

CHAPTER XIV.

How King Boabdil el Chico marched over the border.

THE defeat of the Christian cavaliers among the mountains of Malaga, and the successful inroad of Muley Aben Hassan into the lands of Medina Sidonia, had produced a favourable effect on the fortunes of the old monarch. The inconstant populace began to shout forth his name in the streets, and to sneer at the inactivity of his son, Boabdil el Chico. The latter, though in the flower of his age, and distinguished for vigour and dexterity in jousts and tournaments, had never yet fleshed his weapon in the field of battle; and it was murmured, that he preferred the silken repose of the cool halls of the Alhambra, to the fatigue and danger of the foray, and the hard encampments of the mountains.

The popularity of these rival kings depended upon their success against the Christians; and Boabdil el Chico found it necessary to strike

some signal blow, to counterbalance the late triumph of his father. He was further incited by the fierce old Moor, his father-in-law, Ali Atar, alcaide of Loxa, with whom the coals of wrath against the Christians still burned among the ashes of age, and had lately been blown into a flame by the attack made by Ferdinand on the city under his command.

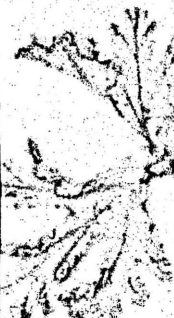
Ali Atar informed Boabdil, that the late discomfiture of the Christian knights had stripped Andalusia of the prime of her chivalry, and broken the spirit of the country. All the frontier of Cordova and Ecija now lay open to inroad; but he specially pointed out the city of Lucena as an object of attack; being feebly garrisoned, and lying in a country rich in pasturage, abounding in cattle and grain, in oil and wine. The fiery old Moor spoke from thorough information; for he had made many an incursion into those parts, and his very name was a terror throughout the country. It had become a by-word in the garrison of Loxa, to call Lucena the garden of Ali Atar; for he was accustomed to forage its fertile territories for all his supplies.

Boabdil el Chico listened to the persuasions

of this veteran of the borders. He assembled a force of nine thousand foot and seven hundred horse, most of them his own adherents, but many the partisans of his father: for both factions, however they might fight among themselves, were ready to unite in any expedition against the Christians. Many of the most illustrious and valiant of the Moorish nobility assembled around his standard, magnificently arrayed, in sumptuous armour and rich embroidery, as though they were going to a festival, or a tilt of reeds, rather than an enterprise of iron war. Boabdil's mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, armed him for the field, and gave him her benediction as she girded his cimeter to his side. His favourite wife Morayma wept, as she thought of the evils that might befall him. "Why dost thou weep, daughter of Ali Atar?" said the high-minded Ayxa; "these tears become not the daughter of a warrior, nor the wife of a king. Believe me, there lurks more danger for a monarch within the strong walls of a palace, than within the frail curtains of a tent. It is by perils in the field, that thy husband must purchase security on his throne."

But Morayma still hung upon his neck with tears and sad forebodings; and when he departed from the Alhambra, she betook herself to her mirador, which looks out over the vega; whence she watched the army, as it passed in shining order along the road that leads to Loxa; and every burst of warlike melody that came swelling on the breeze was answered by a gush of sorrow.

As the royal cavalcade issued from the palace, and descended through the streets of Granada, the populace greeted their youthful sovereign with shouts, and anticipated success that should wither the laurels of his father. In passing through the gate of Elvira, however, the king accidentally broke his lance against the arch. At this, certain of his nobles turned pale, and entreated him not to proceed, for they regarded it as an evil omen. Boabdil scoffed at their fears, for he considered them mere idle fancies; or rather, says Fray Antonio Agapida, he was an incredulous pagan, puffed up with confidence and vain glory. He refused to take another spear, but drew forth his cimeter, and led the way (adds Agapida) in an arrogant and haughty style, as though he would set both



heaven and earth at defiance. Another evil omen was sent, to deter him from his enterprise. Arriving at the rambla or dry ravine of Beyro, which is scarcely a bowshot from the city, a fox ran through the whole army, and close by the person of the king, and, though a thousand bolts were discharged at it, escaped uninjured to the mountains. The principal courtiers about Boabdil now reiterated their remonstrances against proceeding; for they considered these occurrences as mysterious portents of disasters to their army. The king, however, was not to be dismayed, but continued to march forward*.

At Loxa the royal army was reinforced by old Ali Atar, with the chosen horsemen of his garrison, and many of the bravest warriors of the border towns. The people of Loxa shouted with exultation, when they beheld Ali Atar armed at all points, and once more mounted on his Barbary steed, which had often borne him over the borders. The veteran warrior, with nearly a century of years upon his head, had all the fire and animation of a youth at

* Marmol. Rebel. de los Moros, lib. i. c. 12. fol. 14.

the prospect of a foray, and careered from rank to rank with the velocity of an Arab of the desert. The populace watched the army as it paraded over the bridge, and wound into the passes of the mountains; and still their eyes were fixed upon the pennon of Ali Atar, as if it bore with it an assurance of victory.

The Moorish army entered the Christian frontier by forced marches, hastily ravaging the country, driving off the flocks and herds, and making captives of the inhabitants. They pressed on furiously, and made the latter part of their march in the night, that they might elude observation, and come upon Lucena by surprise. Boabdil was inexperienced in the art of war; but he had a veteran counsellor in his old father-in-law: for Ali Atar knew every secret of the country; and as he prowled through it, his eye ranged over the land, uniting, in its glare, the craft of the fox, with the sanguinary ferocity of the wolf. He had flattered himself, that their march had been so rapid, as to outstrip intelligence, and that Lucena would be an easy capture; when, suddenly, he beheld alarm fires, blazing upon the mountains. "We are discovered," said he to

Boabdil el Chico ; " the country will be up in arms. We have nothing left, but to strike boldly for Lucena : it is but slightly garrisoned, and we may carry it by assault, before it can receive assistance." The king approved of his council, and they marched rapidly for the gate of Lucena.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

CHAPTER XV.

How the Count de Cabra sallied forth from his castle,
in quest of King Boabdil.

DON DIEGO DE CORDOVA, Count of Cabra, was in the castle of Vaena, which, with the town of the same name, is situated on a lofty sunburnt hill, on the frontier of the kingdom of Cordova, and but a few leagues from Lucena. The range of mountains from Horquera lie between them. The castle of Vaena was strong, and well furnished with arms; and the count had a numerous band of vassals and retainers: for it behoved the noblemen of the frontiers in those times to be well prepared, with man and horse, with lance and buckler, to resist the sudden incursions of the Moors. The Count of Cabra was a hardy and experienced warrior; shrewd in council, prompt in action, rapid and fearless in the field. He was one of the bravest cavaliers for an inroad, and had been quickened and sharpened in thought and action by living on the borders.

On the night of the 20th of April, 1483, the count was about to retire to rest, when the watchman from the turret brought him word, that there were alarm fires on the mountains of Horquera, and that they were made on the signal tower, overhanging the defile, through which the road passes to Cabra and Lucena.

The count ascended the battlements, and beheld five lights blazing on the tower; a sign that there was a Moorish army attacking some place on the frontier. The count instantly ordered the alarmbells to be sounded, and despatched couriers, to rouse the commanders of the neighbouring towns. He ordered all his retainers to prepare for action, and sent a trumpet through the town, summoning the men to assemble at the castle gate at daybreak, armed and equipped for the field.

Throughout the remainder of the night, the castle resounded with the din of preparation. Every house in the town was in equal bustle; for in these frontier towns every house had its warrior, and the lance and buckler were ever hanging against the wall, ready to be snatched down for instant service. Nothing was heard but the noise of armourers, the shoeing of

steeds, and furbishing of weapons; and all night long the alarm fires kept blazing on the mountain.

When the morning dawned; the Count of Cabra sallied forth, at the head of two hundred and fifty cavaliers, of the best families of Vaena; all well appointed, exercised in arms, and experienced in the warfare of the borders. There were, besides, twelve hundred foot soldiers; all brave and well seasoned men of the same town. The count ordered them to hasten forward, whoever could make most speed, taking the road to Cabra, which was three leagues distant. That they might not loiter on the road, he allowed none of them to break their fast, until they arrived at that place. The provident count despatched couriers in advance; and the little army, on reaching Cabra, found tables spread with food and refreshments at the gates of the town. There they were joined by Don Alonzo de Cordova, senior of Zuheros.

Having made a hearty repast, they were on the point of resuming their march, when the count discovered, that, in the hurry of his departure from home, he had forgotten to bring

the standard of Vaena, which, for upwards of eighty years, had always been borne to battle by his family. It was now noon, and there was not time to return. He took, therefore, the standard of Cabra, the device of which is a goat, and which had not been seen in the wars for the last half century. When about to depart, a courier came galloping at full speed, bringing missives to the count, from his nephew, Don Diego Hernandez de Cordova, senior of Lucena, and alcaide de los Donzeles, entreating him to hasten to his aid, as his town was beset by the Moorish king, Boabdil el Chico, with a powerful army, who were actually setting fire to the gates.

The count put his little army instantly in movement for Lucena, which is only one league from Cabra. He was fired with the idea of having the Moorish king in person to contend with. By the time he reached Lucena, the Moors had desisted from the attack, and were ravaging the surrounding country. He entered the town with a few of his cavaliers, and was received with joy by his nephew, whose whole force consisted but of eighty horse and three hundred foot. Don Diego

Hernandez de Cordova was a young man; yet he was a prudent, careful, and capable officer. Having learned, the evening before, that the Moors had passed the frontiers, he had gathered within his walls all the women and children from the environs; had armed the men, sent couriers in all directions for succour, and had lighted alarm-fires on the mountains.

Boabdil had arrived with his army at day-break, and had sent in a message, threatening to put the garrison to the sword, if the place were not instantly surrendered. The messenger was a Moor of Granada, named Hamet, whom Don Diego had formerly known. He contrived to amuse him with negotiation, to gain time for succour to arrive. The fierce old Ali Atar, losing all patience, had made an assault upon the town, and stormed like a fury at the gate; but had been repulsed. Another and more serious attack was expected in the course of the night.

When the Count de Cabra had heard this account of the situation of affairs, he turned to his nephew with his usual alacrity of manner, and proposed, that they should immediately sally forth in quest of the enemy. The

prudent Don Diego remonstrated at the rashness of attacking so great a force with a mere handful of men. "Nephew," said the count, "I came from Vaena with a determination to fight this Moorish king, and I will not be disappointed."

"At any rate," replied Don Diego, "let us wait but two hours, and we shall have reinforcements, which have been promised me from Rambla, Santaella, Montilla, and other places in the neighbourhood." "If we wait these," said the hardy count, "the Moors will be off, and all our trouble will have been in vain. You may await them, if you please: I am resolved on fighting."

The count paused not for a reply; but, in his prompt and rapid manner, sallied forth to his men. The young alcaide de los Donzeles, though more prudent than his ardent uncle, was equally brave. He determined to stand by him in his rash enterprise; and, summoning his little force, marched forth, to join the count, who was already on the alert. They then proceeded together in quest of the enemy.

The Moorish army had ceased ravaging the

country, and were not to be seen, the neighbourhood being hilly, and broken with deep ravines. The count despatched six scouts on horseback, to reconnoitre, ordering them to return with all speed when they should have discovered the enemy, and by no means to engage in skirmishing with stragglers. The scouts, ascending a high hill, beheld the Moorish army in a valley behind it; the cavalry ranged in five battalions, keeping guard, while the foot soldiers were seated on the grass, making a repast. They returned immediately with the intelligence.

The count now ordered the troops to march in the direction of the enemy. He and his nephew ascended the hill, and saw, that the five battalions of Moorish cavalry had been formed into two; one of about nine hundred lances, the other of about six hundred. The whole force seemed prepared to march for the frontier. The foot soldiers were already in motion, with many prisoners, and a great train of mules and beasts of burden, laden with booty. At a distance was Boabdil el Chico. They could not distinguish his person; but they knew him by his superb white charger,

magnificently caparisoned; and by his being surrounded by a numerous guard, sumptuously armed and attired. Old Ali Atar was careering about the valley with his usual impatience, hurrying the march of the loitering troops.

The eyes of the Count de Cabra glistened with eager joy, as he beheld the royal prize within his reach. The immense disparity of their forces never entered into his mind. "By Santiago!" said he to his nephew, as they hastened down the hill, "had we waited for more forces, the Moorish king and his army would have escaped us!"

The count now harangued his men, to inspire them to this hazardous encounter. He told them, not to be dismayed at the number of the Moors; for God often permitted the few to conquer the many; and he had great confidence, that, through the divine aid, they were that day to achieve a signal victory, which should win them both riches and renown. He commanded, that no man should hurl his lance at the enemy, but should keep it in his hands, and strike as many blows with it as he could. He warned them, also, never to shout, except when the Moors did; for when both armies

shouted together, there was no perceiving which made the most noise, and was the strongest. He desired his uncle, Lope de Mendoza, and Diego Cabrera, alcajde of Menica, to alight, and enter on foot, in the battalion of infantry, to animate them to the combat. He appointed, also, the alcajde of Vaena, and Diego de Clavijo, a cavalier of his household, to remain in the rear, and not to permit any one to lag behind, either to despoil the dead, or for any other purpose.

Such were the orders given by this most adroit, active, and intrepid cavalier to his little army; supplying, by admirable sagacity, and subtle management, the want of a more numerous force. His orders being given, and all arrangements made, he threw aside his lance, drew his sword, and commanded his standard to be advanced against the enemy.

CHAPTER XVI.

The battle of Lucena.

THE Moorish king had descried the Spanish forces at a distance, although a slight fog prevented his seeing them distinctly, and ascertaining their numbers. His old father-in-law, Ali Atar, was by his side, who, being a veteran marauder, was well acquainted with all the standards and armorial bearings of the frontiers. When the king beheld the ancient and long disused banner of Cabra emerging from the mist, he turned to Ali Atar, and demanded whose ensign it was. The old borderer was for once at a loss; for the banner had not been displayed in battle in his time.

"Sire," replied he, after a pause, "I have been considering that standard, but do not know it. It appears to be a dog, which is a device borne by the towns of Baeza and Ubeda. If it be so, all Andalusia is in movement against you; for it is not probable, that any single commander or community would ven-

ture to attack you. I would advise you, therefore, to retire."

The Count of Cabra, in winding down the hill towards the Moors, found himself on a much lower station than the enemy: he therefore ordered in all haste, that his standard should be taken back, so as to gain the vantage ground. The Moors, mistaking this for a retreat, rushed impetuously towards the Christians. The latter, having gained the height proposed, charged down upon them at the same moment, with the battle-cry of "Santiago!" and, dealing the first blows, laid many of the Moorish cavaliers in the dust.

The Moors, thus checked in their tumultuous assault, were thrown into confusion, and began to give way; the Christians following hard upon them. Boabdil el Chico endeavoured to rally them. "Hold! hold! for shame!" cried he: "let us not fly, at least until we know our enemy!" The Moorish chivalry were stung by this reproof, and turned to make front, with the valour of men, who feel, that they are fighting under their monarch's eye.

At this moment, Lorenzo de Porres, alcaide

of Luque, arrived with fifty horse and one hundred foot, sounding an Italian trumpet from among a copse of oak trees, which concealed his force. The quick ear of old Ali Atar caught the note. "That is an Italian trumpet," said he to the king: "the whole world seems in arms against your majesty!"

The trumpet of Lorenzo de Porres was answered by that of the Count de Cabra in another direction; and it seemed to the Moors as if they were between two armies. Don Lorenzo, sallying from among the oaks, now charged upon the enemy. The latter did not wait to ascertain the force of this new foe. The confusion, the variety of alarms, the attacks from opposite quarters, the obscurity of the fog, all conspired to deceive them as to the number of their adversaries. Broken and dismayed, they retreated fighting; and nothing but the presence and remonstrances of the king prevented their retreat from becoming a headlong flight.

This skirmishing retreat lasted for about three leagues. Many were the acts of individual prowess between Christian and Moorish

knights; and the way was strewed by the flower of the king's guards, and of his royal household. At length they came to the rivulet of Mingonzalez, the verdant banks of which were covered with willows and tamarisks. It was swollen by recent rain, and was now a deep and turbid torrent.

Here the king made a courageous stand, with a small body of cavalry, while his baggage crossed the stream. None but the choicest and most loyal of his guards stood by their monarch in this hour of extremity. The foot soldiers took to flight the moment they passed the ford; many of the horsemen, partaking of the general panic, gave reins to their steeds, and scoured for the frontier. The little host of devoted cavaliers now serried their forces in front of their monarch, to protect his retreat. They fought hand to hand with the Christian warriors; disdaining to yield, or to ask for quarter. The ground was covered with the dead and dying. The king, having retreated along the river banks, and gained some distance from the scene of combat, looked back; and saw the loyal band at length give

way. They crossed the ford, followed pell mell by the enemy, and several of them were struck down into the stream.

The king now dismounted from his white charger, whose colour and rich caparison made him too conspicuous, and endeavoured to conceal himself among the thickets which fringed the river. A soldier of Lucena, named Martin Hurtado, discovered him, and attacked him with a pike. The king defended himself with cimeter and target, until another soldier assailed him, and he saw a third approaching. Perceiving that further resistance would be vain, he drew back, and called upon them to desist, offering them a noble ransom. One of the soldiers rushed forward to seize him; but the king struck him to the earth with a blow of his cimeter.

Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova coming up at this moment, the men said to him, "Señor, here is a Moor that we have taken, who seems to be a man of rank, and offers a large ransom."

"Slaves!" exclaimed King Boabdil, "you have not taken me. I surrender to this cavalier."

Don Diego received him with knightly courtesy. He perceived him to be a person of high rank; but the king concealed his quality, and gave himself out as the son of Aben Aleyzer, a nobleman of the royal household*. Don Diego gave him in charge of five soldiers, to conduct him to the castle of Lucena; then putting spurs to his horse, he hastened to rejoin the Count de Cabra, who was in hot pursuit of the enemy. He overtook him at a stream called Riancal, and they continued to press on the skirts of the flying army during the remainder of the day. The pursuit was almost as hazardous as the battle; for had the enemy at any time recovered from their panic, they might, by a sudden reaction, have overwhelmed the small force of their pursuers. To guard against this peril, the wary count kept his battalion always in close order, and had a body of a hundred chosen lances in the advance. The Moors kept up a Parthian retreat. Several times they turned to make battle; but seeing this solid body of steeled warriors pressing upon them, they again took to flight.

* Garibay, lib. xl. cap. 31.

The main retreat of the army was along the valley watered by the Xenil, and opening through the mountains of Algaringo to the city of Loxa. The alarm fires of the preceding night had roused the country. Every man snatched sword and buckler from the wall; and the towns and villages poured forth their warriors, to harass the retreating foe. Ali Atar kept the main force of the army together, and turned fiercely from time to time upon his pursuers. He was like a wolf hunted through the country he had often made desolate by his maraudings.

The alarm of this invasion had reached the city of Antequera, where were several of the cavaliers who had escaped from the carnage in the mountains of Malaga. Their proud minds were festering with their late disgrace, and their only prayer was for vengeance on the infidels. No sooner did they hear of the Moors being over the border, than they were armed and mounted for action. Don Alonzo de Aguilar led them forth: a small body, of but forty horsemen; but all cavaliers of prowess, and thirsting for revenge. They came upon the foe on the banks of the Xenil, where it

winds through the valleys of Cordova. The river, swelled by the late rains, was deep and turbulent, and only fordable at certain places. The main body of the army was gathered in confusion on the banks, endeavouring to ford the stream, protected by the cavalry of Ali Atar. No sooner did the little band of Alonzo de Aguilar come in sight of the Moors, than fury flashed from their eyes. "Remember the mountains of Malaga!" they cried to each other, as they rushed to combat. Their charge was desperate, but was gallantly resisted. A scrambling and bloody fight ensued, hand to hand, and sword to sword; sometimes on land, sometimes in the water; many were lanced on the banks; others, throwing themselves into the river, sunk with the weight of their armour, and were drowned. Some, grappling together, fell from their horses, but continued their struggle in the waves, and helm and turban rolled together down the stream. The Moors were by far the superior in number; and among them were many warriors of rank; but they were disheartened by defeat, while the Christians were excited even to desperation.

Ali Atar alone preserved all his fire and energy amid his reverses. He had been enraged at the defeat of the army, the loss of the king, and the ignominious flight he had been obliged to make, through a country which had so often been the scene of his exploits: but to be thus impeded in his flight, and harassed and insulted by a mere handful of warriors, roused the violent passions of the old Moor to perfect frenzy.

He had marked Don Alonzo de Aguilar dealing his blows, says Agapida, with the pious vehemence of a righteous knight; who knows that in every wound inflicted upon the infidels, he is doing God service. Ali Atar spurred his steed along the bank of the river, to come upon Don Alonzo by surprise. The back of that warrior was towards him; and, collecting all his force, the Moor hurled his lance, to transfix him on the spot. The lance was not thrown with the usual accuracy of Ali Atar: It tore away a part of the cuirass of Don Alonzo, but failed to inflict a wound. The Moor rushed upon Don Alonzo with his cimeter; but the latter was on the alert, and parried his blow. They fought desperately upon the borders of the

river, alternately pressing each other into the stream, and fighting their way again up the bank. Ali Atar was repeatedly wounded; and Don Alonzo, having pity on his age, would have spared his life. He called upon him to surrender. "Never!" cried Ali Atar, "to a Christian dog!" The words were scarce out of his mouth, when the sword of Don Alonzo clove his turbaned head, and sank deep into the brain. He fell dead without a groan: his body rolled into the Xenil; nor was it ever found and recognised*. Thus fell Ali Atar, who had long been the terror of Andalusia. As he had hated and warred upon the Christians all his life, so he died in the very act of bitter hostility.

The fall of Ali Atar put an end to the transient stand of the cavalry. Horse and foot mingled together in the desperate struggle across the Xenil, and many were trampled down, and perished beneath the waves. Don Alonzo and his band continued to harass them, until they crossed the frontier; and every blow struck home to the Moors seemed to lighten

* Cura de los Palacios.

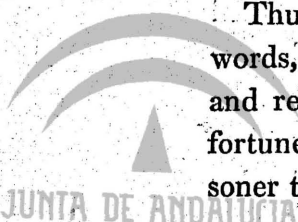
the load of humiliation and sorrow, which had weighed heavy on their hearts.

In this disastrous rout, the Moors lost upwards of five thousand killed and made prisoners, many of whom were of the most noble lineages of Granada. Numbers fled to rocks and mountains, where they were subsequently taken. This battle was called by some the battle of Lucena; by others, the battle of the Moorish king, because of the capture of Boabdil. Twenty-two banners fell into the hands of the Christians, and were carried to Vaena, and hung up in the church; where, says an historian of after times, they remain to this day. Once a year, on the day of St. George, they are borne about in procession by the inhabitants, who at the same time give thanks to God, for this signal victory granted to their forefathers.

Great was the triumph of the Count de Cabra, when, on returning from the pursuit of the enemy, he found, that the Moorish king had fallen into his hands. When the unfortunate Boabdil was brought before him, however, and he beheld him a dejected captive, whom, but shortly before, he had seen in royal

splendour, surrounded by his army, the generous heart of the count was touched by sympathy. He said every thing that became a courteous and Christian knight, to comfort him; observing, that the same mutability of things, which had suddenly destroyed his recent prosperity, might cause his present misfortunes as rapidly to pass away; since, in this world, nothing is stable, and even sorrow has its allotted term.

Thus consoling him by gentle and soothing words, and observing towards him the honour and reverence that his dignity and his misfortunes inspired, he conducted him a prisoner to his strong castle of Vaena.



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CHAPTER XVII.

Lamentations of the Moors for the battle of Lucena.

THE sentinels looked out from the watch-towers of Loxa, along the valley of the Xenil, which passes through the mountains of Algaringo. They looked, to behold the king returning in triumph, at the head of his shining host, laden with the spoil of the unbeliever. They looked, to behold the standard of their warlike idol, the fierce Ali Atar, borne by the chivalry of Loxa, ever foremost in the wars of the border.

In the evening of the 21st of April, they descried a single horseman, urging his faltering steed along the banks of the river. As he drew near, they perceived, by the flash of arms, that he was a warrior; and, on nearer approach, by the richness of his armour, and the caparison of his steed, they knew him to be a warrior of rank.

He reached Loxa faint and aghast; his

Arabian courser covered with foam and dust and blood, panting and staggering with fatigue, and gashed with wounds. Having brought his master in safety, he sunk down and died, before the gate of the city. The soldiers at the gate gathered round the cavalier, as he stood, mute and melancholy, by his expiring steed. They knew him to be the gallant Cidi Caleb, nephew of the chief alfaqui of the al-baycén of Granada. When the people of Loxa beheld this noble cavalier thus alone, haggard and dejected, their hearts were filled with fearful forebodings.

"Cavalier," said they, "how fares it with the king and army?" He cast his hand mournfully towards the land of the Christians. "There they lie!" exclaimed he: "the heavens have fallen upon them! all are lost! all dead*!"

Upon this, there was a great cry of consternation among the people, and loud wailings of women; for the flower of the youth of Loxa were with the army. An old Moorish soldier, scarred in many a border battle, stood leaning

* Cura de los Palacios.

on his lance by the gateway. "Where is Ali Atar?" demanded he eagerly. "If he still live, the army cannot be lost!"

"I saw his turban cloven by the Christian sword," replied Cidi Caleb. "His body is floating in the Xenil."

When the soldier heard these words, he smote his breast, and threw dust upon his head; for he was an old follower of Ali Atar.

The noble Cidi Caleb gave himself no repose; but, mounting another steed, hastened to carry the disastrous tidings to Granada.

As he passed through the villages and hamlets, he spread sorrow around; for their chosen men had followed the king to the wars.

When he entered the gates of Granada, and announced the loss of the king and army, a voice of horror went throughout the city. Every one thought but of his own share in the general calamity, and crowded round the bearer of ill tidings. One asked after a father, another after a brother, some after a lover, and many a mother after her son. His replies were still of wounds and death. To one he replied, "I saw thy father pierced with a lance, as he defended the person of the king."

To another, "Thy brother fell wounded under the hoofs of the horses; but there was no time to aid him, for the Christian cavalry were upon us." To a third, "I saw the horse of thy lover covered with blood, and galloping without his rider." To a fourth, "Thy son fought by my side on the banks of the Xenil: we were surrounded by the enemy, and driven into the stream. I heard him call aloud upon Allah in the midst of the waters: when I reached the other bank, he was no longer by my side!"

The noble Cidi Caleb passed on, leaving Granada in lamentation. He urged his steed up the steep avenue of trees and fountains, that leads to the Alhambra, nor stopped until he arrived before the gate of justice. Ayxa, the mother of Boabdil, and Morayma, his beloved and tender wife, had daily watched, from the tower of the Gomeres, to behold his triumphant return. Who shall describe their affliction, when they heard the tidings of Cidi Caleb? The sultana Ayxa spake not much, but sate as one entranced in wo. Every now and then a deep sigh burst forth; but she raised her eyes to Heaven. "It is the will of Allah!" said she; and with these words she endea-

voured to repress the agonies of a mother's sorrow. The tender Morayma threw herself on the earth, and gave way to the full turbulence of her feelings, bewailing her husband and her father. The high-minded Ayxa rebuked the violence of her grief. "Moderate these transports, my daughter," said she; "remember, magnanimity should be the attribute of princes: it becomes not them to give way to clamorous sorrow, like common and vulgar minds." But Morayma could only deplore her loss with the anguish of a tender woman. She shut herself up in her mirador, and gazed all day with streaming eyes upon the vega. Every object before her recalled the causes of her affliction. The river Xenil, which ran shining amidst the groves and gardens, was the same on the banks of which had perished her father, Ali Atar: before her lay the road to Loxa, by which Boabdil had departed in martial state, surrounded by the chivalry of Granada. Ever and anon she would burst into an agony of grief. "Alas, my father!" she would exclaim, "the river runs smiling before me, that covers thy mangled remains! who will gather them to an honoured tomb, in the land of the

unbeliever? And thou, oh, Boabdil! light of my eyes! joy of my heart! life of my life! Wo the day, and wo the hour, that I saw thee depart from these walls! The road by which thou hast departed is solitary; never will it be gladdened by thy return! The mountain thou hast traversed lies like a cloud in the distance, and all beyond it is darkness!"

The royal minstrels were summoned, to assuage the sorrows of the queen: they attuned their instruments to cheerful strains; but, in a little while, the anguish of their hearts prevailed, and turned their songs to lamentations.

"Beautiful Granada!" they exclaimed, "how is thy glory faded! The vivarrambra no longer echoes to the tramp of steed and sound of trumpet; no longer is it crowded with thy youthful nobles, eager to display their prowess in the tourney and the festive tilt of reeds. Alas! the flower of thy chivalry lies low in a foreign land! The soft note of the lute is no longer heard in thy mournful streets, the lively castanet is silent upon thy hills, and the graceful dance of the zambra is no more seen beneath thy bowers! Behold, the Al-

hambra is forlorn and desolate! In vain do the orange and myrtle breathe their perfumes into its silken chambers; in vain does the nightingale sing within its groves; in vain are its marble halls refreshed by the sound of fountains and the gush of limpid rills! Alas! the countenance of the king no longer shines within those halls; the light of the Alhambra is set for ever!"

Thus all Granada, say the Arabian chroniclers, gave itself up to lamentations; there was nothing but the voice of wailing from the palace to the cottage. All joined to deplore their youthful monarch, cut down in the freshness and promise of his youth. Many feared that the prediction of the astrologer was about to be fulfilled, and that the downfall of the kingdom would follow the death of Boabdil; while all declared, that, had he survived, he was the very sovereign calculated to restore the realm to its ancient prosperity and glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How Muley Aben Hassan profited by the misfortunes
of his son Boabdil.

AN unfortunate death atones with the world for a multitude of errors. While the populace thought their youthful monarch had perished in the field, nothing could exceed their grief for his loss, and their adoration of his memory: when, however, they learned, that he was still alive, and had surrendered himself captive to the Christians, their feelings underwent an instant change. They decried his talents as a commander, his courage as a soldier. They railed at his expedition, as rash and ill conducted; and they reviled him, for not having dared to die on the field of battle, rather than surrender to the enemy.

The alfaquis, as usual, mingled with the populace, and artfully guided their discontents.

"Behold," exclaimed they, "the prediction is accomplished, which was pronounced at the birth of Boabdil! He has been seated on the throne, and the kingdom has suffered downfall and disgrace by his defeat and captivity. Comfort yourselves, oh Moslems! The evil day has passed by: the fates are satisfied, the sceptre, which has been broken in the feeble hand of Boabdil, is destined to resume its former power and sway, in the vigorous grasp of Aben Hassan."

The people were struck with the wisdom of these words. They rejoiced, that the baleful prediction, which had so long hung over them, was at an end; and declared, that none but Muley Aben Hassan had the valour and capacity necessary for the protection of the kingdom in this time of trouble.

The longer the captivity of Boabdil continued, the greater grew the popularity of his father. One city after another renewed allegiance to him: for power attracts power, and fortune creates fortune. At length he was enabled to return to Granada, and establish himself once more in the Alhambra. At his

approach, his repudiated spouse, the sultana Ayxa, gathered together the family and treasures of her captive son, and retired with a handful of the nobles into the albaycen, the rival quarter of the city, the inhabitants of which still retained feelings of loyalty to Boabdil. Here she fortified herself, and held the semblance of a court, in the name of her son. The fierce Muley Aben Hassan would have willingly carried fire and sword into this factious quarter of the capital; but he dared not confide in his new and uncertain popularity. Many of the nobles detested him for his past cruelty; and a large portion of the soldiery, beside many of the people of his own party, respected the virtues of Ayxa la Horra, and pitied the misfortunes of Boabdil. Granada, therefore, presented the singular spectacle of two sovereignties within the same city. The old king fortified himself in the lofty towers of the Alhambra, as much against his own subjects as against the Christians: while Ayxa, with the zeal of a mother's affection, which waxes warmer and warmer towards her offspring when in adversity, still main-

tained the standard of Boabdil on the rival fortress of the alcazaba ; and kept his powerful faction alive within the walls of the albaycen.



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

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CHAPTER XIX.

Captivity of Boabdil el Chico.

THE unfortunate Boabdil remained a prisoner, closely guarded in the castle of Vaena. From the towers of his prison he beheld the town below filled with armed men; and the lofty hill on which it was built, girdled by massive walls and ramparts, on which a vigilant watch was maintained, night and day. The mountains around were studded with watchtowers, overlooking the lonely roads which led to Granada; so that a turban could not stir over the border without the alarm being given, and the whole country put on the alert. Boabdil saw, that there was no hope of escape from such a fortress, and that any attempt to rescue him would be equally in vain. His heart was filled with anxiety, as he thought on the confusion and ruin which his captivity must cause in his affairs; while sorrows of a softer kind overcame his fortitude,

as he thought on the evils it might bring upon his family.

The Count de Cabra, though he maintained the most vigilant guard over his royal prisoner, yet treated him with profound deference. He had appointed the noblest apartments in the castle for his abode, and sought in every way to cheer him during his captivity. A few days only had passed away, when missives arrived from the Castilian sovereigns. Ferdinand had been transported with joy at hearing of the capture of the Moorish monarch; seeing the deep and politic uses that might be made of such an event: but the magnanimous spirit of Isabella was filled with compassion for the unfortunate captive. Their messages to Boabdil were full of sympathy and consolation; breathing that high and gentle courtesy, which dwells in noble minds.

This magnanimity in his foe cheered the dejected spirit of the captive monarch. "Tell my sovereigns, the king and the queen," said he to the messenger, "that I can not be unhappy, being in the power of such high and mighty princes; especially since they partake so largely of that grace and goodness, which

Allah bestows upon the monarchs whom he greatly loves. Tell them, further, that I had long thought of submitting myself to their sway, to receive the kingdom of Granada from their hands, in the same manner that my ancestor received it from King John II., father of the gracious queen. My greatest sorrow, in this my captivity, is, that I must appear to do that from force, which I would fain have done from inclination."

In the mean time, Muley Aben Hassan, finding the faction of his son still formidable in Granada, was anxious to consolidate his power, by gaining possession of the person of Boabdil. For this purpose, he sent an embassy to the catholic monarchs, offering large terms for the ransom, or rather the purchase, of his son; proposing, among other conditions, to release the Count of Cifuentes, and nine other of his most distinguished captives, and to enter into a treaty of confederacy with the sovereigns. Neither did the implacable father make any scruple of testifying his indifference, whether his son were delivered up alive or dead, so that his person were placed assuredly within his power.

The humane heart of Isabella revolted at the idea of giving up the unfortunate prince into the hands of his most unnatural and inveterate enemy. A disdainful refusal was therefore returned to the old monarch, whose message had been couched in a vaunting spirit. He was informed, that the Castilian sovereigns would listen to no proposals of peace from Muley Aben Hassan, until he should lay down his arms, and offer them in all humility. Overtures in a different spirit were made by the mother of Boabdil, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, with the concurrence of the party which still remained faithful to him. It was thereby proposed, that Mahomet Abdalla, otherwise called Boabdil, should hold his crown as vassal to the Castilian sovereigns; paying an annual tribute, and releasing seventy Christian captives annually for five years: that he should moreover pay a large sum upon the spot for his ransom, and at the same time give freedom to four hundred Christians, to be chosen by the king: that he should also engage to be always ready to render military aid; and should come to the Cortes, or assemblage of nobles and distinguished vassals of the crown, whenever sum-

moned. His only son, and the sons of twelve distinguished Moorish houses, were to be delivered as hostages.

King Ferdinand was at Cordova when he received this proposition; Queen Isabella was absent at the time. He was anxious to consult her in so momentous an affair; or rather, he was fearful of proceeding too precipitately, and not drawing from this fortunate event all the advantage of which it was susceptible. Without returning any reply, therefore, to the mission, he sent missives to the castle of Vaena, where Boabdil remained in courteous durance of the brave Count de Cabra, ordering, that the captive monarch should be brought to Cordova.

The Count de Cabra set out with his illustrious prisoner; but when he arrived at Cordova, King Ferdinand declined seeing the Moorish monarch.

He was still undetermined what course to pursue; whether to retain him prisoner, set him at liberty on ransom, or treat him with politic magnanimity; and each course would require a different kind of reception. Until this point should be resolved, therefore, he gave him in charge to Martin de Alarcon,

alcaÿde of the ancient fortress of Porcuna; with orders to guard him strictly, but to treat him with the distinction and deference due to a prince. These commands were strictly obeyed, and, with the exception of being restrained in his liberty, the monarch was as nobly entertained as he could have been in his royal palace at Granada.

In the mean time, Ferdinand availed himself of this critical moment, while Granada was distracted with factions and dissensions, and before he had concluded any treaty with Boabdil, to make a puissant and ostentatious inroad into the very heart of the kingdom, at the head of his most illustrious nobles. He sacked and destroyed several towns and castles, and extended his ravages to the very gates of Granada. Old Muley Aben Hassan did not venture to oppose him. His city was filled with troops; but he was uncertain of their affection. He dreaded, that, should he sally forth, the gates of Granada might be closed against him by the faction of the albaycin.

“The old Moor stood on the lofty tower of the Alhambra,” says Antonio Agapida, “grinding his teeth, and foaming like a tiger shut up in

his cage; as he beheld the glittering battalions of the Christians wheeling about the vega, and the standard of the cross shining forth from amidst the smoke of infidel villages and hamlets. "The most catholic king," continues Agapida, "would gladly have persevered in this righteous ravage; but his munitions began to fail. Satisfied, therefore, with having laid waste the country of the enemy, and insulted old Muley Aben Hassan in his very capital, he returned to Cordova, covered with laurels, and his army loaded with spoils; and now he thought himself of coming to an immediate decision in regard to his royal prisoner."



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CONSEJERIA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XX.

Of the treatment of Boabdil by the Castilian sovereigns.

A STATELY conversation was held by King Ferdinand, in the ancient city of Cordova, composed of several of the most reverend prelates and renowned cavaliers of the kingdom, to determine upon the fate of the unfortunate Boabdil.

Don Alonzo de Cardenas, the worthy master of Santiago, was one of the first who gave his counsel. He was a pious and zealous knight, rigid in his devotion to the faith; and his holy zeal had been inflamed to peculiar vehemence since his disastrous crusade among the mountains of Malaga. He inveighed with ardour against any compromise or compact with the infidels. The object of this war, he observed, was not the subjection of the Moors, but their utter expulsion from the land, so that there might no longer remain a single stain of Ma-

hometanism throughout Christian Spain. He gave it as his opinion, therefore, that the captive king ought not to be set at liberty.

Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, the valiant marquis of Cadiz, on the contrary, spoke warmly for the release of Boabdil. He pronounced it a measure of sound policy, even if done without conditions. It would tend to keep up the civil war in Granada, which was as a fire consuming the entrails of the enemy, and effecting more for the interests of Spain, without expense, than all the conquests of its arms.

The grand cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, coincided in opinion with the Marquis of Cadiz. "Nay," added that pious prelate and politic statesman, "it would be sound wisdom to furnish the Moor with men and money, and all other necessaries to promote the civil war in Granada: by this means would be produced great benefit to the service of God; since we are assured by his infallible word, that 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*.'" Generalife

* Salazar, Cronica del Gran Cardenal, p. 188.

Ferdinand weighed these counsels in his mind, but was slow in coming to a decision. "He was religiously attentive to his own interests," observes Fray Antonio Agapida; "knowing himself to be but an instrument of Providence in this holy war; and that, therefore, in consulting his own advantage, he was promoting the interests of the faith." The opinion of Queen Isabella relieved him from his perplexity. That high-minded princess was zealous for the promotion of the faith, but not for the extermination of the infidels. The Moorish kings had held their thrones as vassals to her progenitors: she was content, at present, to accord the same privilege, and that the royal prisoner should be liberated, on condition of becoming a vassal to the crown. By this means might be effected the deliverance of many Christian captives, who were languishing in Moorish chains.

King Ferdinand adopted the magnanimous measure recommended by the queen, but he accompanied it with several shrewd conditions; exacting tribute, military services, and safe passage and maintenance for Christian troops throughout the places which should adhere to

Boabdil. The captive king readily submitted to these stipulations; and swore, after the manner of his faith, to observe them with exactitude. A truce was arranged for two years, during which the Castilian sovereigns engaged to maintain him on his throne, and to assist him in recovering all places which he had lost during his captivity.

When Boabdil el Chico had solemnly agreed to this arrangement in the castle of Porcuna, preparations were made to receive him in Cordova in regal style. Superb steeds, richly caparisoned; and raiment of brocade and silk, and the most costly cloths, with all other articles of sumptuous array, were furnished to him, and to fifty Moorish cavaliers, who had come to treat for his ransom, that he might appear in state befitting the monarch of Granada, and the most distinguished vassal of the Christian sovereigns. Money, also, was advanced, to maintain him in suitable grandeur during his residence at the Castilian court, and his return to his dominions. Finally, it was ordered by the sovereigns, that, when he came to Cordova, all the nobles and dignitaries of the court should go forth to receive him.