

over the border, scantily supplied with the things needful for a besieging army in the heart of an enemy's country. In the same negligent and confident spirit they took up their station before Loxa. The country around was broken and hilly, so that it was extremely difficult to form a combined camp. The river Xenil, which runs by the town, was compressed between high banks, and so deep as to be fordable with extreme difficulty, and the Moors had possession of the bridge. The king pitched his tents in a plantation of olives, on the banks of the river; the troops were distributed in different encampments on the heights, but separated from each other by deep rocky ravines, so as to be incapable of yielding each other prompt assistance, and there was no room for the operation of the cavalry. The artillery, also, was so injudiciously placed as to be almost entirely useless. Alonzo of Aragon, Duke of Villahermosa, and illegitimate brother of the king, was present at the siege, and disapproved of the whole arrangement. He was one of the most able generals of his time, and especially renowned for his skill in battering fortified places. He recommended,

that the whole disposition of the camp should be changed, and that several bridges should be thrown across the river. His advice was adopted, but slowly and negligently followed; so that it was rendered of no avail. Among other oversights, in this hasty and negligent expedition, the army had no supply of baked bread, and, in the hurry of encampment, there was no time to erect furnaces. Cakes were therefore hastily made, and baked on the coals; and for two days the troops were supplied in this irregular way.

King Ferdinand felt too late the insecurity of his position, and endeavoured to provide a temporary remedy. There was a height near the city, called by the Moors Santo Albôhacen, which was in front of the bridge. He ordered several of his most valiant cavaliers to take possession of this height, and to hold it, as a check upon the enemy and a protection to the camp. The cavaliers chosen for this distinguished and perilous post were the Marquis of Cadiz, the Marquis of Villena, Don Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava, his brother the Count of Ureña, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. These valiant warriors, and tried

companions in arms, led their troops with alacrity to the height, which soon glittered with the array of arms, and was graced by several of the most redoubtable pennons of warlike Spain.

Loxa was commanded at this time by an old Moorish alcaide, whose daughter was the favourite wife of Boabdil el Chico. The name of this Moor was Ibrahim Ali Atar; but he was generally known among the Spaniards as Alatar. He had grown gray in border warfare, was an implacable enemy of the Christians, and his name had long been the terror of the frontier. He was in the ninetieth year of his age, yet indomitable in spirit, fiery in his passions, sinewy and powerful in frame, deeply versed in warlike stratagem, and accounted the best lance in all Mauritania. He had three thousand horsemen under his command, veteran troops, with whom he had often scoured the borders, and he daily expected the old Moorish king with reinforcements.

Old Ali Atar had watched, from his fortress, every movement of the Christian army, and had exulted in all the errors of its commanders. When he beheld the flower of Spanish chivalry

glittering about the height of Albohacen, his eye flushed with exultation. "By the aid of Allah," said he, "I will give these pranking cavaliers a rouse."

Ali Atar privately, and by night, sent forth a large body of his chosen troops, to lie in ambush near one of the skirts of Albohacen. On the fourth day of the siege, he sallied across the bridge, and made a feigned attack upon the height. The cavaliers rushed impetuously forth to meet him, leaving their encampments almost unprotected. Ali Atar wheeled and fled, and was hastily pursued. When the Christian cavaliers had been drawn a considerable distance from their encampments, they heard a vast shout behind them, and, looking round, beheld their encampment assailed by the Moorish force, which had been placed in ambush, and had ascended a different side of the hill.

The cavaliers desisted from the pursuit, and hastened to prevent the plunder of their tents. Ali Atar in his turn wheeled and pursued them; and they were attacked in front and rear on the summit of the hill. The contest lasted for an hour; the height of Albohacen



was red with blood; many brave cavaliers fell, expiring among heaps of the enemy. The fierce Ali Atar fought with the fury of a demon, until the arrival of more Christian forces compelled him to retreat into the city. The severest loss to the Christians in this skirmish was that of Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava: as he was raising his arm to make a blow, an arrow pierced him, just beneath the shoulder, at the open part of the corslet. He fell instantly from his horse, but was caught by Pedro Gasca, a cavalier of Avila, who conveyed him to his tent, where he died. The king and queen and the whole kingdom mourned his death; for he was in the freshness of his youth, being but twenty-four years of age, and had proved himself a gallant and high-minded cavalier. A melancholy group collected about his corse, on the bloody height of Albohacen: the knights of Calatrava mourned him as a commander; the cavaliers, who were encamped on the height, lamented him as their companion in arms in a service of perils, while the Count of Ureña grieved over him with the tender affection of a brother.

King Ferdinand now perceived the wisdom

of the opinion of the Marquis of Cadiz, and that his force was quite insufficient for the enterprise. To continue his camp in its present unfortunate position would cost him the lives of his bravest cavaliers, if not a total defeat, in case of reinforcements to the enemy. He called a council of war late in the evening of Saturday; and it was determined to withdraw the army, early the next morning, to Rio Frio, a short distance from the city, and there wait for additional troops from Cordova. The next morning early, the cavaliers on the height of Albohacen began to strike their tents. No sooner did Ali Atar behold this, than he sallied forth to attack them. Many of the Christian troops, who had not heard of the intention to change the camp, seeing the tents struck, and the Moors sallying forth, supposed that the enemy had been reinforced in the night, and that the army was on the point of retreating. Without stopping to ascertain the truth, or to receive orders, they fled in dismay, spreading confusion through the camp; nor did they halt until they had reached the Rock of the Lovers, about seven leagues from Loxa\*.

\* Pulgar, Cronica.

The king and his commanders saw the imminent peril of the moment, and made face to the Moors, each commander guarding his quarter, and repelling all assaults, while the tents were struck, and the artillery and ammunition conveyed away. The king, with a handful of cavaliers, galloped to a rising ground, exposed to the fire of the enemy, calling upon the flying troops, and endeavouring in vain to rally them. Setting upon the Moors, he and his cavaliers charged them so vigorously, that they put a squadron to flight, slaying many with their swords and lances, and driving others into the river, where they were drowned. The Moors, however, were soon reinforced, and returned in great numbers. The king was in danger of being surrounded: the Moors assailed him furiously; and twice he owed his safety to the valour of Don Juan de Ribera, senior of Montemayor.

The Marquis of Cadiz beheld from a distance the peril of his sovereign. Summoning about seventy horsemen to follow him, he galloped to the spot, threw himself between the king and the enemy, and, hurling his lance, transpierced one of the most daring of the

Moors. For some time he remained with no other weapon than his sword; his horse was wounded by an arrow, and many of his followers were slain; but he succeeded in beating off the Moors, and rescuing the king from imminent jeopardy, whom he then prevailed upon to retire to less dangerous ground.

The marquis continued throughout the day to expose himself to the repeated assaults of the enemy. He was ever found in the place of greatest danger, and through his bravery a great part of the army and the camp was preserved from destruction\*. It was a perilous day for the commanders; for, in a retreat of the kind, it is the noblest cavaliers who most expose themselves, to save their people. The Duke of Medina Celi was struck to the ground, but rescued by his troops. The Count of Tendilla, whose tents were nearest to the city, received several wounds; and various other cavaliers of the most distinguished note were exposed to fearful hazard. The whole day was passed in bloody skirmishings, in which the hidalgos and cavaliers of the royal household distinguished themselves by their bravery.

\* Cura de los Palacios, c. 58.

At length, the encampments being all broken up, and most of the artillery and baggage removed, the bloody height of Albohacen was abandoned, and the neighbourhood of Loxa evacuated. Several tents, a quantity of provisions, and a few pieces of artillery, were left upon the spot, from the want of horses or mules to carry them off.

Ali Atar hung upon the rear of the retiring army, and harassed it until it reached Rio Frio. From thence Ferdinand returned to Cordova, deeply mortified, though greatly benefited, by the severe lesson he had received, which served to render him more cautious in his campaigns, and more diffident of fortune. He sent letters to all parts excusing his retreat, imputing it to the small number of his forces, and the circumstance, that many of them were quotas sent from various cities, and not in royal pay. In the mean time, to console his troops for their disappointment, and to keep up their spirits, he led them upon another inroad, to lay waste the vega of Granada.



## CHAPTER XI.

How Muley Aben Hassan made a foray into the lands of Medina Sidonia, and how he was received.

OLD Muley Aben Hassan had mustered an army, and marched to the relief of Loxa; but arrived too late. The last squadron of Ferdinand had already passed over the border. "They have come and gone," said he, "like a summer cloud, and all their vaunting has been mere empty thunder." He turned, to make another attempt upon Alhama, the garrison of which was in the utmost consternation at the retreat of Ferdinand, and would have deserted the place, had it not been for the courage and perseverance of the alcaide, Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero. That brave and loyal commander cheered up the spirits of the men, and kept the old Moorish king at bay, until the approach of Ferdinand, on his second incursion into the vega, obliged him to make an unwilling retreat to Malaga.

Muley Aben Hassan felt, that it would be in vain, with his inferior force, to oppose the powerful army of the Christian monarch; but to remain idle, and see his territories laid waste, would ruin him in the estimation of his people. "If we cannot parry," said he, "we can strike: if we cannot keep our own lands from being ravaged, we can ravage the lands of the enemy." He inquired, and learned that most of the chivalry of Andalusia, in their eagerness for a foray, had marched off with the king, and left their own country almost defenceless. The territories of the Duke of Medina Sidonia were particularly unguarded. Here were vast plains of pasturage, covered with flocks and herds; the very country for a hasty inroad. The old monarch had a bitter grudge against the duke, for having foiled him at Alhama. "I'll give this cavalier a lesson," said he, exultingly, "that will cure him of his love of campaigning." So he prepared in all haste for a forage into the country about Medina Sidonia.

Muley Aben Hassan sallied out of Malaga with fifteen hundred horse and six thousand foot, and took the way by the seacoast, march-

ing through Esteponia and entering the Christian country between Gibraltar and Castellar.

The only person that was likely to molest him on this route was one Pedro de Vargas, a shrewd, hardy, and vigilant soldier, alcaide of Gibraltar, and who lay ensconced in his old warrior-rock as in a citadel. Muley Aben Hassan knew the watchful and daring character of the man; but had ascertained, that his garrison was too small to enable him to make a sally, or at least to assure him any success. Still he pursued his march with great silence and caution; sent parties in advance, to explore every pass where a foe might lie in ambush, cast many an anxious eye towards the old rock of Gibraltar, as its cloudcapped summit was seen towering in the distance on his left; nor did he feel entirely at ease, until he had passed through the broken and mountainous country of Castellar, and descended into the plains. Here he encamped, on the banks of the Celemin. From hence he sent four hundred corredors, or fleet horsemen, armed with lances, who were to station themselves near Algeziras, and to keep a strict watch, across the bay, upon the opposite fortress of Gibraltar. If the al-

cayde attempted to sally forth, they were to waylay and attack him, being almost four times his supposed force, and were to send swift tidings to the camp.

In the mean time, two hundred corredors were despatched to scour that vast plain called the Campiña de Tarifa, abounding with flocks and herds, and two hundred more were to ravage the lands about Medina Sidonia. Muley Aben Hassan remained with the main body of the army as a rallying point on the banks of the Celemin. The foraging parties scoured the country to such effect, that they came driving vast flocks and herds before them, enough to supply the place of all that had been swept from the vega of Granada. The troops which had kept watch upon the rock of Gibraltar returned, with word, that they had not seen a Christian helmet stirring. The old king congratulated himself upon the secrecy and promptness with which he had conducted his foray, and upon having baffled the vigilance of Pedro de Vargas.

Muley Aben Hassan had not been so secret as he imagined. The watchful Pedro de Vargas had received notice of his movements. His

garrison was barely sufficient for the defence of the place, and he feared to take the field, and leave his fortress unguarded. Luckily, at this juncture, there arrived in the harbour of Gibraltar a squadron of the armed galleys stationed in the strait, and commanded by Carlos de Valera. The alcaide immediately prevailed upon him to guard the place during his absence, and sallied forth at midnight with seventy horse. He made for the town of Castellar, which is strongly posted on a steep height, knowing that the Moorish king would have to return by this place. He ordered alarm fires to be lighted upon the mountains, to give notice that the Moors were on the ravage, that the peasants might drive the flocks and herds to places of refuge; and he sent couriers, riding at full speed in every direction, summoning the fighting men of the neighbourhood to meet him at Castellar. Muley Aben Hassan saw, by the fires blazing about the mountains, that the country was rising.

He struck his tents, and pushed forward as rapidly as possible for the border; but he was encumbered with booty, and with the vast cavalgada swept from the pastures of the



Campiña of Tarifa. His scouts brought him word, that there were troops in the field; but he made light of the intelligence, knowing, that they could only be those of the alcaýde of Gibraltar, and that he had not more than a hundred horsemen in his garrison. He threw in advance two hundred and fifty of his bravest troops, and with them the alcaýdes of Marabilla and Casares. Behind this vanguard was a great cavalgada of cattle, and in the rear marched the king, with the main force of his little army. It was near the middle of a sultry summer day, that they approached Castellar. De Vargas was on the watch; and beheld, by an immense cloud of dust, that they were descending one of the heights of that wild and broken country. The vanguard and rearguard were above half a league asunder, with the cavalgada between them, and a long and close forest hid them from each other. De Vargas saw, that they could render but little assistance to each other, in case of a sudden attack, and might be easily thrown into confusion. He chose fifty of his bravest horsemen, and, making a circuit, took his post secretly in a narrow glen, opening into a defile between two rocky

heights, through which the Moors had to pass. It was his intention to suffer the vanguard and the cavalgada to pass, and to fall upon the rear.

While thus lying perdue, six Moorish scouts, well mounted and well armed, entered the glen, examining every place that might conceal an enemy. Some of the Christians advised, that they should slay these six men, and retreat to Gibraltar. "No," said De Vargas; "I have come out for higher game than these, and I hope, by the aid of God and Santiago, to do good work this day. I know these Moors well, and doubt not but that they may readily be thrown into confusion."

By this time the six scouts approached so near, that they were on the point of discovering the Christian ambush. De Vargas gave the word, and ten horsemen rushed forth upon them. In an instant, four of the Moors rolled in the dust; the other two put spurs to their steeds, and fled towards their army, pursued by the ten Christians. About eighty of the Moorish vanguard came galloping to the relief of their companions: the Christians turned, and fled towards their ambush. De

Vargas kept his men concealed, until the fugitives and their pursuers came clattering pell-mell into the glen: at a signal trumpet, his men sallied forth, with great heat, and in close array. The Moors almost rushed upon their weapons before they perceived them. Forty of the infidels were overthrown; the rest turned their backs. "Forward!" cried De Vargas: "let us give the vanguard a brush before it can be joined by the rear." So saying, he pursued the flying Moors down the hill, and came with such force and fury upon the advance guard, as to overthrow many of them at the first encounter. As he wheeled off with his men, the Moors discharged their lances, upon which he returned to the charge, and made great slaughter. The Moors fought valiantly for a short time, until the alcaides of Marabilla and Casares were slain, when they gave way, and fled for the rearguard. In their flight they passed through the cavalcade of cattle, threw the whole in confusion, and raised such a cloud of dust, that the Christians could no longer distinguish objects. Fearing the king and the main body might be at hand, and finding that De Vargas was severely

wounded, they contented themselves with despoiling the slain, and taking above twenty-eight horses, and then returned to Castellar.

When the routed Moors came flying back on the rearguard, Muley Aben Hassan feared that the people of Xeres were in arms. Several of his followers advised him to abandon the cavalgada, and retreat by another road. "No," said the old king; "he is no true soldier, who gives up his booty without fighting." Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped forward through the centre of the cavalgada, driving the cattle to the right and left. When he reached the field of battle, he found it strewed with the bodies of upwards of one hundred Moors, among which were those of the two alcaides. Enraged at the sight, he summoned all his crossbow men and cavalry, pushed on to the very gates of Castellar, and set fire to two houses close to the walls. Pedro de Vargas was unable from his wound to sally forth in person; but he ordered out his troops, and there was brisk skirmishing under the walls, until the king drew off, and returned to the scene of the recent encounter. Here he had the bodies of the principal warriors laid across

mules, to be interred honourably at Malaga. The rest of the slain were buried in the field of battle. Gathering together the scattered cavalgada, he paraded it slowly, in an immense line, past the walls of Castellar, by way of taunting his foe.

With all his fierceness, old Muley Aben Hassan had a gleam of warlike courtesy, and admired the hardy and soldierlike character of Pedro de Vargas. He summoned two Christian captives, and demanded, what were the revenues of the alcajde of Gibraltar. They told him, that, among other things, he was entitled to one out of every drove of cattle that passed his boundaries. "Alla forbid!"

cried the old monarch, "that so brave a cavalier should be defrauded of his right. He immediately chose twelve of the finest cattle from the twelve droves which formed the cavalgada. These he gave in charge to an alfaqui, to deliver them to Pedro de Vargas. "Tell him," said he, "that I crave his pardon, for not having sent these cattle sooner; but I have this moment learned the nature of his rights, and I hasten to satisfy them with the



punctuality due to so worthy a cavalier. Tell him at the same time, that I had no idea the alcajde of Gibraltar was so active and vigilant in collecting his tolls."

The brave alcajde relished the stern soldier-like pleasantry of the old Moorish monarch, and replied in the same tone. "Tell his majesty," said he, "that I kiss his hands for the honour he has done me, and regret that my scanty force has not permitted me to give him a more signal reception on his coming into these parts. Had three hundred horsemen, whom I have been promised from Xeres, arrived in time, I might have served up an entertainment more befitting such a monarch. I trust, however, they will arrive in the course of the night, in which case his majesty may be sure of a royal regale at the dawning."

He then ordered, that a rich silken vest and scarlet mantle should be given to the alfaqui, and dismissed him with great courtesy.

Muley Aben Hassan shook his head when he received the reply of De Vargas. "Alla preserve us," said he, "from any visitation of these hard riders of Xeres! A handful of

troops, acquainted with the wild passes of these mountains, may destroy an army encumbered as ours is with booty."

It was some relief to the king, however, to learn, that the hardy alcajde of Gibraltar was too severely wounded to take the field in person. He immediately beat a retreat with all speed; hurrying with such precipitation, that the cavalgada was frequently broken and scattered among the rugged defiles of the mountains, and above five thousand of the cattle turned back, and were regained by the Christians. Muley Aben Hassan proceeded triumphantly with the residue to Malaga, glorying in the spoils of the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

King Ferdinand was mortified at finding his incursion into the vega of Granada counterbalanced by this incursion into his own dominions, and saw, that there were two sides to the game of war, as to all other games. The only one who reaped real glory in this series of inroads and skirmishings was Pedro de Vargas, the stout alcajde of Gibraltar\*.

\* Alonzo de Palencia, l. xxviii. c. 3.

## CHAPTER XII.

Foray of the Spanish cavaliers among the mountains of Malaga.

THE foray of old Muley Aben Hassan had touched the pride of the Andalusian chivalry, and they determined on retaliation. For this purpose, a number of the most distinguished cavaliers assembled at Antequera, in the month of March, 1483. The leaders of the enterprise were the gallant Marquis of Cadiz, Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Juan de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, and bearer of the royal standard, who commanded in Seville, Don Alonzo de Cardenas, master of the religious and military order of Santiago, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. Several other cavaliers of note hastened to take part in the enterprise, and in a little time, about twenty-seven hundred horse and several companies of foot were assembled within the old warlike city of Antequera, comprising the very flower of Andalu-

sian chivalry. A council of war was held by the chiefs, to determine in what quarter they should strike a blow. The rival Moorish kings were waging civil war with each other in the vicinity of Granada, and the whole country lay open to inroad. Various plans were proposed by the different cavaliers. The Marquis of Cadiz was desirous of scaling the walls of Zahara, and regaining possession of that important fortress. The master of Santiago, however, suggested a wider range, and a still more important object. He had received information from his adalides, who were apostate Moors, that an incursion might be made with safety into a mountainous region near Malaga, called the Axarquia. Here were valleys of pasture land, well stocked with flocks and herds; and there were numerous villages and hamlets, which would be an easy prey. The city of Malaga was too weakly garrisoned, and had too few cavalry, to send forth any force in opposition. And he added, that they might extend their ravages to its very gates, and peradventure carry that wealthy place by sudden assault. The adventurous spirits of the cavaliers were inflamed by this suggestion: in their

sanguine confidence, they already beheld Malaga in their power, and they were eager for the enterprise. The Marquis of Cadiz endeavoured to interpose a little cool caution: he likewise had apostate adalides, the most intelligent and experienced on the borders. Among these, he placed especial reliance on one, named Luis Amar, who knew all the mountains and valleys of the country. He had received from him a particular account of these mountains of the Axarquia\*. Their savage and broken nature was a sufficient defence for the fierce people that inhabited them, who, manning their rocks, and their tremendous passes, which were often nothing more than the deep, dry bed of torrents, might set whole armies at defiance. Even if vanquished, they afforded no spoil to the victor; their houses were little better than bare walls, and they would drive off their scanty flocks and herds to the fortresses of the mountains. The sober council of the marquis

\* Pulgar, in his chronicle, reverses the case, and makes the Marquis of Cadiz recommend the expedition to the Axarquia; but Fray Antonio Agapida is supported in his statement by that most veracious and contemporary chronicler, Andres Bernaldo, curate of Los Palacios.



was overruled. The cavaliers, accustomed to mountain warfare, considered themselves and their horses equal to any wild and rugged expedition, and were flushed with the idea of a brilliant assault upon Malaga. Leaving all heavy baggage at Antequera, and all such as had horses too weak for this mountain scramble, they set forth, full of spirit and confidence. Don Alonzo de Aguilar and the adelantado of Andalusia led the squadron of advance; the Count of Cifuentes followed, with certain of the chivalry of Seville; then came the battalion of the most valiant Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz: he was accompanied by several of his brothers and nephews, and many cavaliers who sought distinction under his banner; and as this family band paraded in martial state through the streets of Antequera, they attracted universal attention and applause. The rearguard was led by Don Alonzo Cardenas, master of Santiago; and was composed of the knights of his order, and the cavaliers of Ecija, with certain men at arms of the holy brotherhood, whom the king had placed under his command. The army was attended by a great train of mules, laden with provisions

for a few days' supply, until they should be able to forage among the Moorish villages. Never did a more gallant and self-confident little army tread the earth. It was composed of men full of health and vigour, to whom war was a pastime and delight. They had spared no expense in their equipments; for never was the pomp of war carried to a higher pitch than among the proud chivalry of Spain. Cased in armour, richly inlaid and embossed, decked with rich surcoats and waving plumes, and superbly mounted on Andalusian steeds, they pranced out of Antequera, with banners flying, and their various devices and armorial bearings ostentatiously displayed; and, in the confidence of their hopes, promised the inhabitants to enrich them with the spoils of Malaga. In the rear of this warlike pageant followed a peaceful band, intent upon profiting by the anticipated victories. They were not the customary wretches that hover about armies, to plunder and strip the dead; but goodly and substantial traders, from Seville, Cordova, and other cities of traffic. They rode sleek mules, and were clad in fair raiment, with long leathern purses at their girdles, well filled with pistols

and other golden coin. They had heard of the spoils, wasted by the soldiery at the capture of Alhama, and were provided with monies to buy up the jewels and precious stones, the vessels of gold and silver, and the rich silks and cloths, that should form the plunder of Malaga. The proud cavaliers eyed these sons of traffic with great disdain, but permitted them to follow, for the convenience of the troops, who might otherwise be overburdened with booty.

It had been intended to conduct this expedition with great celerity and secrecy; but the noise of their preparations had already reached the city of Malaga. The garrison, it is true, was weak, but the commander was himself a host. This was Muley Abdallah, commonly called El Zagal, or, "the valiant." He was younger brother of Muley Aben Hassan, and general of the few forces which remained faithful to the old monarch. He possessed equal fierceness of spirit with his brother, and surpassed him in craft and vigilance. His very name was a war cry among his soldiery, who had the most extravagant opinion of his prowess.

El Zagal suspected, that Malaga was the ob-

ject of this noisy expedition. He consulted with old Bexir, a veteran Moor, who governed the city. "If this army of marauders were to reach Malaga," said he, "we should hardly be able to keep them without its walls. I will throw myself, with a small force, into the mountains, rouse the peasantry, take possession of the passes, and endeavour to give these Spanish cavaliers sufficient entertainment upon the road."

It was on a Wednesday, that the pranking army of highmettled warriors issued from the ancient gates of Antequera. They marched all day and night, making their way secretly, as they supposed, through the passes of the mountains. As the tract of country they intended to maraud was far in the Moorish territories, near the coast of the Mediterranean, they did not arrive there until late in the following day. In passing through these stern and lofty mountains, their path was often along the bottom of a barranco, or deep rocky valley, with a scanty stream dashing along it, among the loose rocks and stones which it had broken and rolled down in the time of its autumnal violence. Sometimes their road was

a mere rambla, or dry bed of a torrent, cut deep into the mountains, and filled with their shattered fragments. These barrancas and ramblas were overhung by immense cliffs and precipices, forming the lurking places of ambuscades during the wars between the Moors and Spaniards, as in after times they have become the favourite haunts of robbers, to waylay the unfortunate traveller.

As the sun went down, the cavaliers came to a lofty part of the mountains, commanding, to their right, a distant glimpse of a part of the fair vega of Malaga, with the blue Mediterranean beyond, and they hailed it with exultation as a glimpse of the promised land. As the night closed in, they reached the chain of little valleys and hamlets, locked up among these rocky heights, and known among the Moors by the name of the Axarquia. Here their vaunting hopes were destined to meet with the first disappointment. The inhabitants had heard of their approach; they had conveyed away their cattle and effects; and, with their wives and children, had taken refuge in the towers and fortresses of the mountains. Enraged at their disappointment, the



troops set fire to the deserted houses, and pressed forward, hoping for better fortune as they advanced. Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the other cavaliers in the vanguard, spread out their forces, to lay waste the country; capturing a few lingering herds of cattle, with the Moorish peasants who were driving them to some place of safety. While this marauding party carried fire and sword in the advance, and lit up the mountain cliffs with the flames of the hamlets, the master of Santiago, who brought up the rearguard, maintained strict order, keeping his knights together in martial array, ready for attack or defence should an enemy appear. The men at arms of the Holy Brotherhood attempted to roam in quest of booty; but he called them back, and rebuked them severely.

At length they came to a part of the mountain completely broken up by barrancas and ramblas of vast depth, and shagged with rocks and precipices. It was impossible to maintain the order of march; the horses had no room for action, and were scarcely manageable, having to scramble from rock to rock, and up and down frightful declivities, where there was scarce footing for a mountain goat. Passing



by a burning village, the light of the flames revealed their perplexed situation. The Moors who had taken refuge in a watchtower on an impending height, shouted with exultation, when they looked down upon these glistening cavaliers, struggling and stumbling among the rocks. Sallying forth from their tower, they took possession of the cliffs which overhung the ravine, and hurled darts and stones upon the enemy. It was with the utmost grief of heart, that the good master of Santiago beheld his brave men falling like helpless victims around him, without the means of resistance or revenge. The confusion of his followers was increased by the shouts of the Moors, multiplied by the echoes of every crag and cliff, as if they were surrounded by innumerable foes. Being entirely ignorant of the country, in their struggles to extricate themselves they plunged into other glens and defiles, where they were still more exposed to danger. In this extremity, the master of Santiago despatched messengers in search of succour. The Marquis of Cadiz, like a loyal companion in arms, hastened to his aid with his cavalry. His approach checked the as-

saults of the enemy ; and the master was at length enabled to extricate his troops from the defile. In the mean time, Don Alonzo de Aguilar and his companions, in their eager advance, had likewise got entangled in deep glens, and dry beds of torrents, where they had been severely galled by the insulting attacks of a handful of Moorish peasants, posted on the impending precipices. The proud spirit of De Aguilar was incensed at having the game of war thus turned upon him, and his gallant forces domineered over; by mountain boors, whom he had thought to drive, like their own cattle, to Antequera. Hearing, however, that the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago were engaged with the enemy, he disregarded his own danger, and, calling together his troops, returned to assist them, or rather, to partake of their perils. Being once more assembled together, the cavaliers held a hasty council, amidst the hurling of stones and whistling of arrows ; and their resolves were quickened by the sight, from time to time, of some gallant companion in arms laid low. They determined, that there was no spoil in this part of the country to repay

the extraordinary peril; and that it was better to abandon the herds they had already taken, which only embarrassed their march, and to retreat with all speed to less dangerous ground.

The adalides or guides were ordered to lead the way out of this place of carnage. These, thinking to conduct them by the most secure route, led them by a steep and rocky pass, difficult to the foot soldiers, but almost impracticable to the cavalry. It was overhung with precipices, whence showers of stones and arrows were poured upon them, accompanied by savage yells, which appalled the stoutest heart. In some places they could pass but one at a time, and were often transpierced, horse and rider, by the Moorish darts; the progress of their comrades impeded by their dying struggles. The surrounding precipices were lit up by a thousand alarm fires, and every crag and cliff had its flames, by the light of which they beheld their foes bounding from rock to rock, and looking more like fiends than mortal men. Either through terror and confusion, or through real ignorance of the country, their guides, instead of

conducting them out of the mountains, led them deeper into their fatal recesses. The morning dawned upon them in a narrow rambla, its bottom filled with broken rocks, where once had raved along the mountain torrent, while above them beetled huge arid cliffs, over the brows of which they beheld the turbaned heads of their fierce and exulting foes. What a different appearance did the unfortunate cavaliers present, from the gallant band that marched so vauntingly out of Antequera! Covered with dust and blood and wounds, and haggard with fatigue and horror, they looked like victims rather than warriors. Many of their banners were lost, and not a trumpet was heard, to rally their sinking spirits. The men turned with imploring eyes to their commanders, while the hearts of the cavaliers were ready to burst with rage and grief, at the merciless havoc made among their faithful followers.

All day they made ineffectual attempts to extricate themselves from the mountains. Columns of smoke rose from the heights where in the preceding night had blazed the alarm fire. The mountaineers assembled from every di-

rection; they swarmed at every pass, getting in the advance of the Christians, and garrisoning the cliffs like so many towers and battlements.

Night closed again upon the Christians, when they were shut up in a narrow valley, traversed by a deep stream, and surrounded by precipices that seemed to reach the skies, and on which the alarm fires blazed and flared. Suddenly a new cry was heard resounding along the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" echoed from cliff to cliff. "What cry is that?" said the master of Santiago. "It is the war cry of El Zagal, the Moorish general," said an old Castilian soldier: "he must be coming in person with the troops of Malaga."

The worthy master turned to his knights: "Let us die," said he, "making a road with our hearts, since we cannot with our swords. Let us scale the mountain, and sell our lives dearly, instead of staying here to be tamely butchered."

So saying, he turned his steed against the mountain, and spurred him up its flinty side. Horse and foot followed his example; eager, if they could not escape, to have at least a dying

blow at the enemy. As they struggled up the height, a tremendous storm of darts and stones was showered upon them by the Moors. Sometimes a fragment of rock came bounding and thundering down, ploughing its way through the centre of their host. The foot soldiers, faint with weariness and hunger, or crippled by wounds, held by the tails and manes of the horses, to aid them in their ascent, while the horses, losing their footing among the loose stones, or receiving some sudden wound, tumbled down the steep declivity, steed, rider, and soldier rolling from crag to crag, until they were dashed to pieces in the valley. In this desperate struggle, the alferéz, or standard-bearer of the master, with his standard, was lost, as were many of his relations and his dearest friends. At length he succeeded in attaining the crest of the mountain, but it was only to be plunged in new difficulties. A wilderness of rocks and rugged dells lay before him, beset by cruel foes. Having neither banner nor trumpet, by which to rally his troops, they wandered apart, each intent upon saving himself from the precipices of the mountains and the darts of the enemy. When the pious master



of Santiago beheld the scattered fragments of his late gallant force, he could not restrain his grief. "O God!" exclaimed he, "great is thine anger this day against thy servants! Thou hast converted the cowardice of these infidels into desperate valour, and hast made peasants and boors victorious over armed men of battle!"

He would fain have kept with his foot soldiers, and, gathering them together, have made head against the enemy; but those around him entreated him to think only of his personal safety. To remain was to perish without striking a blow; to escape was to preserve a life, that might be devoted to vengeance on the Moors. The master reluctantly yielded to their advice. "O Lord of Hosts!" exclaimed he again, "from thy wrath do I fly, not from these infidels: they are but instruments in thy hands to chastise us for our sins!" So saying, he sent the guides in advance, and, putting spurs to his horse, dashed through a defile of the mountains, before the Moors could intercept him. The moment the master put his horse to speed, his troops scattered in all directions. Some endeavoured to follow his traces, but were confounded among the

intricacies of the mountain. They fled hither and thither; many perishing among the precipices, others being slain by the Moors, and others taken prisoners.

The gallant Marquis of Cadiz, guided by his trusty adalid, Luis Amar, had ascended a different part of the mountain. He was followed by his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, the adelantado, and the Count of Cifuentes; but, in the darkness and confusion, the bands of these commanders became separated from each other. When the marquis attained the summit, he looked around for his companions in arms; but they were no longer following him, and there was no trumpet to summon them. It was a consolation to the marquis, however, that his brothers, and several of his relations, with a number of his retainers, were still with him. He called his brothers by name, and their replies gave comfort to his heart.

His guide now led the way into another valley, where he would be less exposed to danger. When he had reached the bottom of it, the marquis paused, to collect his scattered followers, and to give time for his fellow commanders to rejoin him. Here he was suddenly

assailed by the troops of El Zagal, aided by the mountaineers from the cliffs. The Christians, exhausted and terrified, lost all presence of mind; most of them fled, and were either slain or taken captive. The marquis and his valiant brothers, with a few tried friends, made a stout resistance. His horse was killed under him; his brothers, Don Diego and Don Lope, with his two nephews, Don Lorenzo and Don Manuel, were, one by one, swept from his side; either transfixed with darts and lances by the soldiers of El Zagal, or crushed by stones from the heights. The marquis was a veteran warrior, and had been in many a bloody battle, but never before had death fallen so thick and close around him. When he saw his remaining brother, Don Beltran, struck out of his saddle by a fragment of a rock, and his horse running wildly about without his rider, he gave a cry of anguish, and stood bewildered and aghast. A few faithful followers surrounded him, and entreated him to fly for his life. He would still have remained, to have shared the fortunes of his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and his other companions in arms; but the forces of El Zagal were be-

tween him and them, and death was whistling by on every wind. Reluctantly, therefore, he consented to fly. Another horse was brought him: his faithful adalid guided him by one of the steepest paths, which lasted for four leagues; the enemy still hanging on his traces, and thinning the scanty ranks of his followers. At length the marquis reached the extremity of the mountain defiles, and, with a haggard remnant of his men, escaped by dint of hoof to Antequera.

The Count of Cifuentes, with a few of his retainers, in attempting to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, wandered into a narrow pass, where they were completely surrounded by the band of El Zagal. Finding all attempt at escape impossible, and resistance vain, the worthy count surrendered himself prisoner, as did also his brother, Don Pedro de Silva, and the few of his retainers who survived.

The dawn of day found Don Alonzo de Aguilar, with a handful of his adherents, still among the mountains. They had attempted to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, but had been obliged to pause and defend themselves against the thickening forces of the enemy. They at

length traversed the mountain, and reached the same valley where the marquis had made his last disastrous stand. Wearied and perplexed, they sheltered themselves in a natural grotto, under an overhanging rock, which kept off the darts of the enemy; while a bubbling fountain gave them the means of slaking their raging thirst, and refreshing their exhausted steeds. As day broke, the scene of slaughter unfolded its horrors. There lay the noble brothers and nephews of the gallant marquis, transfixed with darts, or gashed and bruised with unseemly wounds; while many other gallant cavaliers were stretched out dead and dying around, some of them partly stripped and plundered by the Moors. De Aguilar was a pious knight, but his piety was not humble and resigned, like that of the worthy master of Santiago. He imprecated holy curses upon the infidels, for having thus laid low the flower of Christian chivalry, and he vowed in his heart bitter vengeance upon the surrounding country. By degrees the little force of De Aguilar was augmented by numbers of fugitives, who issued from caves and chasms,



where they had taken refuge in the night. A little band of mounted knights was gradually formed, and the Moors having abandoned the heights to collect the spoils of the slain, this gallant but forlorn squadron was enabled to retreat to Antequera.

This disastrous affair lasted from Thursday evening throughout Friday, the twenty-first of March, the festival of St. Benedict. It is still recorded in Spanish calendars as the defeat of the mountains of Malaga; and the place where the greatest slaughter took place is pointed out to the present day, and is called *La cuesta de la matanza*, or "the hill of the massacre." The principal leaders who survived returned to Antequera; many of the knights took refuge in Alhama, and others wandered about the mountains for eight days, living on roots and herbs, hiding themselves during the day, and roaming forth at night. So enfeebled and disheartened were they, that they offered no resistance if attacked. Three or four soldiers would surrender to a Moorish peasant, and even the women of Malaga sallied forth and made prisoners. Some were thrown into



the dungeons of frontier towns; others led captive to Granada; but by far the greater number were conducted to Malaga, the city they had threatened to attack. Two hundred and fifty principal cavaliers, alcaýdes, commanders, and hidalgos of generous blood, were confined in the alcazaba or citadel of Malaga, to await their ransom; and five hundred and seventy of the common soldiery were crowded in an enclosure or court-yard of the alcazaba, to be sold as slaves\*.

Great spoils were collected, of splendid armour and weapons taken from the slain, or thrown away by the cavaliers in their flight; and many horses, magnificently caparisoned, together with numerous standards; all which were paraded in triumph into the Moorish towns.

The merchants, also, who had come with the army, intending to traffic in the spoils of the Moors, were themselves made objects of traffic. Several of them were driven like cattle before the Moorish viragos to the market of Malaga, and, in spite of all their adroitness in

\* Cura de los Palacios.

trade, and their attempts to buy themselves off at a cheap ransom, they were unable to purchase their freedom without such draughts upon their money bags at home, as drained them to the very bottom.



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## CHAPTER XIII.

Effects of the disasters among the mountains of Malaga.

THE people of Antequera had scarcely recovered from the tumult of excitement and admiration, caused by the departure of the gallant band of cavaliers upon their foray, when they beheld the scattered wrecks flying for refuge to their walls. Day after day, and hour after hour, brought some wretched fugitive, in whose battered plight, and haggard, wobegone demeanour, it was almost impossible to recognise the warrior, whom they had lately seen to issue so gaily and gloriously from their gates.

The arrival of the Marquis of Cadiz, almost alone, covered with dust and blood, his armour shattered and defaced, his countenance the picture of despair, filled every heart with sorrow; for he was greatly beloved by the people. The multitude asked, where was the band of brothers, that rallied round him as he went forth to the field; and when they heard, that

they had, one by one, been slaughtered at his side, they hushed their voices, or spoke to each other only in whispers as he passed, gazing at him in silent sympathy. No one attempted to console him in so great an affliction, nor did the good marquis speak ever a word, but, shutting himself up, brooded in lonely anguish over his misfortune. It was only the arrival of Don Alonzo de Aguilar that gave him a gleam of consolation; for, amidst the shafts of death that had fallen so thickly among his family, he rejoiced that his chosen friend and brother in arms had escaped uninjured.

For several days every eye was turned, in an agony of suspense, towards the Moorish border, anxiously looking, in every fugitive from the mountains, for the lineaments of some friend or relation, whose fate was yet a mystery. At length all doubt subsided into certainty; the whole extent of this great calamity was known, spreading grief and consternation throughout the land, and laying desolate the pride and hopes of palaces. It was a sorrow, that visited the marble hall and silken pillow. Stately dames mourned over the loss of their sons, the joy and glory of

their age; and many a fair cheek was blanched with wo, that had lately mantled with secret admiration. "All Andalusia," says an historian of the day, "was overwhelmed by a great affliction; there was no drying of the eyes which wept in her\*."

Fear and trembling reigned for a while along the frontier. Their spear seemed broken; their buckler cleft in twain. Every border town dreaded an attack, and the mother caught her infant to her bosom, when the watch-dog howled in the night, fancying it the war cry of the Moor. All of a time appeared lost, and despondency even found its way to the royal breasts of Ferdinand and Isabella, amid the splendours of their court.

Great, on the other hand, was the joy of the Moors, when they saw whole legions of Christian warriors brought captive into their towns; by rude mountain peasantry. They thought it the work of Allah in favour of the faithful. But when they recognised, among the captives thus dejected and broken down, several of the proudest of Christian chivalry; when they saw several of the banners and de-

\* Cura de los Palacios.



vices of the noblest houses of Spain, which they had been accustomed to behold in the foremost of the battle, now trailed ignominiously through their streets; when, in short, they witnessed the arrival of the Count of Cifuentes, the royal standardbearer of Spain, with his gallant brother, Don Pedro de Silva, brought prisoners into the gates of Granada; there were no bounds to their exultation. They thought, that the days of their ancient glory were about to return, and that they were to renew their career of triumph over the unbelievers.

The Christian historians of the time are sorely perplexed to account for this misfortune; and why so many Christian knights, fighting in the cause of the holy faith, should thus, miraculously as it were, be given captive to a handful of infidel boors; for we are assured, that all this rout and destruction was effected by five hundred foot and fifty horse, and these mere mountaineers, without science or discipline\*. "It was intended," observes one historiographer, "as a lesson to their confidence

\* Cura de los Palacios.



and vain glory; overrating their own prowess, and thinking, that so chosen a band of chivalry had but to appear in the land of the enemy, and conquer. It was to teach them, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that God alone giveth the victory."

The worthy father Fray Antonio Agapida, however, asserts it to be a punishment for the avarice of the Spanish warriors. They did not enter the kingdom of the infidels with the pure spirit of Christian knights, zealous only for the glory of the faith; but rather as greedy men of trade, to enrich themselves by vending the spoils of the infidels. Instead of preparing themselves by confession and communion, and executing their testaments, and making donations to churches and convents, they thought only of arranging bargains and sales of their anticipated booty. Instead of taking with them holy monks, to aid them with their prayers, they were followed by a train of worldlings, to keep alive their secular and sordid ideas, and to turn what ought to be holy triumphs into scenes of brawling traffic." Such is the opinion of the excellent Agapida, in which he is joined by that most worthy and

upright of chroniclers, the curate of Los Palacios. Agapida comforts himself, however, with the reflection, that this visitation was meant in mercy, to try the Castilian heart, and to extract from its present humiliation the elements of future success, as gold is extracted from amidst the impurities of earth; and in this reflection he is supported by the venerable historian, Pedro Abarca, of the society of Jesuits\*.

\* Abarca, Anales de Aragon, Rey 30. cap. 2. sect. 7.

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