

opened upon the road, descried a troop of horsemen, on the banks of a little stream. They were dismounted, and had taken the bridles from their steeds, that they might crop the fresh grass on the banks of the river. The horsemen were scattered about; some reposing in the shade of rocks and trees; others gambling for the spoil they had taken. Not a sentinel was posted to keep guard; every thing showed the perfect security of men, who consider themselves beyond the reach of danger.

These careless cavaliers were, in fact, the knights of Calatrava, with a part of their companions in arms, returning from their foray. A part of their force had passed on with the cavalgada: ninety of the principal cavaliers had halted, to repose and refresh themselves in this valley. El Zagal smiled with ferocious joy, when he heard of their negligent security. "Here will be trophies," said he, "to grace our entrance into Alhama." Approaching the valley with cautious silence, he wheeled into it at full speed, at the head of his troop, and attacked the Christians so suddenly and furiously, that they had not time to put the bridles upon their horses, or

even to leap into the saddles. They made a confused but valiant defence, fighting among the rocks, and in the rugged bed of the river. Their defence was useless; seventy-nine were slain, the remaining eleven were taken prisoners.

A party of the Moors galloped in pursuit of the cavalgada: they soon overtook it, winding slowly up a hill. The horsemen, who convoyed it, perceiving the enemy at a distance, made their escape, and left the spoil to be retaken by the Moors.

El Zagal gathered together his captives and his booty, and proceeded, elate with success, to Granada. He paused before the gate of Elvira; for as yet he had not been proclaimed king. This ceremony was immediately performed; for the fame of his recent exploit had preceded him, and had intoxicated the minds of the giddy populace.

He entered Granada in a sort of triumph. The eleven captive knights of Calatrava walked in front. Next were paraded the ninety captured steeds, bearing the armour and weapons of their late owners, and mounted by as many Moors. Then came seventy Moorish horse-

men, with as many Christian heads hanging at their saddle bows. Muley Abdalla el Zagal followed, surrounded by a number of distinguished cavaliers, richly attired; and the pageant was closed by a long cavalgada of the flocks, and herds, and other booty, recovered from the Christians*.

The populace gazed with almost savage triumph at these captive cavaliers, and the gory heads of their companions; knowing them to have been part of the formidable garrison of Alhama, so long the scourge of Granada, and the terror of the vega. They hailed this petty triumph as an auspicious opening of the reign of their new monarch. For several days the names of Muley Aben Hassan and Boabdil el Chico were never mentioned but with contempt; and the whole city resounded with the praises of El Zagal, or "the valiant."

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 62. Mariana, Hist. España. Abarca, Anales de Aragón.

CHAPTER XXXII.

How the Count de Cabra attempted to capture another king, and how he fared in his attempt.

THE elevation of a bold and active veteran to the throne of Granada, in place of its late bedridden king, made a vast difference in the aspect of the war, and called for some blow, that should dash the confidence of the Moors in their new monarch, and animate the Christians to fresh exertions.

Don Diego de Cordova, the brave Count de Cabra, was at this time in his castle of Vaena, where he kept a wary eye upon the frontier. It was now the latter part of August; and he grieved, that the summer should pass away without any inroad into the country of the foe. He sent out his scouts on the prowl, and they brought him word, that the important post of Moclin was but weakly garrisoned. This was a castellated town, strongly situate upon a high mountain, partly surrounded by thick

forests, and partly girdled by a river. It defended one of the rugged and solitary passes by which the Christians were wont to make their inroads, insomuch that the Moors, in their figurative way, denominated it the shield of Granada.

The Count de Cabra sent word to the monarchs of the feeble state of the garrison, and gave it as his opinion, that, by a secret and rapid expedition, the place might be surprised. King Ferdinand asked the advice of his counsellors. Some cautioned him against the sanguine temperament of the count, and his heedlessness of danger. Moclin, they observed, was near to Granada, and might be promptly reinforced. The opinion of the count, however, prevailed; the king considering him almost infallible in matters of border warfare, since his capture of Boabdil el Chico.

The king departed from Cordova, therefore, and took post at Alcala la Real, for the purpose of being near to Moclin. The queen also proceeded to Vaena, accompanied by her children, Prince Juan and the Princess Isa-

bella, and her great counsellor in all matters, public and private, spiritual and temporal, the venerable grand cardinal of Spain.

Nothing could exceed the pride and satisfaction of the loyal Count de Cabra, when he saw this stately train winding along the dreary mountain roads, and entering the gates of Vaena. He received his royal guests with all due ceremony, and lodged them in the best apartments that the warrior castle afforded; being the same that had formerly been occupied by the royal captive Boabdil.

King Ferdinand had concerted a wary plan to ensure the success of the enterprise. The Count de Cabra and Don Martin Alonzo de Montemayor were to set forth with their troops, so as to reach Moclin by a certain hour, and to intercept all who should attempt to enter, or should sally from the town. The master of Calatrava, the troops of the grand cardinal, commanded by the Count of Buendia, and the forces of the Bishop of Jaen, led by that belligerent prelate, amounting in all to four thousand horse and six thousand foot, were to set off in time to cooperate with the

Count de Cabra, so as to surround the town. The king was to follow with his whole force, and encamp before the place.

And here the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida breaks forth into a triumphant eulogy of the pious prelates, who thus mingled personally in these scenes of warfare. "As this was a holy crusade," says he, "undertaken for the advancement of the faith, and the glory of the church, so was it always countenanced and upheld by saintly men. For the victories of their most catholic majesties were not followed, like those of more worldly sovereigns, by erecting castles and towers, and appointing alcaydes and garrisons, but by founding of convents and cathedrals, and the establishment of wealthy bishopricks. Wherefore their majesties were always surrounded, in court or camp, in the cabinet or in the field, by a crowd of ghostly advisers, inspiriting them to the prosecution of this most righteous war. Nay, the holy men of the church did not scruple, at times, to buckle on the cuirass over the cassock, to exchange the crosier for the lance; and thus, with corporal hands, and

temporal weapons, to fight the good fight of the faith."

But to return from this rhapsody of the worthy friar. The Count de Cabra, being instructed in the complicated arrangements of the king, marched forth at midnight, to execute them punctually. He led his troops by the little river, which winds below Vaena, and so up the wild defiles of the mountains; marching all night, and stopping only in the heat of the following day, to repose under the shadowy cliffs of a deep barranca, calculating to arrive at Moclin exactly in time to cooperate with the other forces.

The troops had scarcely stretched themselves on the earth to take repose, when a scout arrived, bringing word, that El Zagal had suddenly sallied out of Granada, with a strong force, and had encamped in the vicinity of Moclin. It was plain, that the wary Moor had received information of the intended attack. This, however, was not the idea, that presented itself to the mind of the Count de Cabra. He had captured one king: here was a fair opportunity to secure another. What a

triumph, to lodge a second captive monarch in his castle of Vaena! What a prisoner to deliver into the hands of his royal mistress! Fired with the thought, the good count forgot all the arrangements of the king; or rather, blinded by former success, he trusted every thing to courage and fortune; and thought, that, by one bold swoop, he might again bear off the royal prize, and wear his laurels without competition. His only fear was, that the master of Calatrava, and the belligerent bishop, might come up in time to share the glory of the victory. So ordering every one to horse, this hot spirited cavalier pushed on for Moclin, without allowing his troops the necessary time for repose*.

The evening closed as the count arrived in the neighbourhood of Moclin. It was the full of the moon, and a bright and cloudless night. The count was marching through one of those deep valleys or ravines, worn in the Spanish mountains by the brief but tremendous torrents, which prevail during the autumnal

* Mariana, lib. xxv. c. 17. Abarca. Zurita, &c.

rains. It was walled, on both sides, by lofty and almost perpendicular cliffs; but the strong gleams of moonlight, that penetrated to the bottom of the glen, glittered on the armour of the squadrons, as they silently passed through it. Suddenly the war cry of the Moors rose in various parts of the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" was shouted from every cliff, accompanied by showers of missiles, that struck down several of the Christian warriors. The count lifted up his eyes, and beheld, by the light that prevailed, every cliff glistening with Moorish soldiery. The deadly shower fell thickly round him; and the shining armour of his followers made them fair objects for the aim of the enemy. The count saw his brother Gonzalo struck dead by his side; his own horse sunk under him, pierced by four Moorish lances; and he received a wound in the hand from an arquebuse. He remembered the horrible massacre of the mountains of Malaga, and feared a similar catastrophe. There was no time to pause. His brother's horse, freed from his slaughtered rider, was running at large; seizing the reins, he sprang into the

saddle, called upon his men to follow him, and, wheeling round, retreated out of the fatal valley.

The Moors, rushing down from the heights, pursued the retreating Christians. The chase endured for a league; but it was a league of rough and broken ground, where the Christians had to turn and fight at almost every step. In these short but fierce combats, the enemy lost many cavaliers of note; but the loss of the Christians was infinitely more grievous, comprising numbers of the noblest warriors of Vaena and its vicinity. Many of the Christians, disabled by wounds, or exhausted by fatigue, turned aside, and endeavoured to conceal themselves among rocks and thickets, but never more rejoined their companions; being slain or captured by the Moors, or perishing in their wretched retreats.

The arrival of the troops, led by the master of Calatrava and the bishop of Jaen, put an end to the rout. El Zagal contented himself with the laurels he had gained; and, ordering the trumpets to call off his men from the pursuit, returned in great triumph to Moclin*.

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 4. Pulgar, Cronica.

Queen Isabella was at Vaena, awaiting, in great anxiety, the result of the expedition. She was in a stately apartment of the castle, looking towards the road that winds through the mountains from Moclin, and regarding the watchtowers that crowned the neighbouring heights, in hopes of favourable signals. The prince and princess, her children, were with her, and her venerable counsellor, the grand cardinal. All shared in the anxiety of the moment. At length couriers were seen riding toward the town. They entered its gates; but, before they reached the castle, the nature of their tidings was known to the queen, by the shrieks and wailings that rose from the streets below. The messengers were soon followed by wounded fugitives, hastening home to be relieved, or to die among their friends and families. The whole town resounded with lamentations, for it had lost the flower of its youth, and its bravest warriors. Isabella was a woman of courageous soul, but her feelings were overpowered by the spectacle of wo which presented itself on every side. Her maternal heart mourned over the death of so many loyal subjects, who, so shortly

before, had rallied round her with devoted affection ; and, losing her usual self command, she sunk into deep despondency.

In this gloomy state of mind, a thousand apprehensions crowded upon her. She dreaded the confidence which this success would impart to the Moors. She feared, also, for the important fortress of Alhama, the garrison of which had not been reinforced since its foraging party had been cut off by this same El Zagal. On every side the queen saw danger and disaster, and feared, that a general rout was about to attend the Castilian arms.

The grand cardinal comforted her with both spiritual and worldly counsel. He told her to recollect, that no country was ever conquered, without occasional reverses to the conquerors ; that the Moors were a warlike people, fortified in a rough and mountainous country, where they never could be conquered by her ancestors ; and that, in fact, her armies had already, in three years, taken more cities than those of any of her predecessors had been able to do in twelve. He concluded by offering to take the field, with three thousand cavalry, his own retainers, paid and maintained

by himself, and either hasten to the relief of Alhama, or undertake any other expedition her majesty might command. The discreet words of the cardinal soothed the spirit of the queen, who always looked to him for consolation, and she soon recovered her usual equanimity.

Some of the counsellors of Isabella, of that politic class who seek to rise by the faults of others, were loud in their censures of the rashness of the count. The queen defended him with prompt generosity. "The enterprise," said she, "was rash; but not more rash than that of Lucena, which was crowned with success, and which we have all applauded, as the height of heroism. Had the Count de Cabra succeeded in capturing the uncle, as he did the nephew, who is there that would not have praised him to the skies?"

The magnanimous words of the queen put a stop to all invidious remarks in her presence; but certain of the courtiers, who had envied the count the glory gained by his former achievements, continued to magnify, among themselves, his present imprudence; and we are told by Fray Antonio Agapida, that they

sneeringly gave the worthy cavalier the appellation of "Count de Cabra, the king catcher." Ferdinand had reached the place on the frontier called the Fountain of the King, within three leagues of Moclin, when he heard of the late disaster. He greatly lamented the precipitation of the count, but forbore to express himself with severity; for he knew the value of that loyal and valiant cavalier*. He held a council of war, to determine what course was to be pursued. Some of his cavaliers advised him to abandon the attempt upon Moclin, the place being strongly reinforced, and the enemy inspired by his recent victory. Certain old Spanish hidalgos reminded him, that he had but a few Castilian troops in his army, without which stanch soldiery his predecessors never presumed to enter the Moorish territory; while others remonstrated, that it would be beneath the dignity of the king to retire from an enterprise on account of the defeat of a single cavalier and his retainers. In this way, the king was distracted by a

* Abarca, Anales de Aragon.

multitude of counsellors; when fortunately a letter from the queen put an end to his perplexities. Proceed we, in the next chapter, to relate what was the purport of that letter.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Expedition against the castles of Cambil and Albáhar.

“HAPPY are those princes,” exclaims the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida, “who have women and priests to advise them; for in these dwelleth the spirit of council!” While Ferdinand and his captains were confounding each other in their deliberations at the Fountain of the King, a quiet but deep little council of war was held, in the state apartment of the old castle of Vaena, between Queen Isabella, the venerable Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, grand cardinal of Spain, and Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent bishop of Jaen. This last worthy prelate, who had exchanged his mitre for a helm, no sooner beheld the defeat of the enterprise against Moclin, than he turned the reins of his sleek, stall fed steed, and hastened back to Vaena, full of a project for the employment of the army, the advancement of the faith, and the benefit of his own diocese. He

knew, that the actions of the king were influenced by the opinions of the queen; and that the queen always inclined a listening ear to the counsels of saintly men. He laid his plans, therefore, with the customary wisdom of his cloth, to turn the ideas of the queen into the proper channel; and this was the purport of the worthy bishop's suggestions.

The bishoprick of Jaen had for a long time been harassed by two Moorish castles, the scourge and terror of all that part of the country. They were situated on the frontiers of the kingdom of Granada, about four leagues from Jaen, in a deep, narrow, and rugged valley, surrounded by lofty mountains. Through this valley runs the Rio Frio, or "cold river," in a deep channel, between high precipitous rocks. On each side of the stream rise two vast rocks, nearly perpendicular, within a stone's throw of each other; blocking up the narrow gorge of the valley. On the summits of these rocks stood the two formidable castles of Cambil and Albahar, fortified with battlements and towers of great height and thickness. They were connected together by a bridge, thrown from rock to rock across the

river. The road which passed through the valley traversed this bridge, and was completely commanded by these castles. They stood like two giants of romance, guarding the pass and dominating the valley.

The kings of Granada, knowing the importance of these castles, kept them always well garrisoned and victualled, to stand a siege; with fleet steeds and hard riders, to forage the country of the Christians. The warlike race of the Abencerrages, the troops of the royal household, and others of the choicest chivalry of Granada, made them their strong holds, from whence to sally forth on those predatory and roving enterprises, which were the delight of the Moorish cavaliers. As the wealthy bishoprick of Jaen lay immediately at hand, it suffered more peculiarly from these marauders. They drove off the fat beevès, and the flocks of sheep from the pastures, and swept the labourers from the field. They scoured the country to the very gates of Jaen; so that the citizens could not venture from their walls without the risk of being borne off captive to the dungeons of these castles.

The worthy bishop, like a good pastor,

beheld, with grief of heart, his fat bishoprick daily waxing leaner and leaner, and poorer and poorer; and his holy ire was kindled at the thought, that the possessions of the church should thus be at the mercy of a crew of infidels.

It was the urgent counsel of the bishop, therefore, that the military force thus providentially assembled in the neighbourhood, since it was apparently foiled in its attempt upon Moclin, should be turned against these insolent castles, and the country delivered from their domination. The grand cardinal supported the suggestion of the bishop, and declared, that he had long meditated the policy of a measure of the kind. Their united opinions found favour with the queen, and she despatched a letter on the subject to the king. It came just in time to relieve him from the distraction of a multitude of counsellors, and he immediately undertook the reduction of the castles.

The Marquis of Cadiz was, accordingly, sent in advance, with two thousand horse, to keep watch upon the garrisons, and prevent all entrance or exit until the king should arrive

with the main army and the battering artillery. The queen, to be near at hand in case of need; moved her quarters to the city of Jaen, where she was received with martial honours by the belligerent bishop, who had buckled on his cuirass, and girded on his sword, to fight in the cause of his diocese.

In the mean time, the Marquis of Cadiz arrived in the valley, and completely shut up the Moors within their walls. The castles were under the command of Mahomet Lentin ben Usef, an Abencerrage, and one of the bravest cavaliers of Granada. In his garrisons were many troops of the fierce African tribe of Gomeres. Mahomet Lentin, confident in the strength of his fortresses, smiled, as he looked down from his battlements, upon the Christian cavalry, perplexed in the rough and narrow valley. He sent forth skirmishing parties to harass them; and there were many sharp combats between small parties and single knights; but the Moors were driven back to the castles; and all attempts to send intelligence of their situation to Granada were intercepted by the vigilance of the Marquis of Cadiz.

At length the legions of the royal army came pouring, with fluttering banner and vaunting trumpet, along the defiles of the mountains. They halted before the castles; but the king could not find room, in the narrow and rugged valley, to form his camp: he had to divide it into three parts, which were posted on different heights, and his tents whitened the sides of the neighbouring hills. When the encampment was formed, the army remained gazing idly at the castles. The artillery was upwards of four leagues in the rear, and without artillery all attack would be in vain.

The alcaide, Mahomet Lentin, knew the nature of the road by which the artillery had to be brought. It was merely a rugged path, at times scaling almost perpendicular crags and precipices, up which it was utterly impossible for wheel carriages to pass; neither was it in the power of man or beast to draw up the lombards and other ponderous ordnance. He felt assured, therefore, that they never could be brought to the camp; and, without their aid, what could the Christians effect against his rock-built castles? He scoffed at them, therefore, as he saw their tents by

day, and their fires by night, covering the surrounding heights. "Let them linger here a little while longer," said he, "and the autumnal torrents will wash them from the mountains."

While the alcayde was thus closely mewed up within his walls, and the Christians lay inactive in their camp, he noticed, one calm autumnal day, the sound of implements of labour echoing among the mountains, and now and then the crash of a fallen tree, or a thundering report, as if some rock had been heaved from its bed, and hurled into the valley. The alcayde was on the battlements of his castle, surrounded by his knights. "Me thinks," said he, "these Christians are making war upon the rocks and trees of the mountains, since they find our castles unassailable."

The sounds did not cease even during the night; every now and then, the Moorish sentinel, as he paced the battlements, heard some crash echoing among the heights. The return of day explained the mystery. Scarcely did the sun shine against the summits of the mountains, than shouts burst from the cliffs

opposite to the castles, and were answered from the camp with joyful sound of kettle-drums and trumpets.

The astonished Moors lifted up their eyes, and beheld, as it were, a torrent of war breaking out of a narrow defile. There was a multitude of men with pickaxes, spades, and bars of iron, clearing away every obstacle, while behind them slowly moved along great teams of oxen, dragging heavy ordnance, and all the munitions of battering warfare.

“What cannot women and priests effect, when they unite in counsel!” exclaims again the worthy Antonio Agapida. The queen had held another consultation with the grand cardinal, and the belligerent bishop of Jaen. It was clear, that the heavy ordnance could never be conveyed to the camp by the regular road of the country, and on this must depend every hope of success. It was suggested, however, by the zealous bishop, that another road might be opened through a more practicable part of the mountains. It would be an undertaking extrayagant and chimerical with ordinary means, and, therefore,

unlooked for by the enemy; but what could not kings do, who had treasures and armies at command?

The project struck the enterprising spirit of the queen. Six thousand men, with pickaxes, crowbars, and every other necessary implement, were set to work, day and night, to break a road through the very centre of the mountains. No time was to be lost; for it was rumoured, that El Zagal was about to march with a mighty host to the relief of the castles. The bustling Bishop of Jaen acted as pioneer, to mark the route and superintend the labourers; and the grand cardinal took care, that the work should never languish through lack of money*.

“When kings’ treasures,” says Fray Antonio Agapida, “are dispensed by priestly hands, there is no stint, as the glorious annals of Spain bear witness.” Under the guidance of these ghostly men, it seemed as if miracles were effected. Almost an entire mountain was levelled, valleys filled up, trees hewn down, rocks broken and overturned; in short,

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon, lib. xx. c. 64. Pulgar, part iii. c. 51.

all the obstacles, which nature had heaped around, entirely and promptly vanquished. In little more than twelve days this gigantic work was accomplished, and the ordnance dragged to the camp, to the great triumph of the Christians, and confusion of the Moors*.

No sooner was the heavy artillery arrived, than it was disposed in all haste upon the neighbouring heights. Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, the first engineer in Spain, superintended the batteries, and soon opened a destructive fire upon the castles.

When the valiant alcajde, Mahomet Lentin, found his towers tumbling about him, and his bravest men dashed from the walls, without the power of inflicting a wound upon the foe, his haughty spirit was greatly exasperated. "Of what avail," said he, "is all the prowess of knighthood against these cowardly engines, that murder from afar?"

For a whole day a tremendous fire kept thundering upon the castle of Albahar. The lombards discharged large stones, which demolished two of the towers, and all the battle-

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon, lib. xx. c. 64. Pulgar, part iii. c. 51.

ments which guarded the portal. If any Moors attempted to defend the walls, or repair the breaches, they were shot down by ribadoquines, and other small pieces of artillery. The Christian soldiery issued forth from the camp, under cover of this fire, and, approaching the castles, discharged flights of arrows and stones through the openings made by the ordnance.

At length, to bring the siege to a conclusion, Francisco Ramirez elevated some of the heaviest artillery on a mount, that rose in form of a cone or pyramid, on the side of the river near to Albahar, and commanded both castles. This was an operation of great skill and excessive labour, but it was repaid by complete success; for the Moors did not dare to wait until this terrible battery should discharge its fury. Satisfied that all further resistance was vain, the valiant alcaide made signal for a parley. The articles of capitulation were soon arranged. The alcaide and his garrison were permitted to return in safety to the city of Granada, and the castles were delivered into the possession of King Ferdinand, on the day of the festival of St.

Matthew, in the month of September. They were immediately repaired, strongly garrisoned, and given in charge to the city of Jaén.

The effects of this triumph were immediately apparent. Quiet and security once more settled upon the bishoprick. The husbandmen tilled their fields in peace, the herds and flocks fattened unmolested in the pastures, and the vineyards yielded corpulent skinsful of rosy wine. The good bishop enjoyed, in the gratitude of his people, the approbation of his conscience, the increase of his revenues, and the abundance of his table, a reward for all his toils and perils. "This glorious victory," exclaims Fray Antonio Agapida, "achieved by such extraordinary management and infinite labour, is a shining example of what a bishop can effect for the promotion of the faith, and the good of his diocese."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Enterprise of the knights of Calatrava against Zalea.

WHILE these events were taking place on the northern frontier of the kingdom of Granada, the important fortress of Alhama was neglected, and its commander, Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava *, reduced to great perplexity. The remnant of the foraging party, which had been surprised and massacred by the fierce El Zagal, when on his way to Granada to receive the crown, had returned in confusion and dismay to the fortress. They could only speak of their own disgrace, being obliged to abandon their cavalgada, and to fly, pursued by a superior force. Of the flower of their party, the gallant knights of Calatrava, who had remained behind in the valley, they

* Clavero of Calatrava is he who bears the keys of the castle, convents, and archives of the order. It is an office of great honour and distinction.

knew nothing. A few days cleared up the mystery, and brought tidings of their steeds, led in triumph into the gates of Granada; and their bleeding heads, borne at the saddlebows of the warriors of El Zagal. Their fellow knights, who formed a part of the garrison, were struck with horror at the dismal story, and panted to revenge their death. Their number, however, was too much reduced by this loss to take the field; for the vega swarmed with the troops of El Zagal. They could not even venture forth to forage for provisions; and the defeat of the Count de Cabra having interrupted their customary supplies, they were reduced to such extremity, that they had to kill several of their horses for food,

Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava, the commander of the fortress, was pondering one day over the gloomy state of affairs, when a Moor was brought before him, who had applied at the gate for an audience. He bore a budget, and appeared to be one of those itinerant merchants, who wandered about the country in those days, hanging on the skirts of armies, to purchase the spoils of the soldiery, and who would pretend to sell

amulets, trinkets, and perfumes, but would often draw forth from their wallets articles of great rarity and value: rich shawls, chains of gold, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and costly gems, the plunder of camps and cities. The Moor approached the clavero with a mysterious look. "Senior," said he, "I would speak with you alone; I have a precious jewel to dispose of." "I need no jewels," said the clavero, abruptly; "take thy wares to the soldiery." "By the blood of him who died on the cross," exclaimed the Moor, with earnest solemnity, "do not turn a deaf ear to my offer: the jewel I have to sell would be to you of inestimable value, and you alone can be the purchaser."

The clavero was moved by the earnestness of the Moor, and perceived, that, under the figurative language common to his countrymen, he concealed some meaning of importance. He made a sign, therefore, to his attendants to withdraw. The Moor looked after them, until the door closed; then, advancing cautiously, "What will you give me," said he, "if I deliver the fortress of Zalea into your hands?"

Zalea was a strong town, about two leagues distant, which had long been a hostile and dangerous neighbour to Alhama; its warriors laying frequent ambuscades to surprise the knights of Calatrava, when out upon a forage, and to intercept and cut off their supplies and cavalgadas.

The clavero looked with mingled surprise and distrust at this itinerant pedler, who thus offered to traffic for a warlike town. "Thou talkest," said he, "of selling me Zalea; what means hast thou of making good the sale?"

"I have a brother in the garrison," replied the Moor, "who, for a proper sum paid down, will admit a body of troops by night into the citadel."

"And for a sum of gold, then," said the clavero, regarding him with stern scrutiny, "thou art prepared to betray thy people and thy faith?"

"I abjure them and their faith," replied the Moor: "my mother was a Castilian captive; her people shall be my people, and her religion my religion."

The cautious clavero still distrusted the sincerity of this mongrel Moor and piebald

Christian. "What assurance," continued he, "have I, that thou wilt deal more truly with me, than with the alcaide of the fortress thou wouldst betray? To me thou hast no tie of fealty, to him thou owest thy allegiance."

"I owe him no allegiance!" cried the Moor, fire flashing from his eyes: "the alcaide is a tyrant, a dog! he has robbed me of my merchandise, stripped me of my lawful booty, and ordered me the bastinado, because I dared to complain. May the curse of God light upon me, if I rest contented, until I have ample vengeance!"

"Enough," said the clavero; "I will trust to thy vengeance, even more than to thy Christianity."

Don Gutiere now summoned a counsel of his principal knights. They were all eager for the enterprise, as a mode of revenging the death of their companions, and wiping off the stigma cast upon the order by the late defeat; Spiés were sent to reconnoitre Zalea, and to communicate with the brother of the Moor; the sum to be paid as a recompense was adjusted, and every arrangement made for the enterprise.

On the appointed night, a party of cavaliers set out under the guidance of the Moor. When they came near to Zalea, their leader bound the hands of the guide behind his back, and pledged his knightly word to strike him dead on the least sign of treachery; he then bade him lead the way. It was midnight, when they arrived in silence under the walls of the citadel. At a low signal, a ladder of ropes was let down: Gutiere Muñoz and Pedro de Alvarado were the first to ascend, followed by half a dozen others. They surprised the guards, cut them down, threw them over the wall, and gained possession of a tower. The alarm was given, the whole citadel was in confusion, but already the knights of Calatrava were in every part. They called to each other to remember their brethren massacred in the valley of the vega, and their bloody heads borne in triumph to Granada. They fought with sanguinary fury; most of the half-armed and bewildered garrison were put to the sword; the rest were taken prisoners; in an hour they were masters of the citadel, and the town submitted of course. They found the magazines stored

with all kinds of provisions, with which they loaded an immense train of beasts of burden, for the relief of the famishing garrison of Alhama.

Thus did the gallant knights of Calatrava gain the strong town of Zalea, with scarcely any loss, and atone for the inglorious defeat sustained by their companions. Large reinforcements and supplies from the sovereigns arriving soon after, strengthened them in their own fortress, and enabled them to keep possession of their new conquest. This gallant affair took place about the same time as the capture of Cambil and Alachar; and these two achievements gave a prosperous termination to the chequered events of this important year. Ferdinand and Isabella retired for the winter to Alcada de Henares, where the queen, on the 16th of December, gave birth to the infanta Catherine, afterwards spouse to Henry VIII. of England.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Death of old Muley Aben Hassan.

THE personal exploits with which El Zagal had commenced his reign, in surprising the knights of Calatrava, and defeating the Count de Cabra, had given him a transient popularity, which he had promoted by feasts and tournaments, and other public rejoicings, in which the Moors delighted. Knowing, however, the uncertain nature of the people over whom he reigned, he feared some capricious revolution in favour of his deposed brother, Muley Aben Hassan. That once fiery old monarch was now blind and bedridden, and lived in a kind of durance in the city of Al-muneçar. He was treated, however, with deference and attention; for the garrison had been originally appointed by himself. El Zagal, having now a little leisure during the interval of the campaigns, became suddenly solicitous about the death of his brother, and

had him removed to Salobreña, for the benefit of purer and more salubrious air.

The small town of Salobreña was situate on a lofty hill, that rose out of the centre of a beautiful and fertile valley on the Mediterranean coast. It was protected by a strong castle, built by the Moorish kings, as a place of deposit for their treasures. Here also they sent such of their sons and brothers as might endanger the security of their reign. They lived here, prisoners at large, in a state of voluptuous repose, under a serene sky, in a soft climate and luxuriant valley. The palace was adorned with fountains, and delicious gardens, and perfumed baths; a harem of beauties was at the command of the royal captives, and music and the dance beguiled the lagging hours. Nothing was denied them but the liberty to depart; that alone was wanting, to render the abode a perfect paradise.

Notwithstanding the extreme salubrity of the air, and the assiduous attentions of the commander, who was devoted to El Zagal, and had been particularly charged by him to be

watchful over the health of his brother, the old monarch had not been here many days before he expired. There was nothing surprising in this event; for life with him had long glimmered in the socket: but the measures immediately taken by El Zagal roused the suspicions of the public. With indecent haste, he ordered, that the treasures of the deceased should be packed upon mules, and conveyed to Granada, where he took possession of them, to the exclusion of the children. The sultana Zorayna, and her two sons, were imprisoned in the Alhambra, in the tower of Comares; the same place, where, by her instigation, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra and her son Boabdil had once been confined. There she had leisure to ruminate on the disappointment of all her schemes, perfidiously executed, for the advancement of those sons, who were her fellow prisoners. The corpse of old Muley Aben Hassan was also brought to Granada; not in state, like the remains of a once powerful sovereign, but transported ignominiously on a mule. It received no funeral honours, but was borne obscurely to the grave by two

Christian captives, and deposited in the royal Osario or charnel house*.

No sooner were the people well assured, that old Muley Aben Hassan was dead and buried, than they all, with one accord, began to deplore his loss, and extol his memory. They admitted, that he had been fierce and cruel, but then he had been brave: it was true, he had pulled down this war upon their heads; but he had himself also been crushed by it. In a word, he was dead; and his death atoned for every fault: for a king, just deceased, is generally either a hero or a saint. In proportion as they ceased to hate Muley Aben Hassan, they began to hate his brother El Zagal. The manner of the old king's death, the eagerness to seize upon his treasures, the scandalous neglect of his corpse, and the imprisonment of his sultana and children, all filled the public mind with dark suspicions; and the name of El Zagal was often coupled with the epithets of fratricide, in the low murmurings of the people.

As the public must always have some leading

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. lxxvii.

person to like, as well as to hate, there began once more to be an inquiry after Boabdil el Chico. That unfortunate monarch was living at Cordova, under the shade of the cold friendship of Ferdinand, who had ceased to regard him with much attention, when he was no longer useful to his interests. No sooner, however, did the public favour once more incline towards him, than the kindness of the catholic monarch immediately revived. He furnished him with money and means again to elevate his standard, and create a division in the Moorish power. By this assistance, Boabdil established the shadow of a court, at Velez el Blanco, a strong frontier town on the confines of Murcia, where he remained, as it were, with one foot over the border, and ready to draw that back, at a moment's warning. His presence, however, gave new life to his faction in Granada. It is true, the more courtly and opulent inhabitants of the quarter of the Alhambra still rallied round the throne of El Zagal, as the great seat of power; but then the inhabitants of the albaycin, the poorest part of the community, who had nothing to risk, and nothing to lose, were

almost unanimous in favour of the indigent Boabdil. So it is in this wonderful system of sublunary affairs; the rich befriend the rich, the powerful stand by the powerful, while the poor enjoy the sterile assistance of their fellows: thus, each one seeking his kind, the admirable order of all things is maintained, and a universal harmony prevails.



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

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the Christian army, which assembled at the city of Cordova.

GREAT and glorious was the style with which the catholic sovereigns opened another year's campaign of this eventful war. It was like commencing another act of a stately and heroic drama, where the curtain rises to the inspiring sound of martial melody, and the whole stage glitters with the array of warriors and the pomp of arms. The ancient city of Cordova was the place appointed by the sovereigns for the assemblage of the troops; and, early in the spring of 1486, the fair valley of the Guadalquivir resounded with the shrill blast of trumpet, and the impatient neighing of the war horse. In this splendid era of Spanish chivalry, there was a rivalry among the nobles, who most should distinguish himself by the splendour of his appearance, and the number and equipments of his feudal fol-

lowers. Every day beheld some cavalier of note, the representative of some proud and powerful house, entering the gates of Cordova with sound of trumpet, and displaying his banner and device, renowned in many a contest. He would appear in sumptuous array, surrounded by pages and lackeys, no less gorgeously attired, and followed by a host of vassals and retainers, horse and foot, all admirably equipped in burnished armour.

Such was the state of Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Duke of Infantado; who may be cited as a picture of a warlike noble of those times. He brought with him five hundred men at arms of his household, equipped and mounted *a la geneta* and *a la guisa*. The cavaliers who attended him were both magnificently armed and dressed. The housings of fifty of his horses were of rich cloth, embroidered with gold; and others were of brocade. The sumpter mules had housings of the same, with halters of silk; while the bridles, headpieces, and all the harnessing, glittered with silver.

The camp equipage of these noble and luxurious warriors was equally magnificent. Their tents were gay pavilions, of various

colours, fitted up with silken hangings, and decorated with fluttering pennons. They had vessels of gold and silver for the service of their tables, as if they were about to engage in a course of stately feasts and courtly revels, instead of the stern encounters of rugged and mountainous warfare. Sometimes they passed through the streets of Cordova at night, in splendid cavalcade, with great numbers of lighted torches, the rays of which, falling upon polished armour, and nodding plumes, and silken scarfs, and trappings of golden embroidery, filled all beholders with admiration*.

But it was not the chivalry of Spain alone, which thronged the streets of Cordova. The fame of this war had spread throughout Christendom: it was considered a kind of crusade; and catholic knights from all parts hastened to signalize themselves in so holy a cause. There were several valiant chevaliers from France, among whom the most distinguished was Gaston du Léon, seneschal of Toulouse. With him came a gallant train, well armed and mounted, and decorated with rich surcoats

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 41. 56.

and punaches of feathers. These cavaliers, it is said, eclipsed all others in the light festivities of the court. They were devoted to the fair; but not after the solemn and passionate manner of the Spanish lovers: they were gay, gallant, and joyous, in their amours, and captivated by the vivacity of their attacks. They were at first held in light estimation by the grave and stately Spanish knights, until they made themselves to be respected by their wonderful prowess in the field.

The most conspicuous of the volunteers, however, who appeared in Cordova on this occasion, was an English knight of royal connexion. This was the Lord Scales, Earl of Rivers, related to the Queen of England, wife of Henry VII. He had distinguished himself, in the preceding year, at the battle of Bosworth Field, where Henry Tudor, then Earl of Richmond, overcame Richard III. That decisive battle having left the country at peace, the Earl of Rivers, retaining a passion for warlike scenes, repaired to the Castilian court, to keep his arms in exercise in a campaign against the Moors. He brought with him a hundred archers, all dexterous with the long

bow and the cloth yard arrow ; also two hundred yeomen, armed cap à piè, who fought with pike and battleaxe ; men robust of frame, and of prodigious strength.

The worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida describes this stranger knight and his followers with his accustomed accuracy and minuteness. " This cavalier," he observes, " was from the island of England, and brought with him a train of his vassals ; men who had been hardened in certain civil wars which had raged in their country. They were a comely race of men, but too fair and fresh for warriors ; not having the sunburnt, martial hue of our old Castilian soldiery. They were huge feeders, also, and deep carousers ; and could not accommodate themselves to the sober diet of our troops, but must fain eat and drink after the manner of their own country. They were often noisy and unruly, also, in their wassail ; and their quarter of the camp was prone to be a scene of loud revel and sudden brawl. They were withal of great pride ; yet it was not like our inflammable Spanish pride : they stood not much upon the *pundonor* and high punctilio, and rarely drew the stiletto in their disputes ;

but their pride was silent and contumelious. Though from a remote and somewhat barbarous island, they yet believed themselves the most perfect men upon earth; and magnified their chieftain, the Lord Scales, beyond the greatest of our grandees. With all this, it must be said of them, that they were marvellous good men in the field, dexterous archers, and powerful with the battleaxe. In their great pride and self will, they always sought to press in the advance, and take the post of danger, trying to outvie our Spanish chivalry. They did not rush forward fiercely, or make a brilliant onset, like the Moorish and Spanish troops, but they went into the fight deliberately, and persisted obstinately, and were slow to find out when they were beaten. Withal, they were much esteemed, yet little liked, by our soldiery, who considered them stanch companions in the field, yet coveted but little fellowship with them in the camp.

“Their commander, the Lord Scales, was an accomplished cavalier, of gracious and noble presence, and fair speech. It was a marvel to see so much courtesy in a knight brought up so far from our Castilian court. He was much

honoured by the king and queen, and found great favour with the fair dames about the court; who, indeed, are rather prone to be pleased with foreign cavaliers. He went always in costly state, attended by pages and esquires, and accompanied by noble young cavaliers of his country, who had enrolled themselves under his banner, to learn the gentle exercise of arms. In all pageants and festivals, the eyes of the populace were attracted by the singular bearing and rich array of the English earl and his train, who prided themselves in always appearing in the garb and manner of their country; and were indeed something very magnificent, delectable, and strange to behold."

The worthy chronicler is no less elaborate in his description of the masters of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara, and their valiant knights; armed at all points, and decorated with the badges of their orders. "These," he affirms, "were the flower of Christian chivalry. Being constantly in service, they became more steadfast and accomplished in discipline than the irregular and temporary levies of the feudal nobles. Calm, solemn, and stately, they

sat like towers upon their powerful chargers. On parades, they manifested none of the show and ostentation of the other troops. Neither, in battle, did they endeavour to signalise themselves by any fiery vivacity, or desperate and vainglorious exploit; every thing with them was measured and sedate; yet it was observed, that none were more warlike in their appearance in the camp, or more terrible for their achievements in the field.

The gorgeous magnificence of the Spanish nobles found but little favour in the eyes of the sovereigns. They saw, that it caused a competition in expense, ruinous to cavaliers of moderate fortune; and they feared, that a softness and effeminacy might thus be introduced, incompatible with the stern nature of the war. They signified their disapprobation to several of the principal noblemen, and recommended a more sober and soldierlike display while in actual service.

“These are rare troops for a tourney, my lord,” said Ferdinand to the Duke of Infantado, as he beheld his retainers glittering in gold and embroidery: “but gold, though gorgeous,

is soft and yielding: iron is the metal for the field."

"Sire," replied the duke, "if my men parade in gold, your majesty will find they fight with steel." The king smiled, but shook his head; and the duke treasured up his speech in his heart.

It remains now to reveal the immediate object of this mighty and chivalrous preparation; which had, in fact, the gratification of a royal pique at bottom. The severe lesson which Ferdinand had received from the veteran Ali Atar, before the walls of Loxa, though it had been of great service in rendering him wary in his attacks upon fortified places, yet rankled sorely in his mind; and he had ever since held Loxa in peculiar odium. It was, in truth, one of the most belligerent and troublesome cities on the borders; incessantly harassing Andalusia by its incursions. It also intervened between the Christian territories and Alhama, and other important places, gained in the kingdom of Granada. For all these reasons, King Ferdinand had determined to make another grand attempt upon this war-