

laid our towers and battlements in ruins, and we looked in vain for aid from Granada."

The alcaýdes of Illora and Moclin were brothers; they were alike in prowess, and the bravest among the Moorish cavaliers. They had been the most distinguished in all tilts and tourneys, which graced the happier days of Granada, and had distinguished themselves in the sterner conflicts of the field. Acclamation had always followed their banners, and they had long been the delight of the people. Now, when they returned, after the capture of their fortresses, they were followed by the unsteady populace with execrations. The hearts of the alcaýdes swelled with indignation; they found the ingratitude of their countrymen still more intolerable than the hostility of the Christians. Tidings came, that the enemy was advancing with his triumphant legions, to lay waste the country about Granada. Still El Zagal did not dare to take the field. The two alcaýdes of Illora and Moclin stood before him. "We have defended your fortresses," said they, "until we were almost buried under their ruins; and for our reward, we receive scoffs and revilings. Give us, O king, an opportunity in which knightly valour may signalize itself; not shut up behind stone walls, but in the open conflict of the field! The enemy approaches, to lay our country desolate. Give us men to meet him in the advance; and let shame light upon our heads if we be found wanting in the battle!"

The two brothers were sent forth with a large force of horse and foot. El Zagal intended, should they be successful, to issue out with his whole force; and, by a decisive victory, repair the losses he had suffered. When the people saw the well-known standards of the brothers going forth to battle, there was a feeble shout; but the alcaýdes passed on with stern countenances; for they knew the same voices would curse them were they to return unfortunate. They cast a farewell look upon fair Granada, and upon the beautiful fields of their infancy, as if for these they were willing to lay down their lives, but not for an ungrateful people.

The army of Ferdinand had arrived within two leagues of Granada, at the bridge of Pinos, a pass famous in the wars of the Moors and Christians for many a bloody conflict. It was the pass by which the Castilian monarchs generally made their inroads, and was capable of great defence, from the

ruggedness of the country, and the difficulty of the bridge. The king, with the main body of the army, had attained the brow of a hill, when they beheld the advanced guard, under the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, furiously attacked by the enemy, in the vicinity of the bridge. The Moors rushed to the assault with their usual shouts, but with more than usual ferocity.

There was a hard struggle at the bridge, both parties knowing the importance of the pass. The king particularly noted the prowess of two Moorish cavaliers, alike in arms and devices, and who, by their bearing and attendance, he perceived to be commanders of the enemy. They were the two brothers, the alcaides of Illora and Moclin. Wherever they turned, they carried confusion and death into the ranks of the Christians; but they fought with desperation rather than valour. The Count de Cabra and his brother, Don Martin de Cordova, pressed forward with eagerness against them; but, having advanced too precipitately, were surrounded by the foe, and in imminent danger. A young Christian knight, seeing their peril, hastened with his followers to their relief. The king recognized him for Don Juan de Arragon, Count of Ribargoza, his own nephew; for he was illegitimate son of the Duke of Villahermosa, illegitimate brother of King Ferdinand. The splendid armour of Don Juan, and the sumptuous caparison of his steed, rendered him a brilliant object of attack. He was assailed on all sides, and his superb steed slain under him; yet still he fought valiantly, bearing for a while the brunt of the fight, and giving the exhausted forces of the Count de Cabra time to recover breath.

Seeing the peril of these troops, and the general obstinacy of the contest, the king ordered the royal standard to be advanced, and hastened with all his forces to the relief of the Count de Cabra. At his approach, the enemy gave way, and retreated towards the bridge. The two Moorish commanders endeavoured to rally their troops, and animate them to defend this pass to the utmost. They used prayers, remonstrances, menaces; but nearly in vain. They could only collect a scanty handful of cavaliers. With these they planted themselves at the head of the bridge, and disputed it inch by inch. The fight was hot and obstinate; for but few could contend hand to hand, yet many discharged crossbows and arquebuses

from the banks. The river was covered with the floating bodies of the slain. The Moorish band of cavaliers was almost entirely cut to pieces; the two brothers fell, covered with wounds, upon the bridge they had so resolutely defended. They had given up the battle for lost, but had determined not to return alive to ungrateful Granada. When the people of the capital heard how devotedly they had fallen, they lamented greatly their deaths, and extolled their memory. A column was erected to their honour in the vicinity of the bridge, which long went by the name of "the tomb of the brothers."

The army of Ferdinand now marched on, and established its camp in the vicinity of Granada. The worthy Agapida gives many triumphant details of the ravages committed in the vega, which was again laid waste; the grain, fruits, and other productions of the earth destroyed, and that earthly Paradise rendered a dreary desert. He narrates several fierce but ineffectual sallies and skirmishes of the Moors in defence of their favourite plain; among which, one deserves to be mentioned, as it records the achievement of one of the saintly heroes of this war.

During one of the movements of the Christian army near the walls of Granada, a battalion of fifteen hundred cavalry, and a large force of foot, had sallied from the city, and posted themselves near some gardens, which were surrounded by a canal, and traversed by ditches, for the purpose of irrigation.

The Moors beheld the Duke del Infantado pass by with his two splendid battalions, one of men at arms, the other of light cavalry, armed *à la geneta*. In company with him, but following as a rearguard, was Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent Bishop of Jaen, attended by Francisco Boradillo, the corregidor of his city, and followed by two squadrons of men-at-arms from Jaen, Andujar, Ubeda, and Baza.* The success of the preceding year's campaign had given the good bishop an inclination for warlike affairs, and he had once more buckled on his cuirass.

The Moors were much given to stratagem in warfare. They looked wistfully at the magnificent squadrons of the Duke del Infantado; but their martial discipline precluded all attack. The good bishop promised to be a more easy prey. Suffering the duke and his troops to pass unmolested, they approached

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 62.

the squadrons of the bishop, and making a pretended attack, skirmished slightly, and fled in apparent confusion. The bishop considered the day his own, and, seconded by his corregidor, Bovadillo, followed with valorous precipitation. The Moors fled into the *Huerta del Rey*, or orchard of the king. The troops of the bishop followed hotly after them. When the Moors perceived their pursuers fairly embarrassed among the intricacies of the garden, they turned fiercely upon them, while some of their number threw open the sluices of the Xenil. In an instant the canal which encircled, and the ditches which traversed the garden, were filled with water, and the valiant bishop and his followers found themselves overwhelmed by a deluge.* A scene of great confusion succeeded. Some of the men of Jaen, stoutest of heart and hand, fought with the Moors in the garden, while others struggled with the water, endeavouring to escape across the canal, in which attempt many horses were drowned. Fortunately, the Duke del Infantado perceived the snare into which his companions had fallen, and despatched his light cavalry to their assistance. The Moors were compelled to fly, and driven along the road of Elvira up to the gates of Granada. Several Christian cavaliers perished in this affray; the bishop himself escaped with difficulty, having slipped from his saddle in crossing the canal, but saved himself by holding on to the tail of his charger. This perilous achievement seems to have satisfied the good bishop's belligerent propensities. "He retired on his laurels," says Agapida, "to his city of Jaen, where, on the fruition of all good things, he gradually waxed too corpulent for his corslet, which was hung up in the hall of his episcopal palace; and we hear no more of his military deeds throughout the residue of the holy war of Granada."†

King Ferdinand having completed his ravage of the vega, and kept El Zagal shut up in his capital, conducted his army back through the pass of Lope, to rejoin Queen Isabella at Moclin. The fortresses lately taken being well garrisoned and supplied, he gave the command of the frontier to his cousin, Don Fadrique de Toledo, afterwards so famous in the

* Pulgar.

† Don Luis Osorio fué obispo de Jaen desde el año de 1483, y presidió en esta iglesia hasta el de 1496 en que murió en Flandes á donde fué acompañando á la Princesa Doña Juana, esposa del Archiduque Don Felipe.—España Sagrada. Por Fr. M. Risco, tom. xli. trat. 77. cap. 4.

Netherlands as the Duke of Alva. The campaign being thus completely crowned with success, the sovereigns returned in triumph to the city of Cordova.

CHAPTER XLV

No sooner did the last squadron of Christian cavalry disappear behind the mountain of Elvira, and the note of its trumpets die away upon the ear, than the long suppressed wrath of old Muley el Zagal burst forth. He determined no longer to be half a king, reigning over a divided kingdom, in a divided capital, but to exterminate, by any means, fair or foul, his nephew Boabdil and his confederates. He turned furiously upon those whose factious conduct had deterred him from sallying upon the foe. Some he punished by confiscation, others by banishment, others by death. Once undisputed monarch of the entire kingdom, he trusted to his military skill to retrieve his fortune, and drive the Christians over the frontier.

Boabdil, however, had again retired to Velez el Blanco, on the confines of Murcia, where he could avail himself, in case of emergency, of any assistance or protection afforded him by the policy of Ferdinand. His defeat had blighted his reviving fortunes, for the people considered him as inevitably doomed to misfortune. Still, while he lived, El Zagal knew he would be a rallying point for faction, and liable, at any moment, to be elevated into power by the capricious multitude. He had recourse, therefore, to the most perfidious means to compass his destruction. He sent ambassadors to him, representing the necessity of concord for the salvation of the kingdom, and even offering to resign the title of king, and to become subject to his sway, on receiving some estate, on which he could live in tranquil retirement. But, while the ambassadors bore these words of peace, they were furnished with poisoned herbs, which they were to administer secretly to Boabdil; and, if they failed in this attempt, they had pledged themselves to despatch him openly, while engaged in conversation. They were instigated to this treason by promises of great reward, and by assurances from the alfaquis, that Boabdil was an apostate, whose death would be acceptable to heaven.

The young monarch was secretly apprized of the concerted

treason, and refused an audience to the ambassadors. He denounced his uncle as the murderer of his father and his kindred, and the usurper of his throne, and vowed never to relent in hostility to him, until he should place his head on the walls of the Alhambra.

Open war again broke out between the two monarchs, though feebly carried on, in consequence of their mutual embarrassments. Ferdinand again extended his assistance to Boabdil, ordering the commanders of his fortresses to aid him in all enterprises against his uncle, and against such places as refused to acknowledge him as king. And Don Juan de Benavides, who commanded in Loxa, even made inroads, in his name, into the territories of Almeria, Baza, and Guadix, which owned allegiance to El Zagal.

The unfortunate Boabdil had three great evils to contend with; the inconstancy of his subjects, the hostility of his uncle, and the friendship of Ferdinand. The last was by far the most baneful; his fortunes withered under it. He was looked upon as the enemy of his faith and of his country. The cities shut their gates against him. The people cursed him. Even the scanty band of cavaliers, who had hitherto followed his ill starred banner, began to desert him; for he had not wherewithal to reward, or even to support them. His spirit sank with his fortune; and he feared that, in a little time, he should not have a spot of earth whereon to place his standard, or an adherent to rally under it.

In the midst of his despondency, he received a message from his lion-hearted mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra. "For shame," said she, "to linger about the borders of your kingdom, when a usurper is seated in your capital! Why look abroad for perfidious aid, when you have loyal hearts beating true to you in Granada? The albaycin is ready to throw open its gates to receive you. Strike home vigorously. A sudden blow may mend all, or make an end. A throne, or a grave! for a king, there is no honourable medium."

Boabdil was of an undecided character: but there are circumstances which bring the most wavering to a decision, and, when once resolved, they are apt to act with a daring impulse, unknown to steadier judgments. The message of the sultana roused him from a dream. Granada, beautiful Granada! with its stately Alhambra, its delicious gardens, its gushing and limpid fountains, sparkling among groves of

orange, citron, and myrtle, rose before him. "What have I done," exclaimed he, "that I should be an exile from this paradise of my forefathers, a wanderer and fugitive in my own kingdom, while a murderous usurper sits proudly upon my throne? Surely, Allah will befriend the righteous cause: one blow, and all may be my own!"

He summoned his scanty band of cavaliers. "Who is ready to follow his monarch unto the death?" said he; and every one laid his hand upon his cimenter. "Enough!" said he: "let each man arm himself, and prepare his steed in secret, for an enterprise of toil and peril: if we succeed, our reward is empire!"

CHAPTER XLV.*

"IN the hand of God," exclaims an old Arabian chronicler, "is the destiny of princes: he alone giveth empire. A single Moorish horseman, mounted on a fleet Arabian steed, was one day traversing the mountains which extend between Granada and the frontiers of Murcia. He galloped swiftly through the valleys, but paused and looked out cautiously from the summit of every height. A squadron of cavaliers followed warily at a distance. There were fifty lances. The richness of their armour and attire showed them to be warriors of noble rank, and their leader had a lofty and prince-like demeanour." The squadron thus described by the Arabian chronicler was the Moorish king Boabdil and his devoted followers.

For two nights and a day they pursued their adventurous journey, avoiding all populous parts of the country, and choosing the most solitary passes of the mountains. They suffered severe hardships and fatigues; but they suffered without a murmur. They were accustomed to rugged campaigning, and their steeds were of generous and unyielding spirit. It was midnight, and all was dark and silent, as they descended from the mountains, and approached the city of Granada. They passed along quietly under the shadow of its walls, until they arrived near the gate of the albaycin. Here Boabdil ordered his followers to halt, and remain concealed. Taking but four or five with him, he advanced resolutely to the gate, and knocked with the hilt of his cimenter. The guards demanded who sought to enter at that unseasonable

hour. "Your king!" exclaimed Boabdil: "open the gate, and admit him."

The guards held forth a light, and recognised the person of the youthful monarch. They were struck with sudden awe, and threw open the gates, and Boabdil and his followers entered unmolested. They galloped to the dwellings of the principal inhabitants of the albaycin; thundering at their portals, and summoning them to rise, and take arms for their rightful sovereign. The summons was instantly obeyed; trumpets resounded throughout the streets; the gleam of torches and the flash of arms showed the Moors hurrying to their gathering places; and by daybreak the whole force of the albaycin was rallied under the standard of Boabdil. Such was the success of this sudden and desperate act of the young monarch; for we are assured, by contemporary historians, that there had been no previous concert or arrangement. "As the guards opened the gate of the city to admit him," observes a pious chronicler, "so God opened the hearts of the Moors to receive him as their king."*

In the morning, early, the tidings of this event roused El Zagal from his slumbers in the Alhambra. The fiery old warrior assembled his guard in haste, and made his way, sword in hand, to the albaycin, hoping to come upon his nephew by surprise. He was vigorously met by Boabdil and his adherents, and driven back into the quarter of the Alhambra. An encounter took place between the two kings in the square before the principal mosque. Here they fought, hand to hand, with implacable fury, as though it had been agreed to decide their competition for the crown by single combat. In the tumult of this chance medley affray, however, they were separated, and the party of El Zagal was ultimately driven from the square.

The battle raged for some time in the streets and places of the city; but, finding their powers of mischief cramped within such narrow limits, both parties sallied forth into the fields, and fought beneath the walls until evening. Many fell on both sides; and at night each party withdrew into its quarter, until the morning gave them light to renew the unnatural conflict. For several days the two divisions of the city remained like hostile powers arrayed against each other. The party of the Alhambra was more numerous than that of

* Pulgar.

the albaycin, and contained most of the nobility and chivalry; but the adherents of Boabdil were men hardened and strengthened by labour, and habitually skilled in the exercise of arms.

The albaycin underwent a kind of siege by the forces of El Zagal: they effected breaches in the walls, and made repeated attempts to carry it sword in hand, but were as often repulsed. The troops of Boabdil, on the other hand, made frequent sallies; and, in the conflicts which took place, the hatred of the combatants rose to such a pitch of fury, that no quarter was given on either side.

Boabdil perceived the inferiority of his force. He dreaded also that his adherents, being for the most part tradesmen and artisans, would become impatient of this interruption of their gainful occupations, and disheartened by these continual scenes of carnage. He sent missives, therefore, in all haste, to Don Fadrique de Toledo, who commanded the Christian forces on the frontier, entreating his assistance.

Don Fadrique had received orders from the politic Ferdinand to aid the youthful monarch in all his contests with his uncle. He advanced, therefore, with a body of troops near to Granada; but, wary lest some treachery might be intended, he stood for some time aloof, watching the movements of the parties. The furious and sanguinary nature of the conflicts, which distracted unhappy Granada, soon convinced him that there was no collusion between the monarchs. He sent Boabdil, therefore, a reinforcement of Christian foot soldiers and arquebusiers, under Fernan Alvarez de Sotomayor, alcaide of Colomara. This was as a fire brand thrown in to light up anew the flames of war in the city, which remained raging between the Moorish inhabitants for the space of fifty days.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HITHERTO the events of this renowned war have been little else than a succession of brilliant but brief exploits, such as sudden forays and wild skirmishes among the mountains, or the surprisals of castles, fortresses, and frontier towns. We approach now to more important and prolonged operations, in which ancient and mighty cities, the bulwarks of Granada, were invested by powerful armies, subdued by

slow and regular sieges, and thus the capital left naked and alone.

The glorious triumphs of the Catholic sovereigns, says Fray Antonio Agapida, had resounded throughout the East, and filled all heathenness with alarm. The Grand Turk, Bajazet II., and his deadly foe the Grand Soldan of Egypt, suspending for a time their bloody feuds, entered into a league to protect the religion of Mahomet and the kingdom of Granada from the hostilities of the Christians. It was concerted between them, that Bajazet should send a powerful armada against the island of Sicily, then appertaining to the Spanish crown, for the purpose of distracting the attention of the Castilian sovereigns, while, at the same time, great bodies of troops should be poured into Granada from the opposite coast of Africa.

Ferdinand and Isabella received timely intelligence of these designs. They resolved at once to carry the war into the seabord of Granada, to possess themselves of its ports, and thus, as it were, to bar the gates of the kingdom against all external aid. Malaga was to be the main object of attack: it was the principal seaport of the kingdom, and almost necessary to its existence. It had long been the seat of opulent commerce, sending many ships to the coasts of Syria and Egypt. It was also the great channel of communication with Africa, through which were introduced supplies of money, troops, arms, and steeds, from Tunis, Tripoli, Fez, Tremezan, and other Barbary powers. It was emphatically called, therefore, the Hand and Mouth of Granada.

Before laying siege to this redoubtable city, however, it was deemed necessary to secure the neighbouring city of Velez Malaga, and its dependent places, which might otherwise harass the besieging army.

For this important campaign, the nobles of the kingdom were again summoned to take the field with their forces, in the spring of 1487. The menaced invasion of the infidel powers of the East had awakened new ardour in the bosoms of all true Christian knights, and so zealously did they respond to the summons of the sovereigns, that an army of twenty thousand cavalry, and fifty thousand foot, the flower of Spanish warriors, led by the bravest of Spanish cavaliers, thronged the renowned city of Cordova at the appointed time.

On the night before this mighty host set forth upon its

march, an earthquake shook the city. The inhabitants, awakened by the shaking of the walls and rocking of the towers, fled to the courts and squares, fearing to be overwhelmed by the ruins of their dwellings. The earthquake was most violent in the quarter of the royal residence, the site of the ancient palace of the Moorish kings. Many looked upon this as an omen of some impending evil, but Fray Antonio Agapida, in that infallible spirit of divination which succeeds an event, plainly reads in it a presage, that the empire of the Moors was about to be shaken to its centre.

It was on Saturday, the eve of the Sunday of Palms, says a worthy and loyal chronicler of the times, that the most Catholic monarch departed with his army to render service to heaven, and make war upon the Moors.* Heavy rains had swelled all the streams, and rendered the roads deep and difficult. The king, therefore, divided his host into two bodies. In one he put all the artillery, guarded by a strong body of horse, and commanded by the master of Alcantara, and Martin Alonzo, senior of Montemayor. This division was to proceed by the road through the valleys, where pasturage abounded for the oxen which drew the ordnance.

The main body of the army was led by the king in person. It was divided into numerous battalions, each commanded by some distinguished cavalier. The king took the rough and perilous road of the mountains; and few mountains are more rugged and difficult than those of Andalusia. The roads are mere mule-paths, straggling amidst rocks and along the verge of precipices, clambering vast craggy heights, or descending into frightful chasms and ravines, with scanty and uncertain foothold for either man or steed. Four thousand pioneers were sent in advance, under the alcaide de los Donzeles, to conquer, in some degree, the asperities of the road. Some had pickaxes and crows, to break the rocks; some implements to construct bridges over the mountain torrents; while it was the duty of others to lay stepping-stones in the smaller streams. As the country was inhabited by fierce Moorish mountaineers, Don Diego de Castrillo was despatched, with a body of horse and foot, to take possession of the heights and passes. Notwithstanding every precaution, the royal army suffered excessively on its march. At one time, there was no place to encamp for five leagues of the most

* Pulgar Cronica de los Reyes Catholicos.

toilsome and mountainous country, and many of the leasts of burden sank down and perished on the road.

It was with the greatest joy, therefore, that the royal army emerged from these stern and frightful defiles, and came to where they looked down upon the vega of Velez Malaga. The region before them was one of the most delectable to the eye that ever was ravaged by an army. Sheltered from every rude blast by a screen of mountains, and sloping and expanding to the south, this lovely valley was quickened by the most generous sunshine, watered by the silver meanderings of the Velez, and refreshed by cooling breezes from the Mediterranean. The sloping hills were covered with vineyards and olive-trees, the distant fields waved with grain, or were verdant with pasturage, while around the city were delightful gardens, the favourite retreats of the Moors, where their white pavilions gleamed among groves of oranges, citrons, and pomegranates, and were surmounted by stately palms, those plants of southern growth, bespeaking a generous climate and a cloudless sky.

In the upper part of this delightful valley, the city of Velez Malaga reared its warrior battlements, in stern contrast to the landscape. It was built on the declivity of a steep and insulated hill, and strongly fortified by walls and towers. The crest of the hill rose high above the town into a mere crag, inaccessible on every other side, and crowned by a powerful castle, which domineered over the surrounding country. Two suburbs swept down into the valley, from the skirts of the town, and were defended by bulwarks and deep ditches. The vast ranges of gray mountains, often capped with clouds, which rose to the north, were inhabited by a hardy and warlike race, whose strong fortresses of Comares, Camillas, Competa, and Benemarhorga, frowned down from cragged heights.

At the time that the Christian host arrived in sight of this valley, a squadron was hovering on the smooth sea before it, displaying the banner of Castile. This was commanded by the Count of Trevento, and consisted of four armed galleys, convoying a number of caravels, laden with supplies for the army.

After surveying the ground, King Ferdinand encamped on the side of a mountain, which advanced close to the city, and was the last of a rugged sierra, or chain of heights, that

extended quite to Granada. On the summit of this mountain, and overlooking the camp, was a Moorish town, powerfully fortified, called Bentomiz, and which, from its vicinity, had been considered capable of yielding great assistance to Velez Malaga. Several of the generals remonstrated with the king for choosing a post so exposed to assaults from the mountaineers. Ferdinand replied, that he should thus cut off all communication between the town and the city; and that, as to the danger, his soldiers must keep the more vigilant guard against surprise.

King Ferdinand rode forth, attended by several cavaliers, and a small number of cuirassiers, appointing the various stations of the camp. While a body of foot soldiers were taking possession, as an advanced guard, of an important height which overlooked the city, the king retired to a tent to take refreshment. While at table, he was startled by a sudden uproar, and, looking forth, beheld his soldiers flying before a superior force of the enemy. The king had on no other armour but a cuirass. Seizing a lance, however, he sprang upon his horse, and galloped to protect the fugitives, followed by his handful of knights and cuirassiers. When the Spaniards saw the king hastening to their aid, they turned upon their pursuers. Ferdinand, in his eagerness, threw himself into the midst of the foe. One of his grooms was killed beside him; but before the Moor who slew him could escape, the king transfixed him with his lance. He then sought to draw his sword, which hung at his saddle-bow, but in vain. Never had he been exposed to such peril: he was surrounded by the enemy, without a weapon wherewith to defend himself.

In this moment of awful jeopardy, the Marquis of Cadiz, the Count de Cabra, the Adelantado of Murcia, with two other cavaliers, named Garcilasso de la Vega and Diego de Atayde, came galloping to the scene of action, and, surrounding the king, made a loyal rampart of their bodies against the assaults of the Moors. The horse of the marquis was pierced by an arrow, and that worthy cavalier exposed to imminent danger; but, with the aid of his valorous companions, he quickly put the enemy to flight, and pursued them with slaughter to the very gates of the city.

When these loyal warriors returned from the pursuit, they remonstrated with the king for exposing his life in personal

conflicts, seeing that he had so many valiant captains, whose business it was to fight. They reminded him, that the life of a prince was the life of his people, and that many a brave army was lost by the loss of its commander. They entreated him, therefore, in future to protect them with the force of his mind in the cabinet, rather than of his arm in the field.

Ferdinand acknowledged the wisdom of their advice, but declared, that he could not see his people in peril without venturing his person to assist them: a reply, say the old chroniclers, which delighted the whole army, inasmuch as they saw, that he not only governed them as a good king, but protected them as a valiant captain. Ferdinand, however, was conscious of the extreme peril to which he had been exposed, and made a vow never again to venture into battle without having his sword girt to his side.*

When this achievement of the king was related to Isabella, she trembled amidst her joy at his safety; and afterwards, in memorial of the event, she granted to Velez Malaga, as the arms of the city, the figure of the king on horseback, with a groom lying dead at his feet, and the Moors flying.†

The camp was formed, but the artillery was yet on the road, advancing with infinite labour at the rate of merely a league a day; for heavy rains had converted the streams of the valleys into raging torrents, and completely broken up the roads. In the meantime King Ferdinand ordered an assault on the suburbs of the city. They were carried, after a sanguinary conflict of six hours, in which many Christian cavaliers were killed and wounded, and among the latter Don Alvaro of Portugal, son of the Duke of Braganza. The suburbs were then fortified towards the city with trenches and palisades, and garrisoned by a chosen force under Don Fadrique de Toledo. Other trenches were dug round the city, and from the suburbs to the royal camp, so as to cut off all communication with the surrounding country.

Bodies of troops were also sent to take possession of the mountain passes, by which the supplies for the army had to be brought. The mountains, however, were so steep and rugged, and so full of defiles and lurking places, that the Moors could sally forth and retreat in perfect security, frequently sweeping down upon Christian convoys, and bearing

* Illiescas, Hist. Pontif. lib. vi. c. 20. Vedmar, Hist. Velez Malaga.

† Idem.

off both booty and prisoners to their strong-holds. Sometimes the Moors would light fires at night on the sides of the mountains, which would be answered by fires from the watch-towers and fortresses. By these signals they would concert assaults upon the Christian camp, which, in consequence, was obliged to be continually on the alert, and ready to fly to arms.

King Ferdinand flattered himself, that the manifestation of his force had struck sufficient terror into the city, and that, by offers of clemency, it might be induced to capitulate. He wrote a letter, therefore, to the commanders, promising, in case of immediate surrender, that all the inhabitants should be permitted to depart with their effects; but threatening them with fire and sword if they persisted in defence. This letter was despatched by a cavalier, named Carvajal, who, putting it on the end of a lance, gave it to the Moors who were on the walls of the city. The commanders replied, that the king was too noble and magnanimous to put such a threat in execution, and that they should not surrender, as they knew the artillery could not be brought to the camp, and they were promised succour by the king of Granada.

At the same time that he received this reply, the king learned, that at the strong town of Comares, upon a height about two leagues distant from the camp, a large number of warriors had assembled from the Axarquía, the same mountains in which the Christian cavaliers had been massacred in the beginning of the war; and that others were daily expected, for this rugged sierra was capable of furnishing fifteen thousand fighting men.

King Ferdinand felt that his army, thus disjointed and enclosed in an enemy's country, was in a perilous situation, and that the utmost discipline and vigilance were necessary. He put the camp under the strictest regulations, forbidding all gaming, blasphemy, or brawl, and expelling all loose women, and their attendant bully-ruffians, the usual fomenters of riot and contention among soldiery. He ordered, that none should sally forth to skirmish without permission from their commanders; that none should set fire to the woods on the neighbouring mountains, and that all word of security given to Moorish places or individuals should be inviolably observed. These regulations were enforced by severe penalties, and had such salutary effect, that, though a vast host of various people

were collected together, not an opprobrious epithet was heard, nor a weapon drawn in quarrel.

In the meantime the cloud of war went on gathering about the summits of the mountains: multitudes of the fierce warriors of the sierra descended to the lower heights of Bentomiz, which overhung the camp, intending to force their way into the city. A detachment was sent against them, which, after sharp fighting, drove them to the higher cliffs of the mountain, where it was impossible to pursue them.

Ten days had elapsed since the encampment of the army, yet still the artillery had not arrived. The lombards and other heavy ordnance were left, in despair, at Antequera: the rest came groaning slowly through the narrow valleys, which were filled with long trains of artillery and cars laden with munitions. At length part of the smaller ordnance arrived within half a league of the camp, and the Christians were animated with the hopes of soon being able to make a regular attack upon the fortifications of the city.

CHAPTER XLVII.

WHILE the standard of the cross waved on the hills before Velez Malaga, and every height and cliff bristled with hostile arms, the civil war between the factions of the Alhambra and the Albaycin, or rather between El Zagal and El Chico, continued to convulse the city of Granada.

The tidings of the investment of Velez Malaga at length roused the attention of the old men and the alfaquis, whose heads were not heated by the daily broils. They spread themselves through the city, and endeavoured to arouse the people to a sense of their common danger.

"Why," said they, "continue these brawls between brethren and kindred? What battles are these, where even triumph is ignominious, and the victor blushes and conceals his scars? Behold the Christians ravaging the land won by the valour and blood of your forefathers, dwelling in the houses they have built, sitting under the trees they have planted, while your brethren wander about, houseless and desolate. Do you wish to seek your real foe? He is encamped on the mountain of Bentomiz. Do you want a field for the display of your valour? You will find it before the walls of Velez Malaga."

When they had roused the spirit of the people, they made their way to the rival kings, and addressed them with like remonstrances. Hamet Aben Zarrex, the inspired santón, reproached El Zagal with his blind and senseless ambition. "You are striving to be king," said he bitterly, "yet suffer the kingdom to be lost."

El Zagal found himself in a perplexing dilemma. He had a double war to wage, with the enemy without and the enemy within. Should the Christians gain possession of the seacoast, it would be ruinous to the kingdom; should he leave Granada to oppose them, his vacant throne might be seized on by his nephew. He made a merit of necessity, and pretending to yield to the remonstrances of the alfaquis, endeavoured to compromise with Boabdil. He expressed deep concern at the daily losses of the country, caused by the dissensions of the capital; an opportunity now presented itself to retrieve all by a blow. The Christians had, in a manner, put themselves in a tomb between the mountains; nothing remained but to throw the earth upon them. He offered to resign the title of king, to submit to the government of his nephew, and fight under his standard; all he desired was to hasten to the relief of Velez Malaga, and to take full vengeance on the Christians.

Boabdil spurned his proposition as the artifice of a hypocrite and a traitor. "How shall I trust a man," said he, "who has murdered my father and my kindred by treachery, and repeatedly sought my own life, both by violence and stratagem?"

El Zagal foamed with rage and vexation, but there was no time to be lost. He was beset by the alfaquis and the nobles of his court; the youthful cavaliers were hot for action, the common people loud in their complaints that the richest cities were abandoned to the enemy. The old warrior was naturally fond of fighting; he saw also, that to remain inactive would endanger both crown and kingdom, whereas a successful blow would secure his popularity in Granada. He had a much more powerful force than his nephew, having lately received reinforcements from Baza, Guadix, and Almaria; he could march therefore with a large force, and yet leave a strong garrison in the Alhambra. He formed his measures accordingly, and departed suddenly in the night, at the head of one thousand horse and twenty thousand foot. He took the most unfrequented roads along the chain of mountains extending

from Granada to the height of Bentomiz, and proceeded with such rapidity as to arrive there before King Ferdinand had notice of his approach.

The Christians were alarmed one evening by the sudden blazing of great fires on the mountain, about the fortress of Bentomiz. By the ruddy light they beheld the flash of weapons and the array of troops, and they heard the distant sound of Moorish drums and trumpets. The fires of Bentomiz were answered by fires on the towers of Velez Malaga. The shouts of "El Zagal! El Zagal!" echoed along the cliffs and resounded from the city, and the Christians found that the old warrior king of Granada was on the mountain above their camp.

The spirits of the Moors were suddenly raised to a pitch of the greatest exultation, while the Christians were astonished to see this storm of war ready to burst upon their heads. The Count de Cabra, with his accustomed eagerness when there was a king in the field, would fain have scaled the heights, and attacked El Zagal before he had time to form his camp; but Ferdinand, who was more cool and wary, restrained him. To attack the height would be to abandon the siege. He ordered every one, therefore, to keep vigilant watch at his post, and to stand ready to defend it to the utmost, but on no account to sally forth and attack the enemy.

All night the signal fires kept blazing along the mountains, rousing and animating the whole country. The morning sun rose over the lofty summit of Bentomiz on a scene of martial splendour. As its rays glanced down the mountain, they lighted up the white tents of the Christian cavaliers, cresting its lower prominences, their pennons and ensigns fluttering in the morning breeze. The sumptuous pavilion of the king, with the holy standard of the cross, and the royal banners of Castile and Arragon, dominated the encampment. Beyond lay the city, its lofty castle and numerous towers glistening with arms, while above all, and just on the profile of the height, in the full blaze of the rising sun, were descried the tents of the Moor, his turbaned troops clustering about them, and his infidel banners floating against the sky. Columns of smoke rose where the night fire had blazed, and the clash of the Moorish cymbal, the bray of the trumpet, and the neigh of steeds, were faintly heard from those airy heights. So pure and transparent is the atmosphere in this region, that every

object can be distinctly seen at a great distance, and the Christians were able to behold the formidable host of foes, that were gathering on the summits of the surrounding mountains.

One of the first measures of the Moorish king was to detach a large force under Rodovan de Vanegas, alcaide of Granada, to fall upon the convoy of ordnance, which stretched for a great distance through the mountain defiles. Ferdinand had anticipated this attempt, and sent the commander of Leon with a body of horse and foot to reinforce the master of Alcantara. El Zagal, from his mountain height, beheld the detachment issue from the camp, and immediately recalled Rodovan de Vanegas. The armies now remained quiet for a time, the Moor looking grimly down upon the Christian camp, like a tiger meditating a bound upon his prey. The Christians were in a fearful jeopardy; a hostile city below them, a powerful army above them, and on every side mountains filled with implacable foes.

After El Zagal had maturely consulted the situation of the Christian camp, and informed himself of all the passes of the mountain, he conceived a plan to surprise the enemy, which he flattered himself would ensure their ruin, and, perhaps, the capture of King Ferdinand. He wrote a letter to the alcaide of the city, commanding him, in the dead of the night, on a signal fire being made from the mountain, to sally forth with all his troops, and fall furiously upon the camp. The king would, at the same time, rush down with his army from the mountain, and assail it on the opposite side, thus overwhelming it at the hour of deep repose. This letter he despatched by a renegado Christian, who knew all the secret roads of the country, and, if taken, could pass himself for a Christian who had escaped from captivity.

The fierce El Zagal, confident in the success of his stratagem, looked down upon the Christians as his devoted victims. As the sun went down, and the long shadows of the mountains stretched across the vega, he pointed with exultation to the camp below, apparently unconscious of the impending danger. "Alla akbar!" exclaimed he, "God is great! Behold the unbelievers are delivered into our hands: their king and choicest chivalry will soon be at our mercy. Now is the time to show the courage of men, and by one glorious victory retrieve all that we have lost. Happy he who falls fighting in

the cause of the prophet : he will at once be transported to the paradise of the faithful, and surrounded by immortal houries ! Happy he who shall survive victorious : he will behold Granada, an earthly paradise, once more delivered from its foes, and restored to all its glory !” The words of El Zagal were received with acclamations by his troops, who waited impatiently for the appointed hour to pour down from their mountain hold upon the Christians.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

QUEEN Isabella and her court had remained at Cordova in great anxiety for the result of the royal expedition. Every day brought tidings of the difficulties which attended the transportation of the ordnance and munitions, and of the critical situation of the army.

While in this state of anxious suspense, couriers arrived with all speed from the frontiers, bringing tidings of the sudden sally of El Zagal from Granada to surprise the Christian camp. All Cordova was in consternation. The destruction of the Andalusian chivalry among the mountains of this very neighbourhood was called to mind ; it was feared that similar ruin was about to burst forth from rocks and precipices upon Ferdinand and his army.

Queen Isabella shared in the public alarm ; but it served to rouse all the energies of her heroic mind. Instead of uttering idle apprehensions, she sought only how to avert the danger. She called upon all the men of Andalusia, under the age of seventy, to arm and hasten to the relief of their sovereign, and she prepared to set out with the first levies.

The grand cardinal of Spain, old Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, in whom the piety of the saint and the wisdom of the counsellor were mingled with the fire of the cavalier, offered high pay to all horsemen who would follow him to aid their king and the Christian cause ; and, buckling on armour, prepared to lead them to the scene of danger.

The summons of the queen roused the quick Andalusian spirit. Warriors, who had long since given up fighting, and had sent their sons to battle, now seized the sword and lance that were rusting on the wall, and marshalled forth their gray-headed domestics and their grandchildren for the field. The great dread was, that all aid would arrive too late. El

Zagal and his host had passed like a storm through the mountains, and it was feared the tempest had already burst upon the Christian camp.

In the meanwhile the night had closed, which had been appointed by El Zagal for the execution of his plan. He had watched the last light of day expire, and all the Spanish camp remained tranquil. As the hours wore away, the camp fires were gradually extinguished. No drum or trumpet sounded from below; nothing was heard but now and then the heavy tread of troops, or the echoing tramp of horses, the usual patrols of the camp, and the changes of the guard. El Zagal restrained his own impatience, and that of his troops, until the night should be advanced, and the camp sunk in that heavy sleep from which men are with difficulty awakened, and, when awakened, so prone to be bewildered and dismayed.

At length the appointed hour arrived. By order of the Moorish king a bright flame sprung up from the height of Bentomiz; but El Zagal looked in vain for the responding light from the city. His impatience could brook no longer delay: he ordered the advance of the army to descend the mountain defile, and attack the camp. The defile was narrow and overhung by rocks. As the troops proceeded, they came suddenly, in a shadowy hollow, upon a dark mass of Christian warriors. A loud shout burst forth, and the Christians rushed to assail them. The Moors, surprised and disconcerted, retreated in confusion to the height. When El Zagal heard of a Christian force posted in the defile, he doubted some counter plan of the enemy. He gave orders to light the mountain fires. On a signal given, bright flames sprung out on every height, from great pyres of wood prepared for the purpose. Cliff blazed out after cliff, until the whole atmosphere was in a glow of furnace light. The ruddy glare lit up the glens and passes of the mountains, and fell strongly upon the Christian camp, revealing all its tents, and every post and bulwark. Wherever El Zagal turned his eyes, he beheld the light of his fires flashed back from cuirass, and helm, and sparkling lance; he beheld a grove of spears planted in every pass, every assailable point bristling with arms, and squadrons of horse and foot, in battle array, awaiting his attack.

In fact, the letter of El Zagal to the alcaide of Velez Malaga had been intercepted by the vigilant Ferdinand, and the

renegade messenger hanged, and secret measures taken; after the night had closed in, to give the enemy a warm reception. El Zagal saw that his plan of surprise was discovered and foiled: furious with disappointment, he ordered his troops forward to the attack. They rushed down the defile with loud cries, but were again encountered by the mass of Christian warriors, being the advanced guard of the army, commanded by Don Hurtado de Mendoza, brother of the grand cardinal. The Moors were again repulsed, and retreated up the heights. Don Hurtado would have pursued them; but the ascent was steep and rugged, and easily defended by the Moors. A sharp action was kept up through the night with crossbows, darts, and arquebusses; the cliffs echoed with deafening uproar, while the fires, blazing upon the mountains, threw a lurid and uncertain light upon the scene.

When the day dawned, and the Moors saw that there was no coöperation from the city, they began to slacken in their ardour: they beheld also every pass of the mountain filled with Christian troops, and began to apprehend an assault in return. Just then King Ferdinand sent the Marquis of Cadiz, with horse and foot, to seize upon a height occupied by a battalion of the enemy. The marquis assailed the Moors with his usual intrepidity, and soon put them to flight. The others, who were above, seeing their companions flying, were seized with a sudden alarm. They threw down their arms and retreated. One of those unaccountable panics which now and then seize upon great bodies of people, and to which the light-spirited Moors were very prone, now spread through the camp. They were terrified they knew not why, or at what. They threw away swords, lances, breastplates, crossbows, everything that could burden or impede their flight, and, spreading themselves wildly over the mountains, fled headlong down the defiles. They fled without pursuers, from the glimpse of each others arms, from the sound of each others footsteps. Rodovan de Vanegas, the brave alcaide of Granada, alone succeeded in collecting a body of the fugitives: he made a circuit with them through the passes of the mountains, and, forcing his way across a weak part of the Christian lines, galloped towards Velez Malaga. The rest of the Moorish host was completely scattered. In vain did El Zagal and his knights attempt to rally them; they were left almost alone, and had to consult their own security by flight. The Marquis of Cadiz,

finding no opposition, ascended from height to height, cautiously reconnoitring, and fearful of some stratagem or ambush. All, however, was quiet. He reached, with his men, the place which the Moorish army had occupied: the heights were abandoned, and strewed with cuirasses, cimeters, crossbows, and other weapons. His force was too small to pursue the enemy, and he returned to the royal camp, laden with the spoils.

King Ferdinand at first could not credit so signal and miraculous a defeat. He suspected some lurking stratagem. He ordered, therefore, that a strict watch should be maintained throughout the camp, and every one be ready for instant action. The following night a thousand cavaliers and hidalgos kept guard about the royal tent, as they had done for several preceding nights, nor did the king relax this vigilance, until he received certain intelligence that the army was completely scattered, and El Zagal flying in confusion.

The tidings of this rout, and of the safety of the Christian army, arrived at Cordova just as the reinforcements were on the point of setting out. The anxiety and alarm of the queen and the public were turned to transports of joy and gratitude. The forces were disbanded, solemn processions were made, and *Te Deums* chanted in the churches for so signal a victory.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE daring spirit of the old warrior, Muley Abdalla el Zagal, in sallying forth to defend his territories, while he left an armed rival in his capital, had struck the people of Granada with admiration. They recalled his former exploits, and again anticipated some hardy achievement from his furious valour. Couriers from the army reported its formidable position on the height of Bentomiz. For a time there was a pause in the bloody commotions of the city; all attention was turned to the blow about to be struck at the Christian camp. The same considerations, which diffused anxiety and terror through Cordova, swelled every bosom with exulting confidence in Granada. The Moors expected to hear of another massacre, like that in the mountains of Malaga. "El Zagal has again entrapped the enemy!" was the cry. "The power of the unbelievers is about to be struck to the heart; and we shall soon see the Christian king led captive to the

capital!" Thus the name of El Zagal was on every tongue. He was extolled as the saviour of the country, the only one worthy of wearing the Moorish crown. Boabdil was reviled as basely remaining passive while his country was invaded; and so violent became the clamour of the populace, that his adherents trembled for his safety.

While the people of Granada were impatiently looking for tidings of the anticipated victory, scattered horsemen came spurring across the vega. They were fugitives from the Moorish army, and brought the first incoherent account of its defeat. Every one who attempted to tell the tale of this unaccountable panic and dispersion was as if bewildered by the broken recollection of some frightful dream. He knew not how or why it came to pass. He talked of a battle in the night among rocks and precipices, by the glare of bale-fires; of multitudes of armed foes in every pass, seen by gleams and flashes; of the sudden horror that seized upon the army at daybreak, its headlong flight and total dispersion. Hour after hour the arrival of other fugitives confirmed the story of ruin and disgrace.

In proportion to their recent vaunting was the humiliation that now fell upon the people of Granada. There was a universal burst, not of grief, but indignation.

They confounded the leader with the army; the deserted with those who had abandoned him; and El Zagal, from being their idol, became the object of their execration. He had sacrificed the army; he had disgraced the nation; he had betrayed the country. He was a dastard, a traitor; he was unworthy to reign!

On a sudden, one among the multitude cried out, "Long live Boabdil el Chico!" The cry was echoed on all sides, and every one shouted, "Long live Boabdil el Chico! long live the legitimate king of Granada! and death to all usurpers!" In the excitement, of the moment they thronged to the albaycin, and those, who had lately besieged Boabdil with arms, now surrounded his palace with acclamations. The keys of the city and of all the fortresses were laid at his feet; he was borne in state to the Alhambra, and once more seated, with all due ceremony, on the throne of his ancestors.

Boabdil had by this time become so accustomed to be crowned and uncrowned by the multitude, that he put no great faith in the duration of their loyalty. He knew that he

was surrounded by hollow hearts, and that most of the courtiers of the Alhambra were secretly devoted to his uncle. He ascended the throne as the rightful sovereign, who had been dispossessed of it by usurpation, and he ordered the heads of four of the principal nobles to be struck off, who had been most zealous in support of the usurper. Executions of this kind were matters of course on any change of Moorish government; and Boabdil was extolled for his moderation and humanity, in being content with so small a sacrifice. The factions were awed into obedience; the populace, delighted with any change, extolled Boabdil to the skies, and the name of Muley Abdalla el Zagal was for a time a bye-word of scorn and opprobrium throughout the city.

Never was any commander more astonished and confounded by a sudden reverse than El Zagal. The evening had seen him with a powerful army at his command, his enemy within his grasp, and victory about to cover him with glory, and to consolidate his power. The morning beheld him a fugitive among the mountains; his army, his prosperity, his power, all dispelled he knew not how; gone like a dream of the night. In vain had he tried to stem the headlong flight of the soldiery. He saw his squadrons breaking and dispersing among the cliffs of the mountains, until, of all his host, only a handful of cavaliers remained faithful to him. With these he made a gloomy retreat towards Granada, but with a heart full of foreboding. When he drew near the city, he paused on the banks of the Xenil, and sent forth scouts to collect intelligence. They returned with dejected countenances. "The gates of Granada," said they, "are closed against you. The banner of Boabdil floats on the tower of the Alhambra."

El Zagal turned his steed, and departed in silence. He retreated to the town of Almun car, and from thence to Almeria, places which still remained faithful to him. Restless and uneasy at being so distant from the capital, he again changed his abode, and repaired to the city of Guadix, within a few leagues of Granada. Here he remained, endeavouring to rally his forces, and preparing to avail himself of any change in the fluctuating politics of the metropolis.

CHAPTER L.

THE people of Velez Malaga had beheld the camp of Muley

Abdalla el Zagal covering the summit of Bentomiz, and glittering in the last rays of the setting sun. During the night they had been alarmed and perplexed by signal fires on the mountain, and by the distant sound of battle. When the morning broke, the Moorish army had vanished as if by enchantment. While the inhabitants were lost in wonder and conjecture, a body of cavalry, the fragment of the army saved by Rodovan de Vanegas, the brave alcaide of Granada, came galloping to the gates. The tidings of the strange discomfiture of the host filled the city with consternation; but Rodovan exhorted the people to continue their resistance. He was devoted to El Zagal, and confident in his skill and prowess; and felt assured that he would soon collect his scattered forces, and return with fresh troops from Granada. The people were comforted by the words and encouraged by the presence of Rodovan, and they had still a lingering hope, that the heavy artillery of the Christians might be locked up in the impassable defiles of the mountains. This hope was soon at an end. The very next day they beheld long laborious lines of ordnance slowly moving into the Spanish camp; lombards, ribodoquines, catapultas, and cars laden with munitions, while the escort, under the brave master of Alcantara, wheeled in great battalions into the camp, to augment the force of the besiegers.

The intelligence, that Granada had shut its gates against El Zagal, and that no reinforcements were to be expected, completed the despair of the inhabitants; even Rodovan himself lost confidence, and advised capitulation.

The terms were arranged between the alcaide and the noble Count de Cifuentes. The latter had been prisoner of Rodovan at Granada, who had treated him with chivalrous courtesy. They had conceived a mutual esteem for each other, and met as ancient friends.

Ferdinand granted favourable conditions; for he was eager to proceed against Malaga. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with their effects, except their arms, and to reside, if they chose it, in Spain, in any place distant from the sea. One hundred and twenty Christians of both sexes were rescued from captivity by the surrender of Velez Malaga, and were sent to Cordova, where they were received with great tenderness by the queen, and her daughter the Infanta Isabella, in the famous cathedral, in the midst of public rejoicings for the victory.

The capture of Velez Malaga was followed by the surrender of Bentomiz, Comares, and all the towns and fortresses of the Axarquia, which were strongly garrisoned, and discreet and valiant cavaliers appointed as their alcaides. The inhabitants of nearly forty towns of the Alpuzarra mountains also sent deputations to the Castilian sovereigns, taking the oath of allegiance as Mudchares, or Moslem vassals.

About the same time came letters from Boabdil el Chico, announcing to the sovereigns the revolution of Granada in his favour. He solicited kindness and protection for the inhabitants who had returned to their allegiance, and for those of all other places which should renounce allegiance to his uncle. By this means, he observed, the whole kingdom of Granada would soon be induced to acknowledge his sway, and would be held by him in faithful vassalage to the Castilian crown.

The Catholic sovereigns complied with his request. Protection was immediately extended to the inhabitants of Granada, permitting them to cultivate their fields in peace, and to trade with the Christian territories in all articles excepting arms, being provided with letters of surety from some Christian captain or alcaide. The same favour was promised to all other places that within six months should renounce El Zagal, and come under allegiance to the younger king. Should they not do so within that time, the sovereigns threatened to make war upon them, and conquer them for themselves. This measure had a great effect in inducing many to return to the standard of Boabdil.

Having made every necessary arrangement for the government and security of the newly conquered territory, Ferdinand turned his attention to the great object of his campaign, the reduction of Malaga.

CHAPTER LI.

THE city of Malaga lies in the lap of a fertile valley, surrounded by mountains, excepting on the part which lies open to the sea. As it was one of the most important, so it was one of the strongest cities of the Moorish kingdom. It was fortified by walls of prodigious strength, studded with a great number of huge towers. On the land side it was protected by a natural barrier of mountains, and, on the other,

the waves of the Mediterranean beat against the foundations of its massive bulwarks.

At one end of the city, near the sea, on a high mound, stood the alcazaba or citadel, a fortress of great strength. Immediately above this rose a steep and rocky mount, on the top of which, in old times had been a pharos, or lighthouse, from which the height derived its name of Gibralfaro.* It was at present crowned by an immense castle, which, from its lofty and craggy situation, its vast walls and mighty towers, was deemed impregnable. It communicated with the alcazaba by a covered way, six paces broad, leading down between two walls, along the profile or ridge of the rock. The castle of Gibralfaro commanded both citadel and city, and was capable, if both were taken, of maintaining a siege.

Two large suburbs adjoined the city: in the one towards the sea were dwelling houses of the most opulent inhabitants, adorned with hanging gardens; the other, on the land side, was thickly peopled, and surrounded by strong walls and towers.

Malaga possessed a brave and numerous garrison, and the common people were active, hardy and resolute; but the city was rich and commercial, and under the habitual control of numerous opulent merchants, who dreaded the ruinous consequences of a siege. They were little zealous for the warlike renown of their city, and longed rather to participate in the enviable security of property, and the lucrative privileges of safe traffic with the Christian territories, granted to all places which declared for Boabdil. At the head of these gainful citizens was Ali Dordux, a mighty merchant of uncounted wealth, whose ships traded to every port of the Levant, and whose word was a law in Malaga.

Ali Dordux assembled the most opulent and important of his commercial brethren, and they repaired in a body to the alcazaba, where they were received by the alcaide, Albozen Connexa, with that deference generally shown to men of their great local dignity and power of purse. Ali Dordux was ample and stately in his form, and fluent and emphatic in his discourse. His eloquence had an effect, therefore, upon the alcaide, as he represented the hopelessness of a defence of Malaga, the misery that must attend a siege, and the ruin

* A corruption of Gibel-faro, the hill of the light-house.

that must follow a capture by force of arms. On the other hand, he set forth the grace that might be obtained from the Castilian sovereigns by an early and voluntary acknowledgment of Boabdil as king, the peaceful possession of their property, and the profitable commerce with the Christian ports that would be allowed them. He was seconded by his weighty and important coadjutors: and the alcaide, accustomed to regard them as the arbiters of the affairs of the place, yielded to their united counsels. He departed, therefore, with all speed to the Christian camp, empowered to arrange a capitulation with the Castilian monarch, and in the meantime his brother remained in command of the alcazaba.

There was, at this time, as alcaide, in the old crag-built castle of Gibralfaro, a warlike and fiery Moor, an implacable enemy of the Christians. This was no other than Hamet Zeli, surnamed El Zegri, the once formidable alcaide of Ronda, and the terror of its mountains. He had never forgiven the capture of his favourite fortress, and panted for vengeance on the Christians. Notwithstanding his reverses, he had retained the favour of El Zagal, who knew how to appreciate a bold warrior of the kind, and had placed him in command of this important fortress of Gibralfaro.

Hamet el Zegri had gathered round him the remnant of his band of Gomeres, with others of the same tribe. These fierce warriors were nestled, like so many war-hawks, about their lofty cliff. They looked down with martial contempt upon the commercial city of Malaga, which they were placed to protect; or rather, they esteemed it only for its military importance and its capability of defence. They held no communion with its trading, gainful inhabitants, and even considered the garrison of the alcazaba as their inferiors. War was their pursuit and passion; they rejoiced in its turbulent and perilous scenes; and, confident in the strength of the city, and, above all, of their castle, they set at defiance the menace of Christian invasion. There were among them, also, many apostate Moors, who had once embraced Christianity, but had since recanted, and had fled from the vengeance of the Inquisition. These were desperadoes, who had no mercy to expect should they again fall into the hands of the enemy.

Such were the fierce elements of the garrison of Gibralfaro.

faro; and its rage may easily be conceived at hearing, that Malaga was to be given up without a blow; that they were to sink into Christian vassals, under the intermediate sway of Boabdil el Chico, and that the alcajde of the alcazaba had departed to arrange the terms of capitulation.

Hamet el Zegri determined to avert, by desperate means, the threatened degradation. He knew that there was a large party in the city faithful to El Zagal, being composed of warlike men, who had taken refuge from the various mountain towns which had been captured. Their feelings were desperate as their fortunes, and, like Hamet, they panted for revenge upon the Christians. With these he had a secret conference, and received assurances of their adherence to him in any measures of defence. As to the council of peaceful inhabitants, he considered it unworthy the consideration of a soldier, and he spurned at the interference of the wealthy merchant, Ali Dordux, in matters of warfare.

"Still," said Hamet el Zegri, "let us proceed regularly." So he descended with his Gomeres to the citadel, entered it suddenly, put to death the brother of the alcajde and such of the garrison as made any demur, and then summoned the principal inhabitants to deliberate on measures for the welfare of the city.*

The wealthy merchants again mounted to the citadel, excepting Ali Dordux, who refused to obey the summons. They entered with hearts filled with awe, for they found Hamet surrounded by his grim African guard, and all the array of military power, and they beheld the bloody traces of the recent massacre.

Hamet el Zegri rolled a dark and searching eye upon the assembly. "Who," said he, "is loyal and devoted to Muley Abdalla el Zagal?" Every one present asserted his loyalty. "Good!" said Hamet, "and who is ready to prove his devotion to his sovereign by defending this his important city to the last extremity?" Every one present expressed his readiness. "Enough," observed Hamet: "the alcajde, Albozen Connexa, has proved himself a traitor to his sovereign and to you all; for he has conspired to deliver the place to the Christians. It behoves you to choose some other commander, capable of defending your city against the approaching enemy." The assembly declared unanimously,

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 82.

that there could be none so worthy of the command as himself. So Hamet el Zegri was appointed alcaide of Malaga, and immediately proceeded to man the forts and towns with his partisans, and to make every preparation for a desperate resistance.

Intelligence of these occurrences put an end to the negotiations between King Ferdinand and the superseded alcaide Albozen Connexa, and it was supposed that there was no alternative but to lay siege to the place. The Marquis of Cadiz, however, found at Velez a Moorish cavalier of some note, a native of Malaga, who offered to tamper with Hamet el Zegri for the surrender of the city; or, at least, of the castle of Gibralfaro. The marquis communicated this to the king. "I put this business and the key of my treasury in your hand," said Ferdinand: act, stipulate, and disburse, in my name, as you think proper."

The marquis armed the Moor with his own lance, cuirass, and target, and mounted him on one of his own horses. He equipped, also, in similar style, another Moor, his companion and relation. They bore secret letters to Hamet from the marquis, offering him the town of Coin in perpetual inheritance, and four thousand doblas in gold, if he would deliver up Gibralfaro; together with large sums to be distributed among his officers and soldiers; and he held out unlimited rewards for the surrender of the city.*

Hamet had a warrior's admiration for the Marquis of Cadiz, and received his messengers with courtesy, in his fortress of Gibralfaro. He even listened to their propositions with patience, and dismissed them in safety, though with an absolute refusal. The marquis thought his reply was not so peremptory as to discourage another effort. The emissaries were despatched, therefore, a second time, with further propositions. They approached Malaga in the night; but found the guards doubled, patrols abroad, and the whole place on the alert. They were discovered, pursued, and only saved themselves by the fleetness of their steeds, and their knowledge of the passes of the mountains.

Finding all attempts to tamper with the faith of Hamet el Zegri utterly futile, King Ferdinand publicly summoned the city to surrender; offering the most favourable terms in case of immediate compliance, but threatening captivity to all the inhabitants in case of resistance.

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 82.

The message was delivered in presence of the principal inhabitants, who, however, were too much in awe of the stern alcaide to utter a word. Hamet el Zegri then rose haughtily, and replied, that the city of Malaga had not been confided to him to be surrendered, but defended; and the king should witness how he acquitted himself of his charge.*

The messengers returned with formidable accounts of the force of the garrison, the strength of the fortifications, and the determined spirit of the commander and his men. The king immediately sent orders to have the heavy artillery forwarded from Antequera; and, on the 7th of May, marched with his army towards Malaga.

CHAPTER LII.

THE army of Ferdinand advanced in lengthened line, glittering along the foot of the mountains which border the Mediterranean; while a fleet of vessels, freighted with heavy artillery and warlike munitions, kept pace with it, at a short distance from the land, covering the sea with a thousand gleaming sails. When Hamet el Zegri saw this force approaching, he set fire to the houses of the suburbs which adjoined the walls, and sent forth three battalions to encounter the advance guard of the enemy.

The Christian army drew near to the city at that end where the castle and rocky height of Gibralfaro defend the seaboard. Immediately opposite to the castle, and about two bow-shots' distance, and between it and the high chain of mountains, was a steep and rocky hill, commanding a pass through which the Christians must march to penetrate to the vega, and surround the city. Hamet el Zegri ordered the three battalions to take their stations, one on this hill, another in the pass near the castle, and a third on the side of the mountain near the sea.

A body of Spanish foot soldiers of the advance guard, sturdy mountaineers of Galicia, sprang forward to climb the side of the height next the sea; at the same time a number of cavaliers and hidalgos of the royal household attacked the Moors who guarded the pass below. The Moors defended their posts with obstinate valour. The Galicians were re-

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 74.

peatedly overpowered and driven down the hill, but as often rallied; and, being reinforced by the hidalgos and cavaliers, returned to the assault. This obstinate struggle lasted for six hours. The strife was of a deadly kind, not merely with crossbows and arquebuses, but hand to hand, with swords and daggers: no quarter was claimed or given on either side: they fought not to make captives, but to slay. It was but the advance guard of the Christian army that was engaged: so narrow was the pass along the coast, that the army could proceed only in file. Horse and foot, and beasts of burden, were crowded one upon another, impeding each other, and blocking up the narrow and rugged defile. The soldiers heard the uproar of the battle, the sound of trumpets, and the war cries of the Moors, but tried in vain to press forward to the assistance of their companions.

At length a body of foot soldiers of the Holy Brotherhood climbed, with great difficulty, the steep side of the mountain which overhung the pass, and advanced with seven banners displayed. The Moors, seeing this force above them, abandoned the pass in despair.

The battle was still raging on the height. The Galicians, though supported by Castilian troops, under Don Hurtado de Mendoza and Garcillaso de la Vega, were severely pressed, and roughly handled by the Moors. At length a brave standard-bearer, Luys Mazedo by name, threw himself into the midst of the enemy, and planted his banner on the summit. The Galicians and Castilians, stimulated by this noble self-devotion, followed him, fighting desperately, and the Moors were at length driven to their castle of Gibralfaro.*

This important height being taken, the pass lay open to the army: but by this time evening was advancing, and the host was too weary and exhausted to seek proper situations for the encampment. The king, attended by several grandees and cavaliers, went the rounds at night, stationing outposts towards the city, and guards and patrols to give the alarm on the least movement of the enemy. All night the Christians lay upon their arms, lest there should be some attempt to sally forth and attack them.

When the morning dawned, the king gazed with admira-

* Pulgar, Cronica.

tion at this city, which he hoped soon to add to his dominions. It was surrounded on one side by vineyards, gardens, and orchards, which covered the hills with verdure; on the other side its walls were bathed by the smooth and tranquil sea. Its vast and lofty towers, and prodigious castles showed the labours of magnanimous men, in former times, to protect their favourite abode. Hanging gardens, groves of oranges, citrons, and pomegranates, with tall cedars and stately palms, were mingled with the stern battlements and towers, bespeaking the opulence and luxury that reigned within.

In the meantime the Christian army poured through the pass, and throwing out its columns, and extending its lines, took possession of every vantage-ground around the city. King Ferdinand surveyed the ground, and appointed the stations of the different commanders.

The important mount, which had cost so evident a struggle, and which faced the powerful fortress of Gibralfaro, was given in charge to Roderigo Ponce de Leon, the Marquis of Cadiz, who in all sieges claimed the post of danger. He had several noble cavaliers, with their retainers, in his encampment, which consisted of fifteen hundred horse, and fourteen thousand foot; and extended from the summit of the mount to the margin of the sea, completely blocking up the approach to the city on that side. From this post a line of encampments extended quite round the city to the seaboard, fortified by bulwarks and deep ditches; while a fleet of armed ships and galleys stretched before the harbour, so that the place was completely invested by sea and land. The various parts of the valley now resounded with the din of preparation, and were filled with artificers preparing warlike engines and munitions: armourers and smiths, with glowing forges and deafening hammers; carpenters and engineers constructing machines wherewith to assail the walls; stone-cutters shaping stone balls for the ordnance; and burners of charcoal preparing fuel for the furnaces and forges.

When the encampment was formed, the heavy ordnance was landed from the ships, and mounted in various parts of the camp. Five huge lombards were placed on the mount, commanded by the Marquis of Cadiz, so as to bear upon the castle of Gibralfaro.

The Moors made strenuous efforts to impede these prepara-

tions. A heavy fire was kept up from their ordnance upon the men employed in digging trenches or constructing batteries, so that the latter had to work principally in the night. The royal tents had been stationed conspicuously and within reach of the Moorish batteries, but were so warmly assailed that they had to be removed behind a hill.

When the works were completed, the Christian batteries opened in return, and kept up a tremendous cannonade, while the fleet, approaching the land, assailed the city vigorously on the opposite side.

"It was a glorious and delectable sight," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "to behold this infidel city thus surrounded by sea and land by a mighty Christian force. Every mound in its circuit was, as it were, a little city of tents, bearing the standard of some renowned Catholic warrior. Besides the warlike ships and galleys which lay before the place, the sea was covered with innumerable sails, passing and repassing, appearing and disappearing, being engaged in bringing supplies for the subsistence of the army. It would have seemed a vast spectacle contrived to recreate the eye, had not the volleying bursts of flame and smoke from the ships, which appeared to lie asleep on the quiet sea, and the thunder of ordnance from camp and city, from tower and battlement, told the deadly warfare that was waging."

At night the scene was far more direful than in the day. The cheerful light of the sun was gone; there was nothing but the flashes of artillery, or the baleful gleams of combustibles thrown into the city, and the conflagration of the houses. The fire kept up from the Christian batteries was incessant; there were seven great lombards, in particular, called the Seven Sisters of Ximenes, which did tremendous execution. The Moorish ordnance replied in thunder from the walls; Gibralfaro was wrapped in volumes of smoke, rolling about its base; and Hamet el Zegri and his Gomeres looked out with triumph upon the tempest of war they had awakened. "Truly they were so many demons incarnate," says the pious Fray Antonio Agapida, "who were permitted by Heaven to enter into and possess this infidel city for its perdition."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE attack on Malaga by sea and land was kept up for several days with tremendous violence, but without producing any great impression, so strong were the ancient bulwarks of the city. The Count de Cifuentes was the first to signalize himself by any noted achievement. A main tower of the suburbs had been shattered by the ordnance, and the battlements demolished, so as to yield no shelter to its defenders. Seeing this, the count assembled a gallant band of cavaliers of the royal household, and advanced to take it by storm; they applied scaling ladders, and mounted sword in hand. The Moors, having no longer battlements to protect them, descended to a lower floor, and made furious resistance from the windows and loopholes; they poured down boiling pitch and rosin, and hurled stones, and darts, and arrows on the assailants. Many of the Christians were slain; their ladders were destroyed by flaming combustibles, and the count was obliged to retreat from before the tower. On the following day he renewed the attack with superior force, and, after a severe combat, succeeded in planting his victorious banner on the tower.

The Moors now assailed the tower in their turn; they undermined the part towards the city, placed props of wood under the foundation, and, setting fire to them, drew off to a distance. In a little while the props gave way, the foundation sank, the tower was rent, part of its wall fell with a tremendous noise, many of the Christians were thrown out headlong, and the rest were laid open to the missiles of the enemy.

By this time, however, a breach had been made in the wall adjoining the tower, and troops poured in to the assistance of their comrades. A continued battle was kept up for two days and a night by reinforcements from camp and city. The parties fought backwards and forwards through the breach of the wall, with alternate success, and the vicinity of the town was strewn with the dead and wounded. At length the Moors gradually gave way, disputing every inch of ground, until they were driven into the city; and the Christians remained masters of the greater part of the suburb.

This partial success, though gained with great toil and bloodshed, gave temporary animation to the Christians. They

soon found, however, that the attack on the main works of the city was a much more arduous task. The garrison contained veterans who had served in many of the towns captured by the Christians: they were no longer confounded and dismayed by the battering ordnance and other strange engines of foreign invention, and had become expert in parrying their effects, in repairing breaches, and erecting counter-works.

The Christians, accustomed of late to speedy conquests of Moorish fortresses, became impatient of the slow progress of the siege. Many were apprehensive of a scarcity of provisions, from the difficulty of subsisting so numerous a host in the heart of the enemies' country, where it was necessary to transport supplies across rugged and hostile mountains, or subjected to the uncertainties of the seas. Many were also alarmed at a pestilence which broke out in the neighbouring villages, and some were so overcome by these apprehensions, as to abandon the camp and return to their homes.

Several of the loose and worthless hangers-on, that infest all great armies, hearing these murmurs, thought that the siege would soon be raised, and deserted to the enemy, hoping to make their fortunes; they gave exaggerated accounts of the alarms and discontents of the army, and represented the troops as daily returning home in bands. Above all, they declared, that the gunpowder was nearly exhausted, so that the artillery would soon be useless. They assured the Moors, therefore, that, if they persisted in their defence a little longer, the king would be obliged to draw off his forces and abandon the siege.

The reports of these renegadoes gave fresh courage to the garrison; they made vigorous sallies upon the camp, harassing it by night and day, and obliging every part to be guarded with the most painful vigilance; they fortified the weak parts of their walls with ditches and palisadoes, and gave every manifestation of a determined and unyielding spirit.

Ferdinand soon received intelligence of the reports which had been carried to the Moors. He understood, that they had been informed, likewise, that the queen was alarmed for the safety of the camp, and had written repeatedly, urging him to abandon the siege. As the best means of disproving all these falsehoods, and of destroying the vain hopes of the enemy, Ferdinand wrote to the queen, entreating her to come and take up her residence in the camp.

CHAPTER LIV.

GREAT was the enthusiasm of the army, when they beheld their patriot queen advancing in state, to share the toils and dangers of her people. Isabella entered the camp, attended by the dignitaries, and the whole retinue of her court, to manifest, that this was no temporary visit. On one side of her was her daughter the Infanta; on the other, the grand cardinal of Spain; and Hernando de Talavera, the prior of Praxo, confessor to the queen, followed, with a great train of prelates, courtiers, cavaliers, and ladies of distinction. The cavalcade moved in calm and stately order through the camp, softening the iron aspect of war by this array of courtly grace and female beauty.

Isabella had commanded, that, on her coming to the camp, the horrors of war should be suspended, and fresh offers of peace made to the enemy. On her arrival, therefore, there had been a cessation of firing throughout the camp. A messenger was at the same time despatched to the besieged, informing them of her being in the camp, and of the determination of the sovereigns to make it their settled residence, until the city should be taken. The same terms were offered in case of immediate surrender, that had been granted to Velez Malaga, but the inhabitants were threatened with captivity and the sword, should they persist in their defence.

Hamet el Zegri received this message with haughty contempt, and dismissed the messenger without deigning a reply.

"The Christian sovereigns," said he, "have made this offer, in consequence of their despair. The silence of their batteries proves the truth of what has been told us, that their powder is exhausted; they have no longer the means of demolishing our walls; and, if they remain much longer, the autumnal rains will interrupt their convoys, and fill their camp with famine and disease; the first storm will disperse their fleet, which has no neighbouring port of shelter. Africa will then be open to us, to procure reinforcements and supplies."

The words of Hamet el Zegri were hailed as oracular by his adherents. Many of the peaceful part of the community, however, ventured to remonstrate, and to implore him to accept the proffered mercy. The stern Hamet silenced them with a terrific threat. He declared, that whoever should talk

of capitulating, or should hold any communication with the Christians, should be put to death. His fierce Gomeres, like true men of the sword, acted upon the menace of their chieftain as upon a written law, and, having detected several of the inhabitants in secret correspondence with the enemy, they set upon and slew them, and then confiscated their effects. This struck such terror into the citizens, that those who had been loudest in their murmurs became suddenly mute, and were remarked as evincing the greatest bustle and alacrity in the defence of the city.

When the messenger returned to the camp, and reported the contemptuous reception of the royal message, King Ferdinand was exceedingly indignant. Finding the cessation of firing, on the queen's arrival, had encouraged a belief among the enemy, that there was a scarcity of powder in the camp, he ordered a general discharge from every battery. This sudden burst of war from every quarter soon convinced the Moors of their error, and completed the confusion of the citizens, who knew not which most to dread, their assailants or their defenders, the Christians or the Gomeres.

That evening the sovereigns visited the encampment of the Marquis of Cadiz, which commanded a view over a great part of the city and the camp. The tent of the marquis was of great magnitude, furnished with hangings of rich brocade, and French cloth of the rarest texture. It was in the oriental style, and, as it crowned the height, with the surrounding tents of other cavaliers, all sumptuously furnished, presented a gay and silken contrast to the opposite towers of Gibralfaro. Here a splendid collation was served up to the sovereigns; and the courtly revel that prevailed on this chivalrous encampment, the glitter of pageantry, and the bursts of festive music, made more striking the gloom and silence that reigned over the dark Moorish castle.

The Marquis of Cadiz, while it was yet light, conducted his royal visitors to every point that commanded a view of the warlike scene below. He caused the heavy lombards also to be discharged, that the queen and the ladies of the court might witness the effect of those tremendous engines. The fair dames were filled with awe and admiration, as the mountain shook beneath their feet with the thunder of the artillery, and they beheld great fragments of the Moorish walls tumbling down the rocks and precipices.

While the good marquis was displaying these things to his royal guests, he lifted up his eyes, and, to his astonishment, beheld his own banner hanging out from the nearest tower of Gibralfaro. The blood mantled in his cheek, for it was a banner which he had lost at the time of the memorable massacre of the heights of Malaga. To make this taunt more evident, several of the Gomeres displayed themselves upon the battlements, arrayed in the helmets and cuirasses of some of the cavaliers, slain or captured on that occasion.* The Marquis of Cadiz restrained his indignation, and held his peace; but several of his cavaliers vowed loudly to revenge this cruel bravado on the ferocious garrison of Gibralfaro.

CHAPTER LV.

THE Marquis of Cadiz was not a cavalier that readily forgave an injury or an insult. On the morning after the royal banquet, his batteries opened a tremendous fire upon Gibralfaro. All day the encampment was wrapped in wreaths of smoke; nor did the assault cease with the day, but throughout the night there was an incessant flashing and thundering of the lombards, and the following morning the assault rather increased than slackened in its fury. The Moorish bulwarks were no proof against these formidable engines. In a few days the lofty tower, on which the taunting banner had been displayed, was shattered; a smaller tower, in its vicinity, reduced to ruins; and a great breach made in the intervening walls.

Several of the hot-spirited cavaliers were eager for storming the breach sword in hand; others, more cool and wary, pointed out the rashness of such an attempt; for the Moors, working indefatigably in the night, had dug a deep ditch within the breach, and had fortified it with palisadoes and a high breastwork. All, however, agreed, that the camp might safely be advanced near to the ruined walls, and that it ought to be so placed, in return for the insolent defiance of the enemy.

The Marquis of Cadiz felt the temerity of the measure; but he was unwilling to damp the zeal of these high-spirited cavaliers; and, having chosen the post of danger in the camp, it did not become him to decline any service, merely because

* Diego de Valera, Cronicas, M.S.

it might appear perilous. He ordered his outposts, therefore, to be advanced within a stonethrow of the breach, but exhorted the soldiers to maintain the utmost vigilance.

The thunder of the batteries had ceased; the troops, exhausted by two nights' fatigue and watchfulness, and apprehending no danger from the dismantled walls, were half of them asleep; the rest were scattered about in negligent security. On a sudden, upwards of two thousand Moors sallied forth from the castle, led on by Abraham Zenete, the principal captain under Hamet. They fell with fearful havoc upon the advanced guard, slaying many of them in their sleep, and putting the rest to headlong flight. The marquis was in his tent, about a bowshot distance, when he heard the tumult of the onset, and beheld his men flying in confusion. He rushed forth, followed by his standardbearers. "Turn again, cavaliers!" exclaimed he; "turn again! I am here, Ponce de Leon! To the foe! to the foe!" The flying troops stopped at hearing his well-known voice, rallied under his banner, and turned upon the enemy. The encampment by this time was roused; several cavaliers from the adjoining stations had hastened to the scene of action, with a number of Gallicians, and soldiers of the Holy Brotherhood. An obstinate and bloody contest ensued. The ruggedness of the place, the rocks, chasms, and declivities, broke it into numerous combats. Christian and Moor fought hand to hand, with swords and daggers; and often, grappling and struggling, rolled together down the precipices.

The banner of the marquis was in danger of being taken. He hastened to its rescue, followed by some of his bravest cavaliers. They were surrounded by the enemy, and several of them cut down. Don Diego Ponce de Leon, brother to the marquis, was wounded by an arrow; and his son-in-law, Luis Ponce, was likewise wounded: they succeeded, however, in rescuing the banner, and bearing it off in safety. The battle lasted for an hour: the height was covered with killed and wounded; and the blood flowed in streams down the rocks. At length, Abraham Zenete being disabled by the thrust of a lance, the Moors gave way, and retreated to the castle.

They now opened a galling fire from their battlements and towers, approaching the breaches, so as to discharge their crossbows and arquebuses into the advance guard of the

encampment. The marquis was singled out: the shot fell thick about him, and one passed through his buckler, and struck upon his cuirass, but without doing him any injury. Every one now saw the danger and inutility of approaching the camp thus near to the castle; and those who had counselled it were now urgent that it should be withdrawn. It was accordingly removed back to its original ground, from which the marquis had most reluctantly advanced it. Nothing but his valour and timely aid had prevented this attack from ending in a total rout of all that part of the army.

Many cavaliers of distinction fell in this contest; but the loss of none was felt more deeply than that of Ortega de Prado, captain of escaladors. He was one of the bravest men in the service; the same who had devised the first successful blow of the war, the storming of Alhama, where he was the first to plant and mount the scaling ladders. He had always been high in the favour and confidence of the noble Ponce de Leon, who knew how to appreciate and avail himself of the merits of all able and valiant men.*

CHAPTER LVI.

GREAT were the exertions now made, both by the besiegers and the besieged, to carry on this contest with the utmost vigour. Hamet el Zegri went the rounds of the walls and towers, doubling the guards, and putting everything into the best posture of defence. The garrison was divided into parties of a hundred, to each of which a captain was appointed. Some were to patrole; others to sally forth and skirmish with the enemy; and others to hold themselves ready armed and in reserve. Six albatozas, or floating batteries, were manned, and armed with pieces of artillery to attack the fleet.

On the other hand, the Castilian sovereigns kept open a communication, by sea, with various parts of Spain, from which they received provisions of all kinds. They ordered supplies of powder, also, from Valencia, Barcelona, Sicily, and Portugal. They made great preparations for storming the city. Towers of wood were constructed, to move on wheels, each capable of holding one hundred men. They were furnished with ladders, to be thrown from their summits to the tops of the walls; and within those ladders others

* Zurita. Mariana. Abarca.

were incased, to be let down for the descent of the troops into the city. There were gallipagos, or tortoises, also; being great wooden shields, covered with hides, to protect the assailants, and those who undermined the walls.

Secret mines were commenced in various places. Some were intended to reach to the foundations of the walls, which were to be propped up with wood, ready to be set on fire; others were to pass under the walls, and remain ready to be broken open, so as to give entrance to the besiegers. At these mines the army worked day and night; and, during these secret preparations, the ordnance kept up a fire upon the city, to divert the attention of the besieged.

In the meantime, Hamet el Zegri displayed wonderful vigour and ingenuity in defending the city, and in repairing, or fortifying by deep ditches, the breaches made by the enemy. He noted, besides, every place where the camp might be assailed with advantage, and gave the besieging army no repose, night or day. While his troops sallied on the land, his floating batteries attacked the besiegers on the sea; so that there was incessant skirmishing. The tents, called the queen's hospital, were crowded with wounded, and the whole army suffered from constant watchfulness and fatigue. To guard against the sudden assaults of the Moors, the trenches were deepened, and palisadoes erected in front of the camp; and in that part facing Gibralfaro, where the rocky heights did not admit of such defences, a high rampart of earth was thrown up. The cavaliers Garcilasso de la Vega, Juan de Zuniga, and Diego de Atayde, were appointed to go the rounds, and keep vigilant watch that these fortifications were maintained in good order.

In a little while Hamet discovered the mines secretly commenced by the Christians. He immediately ordered counter-mines. The soldiers mutually worked until they met, and fought hand to hand in these subterranean passages. The Christians were driven out of one of their mines; fire was set to the wooden framework, and the mine destroyed. Encouraged by this success, the Moors attempted a general attack upon the mines and the besieging fleet. The battle lasted for six hours, on land and water, above and below ground, on bulwark and in trench and mine. The Moors displayed wonderful intrepidity, but were finally repulsed at all points, and obliged to retire into the city, where they were closely

invested, without the means of receiving any assistance from abroad.

The horrors of famine were now added to the other miseries of Malaga. Hamet el Zegri, with the spirit of a man bred up to war, considered everything as subservient to the wants of the soldier, and ordered all the grain in the city to be gathered and garnered up for the sole use of those who fought. Even this was dealt out sparingly; and each soldier received four ounces of bread in the morning, and two in the evening, for his daily allowance.

The wealthy inhabitants, and all those peacefully inclined, mourned over a resistance which brought destruction upon their houses, death into their families, and which they saw must end in their ruin and captivity. Still, none of them dared to speak openly of capitulation, or even to manifest their grief, lest they should awaken the wrath of their fierce defenders. They surrounded their civic champion, Ali Dordux, the great and opulent merchant, who had buckled on shield and cuirass, and taken spear in hand for the defence of his native city; and, with a large body of the braver citizens, had charge of one of the gates and a considerable portion of the walls. Drawing Ali Dordux aside, they poured forth their griefs to him in secret. "Why," said they, "should we suffer our native city to be made a mere bulwark and fighting place for foreign barbarians and desperate men? They have no families to care for, no property to lose, no love for the soil, and no value for their lives. They fight to gratify a thirst for blood, or a desire for revenge, and will fight on until Malaga be made a ruin, and its people slaves. Let us think and act for ourselves, our wives, and our children. Let us make private terms with the Christians before it is too late, and so save ourselves from destruction."

The bowels of Ali Dordux yearned towards his fellow-citizens. He bethought him also of the sweet security of peace, and the bloodless, yet gratifying, triumphs of gainful commerce. The idea likewise of a secret negotiation or bargain with the Castilian sovereigns, for the redemption of his native city, was more conformable to his accustomed habits than this violent appeal to arms; for though he had, for a time, assumed the warrior, he had not forgotten the merchant. Ali Dordux communed, therefore, with the citizen-soldiers under his command, and they readily

conformed to his opinion. Concerting together, they wrote a proposition to the Castilian sovereigns, offering to admit the army into the part of the city intrusted to their care, on receiving assurance of protection for the lives and property of the inhabitants. This writing they delivered to a trusty emissary, to take to the Christian camp, appointing the hour and place of his return, that they might be ready to admit him unperceived.

The Moor made his way in safety to the camp, and was admitted to the presence of the sovereigns. Eager to gain the city without further cost of blood or treasure, they gave a written promise to grant the conditions, and the Moor set out joyfully on his return. As he approached the walls where Ali Dordux and his confederates were waiting to receive him, he was descried by a patrolling band of Gomerès, and considered a spy coming from the camp of the besiegers. They issued forth, and seized him, in sight of his employers, who gave themselves up for lost. The Gomerès had conducted him nearly to the gate, when he escaped from their grasp and fled. They endeavoured to overtake him, but were encumbered with armour; he was lightly clad, and he fled for his life. One of the Gomerès paused, and, levelling his crossbow, let fly a bolt, which pierced the fugitive between the shoulders; he fell, and was nearly within their grasp; but rose again, and, with a desperate effort, attained the Christian camp. The Gomerès gave over the pursuit, and the citizens returned thanks to Alla for their deliverance from this fearful peril. As to the faithful messenger, he died of his wound shortly after reaching the camp, consoled with the idea that he had preserved the secret and the lives of his employers

CHAPTER LVII.

THE sufferings of Malaga spread sorrow and anxiety among the Moors; and they dreaded lest this beautiful city, once the bulwark of the kingdom, should fall into the hands of the unbelievers. The old warrior king, Abdalla el Zagal, was still sheltered in Guadix, where he was slowly gathering together his shattered forces. When the people of Guadix heard of the danger and distress of Malaga, they urged to be led to its relief; and the alfaquis admonished El Zagal not to desert so righteous and loyal a city in its extremity. His own

warlike nature made him feel a sympathy for a place, that made so gallant a resistance; and he despatched as powerful a reinforcement as he could spare, under conduct of a chosen captain, with orders to throw themselves into the city.

Intelligence of this reinforcement reached Boabdil el Chico, in his royal palace of the Alhambra. Filled with hostility against his uncle, and desirous of proving his loyalty to the Castilian sovereigns, he immediately sent forth a superior force of horse and foot, to intercept the detachment. A sharp conflict ensued; the troops of El Zagal were routed with great loss, and fled back in confusion to Guadix.

Boabdil, not being accustomed to victories, was flushed with this melancholy triumph. He sent tidings of it to the Castilian sovereigns, accompanied with rich silks, boxes of Arabian perfume, a cup of gold richly wrought, and a female captive of Rebeda, as presents to the queen; and four Arabian steeds, magnificently caparisoned, a sword and dagger richly mounted, and several albornozes and other robes, sumptuously embroidered, for the king. He entreated them, at the same time, always to look upon him with favour, as their devoted vassal.

Boabdil was fated to be unfortunate even in his victories. His defeat of the forces of his uncle, destined to the relief of unhappy Malaga, shocked the feelings, and cooled the loyalty of many of his best adherents. The mere men of traffic might rejoice in their golden interval of peace, but the chivalrous spirits of Granada spurned a security purchased by such sacrifices of pride and affection. The people at large, having gratified their love of change, began to question whether they had acted generously by their old fighting monarch. "El Zagal," said they, "was fierce and bloody, but then he was true to his country: he was an usurper, but then he maintained the glory of the crown which he usurped. If his sceptre was a rod of iron to his subjects, it was a sword of steel against their enemies. This Boabdil sacrifices religion, friends, country, everything, to a mere shadow of royalty, and is content to hold a rush for a sceptre."

These factious murmurs soon reached the ears of Boabdil, and he apprehended another of his customary reverses. He sent in all haste to the Castilian sovereigns, beseeching military aid to keep him on his throne. Ferdinand graciously complied with a request so much in unison with his policy.

A detachment of one thousand cavalry, and two thousand infantry, were despatched, under the command of Don Fernandez Gonsalez, of Cordova, subsequently renowned as the grand captain. With this success, Boabdil expelled from the city all those who were hostile to him, and in favour of his uncle. He felt secure in these troops, from their being distinct, in manners, language, and religion, from his subjects, and compromised with his pride, in thus exhibiting that most unnatural and humiliating of all regal spectacles, a monarch supported on his throne by foreign weapons, and by soldiers hostile to his people.

Nor was Boabdil el Chico the only Moorish sovereign that sought protection from Ferdinand and Isabella. A splendid galley, with lateen sails, and several banks of oars, came one day into the harbour of Malaga, displaying the standard of the crescent, but likewise a white flag in sign of amity. An ambassador landed from it within the Christian lines. He came from the King of Tremezan, and brought presents similar to those of Boabdil, consisting of Arabian coursers, bits, stirrups, and other furniture of gold, together with costly Moorish mantles: for the queen there were sumptuous shawls, robes, and silken stuffs, ornaments of gold, and exquisite oriental perfumes.

The King of Tremezan had been alarmed at the rapid conquests of the Spanish arms, and startled by the descent of several Spanish cruisers on the coast of Africa. He craved to be considered a vassal to the Castilian sovereigns, and that they would extend such favour and security to his ships and subjects as had been shown to other Moors, who had submitted to their sway. He requested a painting of their arms, that he and his subjects might recognise and respect their standard, whenever they encountered it. At the same time he implored their clemency towards unhappy Malaga, and that its inhabitants might experience the same favour that had been shown towards the Moors of other captured cities.

This embassy was graciously received by the Castilian sovereigns. They granted the protection required; ordering their commanders to respect the flag of Tremezan, unless it should be found rendering assistance to the enemy. They sent also to the Barbary monarch their royal arms, moulded in escutcheons of gold a hand's-breadth in size.*

* *Cura de los Palacios*, c. 84. *Pulgar*, part. iii. c. 86.

While thus the chances of assistance from without daily decreased, famine raged in the city. The inhabitants were compelled to eat the flesh of horses, and many died of hunger. What made the sufferings of the citizens the more intolerable was, to behold the sea covered with ships, daily arriving with provisions for the besiegers. Day after day, also, they saw herds of fat cattle and flocks of sheep drawn into the camp. Wheat and flour were piled in large mounds in the centre of the encampments, glaring in the sunshine, and tantalizing the wretched citizens, who, while they and their children were perishing with hunger, beheld prodigal abundance reigning within a bowshot of their walls.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THERE lived at this time, in a hamlet in the neighbourhood of Guadix, an ancient Moor, of the name of Abraham Algerbi. He was a native of Guerba, in the kingdom of Tunis, and had for several years led the life of a santón or hermit. The hot sun of Africa had dried his blood, and rendered him of an exalted yet melancholy temperament. He passed most of his time in meditation, prayer, and rigorous abstinence, until his body was wasted and his mind bewildered, and he fancied himself favoured with divine revelations. The Moors, who have a great reverence for all enthusiasts of the kind, looked upon him as inspired, listened to all his ravings as veritable prophecies, and denominated him *El Santo*, or "the saint."

The woes of the kingdom of Granada had long exasperated the gloomy spirit of this man; and he had beheld with indignation this beautiful country wrested from the dominion of the faithful, and becoming a prey to the unbelievers. He had implored the blessing of Allah on the troops which issued forth from Guadix, for the relief of Malaga; but when he saw them return, routed and scattered by their own countrymen, he retired to his cell, shut himself up from the world, and was plunged for a time in the blackest gloom.

On a sudden he made his appearance again in the streets of Guadix; his face haggard, his form emaciated, but his eye beaming with fire. He said, that Allah had sent an angel to him, in the solitude of his cell, revealing to him a mode of delivering Malaga from its perils, and striking horror and confusion into the camp of the unbelievers. The Moors

listened with eager credulity to his words: four hundred of them offered to follow him even to the death, and to obey implicitly his commands. Of this number many were Gomeres, anxious to relieve their countrymen, who formed part of the garrison of Malaga.

They traversed the kingdom by the wild and lonely passes of the mountains, concealing themselves in the day, and travelling only in the night, to elude the Christian scouts. At length they arrived at the mountains which tower above Malaga; and, looking down, beheld the city completely invested, a chain of encampments extending round it from shore to shore, and a line of ships blockading it by sea, while the continual thunder of artillery, and the smoke rising in various parts, showed that the siege was pressed with great activity. The hermit scanned the encampments warily from his lofty height. He saw that the part of the encampment of the Marquis of Cadiz, which was at the foot of the height, and on the margin of the sea, was the most assailable, the rocky soil not admitting ditches or palisades. Remaining concealed all day, he descended with his followers at night to the seacoast, and approached silently to the outworks. He had given them their instructions: they were to rush suddenly upon the camp, fight their way through, and throw themselves into the city.

It was just at the gray of the dawning, when objects are obscurely visible, that they made this desperate attempt. Some sprang suddenly upon the sentinels: others rushed into the sea, and got round the works: others clambered over the breastworks. There was sharp skirmishing; a great part of the Moors were cut to pieces, but about two hundred succeeded in getting into the gates of Malaga.

The santón took no part in the conflict, nor did he endeavour to enter the city. His plans were of a different nature. Drawing apart from the battle, he threw himself on his knees, on a rising ground, and, lifting his hands to Heaven, appeared to be absorbed in prayer. The Christians, as they were searching for fugitives in the clefts of the rocks, found him at his devotions. He stirred not at their approach, but remained fixed as a statue, without changing colour or moving a muscle. Filled with surprise, not unmingled with awe, they took him to the Marquis of Cadiz. He was wrapped in a coarse albornoz, or Moorish mantle; his beard was long and grizzled, and

there was something wild and melancholy in his look, that inspired curiosity.

On being examined, he gave himself out as a saint, to whom Allah had revealed the events, that were to take place in that siege. The marquis demanded when and how Malaga was to be taken. He replied, that he knew full well; but he was forbidden to reveal these important secrets, except to the king and queen. The good marquis was not more given to superstitious fancies than other commanders of his time; yet there seemed something singular and mysterious about this man: he might have some important intelligence to communicate; so he was persuaded to send him to the king and queen. He was conducted to the royal tent, surrounded by a curious multitude, exclaiming "El Moro Santo!" for the news had spread through the camp, that they had taken a Moorish prophet.

The king, having dined, was taking his siesta, or afternoon's sleep, in his tent; and the queen, though curious to see this singular being, yet, from a natural delicacy and reserve, delayed until the king should be present. He was taken, therefore, to an adjoining tent, in which were Doña Beatrix de Bovadilla, Marchioness of Moya, and Don Alvaro of Portugal, son of the Duke of Braganza, with two or three attendants. The Moor, ignorant of the Spanish tongue, had not understood the conversation of the guards, and supposed, from the magnificence of the furniture and the silken hangings, that this was the royal tent. From the respect paid by the attendants to Don Alvaro and the marchioness, he concluded, that they were the king and queen.

He now asked for a draught of water. A jar was brought to him, and the guard released his arm, to enable him to drink. The marchioness perceived a sudden change in his countenance, and something sinister in the expression of his eye, and shifted her position to a more remote part of the tent. Pretending to raise the water to his lips, the Moor unfolded his albornoz so as to grasp a cimeter, which he wore concealed beneath; then, dashing down the jar, he drew his weapon, and gave Don Alvaro a blow on the head, that struck him to the earth and nearly deprived him of life. Turning upon the marchioness, he then made a violent blow at her, but, in his eagerness and agitation, his cimeter caught in the drapery of the tent; the force of the blow was broken, and

the weapon struck harmless upon some golden ornaments of her head-dress.*

Ruy Lopez de Toledo, treasurer to the queen, and Juan de Belalcazar, a sturdy friar, who were present, grappled and struggled with the desperado; and immediately the guards who had conducted him from the Marquis of Cadiz fell upon him, and cut him to pieces.†

The king and queen, brought out of their tents by the noise, were filled with horror, when they learned the imminent peril from which they had escaped. The mangled body of the Moor was taken by the people of the camp, and thrown into the city from a catapult. The Gomeres gathered up the body, with deep reverence, as the remains of a saint; they washed and perfumed it, and buried it with great honour and loud lamentations. In revenge of his death, they slew one of their principal Christian captives; and, having tied his body upon an ass, they drove the animal forth into the camp.

From this time there was appointed an additional guard around the tents of the king and queen, composed of twelve hundred cavaliers of rank of the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon. No person was admitted to the royal presence armed. No Moor was allowed to enter the camp without a previous knowledge of his character and business; and on no account was any Moor to be introduced into the presence of the sovereigns.

An act of treachery of such a ferocious nature gave rise to a train of gloomy apprehensions. There were many cabins and sheds about the camp, constructed of branches of trees, which had become dry and combustible; and fears were entertained, that they might be set on fire by the Mudixares, or Moorish vassals, who visited the army. Some even dreaded, that attempts might be made to poison the wells and fountains. To quiet these dismal alarms, all Mudixares were ordered to leave the camp; and all loose loiterers, who could not give a good account of themselves, were taken into custody.

CHAPTER LIX.

AMONG those followers of the santón that had effected their entrance into the city was a dark African, of the tribe of

* Pietro Martyr, epist. 62.

† Cura de los Palacios.

Gomeres, who was likewise a hermit or dervise, and passed among the Moors for a holy and inspired man. No sooner were the mangled remains of his predecessor buried with the honours of martyrdom, than this dervise elevated himself in his place, and professed to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy. He displayed a white banner, which he assured the Moors was sacred; that he had retained it for twenty years, for some signal purpose; and that Allah had revealed to him, that under that banner, the inhabitants of Malaga should sally forth upon the camp of the unbelievers, put it to utter rout, and banquet upon the provisions in which it abounded.* The hungry and credulous Moors were elated at this prediction, and cried out to be led forth at once to the attack; but the dervise told them the time was not yet arrived, for every event had its allotted day in the decrees of fate; they must wait patiently, therefore, until the appointed time should be revealed to him by Heaven. Hamet el Zegri listened to the dervise with profound reverence, and his example had great effect in increasing the awe and deference of his followers. He took the holy man up into his stronghold of Gibralfaro, consulted him on all occasions, and hung out his white banner on the loftiest tower, as a signal of encouragement to the people of the city.

In the meantime, the prime chivalry of Spain was gradually assembling before the walls of Malaga. The army which had commenced the siege had been worn out by extreme hardships, having had to construct immense works, to dig trenches and mines, to mount guard by sea and land, to patrol the mountains, and to sustain incessant conflicts. The sovereigns were obliged therefore to call upon various distant cities for reinforcements of horse and foot. Many nobles, also, assembled their vassals, and repaired, of their own accord, to the royal camp.

Every little while, some stately galley or gallant caravel would stand into the harbour, displaying the well-known banner of some Spanish cavalier, and thundering from its artillery a salutation to the sovereigns, and a defiance to the Moors. On the land side also reinforcements would be seen, winding down the mountains to the sound of drum and trumpet, and marching into the camp with glistening arms, as yet unsullied by the toils of war.

* Cura de los Palacios.

One morning the whole sea was whitened by the sails, and vexed by the oars of ships and galleys bearing towards the port. One hundred vessels, of various kinds and sizes, arrived; some armed for warlike service, others deep freighted with provisions. At the same time, the clangor of drum and trumpet bespoke the arrival of a powerful force by land, which came pouring in lengthening columns into the camp.

This mighty reinforcement was furnished by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who reigned like a petty monarch over his vast possessions. He came with this princely force a volunteer to the royal standard, not having been summoned by the sovereigns, and he brought moreover a loan of twenty thousand doblas of gold.

When the camp was thus powerfully reinforced, Isabella advised that new offers of an indulgent kind should be made to the inhabitants; for she was anxious to prevent the miseries of a protracted siege, or the effusion of blood that must attend a general attack. A fresh summons was therefore sent for the city to surrender, with a promise of life, liberty, and property, in case of immediate compliance, but denouncing all the horrors of war if the defence were obstinately continued.

Hamet el Zegri again rejected the offer with scorn. His main fortifications as yet were but little impaired, and were capable of holding out much longer; he trusted to the thousand evils and accidents that beset a besieging army, and to the inclemencies of the approaching season; and it is said he, as well as his followers, had an infatuated belief in the predictions of the dervise.

The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida does not scruple to affirm that the pretended prophet of the city was an arch necromancer, or Moorish magician; "of which there be countless many," says he, "in the filthy sect of Mahomet;" and that he was leagued with the prince of the powers of the air, to endeavour to work the confusion and defeat of the Christian army. The worthy father asserts also, that Hamet employed him in a high tower of the Gibralfaro, which commanded a wide view over sea and land, where he wrought spells and incantations, with astrolabes and other diabolical instruments, to defeat the Christian ships and forces, whenever they were engaged with the Moors.

To the potent spells of this sorcerer he ascribes the perils and losses sustained by a party of cavaliers of the royal

household, in a desperate combat to gain two towers of the suburb, near the gate of the city called La Puerta de Granada. The Christians, led on by Ruy Lopez de Toledo, the valiant treasurer of the queen, took, and lost, and retook the towers, which were finally set on fire by the Moors, and abandoned to the flames by both parties. To the same malignant influence he attributes the damage done to the Christian fleet, which was so vigorously assailed by the albatozas, or floating batteries, of the Moors, that one ship of the Duke of Medina Sidonia was sunk, and the rest were obliged to retire.

"Hamet el Zegri," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "stood on the top of the high tower of Gibralfaro, and beheld this injury wrought upon the Christian force; and his proud heart was puffed up. And the Moorish necromancer stood beside him. And he pointed out to him the Christian host below, encamped on every eminence around the city, and covering its fertile valley, and the many ships floating upon the tranquil sea; and he bade him be strong of heart, for that, in a few days, all this mighty fleet would be scattered by the winds of heaven; and that he should sally forth, under guidance of the sacred banner, and attack this host, and utterly defeat it, and make spoil of those sumptuous tents; and Malaga should be triumphantly revenged upon her assailants. So the heart of Hamet was hardened like that of Pharaoh, and he persisted in setting at defiance the Catholic sovereigns and their army of saintly warriors."

CHAPTER LX.

SEEING the infatuated obstinacy of the besieged, the Christians now approached their works to the walls, gaining one position after another, preparatory to a general assault. Near the barrier of the city was a bridge with four arches, defended at each end by a strong and lofty tower, by which a part of the army would have to pass in making a general attack. The commander-in-chief of the artillery, Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, was ordered to take possession of this bridge. The approach to it was perilous in the extreme, from the exposed situation of the assailants, and the numbers of Moors that garrisoned the towers. Francisco Ramirez, therefore, secretly excavated a mine leading beneath the first tower, and placed a piece of ordnance, with its mouth upwards,

immediately under the foundation, with a train of powder to produce an explosion at the necessary moment.

When this was arranged, he advanced slowly with his forces in the face of the towers, erecting bulwarks at every step, and gradually gaining ground, until he arrived near to the bridge. He then planted several pieces of artillery in his works, and began to batter the tower. The Moors replied bravely from their battlements; but in the heat of the combat the piece of ordnance under the foundation was discharged. The earth was rent open, a part of the tower overthrown, and several of the Moors torn to pieces: the rest took to flight, overwhelmed with terror at this thundering explosion bursting beneath their feet, and at beholding the earth vomiting flames and smoke; for never before had they witnessed such a stratagem in warfare. The Christians rushed forward and took possession of the abandoned post, and immediately commenced an attack upon the other tower, at the opposite end of the bridge, to which the Moors had retired. An incessant fire of crossbows and arquebuses was kept up between the rival towers, volleys of stones were discharged, and no one dared to venture upon the intermediate bridge.

Francisco de Ramirez at length renewed his former mode of approach, making bulwarks as he advanced, while the Moors at the other end swept the bridge with their artillery. The combat was long and bloody, ferocious on the part of the Moors, patient and persevering on the part of the Christians. By slow degrees they accomplished their progress across the bridge, drove the enemy before them, and remained masters of this important pass.

For this valiant and skilful achievement, King Ferdinand, after the surrender of the city, conferred the dignity of knighthood upon Francisco Ramirez, in the tower which he had so gloriously gained.* The worthy padre, Fray Antonio Agapida, indulges in more than a page of extravagant eulogy upon this invention of blowing up the foundation of the tower by a piece of ordnance, which he affirms to be the first instance on record of gunpowder being used in a mine.

CHAPTER LXI.

WHILE the dervise was deluding the garrison of Malaga

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 91.

with vain hopes, the famine increased to a terrible degree. The Gomerers ranged about the city as though it had been a conquered place; taking by force whatever they found eatable in the houses of the peaceful citizens, and breaking open vaults and cellars, and demolishing walls, wherever they thought provisions might be concealed.

The wretched inhabitants had no longer bread to eat; the horseflesh also now failed them; and they were fain to devour skins and hides toasted at the fire, and to assuage the hunger of their children with vine leaves cut up and fried in oil. Many perished of famine, or of the unwholesome food with which they endeavoured to relieve it; and many took refuge in the Christian camp, preferring captivity to the horrors which surrounded them.

At length the sufferings of the inhabitants became so great as to conquer even their fears of Hamet and his Gomerers. They assembled before the house of Ali Dordux, the wealthy merchant, whose stately mansion was at the foot of the hill of the alcazaba; and they urged him to stand forth as their leader, and to intercede with Hamet el Zegri for a surrender. Ali Dordux was a man of courage as well as policy; he perceived also that hunger was giving boldness to the citizens, while he trusted it was subduing the fierceness of the soldiery. He armed himself, therefore, cap-à-piè, and undertook this dangerous parley with the alcaide. He associated with him an alfaqui, named Abrahen Alharis, and an important inhabitant, named Amar ben Amar; and they ascended to the fortress of Gibralfaro, followed by several of the trembling merchants.

They found Hamet el Zegri, not, as before, surrounded by ferocious guards and all the implements of war; but in a chamber of one of the lofty towers, at a table of stone, covered with scrolls, and traced with strange characters and mystic diagrams; while instruments of singular and unknown form lay about the room. Beside Hamet el Zegri stood the prophetic dervise, who appeared to have been explaining to him the mysterious inscriptions of the scrolls. His presence filled the citizens with awe; for even Ali Dordux considered him a man inspired.

The alfaqui, Abrahen Alharis, whose sacred character gave him boldness to speak, now lifted up his voice, and addressed Hamet el Zegri. "We implore you," said he solemnly, "in the name of the most powerful God, no longer to persist in

a vain resistance, which must end in our destruction; but deliver up the city, while clemency is yet to be obtained. Think how many of our warriors have fallen by the sword; do not suffer those who survive to perish by famine. Our wives and children cry to us for bread, and we have none to give them. We see them expire in lingering agony before our eyes, while the enemy mocks our misery, by displaying the abundance of his camp. Of what avail is our defence? Are our walls, peradventure, more strong than the walls of Ronda? Are our warriors more brave than the defenders of Loxa? The walls of Ronda were thrown down, and the warriors of Loxa had to surrender. Do we hope for succour? From whence are we to receive it? The time for hope has gone by. Granada has lost its power: it no longer possesses chivalry, commanders, or a king. Boabdil sits a vassal in the degraded walls of the Alhambra: El Zagal is a fugitive, shut up within the walls of Guadix. The kingdom is divided against itself: its strength is gone, its pride fallen, its very existence at an end. In the name of Allah, we conjure thee, who art our captain, be not our direst enemy; but surrender these ruins of our once happy Malaga, and deliver us from these overwhelming horrors."

Such was the supplication forced from the inhabitants by the extremity of their sufferings. Hamet el Zegri listened to the alfaqui without anger, for he respected the sanctity of his office. His heart, too, was at that moment lifted up with a vain confidence. "Yet a few days of patience," said he, "and all these evils will suddenly have an end. I have been conferring with this holy man, and find, that the time of our deliverance is at hand. The decrees of fate are inevitable: it is written in the book of destiny, that we shall sally forth, and destroy the camp of the unbelievers, and banquet upon those mountains of grain, which are piled up in the midst of it. So Allah hath promised, by the mouth of this his prophet. Allah achbar! God is great! Let no man oppose the decrees of Heaven."

The citizens heard with proud reverence; for no true Moslem pretends to struggle against whatever is written in the book of fate. Ali Dordux, who had come prepared to champion the city, and to brave the ire of Hamet, humbled himself before this holy man; and gave faith to his prophecies as the revelations of Allah. So the deputies returned to the citizens,

and exhorted them to be of good cheer. "A few days longer," said they, "and our sufferings are to terminate. When the white banner is removed from the tower, then look out for deliverance; for the hour of sallying forth will have arrived." The people retired to their houses with sorrowful hearts. They tried in vain to quiet the cries of their famishing children; and day by day, and hour by hour, their anxious eyes were turned to the sacred banner, which still continued to wave on the tower of Gibralfaro.

CHAPTER LXII.

"The Moorish necromancer," observes the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "remained shut up in the tower of the Gibralfaro, devising devilish means to work mischief and discomfiture upon the Christians. He was daily consulted by Hamet el Zegri, who had great faith in those black and magic arts, which he had brought with him from the bosom of heathen Africa."

From the account given of this dervise and his incantations by the worthy father, it would appear, that he was an astrologer, and was studying the stars, and endeavouring to calculate the day and hour, when a successful attack might be made upon the Christian camp.

Famine had now increased to such a degree as to distress even the garrison of Gibralfaro; although the Gomeres had seized upon all the provisions they could find in the city. Their passions were sharpened by hunger; and they became restless and turbulent, and impatient for action.

Hamet el Zegri was one day in council with his captains, perplexed by the pressure of events, when the dervise entered among them. "The hour of victory," exclaimed he, "is at hand! Allah has commanded, that to-morrow morning ye shall sally forth to the fight. I will bear before you the sacred banner, and deliver your enemies into your hands. Remember, however, that ye are but instruments in the hands of Allah; to take vengeance on the enemies of the faith. Go into battle, therefore, with pure hearts, forgiving each other all past offences; for those, who are charitable towards each other, will be victorious over the foe."

The words of the dervise were received with rapture. All Gibralfaro and the alcazaba resounded immediately with the

din of arms ; and Hamet sent throughout the towers and fortifications of the city, and selected the choicest troops and most distinguished captains for this eventful combat.

In the morning early, the rumour went throughout the city, that the sacred banner had disappeared from the tower of Gibralfaro, and all Malaga was roused to witness the sally that was to destroy the unbelievers. Hamet descended from his strong-hold, accompanied by his principal captain, Abrahen Zenete, and followed by his Gomeres. The dervise led the way, displaying the white banner, the sacred pledge of victory. The multitude shouted, "Allah achbar !" and prostrated themselves before the banner as it passed. Even the dreaded Hamet was hailed with praises ; for, in their hope of speedy relief, through the prowess of his arm, the populace forgot everything but his bravery. Every bosom in Malaga was agitated by hope and fear ; the old men, the women, and children, and all who went not forth to battle, mounted on tower, and battlement, and roof, to watch a combat, that was to decide their fate.

Before sallying forth from the city, the dervise addressed the troops, reminding them of the holy nature of this enterprise, and warning them not to forget the protection of the sacred banner by any unworthy act. They were to press forward, fighting valiantly, and granting no quarter. The gate was then thrown open, and the dervise issued forth, followed by the army. They directed their assault upon the encampments of the master of Santiago and the master of Calatrava, and came upon them so suddenly, that they killed and wounded several of the guards. Abrahen Zenete made his way into one of the tents, where he beheld several Christian striplings, just starting from their slumber. The heart of the Moor was suddenly touched with pity for their youth, or, perhaps, he scorned the weakness of the foe : he smote them with the flat, instead of the edge, of his sword. "Away, imps," cried he, "away to your mothers !" The fanatic dervise reproached him with his clemency. "I did not kill them," replied Zenete, "because I saw no beards !"*

The alarm was given in the camp, and the Christians rushed from all quarters to defend the gates of the bulwarks. Don Pedro Puertocarrero, senior of Moguer, and his brother, Don Alonzo Pacheco, planted themselves, with their followers, in

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 84.

the gateway of the encampment of the master of Santiago, and bore the whole brunt of the battle until they were reinforced. The gate of the encampment of the master of Calatrava was, in like manner, defended by Lorenzo Saurez de Mendoza. Hamet el Zegri was furious at being thus checked, where he had expected a miraculous victory. He led his troops repeatedly to the attack, hoping to force the gates before succour should arrive. They fought with vehement ardour, but were as often repulsed; and every time they returned to the assault, they found their enemies doubled in number. The Christians opened a cross fire of all kinds of missiles from their bulwarks; the Moors could effect but little damage upon a foe thus protected behind their works, while they themselves were exposed from head to foot. The Christians singled out the most conspicuous cavaliers, the greater part of whom were either slain or wounded. Still the Moors, infatuated by the predictions of the prophet, fought desperately and devotedly; and they were furious to revenge the slaughter of their leaders. They rushed upon certain death, endeavouring madly to scale the bulwarks, or force the gates; and fell amidst showers of darts and lances, filling the ditches with their mangled bodies.

Hamet el Zegri raged along the front of the bulwarks, seeking an opening for attack. He gnashed his teeth with fury, as he saw so many of his chosen warriors slain around him. He seemed to have a charmed life; for, though constantly in the hottest of the fight, amidst showers of missiles, he still escaped uninjured. Blindly confiding in the prophecy of victory, he continued to urge on his devoted troops. The dervise, too, ran like a maniac through the ranks, waving his white banner, and inciting the Moors, by howlings rather than by shouts. In the midst of his frenzy, a stone from a catapult struck him on the head, and dashed out his bewildered brains.*

When the Moors beheld their prophet slain, and his banner in the dust, they were seized with despair, and fled in confusion to the city. Hamet el Zegri made some effort to rally them, but was himself confounded by the fall of the dervise. He covered the flight of his broken forces, turning repeatedly upon their pursuers, and slowly making his retreat into the city.

The inhabitants of Malaga witnessed from their walls, with

* Garibay, lib. xviii. cap. 33.