

hawking, sharpening, idle hangers on, eager to profit by the vices and follies of the garrison. The soldiers were oftener gambling and dancing beneath the walls, than keeping watch upon the battlements; and nothing was heard, from morning till night, but the noisy contest of cards and dice, mingled with the sound of the bolero or fandango, the drowsy strumming of the guitar, and the rattling of the castanets; while often the whole was interrupted by the loud brawl and fierce and bloody contest.

The Count of Tendilla set himself vigorously to reform these excesses. He knew, that laxity of morals is generally attended by neglect of duty; and that the least breach of discipline, in the exposed situation of his fortress, might be fatal. "Here is but a handful of men," said he: "it is necessary that each man should be a hero."

He endeavoured to awaken a proper ambition in the minds of his soldiers, and to instil into them the high principles of chivalry: "A just war," he observed, "is often rendered wicked and disastrous by the manner in which it is conducted: for the righteousness of the cause is not sufficient to sanction the profligacy

of the means; and the want of order and subordination among the troops may bring ruin and disgrace upon the best concerted plans." But we cannot describe the character and conduct of this renowned commander in more forcible language than that of Fray Antonio Agapida, excepting, that the pious father places, in the foreground of his virtues, his hatred of the Moors.

"The Count de Tendilla," says he, "was a mirror of Christian knighthood: watchful, abstemious, chaste, devout, and thoroughly filled with the spirit of the cause. He laboured incessantly and strenuously for the glory of the faith, and the prosperity of their most catholic majesties; and, above all, he hated the infidels with a pure and holy hatred. This worthy cavalier discountenanced all idleness, rioting, chambering, and wantonness, among his soldiers. He kept them constantly to the exercise of arms, making them adroit in the use of their weapons and management of their steeds, and prompt for the field, at a moment's notice. He permitted no sound of lute, or harp, or song, or other loose minstrelsy, to be heard in his fortress; debauching the ear

and softening the valour of the soldier: no other music was allowed but the wholesome rolling of the drums and braying of the trumpet, and such like spirit stirring instruments, as fill the mind with thoughts of iron war. All wandering minstrels, sharpening pedlers, sturdy trulls, and other camp trumpery, were ordered to pack up their baggage, and were drummed out of the gates of Alhama. In place of such rabble, he introduced a train of holy friars, to inspirit his people by exhortation, and prayer, and choral chanting; and to spur them on to fight the good fight of faith. All games of chance were prohibited, except the game of war; and this he laboured, by vigilance and vigour, to reduce to a game of certainty. Heaven smiled upon the efforts of this righteous cavalier. His men became soldiers at all points, and terrors to the Moors: The good count never set forth on a ravage without observing the rites of confession, absolution, and communion, and obliging his followers to do the same. Their banners were blessed by the holy friars whom he maintained in Alhama; and, in this way, success was

secured to his arms; and he was enabled to lay waste the land of the heathen.

“The fortress of Alhama,” continues Fray Antonio Agapida, “overlooked, from its lofty site, a great part of the fertile vega, watered by the Cazin and the Xenil. From this he made frequent sallies, sweeping away the flocks and herds from the pasture, the labourer from the field, and the convoy from the road; so that it was said by the Moors, that a beetle could not crawl across the vega without being seen by Count Tendilla. The peasantry, therefore, were fain to betake themselves to watchtowers and fortified hamlets, where they shut up their cattle, garnered their corn, and sheltered their wives and children. Even there they were not safe: the count would storm these rustic fortresses with fire and sword; make captives of their inhabitants; carry off the corn, the oil, the silks, and cattle; and leave the ruins blazing and smoking, within the very sight of Granada.

“It was a pleasing and refreshing sight,” continues the good father, “to behold the pious knight and his followers returning from

one of these crusades, leaving the rich land of the infidel in smoking desolation behind them. To behold the long line of mules and asses, laden with the plunder of the Gentiles, the hosts of captive Moors, men, women, and children; droves of sturdy beeves; lowing kine; and bleating sheep; all winding up the steep acclivity to the gates of Alhama, pricked on by the catholic soldiery. His garrison thus thrived on the fat of the land and the spoil of the infidel: nor was he unmindful of the pious fathers, whose blessings crowned his enterprises with success; a large portion of the spoil was always dedicated to the church, and the good friars were ever ready at the gates to hail him on his return, and receive the share allotted them. Besides these allotments, he made many votive offerings, either in time of peril or on the eve of a foray; and the chapels of Alhama were resplendent with chalices, crosses, and other precious gifts, made by this catholic cavalier." Thus eloquently does the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida dilate in praise of the good Count de Tendilla; and other historians, of equal veracity but less unction, agree in pro-

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Junta de Andalucía
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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

nouncing him one of the ablest of Spanish generals. So terrible, in fact, did he become in the land, that the Moorish peasantry could not venture a league from Granada or Loxa, to labour in the fields, without peril of being carried into captivity. The people of Granada clamoured against Muley Aben Hassan for suffering his lands to be thus outraged and insulted, and demanded to have this bold marauder shut up in his fortress. The old monarch was roused by their remonstrances. He sent forth powerful troops of horse to protect the country during the season that the husbandmen were abroad in the fields. These troops patrolled, in formidable squadrons, in the neighbourhood of Alhama, keeping strict watch upon its gates, so that it was impossible for the Christians to make a sally, without being seen and interrupted.

While Alhama was thus blockaded by a roving force of Moorish cavalry, the inhabitants were awakened, one night, by a tremendous crash, that shook the fortress to its foundations. The garrison flew to arms, supposing it some assault of the enemy. The alarm proved to have been caused by the rupture of a portion

of the wall, which, undermined by heavy rains, had suddenly given way, leaving a large chasm yawning towards the plain.

The Count de Tendilla was for a time in great anxiety. Should this breach be discovered by the blockading horsemen, they would arouse the country. Granada and Loxa would pour out an overwhelming force, and they would find his walls ready sapped for an assault. In this fearful emergency, the count displayed his noted talent for expedients. He ordered a quantity of linen cloth to be stretched in front of the breach, painted in imitation of stone, and indented with battlements, so as, at a distance, to resemble the other parts of the walls. Behind this skreen, he employed workmen, day and night, in repairing the fracture. No one was permitted to leave the fortress, lest information of its defenceless plight should be carried to the Moors. Light squadrons of the enemy were seen hovering about the plain, but none approached near enough to discover the deception; and thus, in the course of a few days, the wall was rebuilt stronger than before.

There was another expedient of this shrewd

veteran, which greatly excites the marvel of Agapida. "It happened," he observes, "that this catholic cavalier at one time was destitute of gold and silver, wherewith to pay the wages of his troops; and the soldiers murmured greatly, seeing that they had not the means of purchasing necessaries from the people of the town. In this dilemma, what does this most sagacious commander? He takes him a number of little morsels of paper, on which he inscribes various sums, large and small, according to the nature of the case, and signs them with his own hand and name. These did he give to the soldiery, in earnest of their pay. How! you will say, are soldiers to be paid with scraps of paper? Even so, I answer, and well paid too, as I will presently make manifest: for the good count issued a proclamation, ordering the inhabitants of Alhama to take these morsels of paper for the full amount thereon inscribed, promising to redeem them, at a future time, with silver and gold, and threatening severe punishment to all who should refuse. The people, having full confidence in his words, and trusting, that he would be as willing to perform the one pro-

mise, as he certainly was able to perform the other, took these curious morsels of paper without hesitation or demur.

“ Thus, by a subtle and most miraculous kind of alchymy, did this catholic cavalier turn worthless paper into precious gold, and make his late impoverished garrison abound in money.”

It is but just to add, that the Count de Tendilla redeemed his promises like a loyal knight; and this miracle, as it appeared in the eyes of Fray Antonio Agapida, is the first instance on record of paper money, which has since inundated the civilized world with unbounded opulence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Foray of Christian knights into the territories of the Moors.

THE Spanish cavaliers, who had survived the memorable massacre among the mountains of Malaga, although they had repeatedly avenged the death of their companions, yet could not forget the horror and humiliation of their defeat. Nothing would satisfy them but to undertake a second expedition of the kind, to carry fire and sword throughout a wide part of the Moorish territories, and to leave all those regions, which had triumphed in their disaster, a black and burning monument of their vengeance. Their wishes accorded with the policy of the king, who desired to lay waste the country, and destroy the resources, of the enemy; every assistance was therefore given, to promote and accomplish their enterprise.

In the spring of 1484, the ancient city of

Antequera again resounded with arms. Numbers of the same cavaliers, who had assembled there so gayly the preceding year, again came wheeling into the gates, with their steeled and shining warriors, but with a more dark and solemn brow than on that disastrous occasion; for they had the recollection of their slaughtered friends present to their minds, whose deaths they were to avenge.

In a little while there was a chosen force of six thousand horse and twelve thousand foot assembled in Antequera, many of them the very flower of Spanish chivalry, troops of the established military and religious orders, and of the Holy Brotherhood.

Every precaution had been taken to provide this army with all things needful for its extensive and perilous inroad. Numerous surgeons accompanied it, who were to attend upon all the sick and wounded, without charge, being paid for their services by the queen. Isabella also, in her considerate humanity, provided six spacious tents, furnished with beds, and all things requisite for the wounded and infirm. These continued to be used in all great expeditions throughout the war, and were called

the Queen's Hospital. The worthy father, Fray Antonio Agapida, vaunts this benignant provision of the queen, as the first introduction of a regular camp hospital in campaigning service.

Thus thoroughly prepared, the cavaliers issued forth from Antequera in splendid and terrible array, but with less exulting confidence and vaunting ostentation than on their former foray: and this was the order of the army.

Don Alonzo de Aguilar led the advance guard, accompanied by Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova, alcaide de los Donzeles, and Luiz Fernandez Puerto Carrero, Count of Palma, with their household troops. They were followed by Juan de Merlo, Juan de Almara, and Carlos de Biezman, of the Holy Brotherhood, with the men at arms of their captaincies.

The second battalion was commanded by the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, with the cavaliers of Santiago, and the troops of the house of Ponce Leon: with these also went the senior commander of Calatrava, and the knights of that order, and various other cavaliers and their retainers.

The right wing of this second battalion was led by Gonsalvo de Cordova, afterwards renowned as grand captain of Spain : the left wing, by Diego Lopez de Avila. They were accompanied by several cavaliers, and certain captains of the Holy Brotherhood, with their men at arms.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Count de Cabra commanded the third battalion, with the troops of their respective houses. They were accompanied by other commanders of note, with their forces.

The rearguard was brought up by the senior commander and knights of Alcantara, followed by the Andalusian chivalry, from Xerez, Ecija, and Carmona.

Such was the army that issued forth from the gates of Antequera, on one of the most extensive *talas*, or devastating inroads, that ever laid waste the kingdom of Granada.

The army entered the Moorish territory by the way of Alora, destroying all the corn fields, vineyards and orchards, and plantations of olives, round that city. It then proceeded through the rich valleys and fertile uplands of Coin, Cazaraboncla, Almexia, and Cartama,

and, in ten days, all those fertile regions were a smoking and frightful desert. From hence it pursued its slow and destructive course, like the stream of lava of a volcano, through the regions of Pupiana and Alhendin, and so on to the vega of Malaga, laying waste the groves of olives and almonds, and the fields of grain; and destroying every green thing. The Moors of some of those places interceded in vain for their groves and fields, offering to deliver up their Christian captives. One part of the army blockaded the towns, while the other ravaged the surrounding country. Sometimes the Moors sallied forth desperately to defend their property, but were driven back to their gates with slaughter; and their suburbs pillaged and burnt. It was an awful spectacle at night, to behold the volumes of black smoke, mingled with lurid flames, that rose from the burning suburbs, and the women on the walls of the town, wringing their hands, and shrieking at the desolation of their dwellings.

The destroying army, on arriving at the sea coast, found vessels lying off shore, laden with all kinds of provisions and munitions for its

use, which had been sent from Seville and Xerez. It was thus enabled to continue its desolating career. Advancing to the neighbourhood of Malaga, it was bravely assailed by the Moors of that city, and there was severe skirmishing for a whole day; but while the main part of the army encountered the enemy, the rest ravaged the whole vega, and destroyed all the mills. As the object of the expedition was not to capture places, but merely to burn, ravage, and destroy, the host, satisfied with the mischief they had done in the vega, turned their backs upon Malaga, and again entered the mountains. They passed by Coin, and through the regions of Allagagna, and Gatero, and Alhamin; all which were likewise desolated. In this way did they make the circuit of that chain of rich and verdant valleys, the glory of those mountains, and the pride and delight of the Moors. For forty days did they continue on, like a consuming fire, leaving a smoking and howling waste to mark their course, until, weary with the work of destruction, and having fully sated their revenge for the massacre of the Axarquia, they returned in triumph to the meadows of Antequera.

In the month of June, King Ferdinand took command in person of this destructive army. He increased its force; and he added to its means of mischief several lombards, and other heavy artillery, intended for the battering of towns, and managed by engineers from France and Germany. With these, the Marquis of Cadiz assured the king, he would soon be able to reduce the Moorish fortresses. They were only calculated for defence against the engines anciently used in warfare. Their walls and towers were high and thin, depending on their rough and rocky situations. The stone and iron balls, thundered from the lombards, would soon tumble them in ruins upon the heads of their defenders.

The fate of Alora speedily proved the truth of this opinion. It was strongly posted on a rock, washed by a river. The artillery soon battered down two of the towers, and a part of the wall. The Moors were thrown into consternation at the vehemence of the assault, and the effect of those tremendous engines upon their vaunted bulwarks. The roaring of the artillery, and the tumbling of the walls, terrified the women; who beset the alcaide.

with vociferous supplications to surrender. The place was given up on the 20th of June, on condition that the inhabitants might depart with their effects. The people of Malaga, as yet unacquainted with the power of this battering ordnance, were so incensed at those of Alora, for what they considered a tame surrender, that they would not admit them into their city.

A similar fate attended the town of Setenil, built on a lofty rock, and esteemed impregnable. Many times had it been besieged, under former Christian kings, but never had it been taken. Even now, for several days, the artillery was directed against it without effect; and many of the cavaliers murmured at the Marquis of Cadiz, for having counselled the king to attack this unconquerable place*.

On the same night that these reproaches were uttered, the marquis directed the artillery himself. He levelled the lombards at the bottom of the walls, and at the gates. In a little while, the gates were battered to pieces; a great breach was effected in the walls; and

* Cura de los Palacios.

the Moors were fain to capitulate. Twenty-four Christian captives, who had been taken in the defeat of the mountains of Malaga, were rescued from the dungeons of this fortress, and hailed the Marquis of Cadiz as their deliverer.

Needless is it to mention the capture of various other places, which surrendered without waiting to be attacked. The Moors had always shown great bravery and perseverance in defending their towns; they were formidable in their sallies and skirmishes, and patient in enduring hunger and thirst when besieged: but this terrible ordnance, which demolished their walls with such ease and rapidity, overwhelmed them with confusion and dismay, and rendered vain all resistance. King Ferdinand was so struck with the effect of this artillery, that he ordered the number of lombards to be increased; and these potent engines had henceforth a great influence on the fortunes of the war.

The last operation of this year, so disastrous to the Moors, was an inroad by King Ferdinand, in the latter part of summer, into the vega; in which he ravaged the country, burned

two villages near to Granada, and destroyed the mills close to the very gates of the city.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was overwhelmed with dismay at this desolation; which, during the whole year, had been raging throughout his territories, and had now reached to the walls of his capital. His fierce spirit was broken by misfortunes and infirmity: he offered to purchase a peace, and to hold his crown as a tributary vassal. Ferdinand would listen to no propositions; the absolute conquest of Granada was the great object of the war; and he was resolved never to rest content without its complete fulfilment. Having supplied and strengthened the garrisons of the places he had taken in the heart of the Moorish territories, he enjoined their commanders to render every assistance to the younger Moorish king, in the civil war against his father. He then returned with his army to Cordova, in great triumph; closing a series of ravaging campaigns, that had filled the kingdom of Granada with grief and consternation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Attempt of El Zagal to surprise Boabdil in Almeria.

DURING this year of sorrow and disaster to the Moors, the younger king Boabdil, most truly called the unfortunate, held a diminished and feeble court in the maritime city of Almeria. He retained little more than the name of king; and was supported, in even the shadow of royalty, by the countenance and treasures of the Castilian sovereigns. Still he trusted, that, in the fluctuation of events, the inconstant nation might once more return to his standard, and replace him on the throne of the Alhambra.

His mother, the high spirited sultana Ayxa la Horra, endeavoured to rouse him from this passive state. "It is a feeble mind," said she, "that waits for the turn of fortune's wheel; the brave mind seizes upon it, and turns it to its purpose. Take the field, and you may drive

danger before you; remain cowering at home, and it besieges you in your dwelling. By a bold enterprise, you may regain your splendid throne in Granada; by passive forbearance, you will forfeit even this miserable throne in Almeria."

Boabdil had not the force of soul to follow these courageous counsels; and, in a little time, the evils his mother had predicted fell upon him.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was almost extinguished by age and infirmity. He had nearly lost his sight, and was completely bedridden. His brother Abdalla, surnamed El Zagal, or "the valiant," the same who had assisted in the massacre of the Spanish chivalry among the mountains of Malaga, was commander in chief of the Moorish armies; and gradually took upon himself most of the cares of sovereignty. Among other things, he was particularly zealous in espousing his brother's quarrel with his son; and he prosecuted it with such vehemence, that many affirmed there was something more than fraternal sympathy at the bottom of his zeal.

The disasters and disgraces inflicted on the

country by the Christians, during this year, had wounded the national feelings of the people of Almeria; and many had felt indignant, that Boabdil should remain passive at such a time; or rather, should appear to make a common cause with the enemy. His uncle Abdalla diligently fomented this feeling by his agents. The same arts were made use of that had been successful in Granada. Boabdil was secretly, but actively, denounced by the alfaquis as an apostate, leagued with the Christians against his country and his early faith. The affections of the populace and soldiery were gradually alienated from him, and a deep conspiracy concerted for his destruction. In the month of February, 1485, El Zagal suddenly appeared before Almeria, at the head of a troop of horse. The alfaquis were prepared for his arrival, and the gates were thrown open to him. He entered, with his band, and galloped to the citadel. The alcayde would have made resistance; but the garrison put him to death, and received El Zagal with acclamations. El Zagal rushed through the apartments of the alcazar, but he sought in vain for Boabdil. He found the sultana Ayxa la Horra in one of the saloons,

with Ben Ahagete, a younger brother of the monarch, a valiant Abencerrage, and several attendants, who rallied round them to protect them. "Where is the traitor Boabdil?" exclaimed El Zagal. "I know no traitor more perfidious than thyself," exclaimed the intrepid sultana: "and I trust my son is in safety, to take vengeance on thy treason." The rage of El Zagal was without bounds, when he learned that his intended victim had escaped. In his fury he slew the prince, Ben Ahagete; and his followers fell upon and massacred the Abencerrage and attendants. As to the proud sultana, she was borne away prisoner, and loaded with revilings; as having upheld her son in his rebellion, and fomented a civil war.

The unfortunate Boabdil had been apprized of his danger by a faithful soldier, just in time to make his escape. Throwing himself on one of the fleetest horses of his stables, and followed by a handful of adherents, he had galloped, in the confusion, out of the gates of Almeria. Several of the cavalry of El Zagal, who were stationed without the walls, perceived his flight, and attempted to pursue him. Their

horses were jaded with travel, and he soon left them far behind. But whither was he to fly? Every fortress and castle in the kingdom was closed against him. He knew not whom among the Moors to trust; for they had been taught to detest him, as a traitor and an apostate. He had no alternative but to seek refuge among the Christians, his hereditary enemies. With a heavy heart, he turned his horse's head towards Cordova. He had to lurk, like a fugitive, through a part of his own dominions; nor did he feel himself secure until he had passed the frontier, and beheld the mountain barrier of his country towering behind him. Then it was that he became conscious of his humiliating state: a fugitive from his throne; an outcast from his nation; a king without a kingdom. He smote his breast in an agony of grief. "Evil indeed," exclaimed he, "was the day of my birth; and truly was I named El Zogoybi, the unlucky!"

He entered the gates of Cordova with downcast countenance, and with a train of only forty followers. The sovereigns were absent; but the cavaliers of Andalusia manifested that sympathy in the misfortunes of the monarch,

that becomes men of lofty and chivalrous souls. They received him with great distinction, attended him with the utmost courtesy; and he was honourably entertained by the civil and military commanders of that ancient city.

In the mean time, El Zagal put a new alcaide over Almeria, to govern in the name of his brother; and, having strongly garrisoned the place, he repaired to Malaga, where an attack of the Christians was apprehended. The young monarch being driven out of the land, and the old monarch blind and bedridden, El Zagal, at the head of the armies, was virtually the sovereign of Granada. The people were pleased with having a new idol to look up to, and a new name to shout forth; and El Zagal was hailed with acclamations, as the main hope of the nation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How King Ferdinand commenced another campaign against the Moors, and how he laid siege to Coin and Cartama.

THE great effect of the battering ordnance, in demolishing the Moorish fortresses, in the preceding year, induced King Ferdinand to procure a powerful train for the campaign of 1485; in the course of which he resolved to assault some of the most formidable holds of the enemy. An army of nine thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry assembled at Cordova early in the spring; and the king took the field on the 5th of April. It had been determined in secret council, to attack the city of Malaga, that ancient and important seaport, on which Granada depended for foreign aid and supplies. It was thought proper previously, however, to get possession of various towns and fortresses in the valleys of Santa Maria and Cartama, through which pass the roads to Malaga.

The first place assailed was the town of Benamaquex. It had submitted to the catholic sovereigns in the preceding year, but had since renounced its allegiance. King Ferdinand was enraged at the rebellion of the inhabitants, "I will make their punishment," said he, "a terror to others: they shall be loyal through force, if not through faith." The place was carried by storm; one hundred and eight of the principal inhabitants were either put to the sword or hanged on the battlements. The rest were carried into captivity*.

The towns of Coin and Cartama were besieged on the same day; the first by a division of the army led on by the Marquis of Cadiz; the second by another division, commanded by Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, the brave senior of Palma. The king, with the rest of the army, remained posted between the two places, to render assistance to either division. The batteries opened upon both places at the same time; and the thunder of the lombards was mutually heard from one camp to the other.

* Pulgar. Garibay. Cura de los Palacios.

The Moors made frequent sallies, and a valiant defence; but they were confounded by the tremendous uproar of the batteries, and the destruction of their walls. In the mean time, the alarm fires gathered together the Moorish mountaineers of the Serrania, who assembled in great numbers in the city of Monda, about a league from Cordova.

They made several attempts to enter the besieged town, but in vain; they were each time intercepted and driven back by the Christians, and were reduced to gaze at a distance, in despair, on the destruction of the place. While thus situated, there rode one day into Monda a fierce and haughty Moorish chieftain, at the head of a band of swarthy African horsemen: it was Hamet el Zegri, the fiery spirited alcayde of Ronda, at the head of his band of Gomerés. He had not yet recovered from the rage and mortification of his defeat on the banks of the Lopera, in the disastrous foray of Old Bexir, when he had been obliged to steal back to his mountains, with the loss of his bravest followers. He had ever since panted for revenge. He now rode among the host of war-

riors assembled at Monda. "Who among you," cried he, "feels pity for the women and children of Coin, exposed to captivity and death? Whoever he is, let him follow me, who am ready to die as a Moslem for the relief of Moslems!" So saying, he seized a white banner, and, waving it over his head, rode forth from the town, followed by the Gomeres. Many of the warriors, roused by his words and his example, spurred resolutely after his banner. The people of Coin, being prepared for this attempt, sallied forth as they saw the white banner, and made an attack upon the Christian camp; and, in the confusion of the moment, Hamet and his followers galloped into the gates. This reinforcement animated the besieged, and Hamet exhorted them to hold out obstinately in defence of life and the town. As the Gomeres were veteran warriors, the more they were attacked, the harder they fought.

At length, a great breach was made in the walls; and Ferdinand, who was impatient of the resistance of the place, ordered the Duke of Naxera and the Count of Benavente to enter with their troops; and, as their forces

were not sufficient, he sent word to Luis de Cerda, Duke of Medina Celi, to send a part of his people to their assistance.

The feudal pride of the duke was roused at this demand. "Tell my lord the king," said the haughty grandee, "that I have come to succour him with my household troops. If my people are ordered to any place, I am to go with them; but, if I am to remain in the camp, they must remain with me: for troops cannot serve without their commander, nor their commander without his troops."

The reply of the high-spirited grandee perplexed the cautious Ferdinand, who knew the jealous pride of his powerful nobles. In the mean time, the people of the camp, having made all preparations for the assault, were impatient to be led forward. Upon this Pero Ruyz de Alarcon put himself at their head, and, seizing their mantas, or portable bulwarks, and their other defences, they made a gallant assault, and fought their way in at the breach. The Moors were so overcome by the fury of their assault, that they retreated fighting to the square of the town. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon thought the place was car-

ried, when suddenly Hamet and his Gomeres came scouring through the streets, with wild war cries, and fell furiously upon the Christians: The latter were, in their turn, beaten back; and, while attacked in front by the Gomeres, were assailed by the inhabitants with all kinds of missiles, from their roofs and windows. They at length gave way, and retreated through the breach. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon still maintained his ground in one of the principal streets. The few cavaliers that stood by him urged him to fly! "No," said he, "I came here to fight, and not to fly!" He was presently surrounded by the Gomeres. His companions fled for their lives. Before they fled, they saw him covered with wounds, but still fighting desperately for the fame of a good cavalier*.

The resistance of the inhabitants, though aided by the valour of the Gomeres, was of no avail. The battering artillery of the Christians demolished their walls; combustibles were thrown into their town, which set it on fire in various places, and they were at length compelled to capitulate. They were permitted

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 42.

to depart with their effects, and the Gomeres with their arms. Hamet el Zegri and his African band sallied forth, and rode proudly through the Christian camp; nor could the Spanish cavaliers refrain from regarding with admiration that haughty warrior and his devoted and dauntless adherents.

The capture of Coin was accompanied by that of Cartama. The fortifications of the latter were repaired and garrisoned; but Coin being too extensive to be defended by a moderate force, its walls were demolished. The siege of these places struck such terror into the surrounding country, that the Moors of many of the neighbouring towns abandoned their homes, and fled, with such of their effects as they could carry away: upon which the king gave orders to demolish their walls and towers.

King Ferdinand now left his camp and his heavy artillery near Cartama, and proceeded with his lighter troops to reconnoitre Malaga. By this time the secret plan of attack, arranged in the council of war at Cordova, was known to all the world. The vigilant warrior, El Zagal, had thrown himself into the

place. He had put all the fortifications, which were of vast strength, into a state of defence, and had sent orders to the alcajdes of the mountain towns to hasten with their forces to his assistance.

The very day that Ferdinand appeared before the place, El Zagal sallied forth to receive him at the head of a thousand cavalry, the choicest warriors of Granada. A hot skirmish took place among the gardens and olive trees near the city. Many were killed on both sides, and this gave the Christians a sharp foretaste of what they might expect, if they attempted to besiege the place.

When the skirmish was over, the Marquis of Cadiz had a private conference with the king. He represented the difficulty of besieging Malaga with their present force, especially as their plans had been discovered and anticipated, and the whole country was marching over the mountains to oppose them. The marquis, who had secret intelligence from all quarters, had received a letter from Juceph Xerife, a Moor of Ronda, of Christian lineage, apprizing him of the situation of that important place and its garrison, which at that

moment laid it open to attack; and the marquis was urgent with the king to seize upon this critical moment, and secure a place, which was one of the most powerful Moorish fortresses on the frontiers, and, in the hands of Hamet el Zegri, had been the scourge of Andalusia. The good marquis had another motive for his advice, becoming a true and loyal knight. In the deep dungeons of Ronda languished several of his companions in arms, who had been captured in the defeat in the Axarquía. To break their chains, and restore them to liberty and light, he felt to be his peculiar duty, as one of those who had most promoted that disastrous enterprise.

King Ferdinand listened to the advice of the marquis. He knew the importance of Ronda, which was considered one of the keys of the kingdom of Granada; and he was disposed to punish the inhabitants, for the aid they had rendered to the garrison at Coin. The siege of Malaga, therefore, was abandoned for the present, and preparations made for a rapid and secret move against the city of Ronda.

CHAPTER XXX.

Siege of Ronda.

THE bold Hamet el Zegri, the alcaide of Ronda, had returned sullenly to his stronghold after the surrender of Coin. He had fleshed his sword in battle with the Christians; but his thirst for vengeance was still unsatisfied. Hamet gloried in the strength of his fortress and the valour of his people. A fierce and warlike populace was at his command; his signal fires would summon all the warriors of the Serrania; his Gomeres almost subsisted on the spoils of Andalusia; and in the rock on which his fortress was built were hopeless dungeons, filled with Christian captives, who had been carried off by these war hawks of the mountains.

Ronda was considered as impregnable. It was situate in the heart of wild and rugged mountains, and perched upon an isolated rock,

crested by a strong citadel, with triple walls and towers. A deep ravine, or rather a perpendicular chasm of rocks, of frightful depth, surrounded three parts of the city; through this flowed the Rio Verde, or Green River. There were two suburbs to the city, fortified by walls and towers, and almost inaccessible, from the natural asperity of the rocks. Around this rugged city were deep rich valleys, sheltered by the mountains, refreshed by constant streams, abounding with grain, and the most delicious fruits, and yielding verdant meadows; in which was reared a renowned breed of horses, the best in the whole kingdom for a foray.

Hamet el Zegri had scarcely returned to Ronda, when he received intelligence, that the Christian army was marching to the siege of Malaga, and orders from El Zagal to send troops to his assistance. Hamet sent a part of his garrison for that purpose. In the meantime, he meditated an expedition to which he was stimulated by pride and revenge. All Andalusia was now drained of its troops: there was an opportunity, therefore, for an inroad, by which he might wipe out the disgrace of his defeat at the battle of Lopera. Appre-

hending no danger to his mountain city, now that the storm of war had passed down into the vega of Malaga, he left but a remnant of his garrison to man its walls; and, putting himself at the head of his band of Gomeres, swept down suddenly into the plains of Andalusia. He careered, almost without resistance, over those vast campiñas, or pasture lands, which form a part of the domains of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. In vain the bells were rung, and the alarm fires kindled; the band of Hamet had passed by before any force could be assembled; and was only to be traced, like a hurricane, by the devastation it had made.

Hamet regained in safety the Serrania de Ronda, exulting in his successful inroad. The mountain glens were filled with long droves of cattle, and flocks of sheep, from the campiñas of Medina Sidonia. There were mules, too, laden with the plunder of the villages; and every warrior had some costly spoil of jewels for his favourite mistress.

As El Zegri drew near to Ronda, he was roused from his dream of triumph by the sound of heavy ordnance, bellowing through the mountain defiles. His heart misgave him:

he put spurs to his horse, and galloped in advance of his lagging cavalgada. As he proceeded, the noise of the ordnance increased, echoing from cliff to cliff. Spurring his horse up a craggy height, which commanded an extensive view, he beheld, to his consternation, the country about Ronda white with the tents of a besieging army. The royal standard, displayed before a proud encampment, showed that Ferdinand himself was present; while the incessant blaze and thunder of artillery, and the volumes of overhanging smoke, told the work of destruction that was going on.

The royal army had succeeded in coming upon Ronda by surprise, during the absence of its alcaide, and most of its garrison; but its inhabitants were warlike, and defended themselves bravely, trusting that Hamet and his Gomeres would soon return to their assistance.

The fancied strength of their bulwarks had been of little avail against the batteries of the besiegers. In the space of four days, three towers, and great masses of the walls which defended the suburbs, were battered down, and the suburbs taken and plundered. Lom-

bards and other heavy ordnance were now levelled at the walls of the city, and stones and missiles of all kinds hurled into the streets. The very rock on which the city stood shook with the thunder of the artillery; and the Christian captives, deep within its dungeons, hailed the sound as the promise of deliverance.

When Hamet el Zegri beheld his city thus surrounded and assailed, he called upon his men to follow him, and make a desperate attempt to cut their way through to its relief. They proceeded stealthily through the mountains, until they came to the nearest heights above the Christian camp. When night fell, and part of the army was sunk in sleep, they descended the rocks, and rushing suddenly upon the weakest part of the camp, endeavoured to break their way through, and gain the city. The camp was too strong to be forced; they were driven back to the crags of the mountains, whence they defended themselves by showering down darts and stones upon their pursuers.

Hamet now lighted alarm fires about the heights; his standard was joined by the neigh-

bouring mountaineers, and by troops from Malaga. Thus reinforced, he made repeated assaults upon the Christians, cutting off all stragglers from the camp. All his attempts, however, to force his way into the city were fruitless. Many of his bravest men were slain, and he was obliged to retreat into the fastnesses of the mountains.

In the mean while, the distress of Ronda was hourly increasing. The Marquis of Cadiz, having possession of the suburbs, was enabled to approach to the very foot of the perpendicular precipice, rising from the river, on the summit of which the city is built. At the foot of this rock is a living fountain of limpid water, gushing into a great natural basin. A secret mine led down from within the city to this fountain, by several hundred steps, cut in the solid rock. From this the city obtained its chief supply of water; and the steps were deeply worn by the weary feet of Christian captives employed in the painful labour. The Marquis of Cadiz discovered this subterranean passage, and directed his pioneers to counter-mine it through the solid body of the rock.

They pierced to the shaft ; and, stopping it up, deprived the city of the benefit of this precious fountain.

While the brave Marquis of Cadiz was thus pressing the siege with zeal, and glowing with the generous thoughts of soon delivering his companions in arms from the Moorish dungeons, far other were the feelings of the alcaide, Hamet el Zegri. He smote his breast, and gnashed his teeth, in impotent fury, as he beheld, from the mountain cliffs, the destruction of the city. Every thunder of the Christian ordnance seemed to batter against his heart. He saw tower after tower tumbling by day, and at night the city blazed like a volcano. "They fired not merely stones from their ordnance," says a chronicler of the times, "but likewise great balls of iron, cast in moulds, which demolished every thing they struck." They threw also balls of tow, steeped in pitch and oil and gunpowder, which, when once on fire, were not to be extinguished, and which set the houses in flames.

Great was the horror of the inhabitants. They knew not where to flee for refuge: their houses were in a blaze, or shattered by the

ordnance. The streets were perilous, from the falling ruins and the bounding balls, which dashed to pieces every thing they encountered. At night the city looked like a fiery furnace: the cries and wailings of the women were heard between the thunders of the ordnance, and reached even to the Moors on the opposite mountains, who answered them by yells of fury and despair.

All hope of external succour being at an end, the inhabitants of Ronda were compelled to capitulate. Ferdinand was easily prevailed upon to grant them favourable terms. The place was capable of longer resistance; and he feared for the safety of his camp, as the forces were daily augmenting on the mountains, and making frequent assaults. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with their effects, either to Barbary or elsewhere; and those who chose to reside in Spain had lands assigned them, and were indulged in the exercise of their religion.

No sooner did the place surrender, than detachments were sent to attack the Moors, who hovered about the neighbouring mountains. Hamet el Zegri, however, did not remain, to

try a fruitless battle. He gave up the game as lost, and retreated with his Gomeres, filled with grief and rage, but trusting to fortune to give him future vengeance.

The first care of the good Marquis of Cadiz, on entering Ronda, was to deliver his unfortunate companions in arms from the dungeons of the fortress. What a difference in their looks, from the time, when, flushed with health and hope, and arrayed in military pomp, they had sallied forth upon the mountain foray. Many of them were almost naked, with irons at their ankles, and beards reaching to their waists. Their meeting with the marquis was joyful, yet it had the look of grief; for their joy was mingled with many bitter recollections. There was an immense number of other captives, among whom were several young men of noble families, who, with filial piety, had surrendered themselves prisoners in place of their fathers.

The captives were all provided with mules, and sent to the queen at Cordova. The humane heart of Isabella melted at the sight of the piteous cavalcade. They were all sup-

plied by her with food and raiment, and money to pay their expenses to their homes. Their chains were hung as pious trophies against the exterior of the church of St. Juan de los Reyes in Toledo, where the Christian traveller may regale his eyes with the sight of them at this very day.

Among the Moorish captives was a young infidel maiden of great beauty, who desired to become a Christian, and to remain in Spain. She had been inspired with the light of the true faith, through the ministry of a young man, who had been a captive in Ronda. He was anxious to complete his good work by marrying her. The queen consented to their pious wishes, having first taken care, that the young maiden should be properly purified by the holy sacrament of baptism.

“ Thus this pestilent nest of warfare and infidelity, the city of Ronda,” says the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, “ was converted to the true faith by the thunder of our artillery. X An example which was soon followed by Casanbonelas, Alarbella, and other towns in these parts ; insomuch that, in the course

of this expedition, no less than seventy-two places were rescued from the vile sect of Mahomet, and placed under the benignant domination of the cross."

*particularly displayed in
the Christian Scourge!!*



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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

x in all times a powerful eloquence

CHAPTER XXXI.

How the people of Granada invited El Zagal to the throne; and how he marched to the capital.

THE people of Granada were a versatile, unsteady race, and exceedingly given to make and unmake kings. They had, for a long time, vacillated between old Muley Aben Hassan and his son, Boabdil el Chico; sometimes setting up the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both at once, according to the pinch and pressure of external evils. They found, however, that the evils still went on increasing, in defiance of every change; and were at their wits' end to devise some new combination or arrangement, by which an efficient government might be wrought out of two bad kings.

When the tidings arrived of the fall of Ronda, and the consequent ruin of the frontier, a tumultuous assemblage took place in one of the public squares. As usual, the

people attributed the misfortunes of the country exclusively to the faults of their rulers: for the populace never imagine, that any part of their miseries can originate with themselves. A crafty alfaqui, named Alyme Mazer, who had watched the current of their discontents, rose, and harangued them.

“You have been choosing and changing,” said he, “between two monarchs; and who and what are they? Muley Aben Hassan for one; a man worn out by age and infirmities; unable to sally forth against the foe, even when ravaging to the very gates of the city: and Boabdil el Chico for the other; an apostate, a traitor, a deserter from his throne, a fugitive among the enemies of his nation; a man fated to misfortune, and proverbially named ‘the unlucky.’”

“In a time of overwhelming war, like the present, he only is fit to sway a sceptre, who can wield a sword. Would you seek such a man? You need not look far. Allah has sent such a one, in this time of distress, to retrieve the fortunes of Granada. You already know whom I mean. You know it can be no other than your general, the invincible Abdalla;

whose surname of El Zagal has become a watchword in battle, rousing the courage of the faithful, and striking terror into the unbelievers."

The multitude received the words of the alfaqui with acclamations; they were delighted with the idea of a third king over Granada; and Abdallá el Zagal, being of the royal family, and already in the virtual exercise of royal power, the measure had nothing in it that appeared either rash or violent. A deputation was therefore sent to El Zagal at Malaga, inviting him to repair to Granada, to receive the crown.

El Zagal expressed great surprise and repugnance, when the mission was announced to him; and nothing but his patriotic zeal for the public safety, and his fraternal eagerness to relieve the aged Aben Hassan from the cares of government, prevailed upon him to accept the offer of the crown. Leaving, therefore, Rodovan de Vanegas, one of the bravest Moorish generals, in command of Malaga, he departed for Granada, attended by three hundred trusty cavaliers.

Old Muley Aben Hassan did not wait for

the arrival of his brother. Unable any longer to buffet with the storms of the times, his only solicitude was to seek some safe and quiet harbour of repose. In one of the deep valleys which indent the Mediterranean coast, and which are shut up, on the land side, by stupendous mountains, stood the little city of Almuñecar. The valley was watered by the river Frio, and abounded with fruits, with grain, and with pasturage. The city was strongly fortified; and the garrison and alcaide were devoted to the old monarch. This was the place chosen by Muley Aben Hassan for his asylum. His first care was to send thither all his treasures; his next, to take refuge there himself; his third, that his sultana Zorayna, and their two sons, should follow him.

In the mean time, Muley Abdalla el Zagal pursued his journey towards the capital, attended by his three hundred cavaliers. The road from Malaga to Granada winds close by Alhama, and is commanded by that fortress. This had been a most perilous pass for the Moors during the time that Alhama was commanded by the Count de Tendilla. Not a traveller could escape his eagle eye; and his gar-

ri-son was ever ready for a sally. The Count de Tendilla, however, had been relieved from this arduous post; and it had been given in charge to Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero or treasurer of the order of Calatrava; an easy, indulgent man, who had with him three hundred gallant knights of his order, beside other mercenary troops. The garrison had fallen off in discipline; the cavaliers were hardy in fight and daring in foray, but confident in themselves, and negligent of proper precautions. Just before the journey of El Zagal, a number of these cavaliers, with several soldiers of fortune of the garrison, in all one hundred and seventy men, had sallied forth to harass the Moorish country, during its present distracted state; and having ravaged the valleys of the Sierra Nevada, or snowy mountains, were returning to Alhama, in gay spirits, and laden with booty.

As El Zagal passed through the neighbourhood of Alhama, he recollected the ancient perils of the road, and sent light corradores in advance, to inspect each rock and ravine where a foe might lurk in ambush. One of these scouts, overlooking a narrow valley, which