As for agriculture, every one who has been in Spain can testify to what the country owed and still owes to the Arabs. With that primitive people, the cultivation of the earth and the care of flocks were pursuits of peculiar predilection; and, by a happy coincidence, the rural economy of their native Arabia was well adapted to the soil and climate of the Peninsula, where, from the power of the sun and the frequency of droughts, irrigation is essential to fertility. The Arabs directed the course of the springs and streams with great labor and ingenuity, collecting the waters in vast reservoirs, whence they conducted them by earthen pipes or in open canals to the trenches of their fields. They also introduced that useful machine the *noria*, by means of which, where streams are not convenient, water may be raised from wells, and spread abroad upon the surface of the earth. Abderahman was well aware that agriculture was the certain and never-failing support of an abundant population, and consequently the true source of national wealth and power. He, therefore, encouraged by every means the strong bias of his people for the improvement of their lands. He assisted them, by constructing reservoirs and aqueducts, and thus gave a

by Roger, king of Sicily, from the Holy Land. There is, however, good reason for believing that they were found at a much earlier period in the kingdom of Cordova.

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new stimulus to the spirit of agricultural enterprise. He gave them an example, in his immense gardens of Azarah, upon the banks of the Guadalquivir, of what could be done by taste and industry; for there the trees and plants of Africa mingled their foliage with those of Europe. The palm-tree and the banana grew beside the olive and the orange, which had emigrated into Spain at an earlier period; the sugar-cane sustained the helplessness of the vine. Like most of his subjects, the king had the simple and natural taste for plants and gardens; nor did he esteem it any degradation to labor with his own hands. Indeed, the most illustrious personages, those highest in dignity among the Arabs, loved to work in their own gardens, and to breathe a fresh and fragrant air, under a shade of their own creation. Scarce was the short winter of Cordova over, when the country was peopled at the expense of the city; whilst such of the villagers, in turn, as were devoted to the care of flocks, commenced the wandering life of their Arabian ancestors, passing from province to province, and from mountain to mountain, in search of the freshest pasture*.

This taste for gardens was combined with an

* Conde says that these wandering shepherds were called *moedinos;* and he supposes that a corruption of this word has produced *merinos,* the name given at the present day in Spain to the flocks which annually migrate from north to south.

equal bias for the pursuits of poetry. Verse-making may indeed be said to have been a mania among the Spanish Saracens. So prevalent was it, that extemporaneous versification — rendered easy, doubtless, by the character of the language, and by a study of the art—was quite general among the wits of that country. Several pieces of the kings of Cordova, preserved in the contemporary histories, have been translated from the Arabic by Conde. They are full of grace and fancy. All these learned men, these historians and poets, formed themselves into academies, assembling at stated periods, to augment the general stock of learning and science by free intercourse and by the clash of discussion. Nothing, however, so greatly tended to promote the cause of knowledge among the Arabs as the public library established in Cordova by Alhakem, the son of Abderahman, and afterward his worthy successor. It contained all the known works upon the sciences, history, eloquence, and poetry. To collect it, he sent agents, charged with the purchase of books, into Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Persia. The palace of the prince was ever open to the wise of all countries, who were made to promise, before they took leave, to procure all the rare, curious, and instructive works of which they had any knowledge. He himself classed the library in compartments, according to the various subjects, and the tables of

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reference alone are said to have filled forty-four volumes of fifty leaves. This occupation was with the virtuous Alhakem but an episode to the cares of state; for Abderahman, who lived to a great old age, would have no other minister than his son, whom he sought to compensate in this way for the long privation to which he was subjected by the protraction of his own reign. He used often to say to him good-humoredly—"It is at the expense of thy reign, my son, that mine is prolonged." But when it at length ceased, and the good king bade adieu alike to the cares and enjoyments of life, it was too soon for Spain and for Alhakem.

So greatly had the population of Spain increased, in consequence of the improved system of political and rural economy introduced by the Arabs, that there can be no doubt that the country which lies south of the Sierra Morena contained more inhabitants than are now found in the whole Peninsula. The city of Cordova naturally rose to the rank and standing worthy of the capital of so vast an empire. It abounded in public edifices; among which were six hundred mosques, fifty hospitals, and eighty public schools. All the streets were paved, and pure water was conducted from the mountains, in pipes of lead, to nourish the public fountains which stood at every corner. Lofty embankments resisted the overflowing of the Guadal-

quivir, and furnished, at the same time, a planted promenade for the public recreation. There were likewise many washing-places, and troughs for cattle and the cavalry; whilst no less than nine hundred public baths were kept constantly in order, to maintain health and cleanliness among the people, and to facilitate the observance of the ablutions prescribed by the Koran. The million of inhabitants ascribed by the Arabian historians to Cordova is, doubtless, an exaggeration. Yet the city must have been immense, to judge from the size of other places of far inferior importance under the Arab domination. Seville had four hundred thousand inhabitants, and Granada counted the same number when taken by Ferdinand and Isabella.

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The picture we have given of the kingdom of Cordova, drawn after the descriptions of the Arabian historians, may perhaps convey an exaggerated idea of its wealth and power *. Indeed, it may rather be considered to have attained a high degree of civilization, in reference to the other

* The foregoing observations are chiefly taken—often literally—from the history of the Arab domination culled and translated by Conde from the valuable materials in the Escorial. This work has been handsomely rendered into French by M. De La Marles. It is full of interest, and contains abundant internal evidence of truth.

nations of that day, than when compared with our own. Yet if an extensive development of local advantages and of the bounties of nature, combined with a flourishing, dense, and happy population, convey the idea of civilization, then does this qualification belong in an eminent degree to the Arabian kingdom of Cordova.

The prosperity of Cordova declined when the Arab power in Spain became broken up into petty kingdoms; and it received a fatal blow when reconquered by Fernando the Saint, who banished all the Moslem inhabitants. When they were gone, Cordova remained desolate: the grass sprang up in its streets and in its court-yards, and the cooling music of its fountains murmured unheard. The cattle had been driven homeward by the returning conquerers, and the face of the country no longer teemed with men and animals. The plough stood still and rusted in its furrow. It is one thing to sweep off and another to restore a numerous and flourishing population. At length, by grants of houses and lands, with exemption from taxes, a few thriftless people were induced to emigrate from other parts of Spain, and settle in the newly conquered region. The descendants of these men form the scanty population of the country, as it exists at the present day.

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Cordova must, from its situation alone, be ever a delightful place; but as a city it has small claims to beauty, being everywhere surrounded by walls, in which the works of Romans, Vandals, Goths, and Arabs are connected by a modern patchwork. The extent of Cordova is the same now as in the day of its greatest prosperity, although it contains but little more than thirty thousand inhabitants. The walls remaining the same, the houses have shrunk from each other, and put themselves more at their ease; so that most of them have a vacant lot beside them, which is laid out as a garden. Here the fruits and flowers of the tropics flourish unprotected in the open air, intermingled with the productions of the temperate climes. The peach, the pear, and the apple, the orange, lemon, fig, and even banana tree, all attain an equal perfection. But the most singular feature in the gardens of Cordova is the lofty palm, which is seen towering far above trees, walls, and housetops. The palm is, indeed, among the first objects which the traveller discovers as he approaches Cordova, and for a moment he fancies that he is about to enter some African or Asiatic city.

It is said, that all the palm-trees in Spain—and they are very numerous in Andalusia, Murcia, and Valencia—proceeded from the one planted by the

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first Abderahman in his favorite garden upon the bank of the Guadalquivir *. He had erected in the same place a lofty tower, from whose summit the eye took in a wide view of the surrounding country. The amiable prince loved frequently to climb in the evening to the top of his tower, and to contemplate from the eminence the outspread beauties of the very fairest spot in the vast domain won by his own valor. When his eye was wearied with roving over the remoter objects of the landscape, it returned to dwell upon the plainer beauties that lay below, and especially upon his favorite palm-tree, which awakened tender recollections of his lost country. He composed verses in praise of it, which still exist. "Beautiful palm tree! thou art, like me, a stranger in this land; but thy roots find a friendly and a fertile soil, thy head rises into a genial atmosphere, and the balmy west breathes kindly among thy branches. Thou hast now nothing to fear from evil fortune; whilst I am ever exposed to its treachery! When cruel fate and the fury of Abbas drove me from my dear country, my tears often watered the palm-trees which grew upon the banks of the Euphrates. Neither the trees nor the river have preserved the memory of my sorrows. And thou, too, beautiful

* Conde.

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palm! hast also forgotten thy country!" The palm-tree is almost the only object that now remains to call to mind the glorious days of Cordova, and the dominion of her Abderahmans. The eye turns from the surrounding objects to dwell upon it with pleasure; and fancy seeks to forget the present amid the associations of the past.

But the palm-tree should not make us forget the orange, which after all furnishes the fairest ornament of the gardens of Cordova. This tree is nowhere seen in greater perfection than here, where it does not require man's sickly assistance, but, left to its own energies, grows up thick and sturdy and wide-spreading. It does not reach the height of the cherry, but has a larger trunk, an equally regular and symmetric growth, and a more impervious foliage. The Cordobeses leave the oranges unplucked from season to season. Thus in the middle of April, I saw the tree covered with fruit, at the same time that the blossoms were full blown and falling. Nothing in nature could be more enchanting than these noble trees, crowned at once with plenty and with promise, the rich verdure of their foliage blended with golden fruit and silver flowers. Their branches, too, sometimes projected over the garden walls, so that many of the streets were white with the falling blossoms. These being trod

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by the passers by load the air with fragrant exhalations.

The streets of Cordova are almost all narrow and crooked, as is the case in all the Spanish cities where the Arabs were long established; for wheeled carriages were not in use among them—and they made their streets narrow, that the projecting roofs of the houses might effectually exclude the rays of the sun. They are, however, kept quite clean, and the houses are neatly whitewashed, with each its latticed window beside the portal, and overhead a projecting balcony, filled with daffodils, carnations, and roses, and now and then a young lemon-tree, amid the foliage of which you may often catch sight of the full black eye and sunny cheek of some brown beauty, as rich as the ripe fruit that hangs around.

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The only remarkable object to be seen in Cordova—the only monument which calls to mind the age of her Abderahmans—is the mosque, which Saint Ferdinand converted into the cathedral of a bishopric. It is one of the most singular structures in the world. The mosque of Cordova was erected after the establishment of the Western Caliphate by its founder, the first Abderahman. He resolved to give his capital the finest mosque in the world—superior in richness to those of Bagdad and Damascus, and a worthy object of veneration

among the believers, like the Caaba of Mecca, reared by the hands of Abraham and of Ismael, and the Alaska, or Temple of Resurrection, in Jerusalem. He is said himself to have traced the plan, and even to have labored an hour each day with his own hands, in order to give an example of diligence to the workmen, and of humiliation and piety to his people. The Arabian historians give a brilliant description of this wonderful temple. They say that it had thirty-nine naves one way by nineteen the other, and that these naves were sustained upon one thousand and ninety-three columns of marble. On one side were nineteen gates, corresponding to the naves. The central one was covered with plates of gold; the others with bronze, beautifully decorated. The minarets terminated in gilt balls, surmounted by golden pomegranates. This vast edifice was lit by four thousand seven hundred lamps, of which the oil was perfumed with amber and aloes. Such is said to have been this mosque in the time of the Arabs: it is much easier to vouch for and determine its present appearance.

The exterior of the Cathedral offers a quadrangle of six hundred and twenty feet by four hundred and forty. The walls are about fifty feet high, of hewn stone, and very solid. They are perfectly plain, without columns or other ornament, and ter-

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minate at the top in alternate squares and vacancies, like the loopholes of a turret. The wonder of this building, however, lies within. Here you find yourself in a perfect forest of columns laid out in twenty-nine parallel rows. They are still more than four hundred in number, although many have been removed to make room for the choir and for chapels. These columns are of different forms and thickness, as well as of different materials—some being of granite, others of serpentine, porphyry, jasper, and marbles of every kind and color. They supported small arches thrown from column to column, on which rested originally a light roof of wood; but a century or two ago the edifice underwent many changes. The wooden roof was removed, and a second series of arches was thrown over the lighter ones of the original construction. But the most remarkable alteration that then took place was the erection of an immense Gothic choir, which rises, like a distinct church, in the centre of the quadrangle. It may be that at the same time ten of the naves were likewise removed to make room in front of the Cathedral, which would at once account for the difference in the number of the naves and columns, as described by the Arabs, and as they are found at the present day. Where the original walls remain untouched, they are covered with a profusion of minute ornaments, worked

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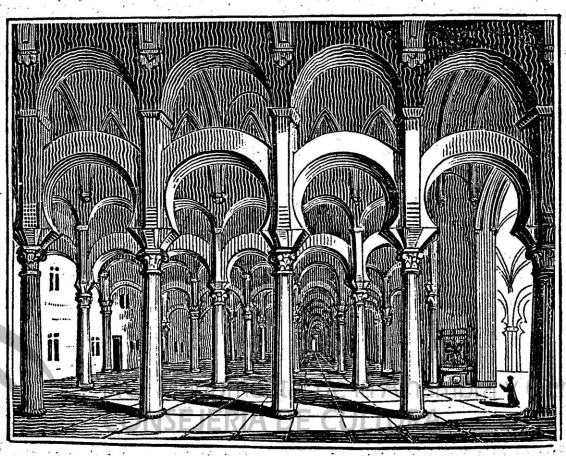
upon a surface of plaster, and which, in the form of wreaths and garlands, contain sentences from the Koran.



Mosque of Cordova.

On one side of the Cathedral is still found the spacious garden planted by the third Abderahman, and which now serves as a vestibule to the temple. Over the portal which gives admittance to this place is an Arabic inscription from the Koran, beginning with "O true believers! come not to prayers when ye are drunk." The area is surrounded by high walls, within which are some very large orange-trees, said to be contemporary with the Moors. When I saw them, they were loaded with fruit and flowers, and enlivened with

the music of many birds. To complete the charms of the spot, there are several fountains of gushing water, falling into marble basins filled with glistening shoals of gold and silver fish. The main entrance to the mosque lay through this grove, and it was probably intended, by this display of natural attractions, to banish the recollection of the world without, and soothe the passions of the believer on his way to prostrate himself in the presence of his God.

One of many visits that I made to the Cathedral was on Sunday at the celebration of grand mass. It was Easter Sunday. The faithful were crowding to the sanctuary; the dignitaries of the Cathedral were all present; the choir was full, and the bishop himself stood ready to officiate, with crosier and mitre, and all the pomp of episcopacy. The Passion Week was past—the sufferings, the agony, the death of Christ, had been commemorated, and now they had come together to celebrate his resurrection from the dead. Mortification and sorrow and restraint were forgotten; happiness was in every heart, joy upon every countenance. The noble organ was touched by a master hand, whilst the stringed instruments, the bassoons, and the various and well-practised voices harmonized in the softest symphonies, or swelled into a pealing chorus, that resounded through the lofty choir and countless naves.

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As I glanced round upon the work of Abderahman and upon the temple of Mahomet, over which thousands of lamps once shed a noonday effulgence, and upon the pavement which had been often strewed by the prostrate bodies of Moslems, I felt bewildered by the singularity of the associations *.

* This mosque was the third in veneration among the Mussulmans, being only inferior to those of Mecca and Jerusalem. It was customary, among the true believers, to make pilgrimages between Cordova and Mecca. Hence the Spanish proverb "*Irse de Ceca a Meca*,"—"Going from Ceca to Mecca,"—applied to a person who wanders a long way on a fruitless errand; Ceca being, if my memory serves me, the Arab name for the mosque of Cordova.

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CHAPTER XV.

KINGDOMS OF CORDOVA AND SEVILLE.

Excursion to the Desert of Cordova.—The Hermano Mayor.—The Hermitage.—The Garden.—Return.—Start for Seville with Tio Jorge.—Cross the Guadalquivir.—Galera Party.—Azhara.—Ecija and her little ones.—Decayed Condition of Andalusia.

The afternoon before leaving Cordova, I went to visit a very famous hermitage, situated about five miles from the city, in the last range of the Sierra Morena. An old porter, who had shown me all the wonders of Cordova, was to have been my guide to the desert; but as he did not come at the appointed hour, I grew impatient and started alone, determined to inquire the way. As I passed through the beautiful public walk which lies without the gate, in the direction of the Sierra, a cut-throat-looking group of three or four occupied the stone benches beneath the trees; and whilst one of them smoked his cigarillo, the others were stretched flat upon their faces, enjoying a siesta, under the influence of the shade and of a gentle breeze which blew refreshingly from the mountains. Leaving the city walls, I struck at once into the road which had been pointed out to me the day

before as leading to the hermitage. I had not gone far, however, between waving fields of wheat and barley, before I discovered that I was closely followed by an ill-looking fellow, the same I had seen smoking upon the bench. This alarmed me, for the porter had told me several stories of people who had been robbed and beaten in this short pilgrimage; indeed, he had shown an unwillingness to go on this very account. It at once occurred to me, that if the fellow intended any treachery, it would be easy for him to spring upon me unseen from behind; so, crossing to the opposite side of the road, I slackened my pace suddenly and allowed him to go past. But he did not seem to like this new station in advance any better than I liked mine; for he presently seated himself by the road side, and when I had once more got before him, he again resumed his journey. This looked very suspicious. I laid my hand at once upon a dirk, which I had of late occasionally carried in my rambles by day and night, and, turning towards the fellow who thus pertinaciously followed my footsteps, I awaited his approach. He was quite a young man, but sturdy and athletic, with a soiled and neglected dress, and as dogged and ill-favored a face as I had seen for many a day. He passed the second time without noticing me; and on coming to where the road divided a little farther on, where, as is frequent

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in such situations, a rough stone cross bore testimony to some act of violence, he took a different road from the one leading to the hermitage. It might be that, seeing me on my guard, he intended to join his comrades and waylay me in the cork wood farther on, or else upon my return to Cordova. I did not like the appearance of things, and still less to turn back from my undertaking; so I pushed on briskly, beginning to ascend the mountain.

The level lands, covered with grain and pasture and fruit-orchards, now gave place to a rugged rocky steep, covered with brambles, interspersed with a scattering growth of cork-trees and algarrobos, which soon concealed the hermitage from my view. As I advanced, the beaten road gradually branched into several paths that wound among the trees. In such a case it was very easy to miss one's way; and as bad luck had of late presided over my affairs, it was more than easy for me to miss mine. Thus perplexed, I chose the path which led most directly upward, until it brought me to a level spot, where there was a small farm-house surrounded by an orchard. There was nobody at home but a large mastiff, who gave me a very bad reception, springing at me fiercely, as I entered the gateway, the length of his chain,—beside a sunburnt urchin, who was scarcely able to hear and answer my questions for the howlings of his noisy coadjutor. Finding at

length what I was in search of, he told me that the road to the desert lay a long way to the left, and that I should scarce get there with the sun. I knew that the little fellow must be mistaken, for there were yet two hours of day; and though sweating with the heat, the toil, and the vexation, I determined to persevere. The lad could not leave his home to accompany me the whole way, but he showed me the road; and just before he left me, he pointed to a sudden angle of the path where an overhanging rock formed a cavern beneath, and told me how one Don Jose, a rich mayorazgo of Cordova, whom he seemed astonished that I should never have heard of, had been plundered in that very spot of his horse, his purse, and his clothes to his very shirt, and sent back to Cordova as naked as when his mother bore him. There was small encouragement in this parting information of my little friend; but I kept on, and, after many a winding turn up the side of the mountain, came at length to the gate of the hermitage.

I found the hermitage situated upon one of the wildest ledges of the mountain. It is bounded on the southern and eastern sides by a precipice of a fearful depth, and on every other hand the world is as effectually shut out by an irregular wall connecting and binding together the scattered rocks which had been rudely thrown there by the hand of Nature.

Having rung at the gate, I was presently reconnoitred through a small grated window by one of the hermits with a pale face and a long beard. He asked what I would have in a tone of meekness. I told him that I had come to see the Desert of Cordova. He disappeared to ask the permission of the chief brother, and soon after returned to give me admittance. My first sensation, on entering, was one of most pleasing disappointment. I had expected to find every thing within dreary and graceless, as became the abode of austere misanthropy; but instead of that, there were fifteen or twenty little whitewashed cottages, nestling among the rocks, and almost overrun and hidden amid vines, fruit-trees, and flowers. Nature here was as savage as without. The rocks and precipices were of equal boldness; but man had been busy, and the rain and the sun had lent their assistance. Indeed, vegetation could nowhere be more luxuriant, and the plants and flowers had a richness of color and of perfume that could scarce be surpassed.

On approaching the cottage of the hermano mayor or chief brother, he came to the door to receive me, signed the cross over me, and pressed my hand in token of a welcome. Like the other hermits, the hermano mayor wore a large garment of coarse brown cloth, girded round the middle with a rope, and having a hood for the head. The only

covering of his feet consisted of a coarse shoe of half-tanned leather. Yet was there something in his appearance which would have enabled one to single him out at once from the whole fraternity. He had a lofty and towering form, and features of the very noblest mould. I cannot tell the curious reader how long his beard was; for after descending a reasonable distance along the chest, it returned to expend itself in the bosom of his habit. This man was such a one as, in any dress or situation, a person would have turned to look at a second time; but as he now stood before me, in addition to the effect of his apostolic garment, his complexion and his eye had a clearness that no one can conceive who is not familiar with the aspect of those who have practised a long and rigid abstinence from animal food and every exciting aliment. It gives a lustre, a spiritual intelligence to the countenance, that has something saint-like and divine; and the adventurous artist who would essay to trace the lineaments of his Saviour should seek a model in some convent of Trappists or Carthusians, or in the ethereal region of the Desert of Cordova.

When we were seated in the cell of the superior, he began at once to ask questions about America; for I had sent in word that a citizen of the United States asked admission, having ever found this character to be a ready passport. He had been on

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mercantile business to Mexico many years before, and had come away at the commencement of the revolution. He felt anxious to hear something of its present condition, of which he was very ignorant; and, when I had satisfied his curiosity and rose to depart, he gave me a little cross of a wood that had grown within the consecrated enclosure, and had been rudely wrought by the hands of the hermits. He told me that, if troubles and sorrows should ever assail me, if I should grow weary of worldly vanities, if the burden of existence should ever wax heavier than I could bear, I might leave all behind and come to their solitude, where I should be at least sure of a peaceful and a welcome home. Then, ordering a brother to show me every thing, he uttered a benediction, and bade me "Go with God!"

A good-natured friar of the convent of San Francisco in Cordova, who had come out to take the mountain air with two young lads, his relations, took his leave at the same time of the hermano mayor, and we all went the rounds together. The little chapel we found under the same roof with the principal cell. It has been enriched by the pious gifts of the faithful and devout; for silver, gold, and precious stones are everywhere in profusion. As the desert is dedicated to the Virgin, the altar of the chapel is decorated by a painting of her possessing heavenly sweetness of expression. I lingered

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long on this consecrated spot. What a contrast between the dazzling splendors of that altar, and the humble garb and humbler mien of the penitents who lay prostrate before it!

From the chapel we went to see the different cottages of the brethren. They are very small, containing each a small sleeping-room, with a broad platform, a straw pillow, and two blankets for the whole bed-furniture. A second apartment serves as a workshop and a kitchen. Each brother prepares his own food, which consists of milk, beans, cabbages, and other vegetable dishes, chiefly cultivated by themselves in the hermitage garden. There is a larger building for the instruction of novices, where they pass a year in learning the duties of their new life under the tutelage of an elder brother.

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The brother did not fail to lead us to the projecting point of the ledge upon which the hermitage stands, near two thousand feet above the level of the city, and which is bounded on three sides by a fearful abyss. Hence you command a broad view of one of the fairest regions of Andalusia. A rock which occupied the spot has been hewn away, so as to leave a stone arm-chair, just at the pinnacle. This stone chair has received sundry great personages: among others the French Dauphin, and Fernando Septimo, who halted here to review a part of his kingdom on one of his forced marches to Cadiz.

The august pressure which the chair had felt on former occasions did not, however, hinder us from seating ourselves in turn, and gazing abroad upon the splendid panorama. The view was indeed a fine one; the hour for contemplating it most auspicious; for the sun had well nigh finished his course, and was soon to hide himself—unclouded and brilliant to the last—behind a projection of the Sierra Morena. The country about us was broken and savage; precipices and ravines, rocks and half-grown trees, were thrown together in the utmost confusion; but below the scenery was of the most peaceful kind; for there the Campania spread itself in a gentle succession of slopes and swells, everywhere covered with wheat-fields, vineyards, and fruit-orchards. The Guadalquivir glided nobly amid the white buildings of Cordova, concealed occasionally in its meanderings as it wound round a slope, and emerging again in a succession of glassy lakes, which served as mirrors to the rays of the sun. The course of the river might, however, be constantly traced by the trees which skirted it, and by a broad range of meadow land sweeping back from the banks, and thickly dotted with cattle. In the distance rose the towering Sierras of Ronda and Nevada, the latter blending its snowy summit with the clouds. At its foot lies Granada, blest with a continual spring, and surrounded by that land of

promise—that favored Vega, over which the Genil and the Darro are ever scattering fertility.

But the pleasantest if not the most interesting portion of our ramble was when we came to wander through the garden. It was arranged in terraces, without much attention to symmetry, wherever the rocks left a vacant space, and levelled off to prevent the soil from being washed away. These terraces were occupied by plantations of pease, lettuce, and cauliflowers, interspersed with fruit-trees, which seemed to thrive admirably; whilst the vine occupied little sunny angles formed by a conjunction of the rocks, between which it hung itself in festoons. Nor was mere ornament entirely proscribed in this little seclusion. There were everywhere hedges of the fairest flowers, dividing the beds and creeping along the rocks; so that here the perfumes of the parterre were added to the wild aromas of the mountain. The roses of white, of orange, and of crimson formed, however, the chief attraction of the spot; for they had an unequalled richness of smell and color. We were allowed to select a few of these beautiful flowers, which are in such estimation throughout Andalusia, that you scarcely meet the poorest peasant, going to his daily toil, without one of them thrust through his button-hole or lodged over the left ear, his round hat being gaily turned aside to make room for it. This passion for roses is

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of course stronger among the women. They wear them in the tresses of their hair, or at their girdle; and often hold them in the same hand that moves the fan, or else dangling by the stem from their teeth.

An occasion now occurred of seeing something of this, in the eagerness of the two lads, and even of their old uncle, who hastened to avail themselves of the privilege of carrying home each a bunch of flowers. One of these two lads had a pale, sickly, city look; the other was about thirteen, and one of the handsomest boys I had ever seen. He had come from Montilla with his sister, to spend the holy week in Cordova. It was the first time that he had been so far from home; and his city cousin and their common uncle, the friar, had brought him out to see the wonderful desert. He was dressed in the true majo style, as became the son of a sturdy cultivator—a low-crowned beaver with the brim gracefully turned upward, and ornamented with tassels and variegated beads; a shirt embroidered at the sleeves, the collar, and the ruffles; a jacket and breeches of green velvet, everywhere studded with gilt basket-buttons; with shoes and leggings of the beautifully tanned and bleached leather in use in Andalusia. The boy was enthusiastic in praise of the roses, which he allowed were finer than any to be found in Montilla, though but

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a little while before he had been eulogizing his native place for the whiteness of its bread and the flavor of its wine.

By the time we had seen the garden, the sun had got low, and warned us that we had to sleep in Cordova. The friar had made himself acquainted with all my affairs; and finding that our roads lay the same way, he proposed that we should all go together. The proposition was gladly accepted, both for the sake of good fellowship, and because I had not forgot the possibility of an encounter in the dark with the fellows who had shown a disposition to escort me in my outward journey. I took leave of the hermits and their peaceful abode with a feeling of good-will which I had not yet felt in turning my back upon any religious community in Spain. These recluses take no vows at the time of their admission, so that they may return to their homes whenever they please. The hermano mayor had formerly been a wealthy merchant in Mexico, and afterwards in Cadiz, which place, the friar told me, he had left some years before, to bury himself in this solitude. There was another hermit who had been there twenty years. He was a grandee of Portugal, and had given up honors and estates to a younger brother, to turn his back upon the world for ever. The rest of the brethren were vulgar men, chiefly peasants from the neighbourhood, who had been

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conducted to the desert by a deep-felt sentiment of piety, or by worldly disappointments and blighted hopes, or who had come upon the more difficult errand of escaping from the stings of remorse, and easing a loaded conscience by ceaseless prayers and unrelenting maceration. These humble brethren do not live by the toil of their fellow-men, but eat only the fruits of their own labor. Their wants, indeed, are all reduced to the narrowest necessities of nature. It may be that their piety is a mistaken one; but it certainly must be sincere; and if they add little to their own happiness, they take nothing from the happiness of others.

At the gate of the hermitage we met Fray Pedro, a lay brother and kind of porter to the convent of our monkish friend, and who, like him, wore the blue habit of San Francisco. He had come out with the party to lead the mule, which was browsing among the rocks; and when he had caught it, we all set out on the descent. After winding by zigzag paths half-way down the side of the mountain, we came to a little rill, springing up under a precipice, and which had been made to fall into a stone basin. Here Fray Juan commanded a halt, and when old Pedro had come up with the mule, he took down the alforjas, and produced a leathern bottle of plump dimensions, with some bread and a preparation of figs and other dried

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fruit, called pandigo, or bread of figs, which is made into rolls like Bologna sausage. This simple food needed no other seasoning than the keen appetite which the exercise and the mountain air had excited to become very acceptable; nor did I wait a second invitation to join in, and take my turn at the leathern bottle, as it rapidly performed the round of our circle. Fray Juan had probably done penance in the holy week, and doubtless thought the occasion a good one to bring up arrears; indeed the bottle lingered nowhere so long as in his hands, until at length he became as merry as a cricket. The remains of our repast being stored away in the saddle-bags, and old Pedro having mounted the mule, with one of the lads before and the other behind him, we once more set forward. Fray Juan rolled his habit snugly round him, and tucked it under his girdle of rope, so as to leave his thin legs unembarrassed, when he set off capering down the mountain, the most ludicrous figure imaginable. By degrees he cooled down with the exercise, and then went on more quietly, striking up a royalist song of triumph to one of the old Constitutional airs. The others joined in at the chorus, and formed a music which in this mountain solitude was far from contemptible.

In this way we went merrily forward, and at

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sunset arrived at a *huerta*, or fruit-orchard and kitchen garden, that lay in the road to Cordova. It belonged to the convent of San Francisco, and was kept by a friend of the friar. We walked in, and were well received by the farmer and his wife. The whole huerta was levelled off with a gentle slope, and in the highest part, near the house, was a large reservoir of mason-work, kept constantly full of water, by means of a never-failing brook, which passed along the outer wall, paying a tribute of fertility to many an orchard and garden in its way to the Guadalquivir. From the reservoir the water is sent at pleasure to any part of the field in little canals formed along the surface of the ground, and thus the inconvenience of a drought is always avoided. The field thus furnished with the means of fertility was laid out with beds of vegetables, interspersed with date, fig, olive, orange, lemon, almond, peach, plum, and pomegranate trees. The orange and the lemon still preserved their fruits; and they, as well as many of the other trees, were likewise covered with leaves and blossoms, in the full pride of their vernal decorations.

On our return from walking round this delightful spot, we found that the woman of the house had placed a little wooden table by the side of the reservoir, and had prepared a salad for us, which, with bread and sometimes meat, forms the common

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