed, and all the horses, armour, and munitions of war, were brought on shore: he then gave orders to set fire to the ships. The Moslems were struck with

(1) Conde, part. i. c. 8.
terror when they beheld their fleet wrapped in flames and smoke, and sinking beneath the waves. "How shall we escape," exclaimed they, "if the fortune of war should be against us?" "There is no escape for the coward!" cried Taric: "the brave man thinks of none: your only chance is victory." "But how, without ships, shall we ever return to our homes?" "Your home," replied Taric, "is before you; but you must win it with your swords."

While Taric was yet talking with his followers, says one of the ancient chroniclers, a Christian female was descried, waving a white pennon on a reed, in signal of peace. On being brought into the presence of Taric she prostrated herself before him. "Senior," said she, "I am an ancient woman; and it is now fully sixty years, past and gone, since, as I was keeping vigils one winter's night by the fireside, I heard my father, who was an exceeding old man, read a prophecy, said to have been written by a holy friar; and this was the purport of the prophecy that a time would arrive when our country would be invaded and conquered by a people from Africa, of a strange garb, a strange tongue, and a strange religion. They were to be led by a strong and valiant captain, who would be known by these signs: on his right shoulder he would have a hairy mole, and his right arm would be much longer than the left; and of such length as to enable him to cover his knee with his hand without bending his body."

Taric listened to the old beldame with grave attention; and, when she had concluded, he laid bare his shoulder, and lo! there was the mole as it had been described; his right arm, also, was, in verity, found to exceed the other in length, though not to the degree that had been mentioned. Upon this the Arab host shouted for joy, and felt assured of conquest (1).

The discreet Antonio Agapida, though he records this circumstance as it is set down in ancient chronicle, yet withholds his belief from the pretended prophecy, considering the whole a cunning device of Taric to increase the courage of his troops. "Doubtless," says he, "there was a collusion between this ancient sybil and the crafty son of Ishmael; for these infidel leaders were full of damnable inventions, to work upon the superstitious fancies of their followers, and to inspire them with a blind confidence in the success of their arms."

(1) Pérdida de España, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. i. c. 7.
Be this as it may, the veteran Taric took advantage of the excitement of his soldiery, and led them forward to gain possession of a stronghold, which was, in a manner, the key to all the adjacent country. This was a lofty mountain, or promontory, almost surrounded by the sea; and connected with the main land by a narrow isthmus. It was called the rock of Calpe, and, like the opposite rock of Ceuta, commanded the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Here, in old times, Hercules had set up one of his pillars, and the city of Heraclea had been built.

As Taric advanced against this promontory, he was opposed by a hasty levy of the Christians, who had assembled under the banner of a Gothic noble of great power and importance, whose domains lay along the mountainous coast of the Mediterranean. The name of this Christian cavalier was Theodemir, but he has universally been called Tadimir by the Arabian historians; and is renowned as being the first commander that made any stand against the inroad of the Moslems. He was about forty years of age; hardy, prompt, and sagacious; and had all the Gothic nobles been equally vigilant and shrewd in their defence, the banner of Islam would never have triumphed over the land.

Theodemir had but seventeen hundred men under his command, and these but rudely armed; yet he made a resolute stand against the army of Taric, and defended the pass to the promontory with great valour. He was, at length, obliged to retreat; and Taric advanced, and planted his standard on the rock of Calpe, and fortified it as his stronghold, and as the means of securing an entrance into the land. To commemorate his first victory, he changed the name of the promontory, and called it Gibel Taric, or the mountain of Taric; but, in process of time, the name has gradually been altered to Gibraltar.

In the meantime, the patriotic chieftain, Theodemir, having collected his routed forces, encamped with them on the skirts of the mountains, and summoned the country round to join his standard. He sent off missives, in all speed, to the king, imparting, in brief and blunt terms, the news of the invasion, and craving assistance with equal frankness. "Senior," said he, in his letter, "the legions of Africa are upon us, but whether they come from heaven or earth I know not. They seem to have fallen from the clouds, for they have no ships. We have been taken by surprise, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retreat; and they have fortified them-
selves in our territory. Send us aid, senior, with instant speed; or, rather, come yourself to our assistance (1)."

CHAPTER XI.

Measures of Don Roderick on hearing of the Invasion.—Expedition of Ataulpho, —Vision of Taric.

When Don Roderick heard that legions of turbaned troops had poured into the land from Africa, he called to mind the visions and predictions of the necromantic tower, and great fear came upon him. But, though sunk from his former hardihood and virtue, though enervated by indulgence, and degraded in spirit by a consciousness of crime, he was resolute of soul, and roused himself to meet the coming danger. He summoned a hasty levy of horse and foot, amounting to forty thousand; but now were felt the effects of the crafty counsel of Count Julian, for the best of the horses and armour intended for the public service had been sent into Africa, and were really in possession of the traitors. Many nobles, it is true, took the field with the sumptuous array with which they had been accustomed to appear at tournaments and jousts; but most of their vassals were destitute of weapons, and caséd in cuirasses of leather, or suits of armour almost consumed by rust. They were without discipline or animation; and their horses, like themselves, pampered by slothful peace, were little fitted to bear the heat, the dust, and toil, of long campaigns.

This army Don Roderick put under the command of his kinsman Ataulpho, a prince of the royal blood of the Goths, and of a noble and generous nature; and he ordered him to march with all speed to meet the foe, and to recruit his forces on the way with the troops of Theodomir.

In the meantime, Taric el Tuerto had received large reinforcements from Africa, and the adherents of Count Julian, and all those discontented with the sway of Don Roderick, had flocked to his standard; for many were deceived by the representations of Count Julian, and thought that the Arabs had come to aid him in placing the sons of Witiza upon the throne. Guided by the count, the troops of Taric penetrated into various parts of the country,

(1) Conde, part. i. c. 9.
and laid waste the land; bringing back loads of spoil to their stronghold at the rock of Calpe.

The prince Ataulpho marched with his army through Andalusia, and was joined by Theodemir with his troops; he met with various detachments of the enemy foraging the country, and had several bloody skirmishes; but he succeeded in driving them before him, and they retreated to the rock of Calpe, where Taric lay gathered up with the main body of his army.

The prince encamped not far from the bay which spreads itself out before the promontory. In the evening he despatched the veteran Theodemir, with a trumpet, to demand a parley of the Arab chieftain, who received the envoy in his tent, surrounded by his captains. Theodemir was frank and abrupt in speech, for the most of his life had been passed far from courts. He delivered, in round terms, the message of the Prince Ataulpho; upbraiding the Arab general with his wanton invasion of the land, and summoning him to surrender his army, or to expect no mercy.

The single eye of Taric el Tuerto glowed like a coal of fire at this message. "Tell your commander," replied he, "that I have crossed the strait to conquer Spain, nor will I return until I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him I have men skilled in war, and armed in proof, with whose aid I trust soon to give a good account of his rabble host."

A murmur of applause passed through the assemblage of Moslem captains. Theodemir glanced on them a look of defiance, but his eye rested on a renegade Christian, one of his own ancient comrades, and a relation of Count Julian. "As to you, Dom Greybeard," said he, "you who turn apostate in your declining age, I here pronounce you a traitor to your God, your king, and country; and stand ready to prove it this instant upon your body, if field be granted me."

The traitor knight was stung with rage at these words, for truth rendered them piercing to the heart. He would have immediately answered to the challenge, but Taric forbade it, and ordered that the Christian envoy should be conducted from the camp. "Tis well," replied Theodemir; "God will give me the field which you deny. Let your hoary apostate look to himself to-morrow in the battle; for I pledge myself to use my lance upon no other foe until it has shed his blood upon the native soil he has betrayed." So saying, he left the camp, nor could the Moslem chieftains help
admiring the honest indignation of this patriot knight, while they secretly despised his renegado adversary.

The ancient Moorish chroniclers relate many awful portents, and strange and mysterious visions, which appeared to the commanders of either army during this anxious night. Certainly it was a night of fearful suspense, and Moslem and Christian looked forward with doubt to the fortune of the coming day. The Spanish sentinel walked his pensive round, listening occasionally to the vague sounds from the distant rock of Calpe, and eyeing it as the mariner eyes the thunder-cloud pregnant with terror and destruction. The Arabs, too, from their lofty cliffs beheld the numerous camp-fires of the Christians gradually lighted up, and saw that they were a powerful host; at the same time the night breeze brought to their ears the sullen roar of the sea which separated them from Africa. When they considered their perilous situation, an army on one side, with a whole nation aroused to reinforce it, and on the other an impassable sea, the spirits of many of the warriors were cast down, and they repented the day when they had ventured into this hostile land.

Taric marked their despondency, but said nothing. Scarce had the first streak of morning light trembled along the sea, however, when he summoned his principal warriors to his tent. "Be of good cheer," said he; "Allah is with us, and has sent his prophet to give assurance of his aid. Scarce had I retired to my tent last night, when a man of a majestic and venerable presence stood before me. He was taller by a palm than the ordinary race of men; his flowing beard was of a golden hue, and his eyes were so bright that they seemed to send forth flashes of fire. I have heard the Emir Bahamet, and other ancient men, describe the prophet, whom they had seen many times while on earth, and such was his form and lineament. 'Fear nothing, O Taric, from the morrow,' said he, 'I will be with thee in the fight. Strike boldly, then, and conquer. Those of thy followers who survive the battle will have this land for an inheritance; for those who fall, a mansion in paradise is prepared, and immortal hours await their coming.' He spake and vanished; I heard a strain of celestial melody, and my tent was filled with the odours of Arabia the Happy." "Such," say the Spanish chroniclers, "was another of the arts by which this arch son of Ishmael sought to animate the hearts of his followers;" and the pretended vision had been recorded by the
The grey summits of the rock of Calpe brightened with the first rays of morning, as the Christian army issued forth from its encampment. The Prince Ataulpho rode from squadron to squadron, animating his soldiers for the battle. "Never should we sheath our swords," said he, "while these infidels have a footing in the land. They are pent up within your rocky mountain; we must assail them in their rugged hole. We have a long day before us: let not the setting sun shine upon one of their host who is not a fugitive, a captive, or a corpse."

The words of the prince were received with shouts, and the army moved towards the promontory. As they advanced, they heard the clash of cymbals and the bray of trumpets, and the rocky bosom of the mountain glittered with helms and spears and scimitars; for the Arabs, inspired with fresh confidence by the words of Taric, were sallying forth, with flaunting banners, to the combat.

The gaunt Arab chieftain stood upon a rock as his troops marched by; his buckler was at his back, and he brandished in his hand a double-pointed spear. Calling upon the several leaders by their names, he exhorted them to direct their attacks against the Christian captains, and especially against Ataulpho; "for the chiefs being slain," said he, "their followers will vanish from before us like the morning mist."

The Gothic nobles were easily to be distinguished by the splendour of their arms; but the Prince Ataulpho was conspicuous above all the rest for the youthful grace and majesty of his appearance, and the bravery of his array. He was mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, richly caparisoned with crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. His surcoat was of like colour and adornment, and the plumes that waved above his burnished helmet were of the purest white. Ten mounted pages, magnificently attired, followed him to the field, but their duty was not so much
to fight as to attend upon their lord, and to furnish him with steed or weapon.

The Christian troops, though irregular and undisciplined, were full of native courage; for the old warrior spirit of their Gothic sires still glowed in their bosoms. There were two battalions of infantry, but Ataulpho stationed them in the rear; "for God forbid," said he, "that foot soldiers should have the place of honour in the battle, when I have so many valiant cavaliers." As the armies drew nigh to each other, however, it was discovered that the advance of the Arabs was composed of infantry. Upon this the cavaliers checked their steeds, and requested that the foot soldiers might advance and disperse this losel crew, holding it beneath their dignity to contend with pedestrian foes. The prince, however, commanded them to charge; upon which, putting spurs to their steeds, they rushed upon the foe.

The Arabs stood the shock manfully, receiving the horses upon the points of their lances. Many of the riders were shot down with bolts from crossbows, or stabbed with the poniards of the Moslems. The cavaliers succeeded, however, in breaking into the midst of the battalion and throwing it into confusion, cutting down some with their swords, transpiercing others with their spears, and trampling many under the hoofs of their horses. At this moment, they were attacked by a band of Spanish horsemen, the recreant partisans of Count Julian. Their assault bore hard upon their countrymen, who were disordered by the contest with the foot soldiers, and many a loyal Christian knight fell beneath the sword of an unnatural foe.

The foremost among these recreant warriors was the renegado cavalier whom Theodomir had challenged in the tent of Taric. He dealt his blows about him with a powerful arm and with malignant fury, for nothing is more deadly than the hatred of an apostate. In the midst of his career he was espied by the hardy Theodomir, who came spurring to the encounter: "Traitor," cried he, "I have kept my vow. This lance has been held sacred from all other foes to make a passage for thy perjured soul." The renegado had been renowned for prowess before he became a traitor to his country, but guilt will sap the courage of the stoutest heart. When he beheld Theodomir rushing upon him, he would have turned and fled. Pride alone withheld him; and, though an admirable master of defence, he lost all skill to ward the attack of his adversary. At
the first assault the lance of Theodomir pierced him through and through. He fell to the earth, gnashed his teeth as he rolled in the dust, but yielded his breath without uttering a word.

The battle now became general, and lasted throughout the morning with varying success. The stratagem of Taric, however, began to produce its effect. The Christian leaders and most conspicuous cavaliers were singled out, and severally assailed by overpowering numbers. They fought desperately, and performed miracles of prowess, but fell, one by one, beneath a thousand wounds. Still the battle lingered on throughout a great part of the day; and as the declining sun shone through the clouds of dust, it seemed as if the conflicting hosts were wrapped in smoke and fire.

The Prince Ataulpho saw that the fortune of battle was against him. He rode about the field calling out the names of the bravest of his knights. But few answered to his call; the rest lay mangled on the field. With this handful of warriors he endeavoured to retrieve the day, when he was assailed by Tenderos, a partisan of Count Julian, at the head of a body of recreant Christians. At sight of this new adversary, fire flashed from the eyes of the prince, for Tenderos had been brought up in his father's palace. "Well dost thou traitor!" cried he, "to attack the son of thy lord, who gave thee bread; thou, who hast betrayed thy country and thy God!"

So saying, he seized a lance from one of his pages, and charged furiously upon the apostate; but Tenderos met him in mid career, and the lance of the prince was shivered upon his shield. Ataulpho then grasped his mace, which hung at his saddle-bow, and a doubtful fight ensued. Tenderos was powerful of frame, and superior in the use of his weapons, but the curse of treason seemed to paralyse his arm. He wounded Ataulpho slightly between the greaves of his armour; but the prince dealt a blow with his mace that crushed through helm and skull, and reached the brains, and Tenderos fell dead to the earth, his armour rattling as he fell.

At the same moment a javelin, hurled by an Arab, transpierced the horse of Ataulpho, which sunk beneath him. The prince seized the reins of the steed of Tenderos, but the faithful animal, as though he knew him to be the foe of his late lord, reared and plunged, and refused to let him mount. The prince, however, used him as a shield to ward off the press of foes; while, with his sword, he defended himself against those in front of him. Taric ben Zeyad arrived at the scene of conflict, and paused, for a moment, in ad-
miration of the surpassing prowess of the prince. Recollecting, however, that his fall would be a death-blow to his army, he spurred upon him, and wounded him severely with his scimitar. Before he could repeat his blow, Theodomir led up a body of Christian cavaliers to the rescue, and Taric was parted from his prey by the tumult of the fight. The prince sank to the earth, covered with wounds, and exhausted by the loss of blood. A faithful page drew him from under the hoofs of the horses, and, aided by a veteran soldier, an ancient vassal of Ataulpho, conveyed him to a short distance from the field of battle by the side of a small stream that gushed out from among rocks. They stanchéd the blood that flowed from his wounds, and washed the dust from his face, and laid him beside the fountain. The page sat at his head, and supported it on his knees; and the veteran stood at his feet, with his brow bent, and his eyes full of sorrow. The prince gradually revived, and opened his eyes. "How fares the battle?" said he. "The struggle is hard," replied the soldier, "but the day may yet be ours."

The prince felt that the hour of his death was at hand, and ordered that they should aid him to rise upon his knees. They supported him between them, and he prayed fervently for a short time, when, finding his strength declining, he beckoned the veteran to sit down beside him on the rock. Continuing to kneel, he confessed himself to that ancient soldier, having no priest or friar to perform that office in this hour of extremity. When he had so done, he sank again upon the earth, and pressed it with his lips, as if he would take a fond farewell of his beloved country. The page would then have raised his head, but found that his lord had yielded up the ghost.

A number of Arab warriors, who came to the fountain to slake their thirst, cut off the head of the prince, and bore it in triumph to Taric, crying, "Behold the head of the Christian leader!" Taric immediately ordered that the head should be put upon the end of a lance, together with the surcoat of the prince, and borne about the field of battle, with the sound of trumpets, atabals, and cymbals.

When the Christians beheld the surcoat, and knew the features of the prince, they were struck with horror, and heart and hand failed them. Theodomir endeavoured in vain to rally them; they threw by their weapons and fled; and they continued to fly, and the enemy to pursue and slay them, until the darkness of the night.
The Moslems then returned and plundered the Christian camp, where they found abundant spoil.

CHAPTER XIII.

Terror of the Country.—Roderick arouses himself to Arms.

The scattered fugitives of the Christian army spread terror throughout the land. The inhabitants of the towns and villages gathered around them as they applied at their gates for food; or lay themselves down, faint and wounded, beside the public fountains. When they related the tale of their defeat, old men shook their heads and groaned, and the women uttered cries and lamentations. So strange and unlooked-for a calamity filled them with consternation and despair, for it was long since the alarm of war had sounded in their land; and this was a warfare that carried chains and slavery, and all kinds of horrors, in its train.

Don Roderick was seated with his beautiful queen, Exilona, in the royal palace which crowned the rocky summit of Toledo, when the bearer of ill-tidings came galloping over the bridge of the Tagus. "What tidings from the army?" demanded the king, as the panting messenger was brought into his presence. "Tidings of great woe!" exclaimed the soldier. "The prince has fallen in battle. I saw his head and surcoat upon a Moorish lance; and the army was overthrown and fled!"

At hearing these words, Roderick covered his face with his hand, and for some time sat in silence; and all his courtiers stood mute and aghast, and no one dared to speak a word. In that awful space of time passed before his thoughts all his errors and his crimes, and all the evil that had been predicted in the necromantic tower. His mind was filled with horror and confusion, for the hour of his destruction seemed at hand. But he subdued his agitation by his strong and haughty spirit; and, when he uncovered his face, no one could read on his brow the trouble and agony of his heart. Still, every hour brought fresh tidings of disaster. Messenger after messenger came spurring into the city, distracting it with new alarms. The infidels, they said, were strengthening themselves in the land; host after host were pouring in from Africa; the sea coast of Andalusia glittered with spears and scimitars. Bands of turbaned horsemen had overrun the plains of Sidonia,
even to the banks of the Guadiana. Fields were laid waste, towns and cities plundered, the inhabitants carried into captivity, and the whole country lay in smoking desolation.

Roderick heard all these tidings with an undaunted aspect; nor did he ever again betray sign of consternation; but the anxiety of his soul was evident in his warlike preparations. He issued orders that every noble and prelate of his kingdom should put himself at the head of his retainers, and take the field; and that every man capable of bearing arms should hasten to his standard, bringing whatever horse, and mule, and weapon, he possessed: and he appointed the plain of Cordova for the place where the army was to assemble. Throwing by, then, all the trappings of his late slothful and voluptuous life, and arming himself for warlike action, he departed from Toledo at the head of his guard, composed of the flower of the youthful nobility. His queen, Exilona, accompanied him; for she craved permission to remain in one of the cities of Andalusia, that she might be near her lord in this time of peril.

Among the first who appeared to hail the arrival of the king at Cordova, was the Bishop Oppas, the secret partisan of the traitor Julian. He brought with him his two nephews, Evan and Sisemburto, the sons of the late king Witiza, and a great host of vassals and retainers, all well armed and appointed, for they had been furnished, by Count Julian, with a part of the arms sent by the king to Africa. The bishop was smooth of tongue, and profound in his hypocrisy. His pretended zeal and devotion, and the horror with which he spoke of the treachery of his kinsman, imposed upon the credulous spirit of the king, and he was readily admitted into his most secret council.

The alarm of the infidel invasion had spread throughout the land, and roused the Gothic valour of the inhabitants. On receiving the orders of Roderick, every town and hamlet, every mountain and valley, had sent forth its fighting men, and the whole country was on the march towards Andalusia. In a little while there were gathered together, on the plain of Cordova, near fifty thousand horsemen, and a countless host of foot-soldiers. The Gothic nobles appeared in burnished armour, curiously inlaid and adorned, with chains and jewels of gold, and ornaments of precious stones, and silken scarfs, and surcoats of brocade, or velvet richly embroidered; betraying the luxury and ostentation into which they
had declined from the iron hardihood of their warlike sires. As to
the common people, some had lances, and shields, and swords, and
crossbows, but the greater part were unarmed, or provided merely
with slings, and clubs studded with nails, and with the iron imple-
ments of husbandry; and many had made shields for themselves
from the doors and windows of their habitations. They were a
prodigious host, and appeared, say the Arabian chroniclers, like
an agitated sea; but, though brave in spirit, they possessed no
knowledge of warlike art, and were ineffectual through lack of arms
and discipline.

Several of the most ancient and experienced cavaliers, beholding
the state of the army, advised Don Roderick to await the arri-
val of more regular troops, which were stationed in Iberia,
Cantabria, and Gallia Gothica; but this counsel was strenuously
opposed by the Bishop Oppas, who urged the king to march im-
mediately against the infidels. "As yet," said he, "their number
is but limited; but every day new hosts arrive, like flocks of locusts,
from Africa. They will augment faster than we; they are living,
too, at our expense, and, while we pause, both armies are con-
suming the substance of the land."

King Roderick listened to the crafty counsel of the bishop, and
determined to advance without delay. He mounted his war-
horse, Orelia, and rode among his troops assembled on that spa-
cious plain, and wherever he appeared he was received with ac-
clamations; for nothing so arouses the spirit of the soldier as to be-
hold his sovereign in arms. He addressed them in words calculated
to touch their hearts and animate their courage. "The Saracens,"
said he, "are ravaging our land, and their object is our conquest.
Should they prevail, your very existence as a nation is at an end.
They will overturn your altars; trample on the cross; lay waste
your cities; carry off your wives and daughters; and doom your-
selves and sons to hard and cruel slavery. No safety remains for
you but in the prowess of your arms. For my own part, as I am
your king, so will I be your leader, and will be the foremost to en-
counter every toil and danger."

The soldiery answered their monarch with loud acclamations,
and solemnly pledged themselves to fight to the last gasp in defence
of their country and their faith. The king then arranged the or-
der of their march. All those who were armed with cuirasses and
coats of mail were placed in the front and rear; the centre of the
army was composed of a promiscuous throng, without body armour, and but scantily provided with weapons.

When they were about to march, the king called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and, delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honour of Spain. Scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many ancient courtiers who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counselled the king not to set forward on his march that day; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance; and gave it in charge of another standard-bearer: then, commanding the trumpets to be sounded, he departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.

The field where this great army assembled was called, from the solemn pledge given by the nobles and the soldiery, El campo de la Verdad: or, The field of Truth; a name, says the sage chronicler Abul Cassim, which it bears even to the present day (1).

CHAPTER XIV.

March of the Gothic Army.—Encampment on the Banks of the Guadalete.—Mysterious Predictions of a Palmer.—Conduct of Pelistes thereupon.

The hopes of Andalusia revived, as this mighty host stretched in lengthening lines along its fertile plains. From morn until night it continued to pour along, with sound of drum and trumpet; it was led on by the proudest nobles and bravest cavaliers of the land, and, had it possessed arms and discipline, might have undertaken the conquest of the world.

After a few days' march, Don Roderick arrived in sight of the Moslem army, encamped on the banks of the Guadalete (2), where that beautiful stream winds through the fertile land of Xeres. The infidel host was far inferior in number to the Christians; but then it was composed of hardy and dexterous troops, seasoned to war, and admirably armed. The camp shone gloriously in the setting

(1) La pérdida de España, cap. 9. Bleda, lib. ii. c. 8.
(2) This name was given to it subsequently by the Arabs. It signifies the River of Death. Vide Pedruza, Hist. Granad. p. 3. c. 1.
sun, and resounded with the clash of cymbal, the note of the trumpet, and the neighing of fiery Arabian steeds. There were swarthy troops from every nation of the African coast, together with legions from Syria and Egypt, while the light Bedouins were careering about the adjacent plain. What grieved and incensed the spirits of the Christian warriors, however, was to behold, a little apart from the Moslem host, an encampment of Spanish cavaliers, with the banner of Count Julian waving above their tents. They were ten thousand in number, valiant and hardy men, the most experienced of Spanish soldiery, most of them having served in the African wars; they were well armed and appointed also, with the weapons of which the count had beguiled his sovereign; and it was a grievous sight to behold such good soldiers arrayed against their country and their faith.

The Christians pitched their tents about the hour of vespers, at a short league distant from the enemy, and remained gazing with anxiety and awe upon this barbaric host that had caused such terror and desolation in the land; for the first sight of a hostile encampment, in a country disused to war, is terrible to the newly-enlisted soldier. A marvellous occurrence is recorded by the Arabian chroniclers as having taken place in the Christian camp; but discreet Spanish writers relate it with much modification, and consider it a stratagem of the wily Bishop Oppas, to sound the loyalty of the Christian cavaliers.

As several leaders of the army were seated with the bishop in his tent, conversing on the dubious fortunes of the approaching contest, an ancient pilgrim appeared at the entrance. He was bowed down with years, his snowy beard descended to his girdle, and he supported his tottering steps with a palmer's staff. The cavaliers rose and received him with great reverence as he advanced within the tent. Holding up his withered hand, "Woe, woe to Spain!" exclaimed he, "for the vial of the wrath of heaven is about to be poured out. Listen, warriors, and take warning. Four months since, having performed my pilgrimage to the sepulchre of our Lord in Palestine, I was on my return towards my native land. Wearied and wayworn, I lay down one night to sleep beneath a palm tree, by the side of a fountain, when I was awakened by a voice saying unto me, in soft accents, 'Son of sorrow, why sleepest thou?' I opened my eyes, and beheld one of a fair and beauteous countenance, in shining apparel and with glorious wings,
standing by the fountain; and I said, 'Who art thou who callest upon me in this deep hour of the night?'

"'Fear not,' replied the stranger; 'I am an angel from heaven, sent to reveal unto thee the fate of thy country. Behold the sins of Roderick have come up before God, and his anger is kindled against him, and he has given him up to be invaded and destroyed. Hasten, then, to Spain, and seek the camp of thy countrymen. Warn them that such only shall be saved as shall abandon Roderick; but those who adhere to him shall share his punishment, and shall fall under the sword of the invader.'"

The pilgrim ceased, and passed forth from the tent; certain of the cavaliers followed him to detain him, that they might converse further with him about these matters, but he was no where to be found. The sentinel before the tent said, "I saw no one come forth; but it was as if a blast of wind passed by me, and there was a rustling as of dry leaves."

The cavaliers remained looking upon each other with astonishment. The Bishop Oppas sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and shadowed by his overhanging brow. At length, breaking silence, in a low and faltering voice, "Doubtless," said he, "this message is from God; and since he has taken compassion upon us and given us notice of his impending judgment, it behoves us to hold grave council, and determine how best we may accomplish his will and avert his displeasure."

The chiefs still remained silent, as men confounded. Among them was a veteran noble named Pelistes. He had distinguished himself in the African wars, fighting side by side with Count Julian, but the latter had never dared to tamper with his faith, for he knew his stern integrity. Pelistes had brought with him to the camp his only son, who had never drawn a sword except in tourney. When the young man saw that the veterans held their peace, the blood mantled in his cheek, and, overcoming his modesty, he broke forth with a generous warmth: "I know not, cavaliers," said he, "what is passing in your minds, but I believe this pilgrim to be an envoy from the devil; for none else could have given such dastard and perfidious counsel. For my own part, I stand ready to defend my king, my country, and my faith. I know no higher duty than this, and if God thinks fit to strike me dead in the performance of it, his sovereign will be done!"

When the young man had risen to speak, his father had fixed his
eyes upon him with a grave and stern demeanour, leaning upon a two-handed sword. As soon as the youth had finished, Pelistes embraced him with a father's fondness. "Thou hast spoken well, my son," said he; "if I held my peace at the counsel of this lost pilgrim, it was but to hear thy opinion, and to learn whether thou wert worthy of thy lineage and of the training I had given thee. Hadst thou counselled otherwise than thou hast done, hadst thou shown thyself craven and disloyal, so help me God, I would have struck off thy head with this weapon which I hold in my hand. But thou hast counselled like a loyal and a Christian knight, and I thank God for having given me a son worthy to perpetuate the honours of my line. As to this pilgrim, be he saint or be he devil, I care not; this much I promise, that if I am to die in defence of my country and my king, my life shall be a costly purchase to the foe. Let each man make the same resolve, and I trust we shall yet prove the pilgrim a lying prophet." The words of Pelistes roused the spirits of many of the cavaliers: others, however, remained full of anxious foreboding; and when this fearful prophecy was rumoured about the camp, as it presently was by the emissaries of the bishop, it spread awe and dismay among the soldiery.

CHAPTER XV.

Skirmishing of the Armies.—Pelistes and his Son.—Pelistes and the Bishop.

On the following day, the two armies remained regarding each other with wary but menacing aspect. About noontide, King Roderick sent forth a chosen force of five hundred horse and two hundred foot, the best armed of his host, to skirmish with the enemy, that, by gaining some partial advantage, they might raise the spirits of the army. They were led on by Theodomir, the same Gothic noble who had signalised himself by first opposing the invasion of the Moslems.

The Christian squadrons paraded with flying pennons in the valley which lay between the armies. The Arabs were not slow in answering their defiance. A large body of horsemen sallied forth to the encounter, together with three hundred of the followers of Count Julian. There was hot skirmishing about the field, and on the banks of the river; many gallant feats were displayed on
either side, and many valiant warriors were slain. As the night closed in, the trumpets from either camp summoned the troops to retire from the combat. In this day’s action the Christians suffered greatly in the loss of their distinguished cavaliers; for it is the noble spirits who venture most, and lay themselves open to danger; and the Moslem soldiers had instructions to single out the leaders of the adverse host. All this is said to have been devised by the perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had secret communications with the enemy, while he influenced the councils of the king; and who trusted that, by this skirmishing warfare, the power of the Christian troops would be cut off, and the rest disheartened.

On the following morning, a larger force was ordered out to skirmish, and such of the soldiery as were unarmed were commanded to stand ready to seize the horses and strip off the armour of the killed and wounded. Among the most illustrious of the warriors who fought that day was Pelistes, the Gothic noble who had so sternly checked the tongue of the Bishop Oppas. He led to the field a large body of his own vassals and retainers, and of cavaliers trained up in his house, who had followed him to the wars in Africa, and who looked up to him more as a father than a chieftain. Beside him was his only son who now, for the first time, was fleshing his sword in battle. The conflict that day was more general and bloody than the day preceding. The slaughter of the Christian warriors was immense, from their lack of defensive armour; and as nothing could prevent the flower of the Gothic chivalry from spurring to the combat, the field was strewed with the bodies of the youthful nobles. None suffered more, however, than the warriors of Pelistes. Their leader himself was bold and hardy, and prone to expose himself to danger; but years and experience had moderated his early fire. His son, however, was eager to distinguish himself in this, his first essay, and rushed with impetuous ardour into the hottest of the battle. In vain his father called to caution him; he was ever in the advance, and seemed unconscious of the perils that surrounded him. The cavaliers and vassals of his father followed him with devoted zeal, and many of them paid for their loyalty with their lives. When the trumpets sounded in the evening for retreat, the troops of Pelistes were the last to reach the camp. They came slowly and mournfully, and much decreased in number. Their veteran commander was seated on his war-horse, but the blood trickled from the greaves
of his armour. His valiant son was borne on the shields of his vassals. When they laid him on the earth near to where the king was standing, they found that the heroic youth had expired of his wounds. The cavaliers surrounded the body, and gave utterance to their grief; but the father restrained his agony, and looked on with the stern resignation of a soldier.

Don Roderick surveyed the field of battle with a rueful eye, for it was covered with the mangled bodies of his most illustrious warriors. He saw, too, with anxiety, that the common people, unused to war, and unsustained by discipline, were harassed by incessant toils and dangers, and were cooling in their zeal and courage.

The crafty Bishop Oppas marked the internal trouble of the king, and thought a favourable moment had arrived to sway him to his purpose. He called to his mind the various portents and prophecies which had forerun their present danger. "Let not my lord the king," said he, "make light of these mysterious revelations, which appear to be so disastrously fulfilling. The hand of Heaven appears to be against us. Destruction is impending over our heads. Our troops are rude and unskilful, but slightly armed, and much cast down in spirit. Better is it that we should make a treaty with the enemy, and, by granting part of his demands, prevent the utter ruin of our country. If such counsel be acceptable to my lord the king, I stand ready to depart upon an embassy to the Moslem camp."

Upon hearing these words, Pelistes, who had stood in mournful silence, regarding the dead body of his son, burst forth with honest indignation. "By this good sword," said he, "the man who yields such dastard counsel deserves death from the hand of his countrymen rather than from the foe; and, were it not for the presence of the king, may I forfeit salvation if I would not strike him dead upon the spot."

The bishop turned an eye of venom upon Pelistes. "My lord," said he, "I, too, bear a weapon, and know how to wield it. Were the king not present, you would not dare to menace, nor should you advance one step without my hastening to meet you."

The king interposed between the jarring nobles, and rebuked the impetuosity of Pelistes, but at the same time rejected the counsel of the bishop. "The event of this conflict," said he, "is in the
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hand of God; but never shall my sword return to its scabbard while an infidel invader remains within the land."

He then held a council with his captains; and it was determined to offer the enemy general battle on the following day. A herald was despatched defying Taric ben Zeyad to the contest, and the defiance was gladly accepted by the Moslem chieftain (1). Don Roderick then formed the plan of action, and assigned to each commander his several station, after which he dismissed his officers, and each one sought his tent, to prepare by diligence or repose for the next day’s eventful contest.

CHAPTER XVI.

Traitorous Message of Count Julian.

Taric ben Zeyad had been surprised by the valour of the Christian cavaliers in the recent battles, and at the number and apparent devotion of the troops which accompanied the king to the field. The confident defiance of Don Roderick increased his surprise. When the herald had retired, he turned an eye of suspicion on Count Julian. "Thou hast represented thy countrymen," said he, "as sunk in effeminacy and lost to all generous impulse; yet I find them fighting with the courage and the strength of lions. Thou hast represented thy king as detested by his subjects, and surrounded by secret treason, but I behold his tents whitening the hills and dales, while thousands are hourly flocking to his standard. Woe unto thee if thou hast dealt deceitfully with us, or betrayed us with guileful words."

Don Julian retired to his tent in great trouble of mind, and fear came upon him that the Bishop Oppas might play him false; for it is the lot of traitors ever to distrust each other. He called to him the same page who had brought him the letter from Florinda, revealing the story of her dishonour.

"Thou knowest, my trusty page," said he, "that I have reared thee in my household, and cherished thee above all thy companions. If thou hast loyalty and affection for thy lord, now is the time to serve him. Hee thee to the Christian camp, and find thy way to the tent of the Bishop Oppas. If any one ask thee who

(1) Bleda, Crónica.
thou art, tell them thou art of the household of the bishop, and bearer of missives from Cordova. When thou art admitted to the presence of the bishop, show him this ring, and he will commune with thee in secret. Then tell him Count Julian greets him as a brother, and demands how the wrongs of his daughter Florinda are to be redressed. Mark well his reply, and bring it word for word. Have thy lips closed, but thine eyes and ears open; and observe every thing of note in the camp of the king. So, speed thee on thy errand—away, away!"

The page hastened to saddle a Barbary steed, fleet as the wind, and of a jet black colour, so as not to be easily discernible in the night. He girded on a sword and dagger, slung an Arab bow with a quiver of arrows at his side, and a buckler at his shoulder. Issuing out of the camp, he sought the banks of the Guadalete, and proceeded silently along its stream, which reflected the distant fires of the Christian camp. As he passed by the place which had been the scene of the recent conflict, he heard, from time to time, the groan of some expiring warrior who had crawled among the reeds on the margin of the river; and sometimes his steed stepped cautiously over the mangled bodies of the slain. The young page was unused to the sights of war, and his heart beat quick within him. He was hailed by the sentinels as he approached the Christian camp, and, on giving the reply taught him by Count Julian, was conducted to the tent of the Bishop Oppas.

The bishop had not yet retired to his couch. When he beheld the ring of Count Julian, and heard the words of his message, he saw that the page was one in whom he might confide. "Hasten back to thy lord," said he, "and tell him to have faith in me, and all shall go well. As yet I have kept my troops out of the combat. They are all fresh, well armed, and well appointed. The king has confided to myself, aided by the princes Evan and Siseburto, the command of a wing of the army. To-morrow, at the hour of noon, when both armies are in the heat of action, we will pass over with our forces to the Moslems. But I claim the compact made with Taric ben Zeyad, that my nephews be placed in dominion over Spain, and tributary only to the Caliph of Damascus." With this traitorous message the page departed. He led his black steed by the bridle to present less mark for observation, as he went stumbling along near the expiring fires of the camp. On passing the last outpost, when the guards were half slumbering on their arms,
he was overheard and summoned, but leaped lightly into the saddle and put spurs to his steed. An arrow whistled by his ear and two more stuck in the target which he had thrown upon his back. The clatter of swift hoofs echoed behind him, but he had learnt of the Arabs to fight and fly. Plucking a shaft from his quiver, and turning and rising in the stirrups as his courser galloped at full speed, he drew the arrow to the head and launched it at his pursuer. The twang of the bow-string was followed by the crash of armour, and a deep groan, as the horseman tumbled to the earth. The page pursued his course without further molestation, and arrived at the Moslem camp before the break of day.

CHAPTER XVII.

Last Day of the Battle.

A light had burned throughout the night in the tent of the king, and anxious thoughts and dismal visions troubled his repose. If he fell into a slumber, he beheld in his dreams the shadowy phantoms of the necromantic tower, or the injured Florinda, pale and dishevelled, imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon his head. In the midwatches of the night, when all was silent except the footstep of the sentinel pacing before his tent, the king rose from his couch, and walking forth looked thoughtfully upon the martial scene before him. The pale crescent of the moon hung over the Moorish camp, and dimly lighted up the windings of the Guadalete. The heart of the king was heavy and oppressed; but he felt only for himself, says Antonio Agapida: he thought nothing of the perils impending over the thousands of devoted subjects in the camp below him, sleeping, as it were, on the margin of their graves. The faint clatter of distant hoofs, as if in rapid flight, reached the monarch's ear, but the horsemen were not to be descried. At that very hour, and along the shadowy banks of that river, here and there gleaming with the scanty moonlight, passed the fugitive messenger of Count Julian, with the plan of the next day's treason.

The day had not yet dawned, when the sleepless and impatient monarch summoned his attendants and arrayed himself for the field. He then sent for the venerable Bishop Urbino, who had accompanied him to the camp, and, laying aside his regal crown, he knelt
THE LEGEND OF

with head uncovered, and confessed his sins before the holy man. After this a solemn mass was performed in the royal tent, and the eucharist administered to the monarch. When these ceremonies were concluded, he besought the archbishop to depart forthwith for Cordova, there to await the issue of the battle, and to be ready to bring forward reinforcements and supplies. The archbishop saddled his mule and departed just as the faint blush of morning began to kindle in the east. Already the camp resounded with the thrilling call of the trumpet, the clank of armour, and the tramp and neigh of steeds. As the archbishop passed through the camp, he looked with a compassionate heart on this vast multitude, of whom so many were soon to perish. The warriors pressed to kiss his hand, and many a cavalier full of youth and fire received his benediction, who was to lie stiff and cold before the evening.

When the troops were marshalled for the field, Don Roderick prepared to sally forth in the state and pomp with which the Gothic kings were wont to go to battle. He was arrayed in robes of gold brocade; his sandals were embroidered with pearls and diamonds; he had a sceptre in his hand, and he wore a regal crown resplendent with inestimable jewels. Thus gorgeously apparelled, he ascended a lofty chariot of ivory, the axle-trees of which were of silver, and the wheels and pole covered with plates of burnished gold. Above his head was a canopy of cloth of gold embossed with armorial devices, and studded with precious stones (1). This sumptuous chariot was drawn by milk-white horses, with caparisons of crimson velvet, embroidered with pearls. A thousand youthful cavaliers surrounded the car; all of the noblest blood and bravest spirit; all knighted by the king's own hand, and sworn to defend him to the last.

When Roderick issued forth in this resplendent state, says an Arabian writer, surrounded by his guards in gilded armour, and waving plumes, and scarfs, and surcoats of a thousand dyes, it was as if the sun were emerging in the dazzling chariot of the day from amidst the glorious clouds of morning.

As the royal car rolled along in front of the squadrons, the soldiers shouted with admiration. Don Roderick waved his sceptre, and addressed them from his lofty throne, reminding them of the horror and desolation which had already been spread through the

(1) Eutrand, Chron. an. Christ. 714.
land by the invaders. He called upon them to summon up the ancient valour of their race, and avenge the blood of their brethren. "One day of glorious fighting," said he, "and this infidel horde will be driven into the sea, or will perish beneath your swords. Forward bravely to the fight; your families are behind you praying for your success; the invaders of your country are before you; God is above to bless his holy cause; and your king leads you to the field." The army shouted with one accord, "Forward to the foe, and death be his portion who shuns the encounter!"

The rising sun began to shine along the glistening waters of the Guadalete as the Moorish army, squadron after squadron, came sweeping down a gentle declivity to the sound of martial music. Their turbans and robes, of various dyes and fashions, gave a splendid appearance to their host. As they marched, a cloud of dust arose and partly hid them from the sight; but still there would break forth flashes of steel and gleams of burnished gold, like rays of vivid lightning; while the sound of drum and trumpet, and the clash of Moorish cymbal, were as the warlike thunder within that stormy cloud of battle.

As the armies drew near each other the sun disappeared among gathering clouds, and the gloom of the day was increased by the columns of dust which rose from either host. At length the trumpets sounded for the encounter. The battle commenced with showers of arrows, stones, and javelins. The Christian foot-soldiers fought to disadvantage; the greater part being destitute of helm or buckler. A battalion of light Arabian horsemen, led by a Greek renegade named Magued el Rumi, careered in front of the Christian line, launching their darts, and then wheeling off beyond the reach of the missiles hurled after them. Theodomir now brought up his seasoned troops into the action, seconded by the veteran Pelistes, and in a little while the battle became furious and promiscuous. It was glorious to behold the old Gothic valour shining forth in this hour of fearful trial. Wherever the Moslems fell, the Christians rushed forward, seized upon their horses, and stripped them of their armour and their weapons. They fought desperately and successfully, for they fought for their country and their faith. The battle raged for several hours; the field was strown with slain, and the Moors, overcome by the multitude and fury of their foes, began to falter.

When Taric beheld his troops retreating before the enemy, he
threw himself before them, and, rising in his stirrups, "Oh Moslems! conquerors of Africa!" cried he, "whither would you fly? The sea is behind you, the enemy before; you have no hope but in your valour and the help of God. Do as I do, and the day is ours!"

With these words he put spurs to his horse and sprang among the enemy, striking to right and left, cutting down and destroying, while his steed, fierce as himself, trampled upon the foot-soldiers, and tore them with his teeth. At this moment a mighty shout arose in various parts of the field; the noontide hour had arrived. The Bishop Oppas, with the two princes, who had hitherto kept their bands out of the fight, suddenly went over to the enemy, and turned their weapons upon their astonished countrymen. From that moment the fortune of the day was changed, and the field of battle became a scene of wild confusion and bloody massacre. The Christians knew not whom to contend with, or whom to trust. It seemed as if madness had seized upon their friends and kinsmen, and that their worst enemies were among themselves.

The courage of Don Roderick rose with his danger. Throwing off the cumbersome robes of royalty, and descending from his car, he sprang upon his steed Orelia, grasped his lance and buckler, and endeavoured to rally his retreating troops. He was surrounded and assailed by a multitude of his own traitorous subjects, but defended himself with wondrous prowess. The enemy thickened around him; his loyal band of cavaliers were slain, bravely fighting in his defence. The last that was seen of the king was in the midst of the enemy, dealing death at every blow.

A complete panic fell upon the Christians; they threw away their arms and fled in all directions. They were pursued with dreadful slaughter, until the darkness of the night rendered it impossible to distinguish friend from foe. Taric then called off his troops from the pursuit, and took possession of the royal camp; and the couch which had been pressed so uneasily on the preceding night by Don Roderick, now yielded sound repose to his conqueror (1).

(1) This battle is called indiscriminately by historians the battle of Guadalete, or Xeres, from the neighbourhood of that city.
CHAPTER XVIII.

The Field of Battle after the Defeat.—The Fate of Roderick.

On the morning after the battle, the Arab leader, Taric ben Zeyad, rode over the bloody field of the Guadalete, strewed with the ruins of those splendid armies, which had so lately passed like glorious pageants along the river banks. There Moor and Christian, horseman and horse, lay gashed with hideous wounds; and the river, still red with blood, was filled with the bodies of the slain. The gaunt Arab was as a wolf roaming through the fold he had laid waste. On every side his eye revelled on the ruin of the country, on the wrecks of haughty Spain. There lay the flower of her youthful chivalry, mangled and destroyed, and the strength of her yeomanry prostrated in the dust. The Gothic noble lay confounded with his vassals; the peasant with the prince; all ranks and dignities were mingled in one bloody massacre.

When Taric had surveyed the field, he caused the spoils of the dead and the plunder of the camp to be brought before him. The booty was immense. There were massy chains, and rare jewels of gold, pearls and precious stones, rich silks and brocades, and all other luxurious decorations in which the Gothic nobles had indulged in the latter times of their degeneracy. A vast amount of treasure was likewise found, which had been brought by Roderick for the expenses of the war.

Taric then ordered that the bodies of the Moslem warriors should be interred. As for those of the Christians, they were gathered in heaps, and vast pyres of wood were formed on which they were consumed. The flames of these pyres rose high in the air, and were seen afar off in the night; and when the Christians beheld them from the neighbouring hills, they beat their breasts and tore their hair, and lamented over them as over the funeral fires of their country. The carnage of that battle infected the air for two whole months, and bones were seen lying in heaps upon the field for more than forty years; nay, when ages had past and gone, the husbandman, turning up the soil, would still find fragments of Gothic cuirasses and helms, and Moorish scimitars, the relics of that dreadful fight.
THE LEGEND OF

For three days the Arabian horsemen pursued the flying Christians, hunting them over the face of the country; so that but a scanty number of that mighty host escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

Taric ben Zeyad considered his victory incomplete so long as the Gothic monarch survived; he proclaimed great rewards, therefore, to whomsoever should bring Roderick to him, dead or alive. A diligent search was accordingly made in every direction, but for a long time in vain. At length a soldier brought to Taric the head of a Christian warrior, on which was a cap decorated with feathers and precious stones. The Arab leader received it as the head of the unfortunate Roderick, and sent it, as a trophy of his victory, to Muza ben Nosier, who, in like manner, transmitted it to the caliph at Damascus. The Spanish historians, however, have always denied its identity.

A mystery has ever hung, and ever must continue to hang, over the fate of King Roderick, in that dark and doleful day of Spain. Whether he went down amidst the storm of battle, and atoned for his sins and errors by a patriot grave, or whether he survived to repent of them in hermit exile, must remain matter of conjecture and dispute. The learned Archbishop Rodrigo, who has recorded the events of this disastrous field, affirms that Roderick fell beneath the vengeful blade of the traitor Julian, and thus expiated with his blood his crime against the hapless Florinda; but the archbishop stands alone in his record of the fact. It seems generally admitted that Orelia, the favourite war-horse of Don Roderick, was found entangled in a marsh on the borders of the Guadalete, with the sandals and mantle and royal insignia of the king lying close by him. The river at this place ran broad and deep, and was encumbered with the dead bodies of warriors and steeds; it has been supposed, therefore, that he perished in the stream; but his body was not found within its waters.

When several years had passed away, and mens' minds, being restored to some degree of tranquillity, began to occupy themselves about the events of this dismal day, a rumour arose that Roderick had escaped from the carnage on the banks of the Guadalete, and was still alive. It was said, that having from a rising ground caught a view of the whole field of battle, and seen that the day was lost, and his army flying in all directions, he likewise sought his safety in flight. It is added, that the Arab horsemen, while
scouring the mountains in quest of fugitives, found a shepherd arrayed in the royal robes, and brought him before the conqueror; believing him to be the king himself. Count Julian soon dispelled the error. On being questioned, the trembling rustic declared, that while tending his sheep in the folds of the mountains, there came a cavalier on a horse wearied and spent, and ready to sink beneath the spur; that the cavalier, with an authoritative voice and menacing air, commanded him to exchange garments with him, and clad himself in his rude garb of sheep-skin, and took his crook and his scrip of provisions, and continued up the rugged defiles of the mountains leading towards Castile, until he was lost to view (1).

This tradition was fondly cherished by many, who clung to the belief in the existence of their monarch as their main hope for the redemption of Spain. It was even affirmed that he had taken refuge, with many of his host, in an island of the "Ocean sea," from whence he might yet return once more to elevate his standard, and battle for the recovery of his throne.

Year after year, however, elapsed, and nothing was heard of Don Roderick; yet, like Sebastian of Portugal, and Arthur of England, his name continued to be a rallying point for popular faith, and the mystery of his end to give rise to romantic fables. At length, when generation after generation had sunk into grave, and near two centuries had passed and gone, traces were said to be discovered that threw a light on the final fortunes of the unfortunate Roderick. At that time, Don Alphonso the Great, King of Leon, had wrested the city of Viseo in Lusitania from the hands of the Moors. As his soldiers were ranging about the city and its environs, one of them discovered in a field, outside of the walls, a small chapel or hermitage, with a sepulchre in front, on which was inscribed this epitaph in Gothic characters:—

HIC REQUIESCIT RUDERICKUS,
ULTIMUS REX GOTHORUM.

Here lies Roderick,
The last king of the Goths.

It has been believed by many that this was the veritable tomb of the monarch, and that in this hermitage he had finished his days in solitary penance. The warrior, as he contemplated the supposed

(1) Bleda, Cron. lib. ii. c. 9. Abulcasim Tarif Abentariquie, lib. i. c. 10.
tomb of the once haughty Roderick, forgot all his faults and errors, and shed a soldier's tear over his memory; but when his thoughts turned to Count Julian, his patriotic indignation broke forth, and with his dagger he inscribed a rude malediction on the stone.

"Accursed," said he, "be the impious and headlong vengeance of the traitor Julian. He was a murderer of his king; a destroyer of his kindred; a betrayer of his country. May his name be bitter in every mouth, and his memory infamous to all generations."

Here ends the legend of Don Roderick.
ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

FOREGOING LEGEND.

The Tomb of Roderick.

The venerable Sebastiano, Bishop of Salamanca, declares that the inscription on the tomb at Visco, in Portugal, existed in his time, and that he had seen it. A particular account of the exile and hermit life of Roderick is furnished by Berganza, on the authority of Portuguese chronicles.

Algunos historiadores portugueses asseguran, que el rey Rodrigo, perdida la batalla, huyó á tierra de Mérida, y se recogió en el monasterio de Cauliniano, en donde, arrepentido de sus culpas, procuró confesárselas con muchas lágrimas. Deseando mas retiro, y escogiendo por compañero á un monge llamado Roman, y llevando la imagen de Nazareth, que Cyriaco, monge de nacion griego, aviá traído de Jerusalem al monasterio de Cauliniano, se subió á un monte muy áspero, que estaba sobre el mar, junto al lugar de Pedeneraya. Vivió Rodrigo en compañía del monge en el hueco de una gruta por espacio de un año; despues se pasó á la ermita de San Miguel, que estaba cerca de Visco, en donde murió y fue sepultado.

Puédese ver esta relacion en las notas de Don Thomas Tamayo sobre Paulo decano. El chronicon de san Milan, que llega hasta el año 883, dize que, hasta su tiempo, se ignora el fin del rey Rodrigo. Pocos años despues el rey Don Alonso el Magno, aviendo ganado la ciudad de Visco, encontró en una iglesia el epitafio que en romance dice: —Aquí yaze Rodrigo, último rey de los Godos.—Berganza, l. i. c. 15.

The Cave of Hercules.

As the story of the necromantic tower is one of the most famous as well as least credible points in the history of Don Roderick, it may be well to fortify or buttress it by some account of another
illustrations.

marvel of the city of Toledo. This ancient city, which dates its existence almost from the time of the flood, claiming as its founder Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah (1), has been the warrior-hold of many generations, and a strange diversity of races. It bears traces of the artifices and devices of its various occupants, and is full of mysteries and subjects for antiquarian conjecture and perplexity. It is built upon a high rocky promontory, with the Tagus brawling round its base, and is overlooked by cragged and precipitous hills. These hills abound with clefts and caverns; and the promontory itself, on which the city is built, bears traces of vaults and subterraneous habitations, which are occasionally discovered under the ruins of ancient houses, or beneath the churches and convents.

These are supposed by some to have been the habitations or retreats of the primitive inhabitants; for it was the custom of the ancients, according to Pliny, to make caves in high and rocky places, and live in them through fear of floods; and such a precaution, says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, in his history of Toledo, was natural enough among the first Toledans, seeing that they founded their city shortly after the deluge, while the memory of it was still fresh in their minds.

Some have supposed these secret caves and vaults to have been places of concealment of the inhabitants and their treasure, during times of war and violence; or rude temples for the performance of religious ceremonies in times of persecution. There are not wanting other and grave writers, who give them a still darker purpose. In these caves, say they, were taught the diabolical mysteries of magic; and here were performed those infernal ceremonies and incantations, horrible in the eyes of God and man. "History," says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, "is full of accounts that the magi taught and performed their magic and their superstitious rites in profound caves and secret places; because, as this art of the devil was prohibited from the very origin of Christianity, they always sought for hidden places in which to practise it." In the time of the Moors this art, we are told, was publicly taught at their universities, the same as astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics, and at no place was it cultivated with more success than at Toledo. Hence this city has ever been darkly renowned for mystic

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science; insomuch that the magic art was called by the French, and by other nations, the Arte Toledana.

Of all the marvels, however, of this ancient, picturesque, romantic, and necromantic city, none in modern times surpass the cave of Hercules, if we may take the account of Don Pedro de Roxas for authentic. The entrance to this cave is within the church of San Gines, situated in nearly the highest part of the city. The portal is secured by massive doors, opening within the walls of the church, but which are kept rigorously closed. The cavern extends under the city and beneath the bed of the Tagus to the distance of three leagues beyond. It is, in some places, of rare architecture, built of small stones curiously wrought, and supported by columns and arches.

In the year 1546 an account of this cavern was given to the archbishop and cardinal Don Juan Martinez Siliceo, who, desirous of examining it, ordered the entrance to be cleaned. A number of persons furnished with provisions, lanterns, and cords, then went in, and having proceeded about half a league, came to a place where there was a kind of chapel or temple, having a table or altar, with several statues of bronze in niches or on pedestals.

While they were regarding this mysterious scene of ancient worship or incantation, one of the statues fell, with a noise that echoed through the cavern, and smote the hearts of the adventurers with terror. Recovering from their alarm, they proceeded onward, but were soon again dismayed by a roaring and rushing sound that increased as they advanced. It was made by a furious and turbulent stream, the dark waters of which were too deep and broad and rapid to be crossed. By this time their hearts were so chilled they could not seek any other passage by which they might advance; so they turned back and hastened out of the cave. It was nightfall when they sallied forth, and they were so much affected by the terror they had undergone, and by the cold and damp air of the cavern, to which they were the more sensible from its being in the summer, that all of them fell sick, and several of them died. Whether the archbishop was encouraged to pursue his research and gratify his curiosity, the history does not mention.

Alonzo Telles de Meneses, in his History of the world, records, that not long before his time a boy of Toledo, being threatened with punishment by his master, fled and took refuge in this cave. Fancying his pursuer at his heels, he took no heed of the obscurity
or coldness of the cave, but kept groping and blundering forward, until he came forth at three leagues' distance from the city.

Another and very popular story of this cave, current among the common people, was, that in its remote recesses lay concealed a great treasure of gold, left there by the Romans. Whoever would reach this precious hoard must pass through several caves or grottos; each having its particular terror, and all under the guardianship of a ferocious dog, who has the key of all the gates, and watches day and night. At the approach of any one, he shows his teeth, and makes a hideous growling; but no adventurer after wealth had the courage to brave a contest with this terrific cerberus.

The most intrepid candidate on record was a poor man who had lost his all, and had those grand incentives to desperate enterprise, a wife and a large family of children. Hearing the story of this cave, he determined to venture alone in search of the treasure. He accordingly entered, and wandered many hours, bewildered, about the cave. Often would he have returned, but the thoughts of his wife and children urged him on. At length he arrived near to the place where he supposed the treasure lay hidden; but here, to his dismay, he beheld the floor of the cavern strown with human bones; doubtless the remains of adventurers like himself, who had been torn to pieces.

Losing all courage, he now turned and sought his way out of the cave. Horrors thickened upon him as he fled. He beheld direful phantoms glaring and gibbering around him, and heard the sound of pursuit in the echoes of his footsteps. He reached his home overcome with affright; several hours elapsed before he could recover speech to tell his story, and he died on the following day.

The judicious Don Pedro de Roxas holds the account of the buried treasure for fabulous, but the adventure of this unlucky man for very possible; being led on by avarice, or rather the hope of retrieving a desperate fortune. He, moreover, pronounces his dying, shortly after coming forth, as very probable; because the darkness of the cave, its coldness, the fright at finding the bones, the dread of meeting the imaginary dog, all joining to operate upon a man who was past the prime of his days, and enfeebled by poverty and scanty food, might easily cause his death.

Many have considered this cave as intended originally for a sally or retreat from the city in case it should be taken; an opt-
nion rendered probable, it is thought, by its grandeur and great extent.

The learned Salazar de Mendoza, however, in his history of the grand cardinal of Spain, affirms it as an established fact, that it was first wrought out of the rock by Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah, and afterwards repaired and greatly augmented by Hercules, the Egyptian, who made it his habitation after he had erected his pillars at the straits of Gibraltar. Here, too, it is said, he read magic to his followers, and taught them those supernatural arts by which he accomplished his vast achievements. Others think that it was a temple dedicated to Hercules, as was the case, according to Pomponius Mela, with the great cave in the rock of Gibraltar; certain it is, that it has always borne the name of "The Cave of Hercules."

There are not wanting some who have insinuated that it was a work dating from the time of the Romans, and intended as a cloaca or sewer of the city; but such a grovelling insinuation will be treated with proper scorn by the reader, after the nobler purposes to which he has heard this marvellous cavern consecrated.

From all the circumstances here adduced from learned and reverend authors, it will be perceived that Toledo is a city fruitful of marvels, and that the necromantic tower of Hercules has more solid foundation than most edifices of similar import in ancient history.

The writer of these pages will venture to add the result of his personal researches respecting the far-famed cavern in question. Rambling about Toledo in the year 1826, in company with a small knot of antiquity hunters, among whom was an eminent British painter (1), and an English nobleman (2), who has since distinguished himself in Spanish historical research, we directed our steps to the church of San Gines, and inquired for the portal of the secret cavern. The sacristan was a voluble and communicative man, and one not likely to be niggard of his tongue about any thing he knew, or slow to boast of any marvel pertaining to his church; but he professed utter ignorance of the existence of any such portal. He remembered to have heard, however, that immediately under the entrance to the church there was an arch of mason-

(1) Mr. D. W—kie. (2) Lord Mah—n.
work, apparently the upper part of some subterranean portal; but that all had been covered up, and a pavement laid down thereon; so that whether it led to the magic cave or the necromantic tower remains a mystery, and so must remain until some monarch or archbishop shall again have courage and authority to break the spell.
LEGEND
OF THE
SUBJUGATION OF SPAIN (1).

CHAPTER I.

Consternation of Spain.—Conduct of the conquerors.—Missives between Taric and Muza.

The overthrow of King Roderick and his army on the banks of the Guadalete threw open all southern Spain to the inroads of the Moslems. The whole country fled before them; villages and hamlets were hastily abandoned; the inhabitants placed their aged and infirm, their wives and children, and their most precious effects, on mules and other beasts of burden, and, driving before them their flocks and herds, made for distant parts of the land, for the fastnesses of the mountains, and for such of the cities as yet possessed walls and bulwarks. Many gave out, faint and weary, by the way, and fell into the hands of the enemy; others, at the distant sight of a turban or a Moslem standard, or on hearing the clangour of a trumpet, abandoned their flocks and herds, and hastened their flight with their families. If their pursuers gained upon them, they threw by their household goods and whatever was of burden, and thought themselves fortunate to escape, naked and destitute, to a place of refuge. Thus the roads were covered with scattered flocks and herds, and with spoil of all kind.

The Arabs, however, were not guilty of wanton cruelty or ravage; on the contrary, they conducted themselves with a moderation but seldom witnessed in more civilised conquerors. Taric el Tuerto, though a thorough man of the sword, and one whose whole thoughts were warlike, yet evinced wonderful judgment and dis-

(1) In this legend most of the facts respecting the Arab inroads into Spain are on the authority of Arabian writers, who had the most accurate means of information. Those relative to the Spaniards are chiefly from old Spanish chronicles. It is to be remarked that the Arab accounts have most the air of verity, and the events, as they relate them, are in the ordinary course of common life. The Spanish accounts, on the contrary, are full of the marvellous; for there were no greater romancers than the monkish chroniclers.
creation. He checked the predatory habits of his troops with a rigorous hand. They were forbidden, under pain of severe punishment, to molest any peaceable and unfortified towns, or any unarmed and unresisting people, who remained quiet in their homes. No spoil was permitted to be made excepting in fields of battle, in camps of routed foes, or in cities taken by the sword.

Taric had little need to exercise his severity; his orders were obeyed through love, rather than fear, for he was the idol of his soldiery. They admired his restless and daring spirit, which nothing could dismay. His gaunt and sinewy form, his fiery eye, his visage seamed with scars, were suited to the hardihood of his deeds; and when mounted on his foaming steed, careering the field of battle with quivering lance or flashing scimitar, his Arabs would greet him with shouts of enthusiasm. But what endeared him to them more than all was his soldierlike contempt of gain. Conquest was his only passion; glory the only reward he coveted. As to the spoil of the conquered, he shared it freely among his followers, and squandered his own portion with open-handed generosity.

While Taric was pushing his triumphant course through Andalusia, tidings of his stupendous victory on the banks of the Guadalte were carried to Muza ben Nozier. Messengers after messengers arrived, vying who should most extol the achievements of the conqueror and the grandeur of the conquest. "Taric," said they, "has overthrown the whole force of the unbelievers in one mighty battle. Their king is slain; thousands and tens of thousands of their warriors are destroyed; the whole land lies at our mercy; and city after city is surrendering to the victorious arms of Taric."

The heart of Muza ben Nozier sickened at these tidings, and, instead of rejoicing at the success of the cause of Islam, he trembled with jealous fear lest the triumphs of Taric in Spain should eclipse his own victories in Africa. He despatched missives to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, informing him of these new conquests, but taking the whole glory to himself, and making no mention of the services of Taric; or, at least, only mentioning him incidentally as a subordinate commander. "The battles," said he, "have been terrible as the day of judgment; but, by the aid of Allah, we have gained the victory."

He then prepared in all haste to cross over into Spain, and as-
sume the command of the conquering army; and he wrote a letter in advance to interrupt Taric in the midst of his career. "Whenever this letter may find thee," said he, "I charge thee halt, with thy army and await my coming. Thy force is inadequate to the subjugation of the land, and by rashly venturing, thou mayst lose every thing. I will be with thee speedily with a reinforcement of troops competent to so great an enterprise."

The letter overtook the veteran Taric while in the full glow of triumphant success, having overrun some of the richest parts of Andalusia, and just received the surrender of the city of Ecija. As he read the letter, the blood mantled in his sun-burnt cheek, and fire kindled in his eye, for he penetrated the motives of Muza. He suppressed his wrath, however, and turning with a bitter expression of forced composure to his captains, "Unsaddle your steeds," said he, "and plant your lances in the earth; set up your tents and take your repose; for we must await the coming of the Wali with a mighty force to assist us in our conquest."

The Arab warriors broke forth with loud murmurs at these words: "What need have we of aid," cried they, "when the whole country is flying before us; and what better commander can we have than Taric to lead us on to victory?"

Count Julian also, who was present, now hastened to give his traitorous counsel. "Why pause," cried he, "at this precious moment? The great army of the Goths is vanquished, and their nobles are slaughtered or dispersed. Follow up your blow before the land can recover from its panic. Overrun the provinces, seize upon the cities, make yourself master of the capital, and your conquest is complete (1)."

The advice of Julian was applauded by all the Arab chieftains, who were impatient of any interruption in their career of conquest. Taric was easily persuaded to what was the wish of his heart. Disregarding the letter of Muza, therefore, he prepared to pursue his victories. For this purpose he ordered a review of his troops on the plain of Ecija. Some were mounted on steeds which they had brought from Africa; the rest he supplied with horses taken from the Christians. He repeated his general orders, that they should inflict no wanton injury, nor plunder any place

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(1) Conde, p. i. c. 10.
that offered no resistance. They were forbidden also to encumber themselves with booty, or even with provisions; but were to scour the country with all speed, and seize upon all its fortresses and strongholds.

He then divided his host into three several armies. One he placed under the command of the Greek renegade, Magued el Rumi, a man of desperate courage; and sent it against the ancient city of Cordova. Another was sent against the city of Malaga, and was led by Zayd ben Kesadi, aided by the Bishop Oppas. The third was led by Taric himself, and with this he determined to make a wide sweep through the kingdom (1).

CHAPTER II.
Capture of Granada.—Subjugation of the Alpuxarra Mountains.

The terror of the arms of Taric ben Zeyad went before him; and, at the same time, the report of his lenity to those who submitted without resistance. Wherever he appeared, the towns, for the most part, sent forth some of their principal inhabitants to proffer a surrender; for they were destitute of fortifications, and their fighting men had perished in battle. They were all received into allegiance to the caliph, and were protected from pillage or molestation.

After marching some distance through the country, he entered one day a vast and beautiful plain, interspersed with villages, adorned with groves and gardens, watered by winding rivers, and surrounded by lofty mountains. It was the famous vega, or plain of Granada, destined to be for ages the favourite abode of the Moors. When the Arab conquerors beheld this delicious vega, they were lost in admiration; for it seemed as if the prophet had given them a paradise on earth, as a reward for their services in his cause.

Taric approached the city of Granada, which had a formidable aspect, seated on lofty hills and fortified with Gothic walls and towers, and with the red castle or citadel, built in times of old by the Phœnicians or the Romans. As the Arab chieftain eyed the

(1) Cronica de España, de Alonzo el Sabio, p. iii. c. i.
place, he was pleased with its stern warrior-look, contrasting with the smiling beauty of its vega, and the freshness and voluptuous abundance of its hills and valleys. He pitched his tent before its walls, and made preparations to attack it with all his force.

The city, however, bore but the semblance of power. The flower of its youth had perished in the battle of the Guadalete; many of the principal inhabitants had fled to the mountains, and few remained in the city excepting old men, women, and children, and a number of Jews, which last were well disposed to take part with the conquerors. The city, therefore, readily capitulated, and was received into vassalage on favourable terms. The inhabitants were to retain their property, their laws, and their religion; their churches and priests were to be respected; and no other tribute was required of them than such as they had been accustomed to pay to their Gothic kings.

On taking possession of Granada, Taric garrisoned the towers and castles, and left as alcayde, or governor, a chosen warrior named Betiz Aben Habuz, a native of Arabia Felix, who had distinguished himself by his valour and abilities. This alcayde subsequently made himself king of Granada, and built a palace on one of its hills, the remains of which may be seen at the present day (1).

Even the delights of Granada had no power to detain the active and ardent Taric. To the east of the city he beheld a lofty chain of mountains, towering to the sky, and crowned with shining snow. These were the "Mountains of the Sun and Air;" and the perpetual snows on their summits gave birth to streams that fertilised the plains. In their bosoms, shut up among cliffs and precipices, were many small valleys of great beauty and abundance.

(1) The house shown as the ancient residence of Aben Habuz is called La Casa del Gallo, or the house of the weathercock; so named, says Pedraza, in his History of Granada, from a bronze figure of an Arab horseman, armed with lance and buckler, which once surmounted it and which varied with every wind. On this warlike weathercock was inscribed, in Arabic characters,—

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

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

The Casa del Gallo, even until within twenty years, possessed two great halls beautifully decorated with Morisco reliefs. It then caught fire, and was so damaged as to require to be nearly rebuilt. It is now a manufactory of coarse canvas, and has nothing of the Moorish character remaining. It commands a beautiful view of the city and the vega.
The inhabitants were a bold and hardy race who looked upon their mountains as everlasting fortresses that could never be taken. The inhabitants of the surrounding country had fled to these natural fastnesses for refuge, and driven thither their flocks and herds.

Taric felt that the dominion he had acquired of the plains would be insecure until he had penetrated and subdued these haughty mountains. Leaving Aben Habuz, therefore, in command of Granada, he marched with his army across the vega, and entered the folds of the Sierra, which stretch towards the south. The inhabitants fled with affright on hearing the Moorish trumpets, or beholding the approach of the turbaned horsemen, and plunged deeper into the recesses of their mountains. As the army advanced, the roads became more and more rugged and difficult; sometimes climbing great rocky heights, and at other times descending abruptly into deep ravines, the beds of winter torrents. The mountains were strangely wild and sterile, broken into cliffs and precipices of variegated marble. At their feet were little valleys enamelled with groves and gardens, interlaced with silver streams, and studded with villages and hamlets, but all deserted by their inhabitants. No one appeared to dispute the inroad of the Moslems, who continued their march with increasing confidence, their pennons fluttering from rock and cliff, and the valleys echoing to the din of trumpet, drum, and cymbal. At length they came to a defile, where the mountains seemed to have been rent asunder to make way for a foaming torrent. The narrow and broken road wound along the dizzy edge of precipices, until it came to where a bridge was thrown across the chasm. It was a fearful and gloomy pass; great beetling cliffs overhung the road, and the torrent roared below. This awful defile has ever been famous in the warlike history of those mountains by the name, in former times, of the Barranca de Tocos, and, at present, of the Bridge of Tablete. The Saracen army entered fearlessly into the pass. A part had already crossed the bridge, and was slowly toiling up the rugged road on the opposite side, when great shouts arose, and every cliff appeared suddenly peopled with furious foes. In an instant a deluge of missiles of every sort was rained upon the astonished Moslems. Darts, arrows, javelins, and stones, came whistling down, singling out the most conspicuous cavaliers; and at times great masses of rock, bounding and thundering along the mountain side, crushed
whole ranks at once, or hurled horses and riders over the edge of the precipices.

It was in vain to attempt to brave this mountain warfare. The enemy were beyond the reach of missiles, and safe from pursuit; and the horses of the Arabs were here an encumbrance rather than an aid. The trumpets sounded a retreat, and the army retired in tumult and confusion, harassed by the enemy until extricated from the defile. Taric, who had beheld cities and castles surrendering without a blow, was enraged at being braved by a mere horde of mountain boors, and made another attempt to penetrate the mountains, but was again waylaid and opposed with horrible slaughter.

The fiery son of Ishmael foamed with rage at being thus checkered in his career and foiled in his revenge. He was on the point of abandoning the attempt, and returning to the vega, when a Christian boor sought his camp, and was admitted to his presence. The miserable wretch possessed a cabin and a little patch of ground among the mountains, and offered, if these should be protected from ravage, to inform the Arab commander of a way by which troops of horse might be safely introduced into the bosom of the Sierra, and the whole subdued. The name of this traitor was Fandino, and it deserves to be perpetually recorded with ignominy. His case is an instance how much it is in the power, at times, of the most insignificant being to do mischief, and how all the value of the magnanimous and the brave may be defeated by the treason of the selfish and the despicable.

Instructed by this traitor, the Arab commander caused ten thousand foot soldiers and four thousand horsemen, commanded by a valiant captain, named Ibrahim Albuxarra, to be conveyed by sea to the little port of Adra, at the Mediterranean foot of the mountains. Here they landed, and, guided by the traitor, penetrated to the heart of the sierra, laying every thing waste. The brave mountaineers, thus hemmed in between two armies, destitute of fortresses and without hope of succour, were obliged to capitulate; but their valour was not without avail, for never, even in Spain, did vanquished people surrender on prouder or more honourable terms. We have named the wretch who betrayed his native mountains: let us equally record the name of him whose pious patriotism saved them from desolation. It was the reverend Bishop Centerio. While the warriors rested on their arms in grim and menacing tranquillity among the cliffs, this venerable
prelate descended to the Arab tents in the valley, to conduct the capitulation. In stipulating for the safety of his people, he did not forget that they were brave men, and that they still had weapons in their hands. He obtained conditions accordingly. It was agreed that they should be permitted to retain their houses, lands, and personal effects; that they should be unmolested in their religion, and their temples and priests respected; and that they should pay no other tribute than such as they had been accustomed to render to their kings. Should they prefer to leave the country and remove to any part of Christendom, they were to be allowed to sell their possessions; and to take with them the money, and all their other effects.

Ibrahim Albuoxarra remained in command of the territory, and the whole sierra, or chain of mountains, took his name, which has since been slightly corrupted into that of the Alpuxarras. The subjugation of this rugged region, however, was for a long time incomplete; many of the Christians maintained a wild and hostile independence, living in green glens and scanty valleys among the heights; and the sierra of the Alpuxarras has, in all ages, been one of the most difficult parts of Andalusia to be subdued.

Expediton of Magued against Cordova.—Defence of the patriot Pelistes.

While the veteran Taric was making this wide circuit through the land, the expedition under Magued the renegade proceeded against the city of Cordova. The inhabitants of that ancient place had beheld the great army of Don Roderick spreading like an inundation over the plain of the Guadalquivir, and had felt confident that it must sweep the infidel invaders from the land. What, then, was their dismay, when scattered fugitives, wild with horror and affright, brought them tidings of the entire overthrow of that mighty host, and the disappearance of the king! In the midst of their consternation, the Gothic noble, Pelistes, arrived at their gates, haggard with fatigue of body and anguish of mind, and leading a remnant of his devoted cavaliers, who had survived the dreadful battle of the Guadalete. The people of Cordova knew the valiant

(1) Pedraza, Hist. Granada, p. iii. c. 2. Bleda, Crónica, lib. i. c. 10.
and steadfast spirit of Pelistes, and rallied round him as a last hope. “Roderick is fallen,” cried they, “and we have neither king nor captain: be unto us as a sovereign; take command of our city, and protect us in this hour of peril!”

The heart of Pelistes was free from ambition, and was too much broken by grief to be flattered by the offer of command: but he felt above everything for the woes of his country, and was ready to assume any desperate service in her cause. “Your city,” said he, “is surrounded by walls and towers, and may yet check the progress of the foe. Promise to stand by me to the last, and I will undertake your defence.” The inhabitants all promised implicit obedience and devoted zeal; for what will not the inhabitants of a wealthy city promise and profess in a moment of alarm? The instant, however, that they heard of the approach of the Moslem troops, the wealthier citizens packed up their effects and fled to the mountains, or to the distant city of Toledo. Even the monks collected the riches of their convents and churches, and fled. Pelistes, though he saw himself thus deserted by those who had the greatest interest in the safety of the city, yet determined not to abandon its defence. He had still his faithful though scanty band of cavaliers, and a number of fugitives of the army, in all amounting to about four hundred men. He stationed guards, therefore, at the gates and in the towers, and made every preparation for a desperate resistance.

In the mean time the army of Moslems and apostate Christians advanced, under the command of the Greek renegado, Magued, and guided by the traitor Julian. While they were yet at some distance from the city, their scouts brought to them a shepherd, whom they had surprised on the banks of the Guadalquivir. The trembling hind was an inhabitant of Cordova, and revealed to them the state of the place, and the weakness of its garrison. “And the walls and gates,” said Magued; “are they strong and well guarded?”

“The walls are high, and of wondrous strength,” replied the shepherd; and soldiers hold watch at the gates by day and night. But there is one place where the city may be secretly entered. In a part of the wall, not far from the bridge, the battlements are broken, and there is a breach at some height from the ground. Hard by stands a fig-tree, by the aid of which the wall may easily be scaled.”
Having received this information, Magued halted with his army, and sent forward several renegado Christians, partisans of Count Julian, who entered Cordova as if flying before the enemy. On a dark and tempestuous night, the Moslems approached to the end of the bridge which crosses the Guadalquivir, and remained in ambush. Magued took a small party of chosen men, and, guided by the shepherd, forded the stream, and groped silently along the wall to the place where stood the fig-tree. The traitors, who had fraudulently entered the city, were ready on the wall to render assistance. Magued ordered his followers to make use of the long folds of their turbans instead of cords, and succeeded without difficulty in clambering into the breach.

Drawing their scimitars, they now hastened to the gate which opened towards the bridge; the guards, suspecting no assault from within, were taken by surprise, and easily overpowered; the gate was thrown open, and the army that had remained in ambush rushed over the bridge and entered without opposition.

The alarm had by this time spread throughout the city; but already a torrent of armed men was pouring through the streets. Pelistes sallied forth with his cavaliers and such of the soldiery as he could collect, and endeavoured to repel the foe; but every effort was in vain. The Christians were slowly driven from street to street, and square to square, disputing every inch of ground, until, finding another body of the enemy approaching to attack them in rear, they took refuge in a convent, and succeeded in throwing to and barring the ponderous doors. The Moors attempted to force the gates, but were assailed with such showers of missiles from the windows and battlements that they were obliged to retire. Pelistes examined the convent, and found it admirably calculated for defence. It was of great extent, with spacious courts and cloisters. The gates were massive, and secured with bolts and bars; the walls were of great thickness; the windows high and grated; there was a great tank or cistern of water, and the friars, who had fled from the city, had left behind a good supply of provisions. Here, then, Pelistes proposed to make a stand, and to endeavour to hold out until succour should arrive from some other city. His proposition was received with shouts by his loyal cavaliers, not one of whom but was ready to lay down his life in the service of his commander.
CHAPTER IV.

Defence of the Convent of St. George by Pelistes.

For three long and anxious months did the good knight Pelistes and his cavaliers defend their sacred asylum against the repeated assaults of the infidels. The standard of the true faith was constantly displayed from the loftiest tower, and a fire blazed there throughout the night, as signals of distress to the surrounding country. The watchman from his turret kept a wary look-out over the land, hoping in every cloud of dust to descry the glittering helms of Christian warriors. The country, however, was forlorn and abandoned; or if perchance a human being was perceived, it was some Arab horseman, careering the plain of the Guadalquivir as fearlessly as if it were his native desert.

By degrees the provisions of the convent were consumed, and the cavaliers had to slay their horses, one by one, for food. They suffered the wasting miseries of famine without a murmur, and always met their commander with a smile. Pelistes, however, read their sufferings in their wan and emaciated countenances, and felt more for them than for himself. He was grieved at heart that such loyalty and valour should only lead to slavery or death, and resolved to make one desperate attempt for their deliverance. Assembling them one day in the court of the convent, he disclosed to them his purpose.

"Comrades and brothers in arms," said he, "it is needless to conceal danger from brave men. Our case is desperate: our countrymen either know not or heed not our situation, or have not the means to help us. There is but one chance of escape; it is full of peril, and, as your leader, I claim the right to brave it. To-morrow at break of day I will sally forth and make for the city gates at the moment of their being opened; no one will suspect a solitary horseman; I shall be taken for one of those recreant Christians who have basely mingled with the enemy. If I succeed in getting out of the city, I will hasten to Toledo for assistance. In all events I shall be back in less than twenty days. Keep a vigilant look-out toward the nearest mountain. If you behold five lights blazing upon its summit, be assured I am at hand with succour,
and prepare yourselves to sally forth upon the city as I attack the
gates. Should I fail in obtaining aid, I will return to die with you."

When he had finished, his warriors would fain have severally
undertaken the enterprise, and they remonstrated against his ex­
posing himself to such peril; but he was not to be shaken from his
purpose. On the following morning, ere the break of day, his
horse was led forth, caparisoned, into the court of the convent,
and Pelistes appeared in complete armour. Assembling his cav­
aliers in the chapel, he prayed with them for some time before the
altar of the holy Virgin. Then rising, and standing in the midst
of them, "God knows, my companions," said he, "whether we
have any longer a country! If not, better were we in our graves.
Loyal and true have ye been to me, and loyal have ye been to my
son, even to the hour of his death; and grieved am I that I have
no other means of proving my love for you, than by adventuring
my worthless life for your deliverance. All I ask of you, before I
go, is a solemn promise to defend yourselves to the last like brave
men and Christian cavaliers, and never to renounce your faith, or
throw yourselves on the mercy of the renegado Magued, or the
traitor Julian." They all pledged their words, and took a solemn
oath to the same effect before the altar.

Pelistes then embraced them one by one, and gave them his be­
nediction; and as he did so his heart yearned over them, for he
felt towards them not merely as a companion in arms and as a
commander, but as a father; and he took leave of them as if he had
been going to his death. The warriors, on their part, crowded
round him in silence, kissing his hand and the hem of his surcoat,
and many of the sternest shed tears.

The grey of the dawning had just streaked the east, when Pe­
listes took lance in hand, hung his shield about his neck, and,
mounting his steed, issued quietly forth from a postern of the con­
vent. He paced slowly through the vacant streets, and the tramp of
his steed echoed afar in that silent hour; but no one suspected a
warrior, moving thus singly and tranquilly in an armed city, to be
an enemy. He arrived at the gate just at the hour of opening. A
foraging party was entering with cattle and with beasts of burthen,
and he passed unheeded through the throng. As soon as he was
out of sight of the soldiers who guarded the gate, he quickened
his pace, and at length, galloping at full speed, succeeded in gaining
the mountains. Here he paused, and alighted at a solitary farm-