

house to breathe his panting steed ; but had scarce put foot to ground when he heard the distant sound of pursuit, and beheld a horseman spurring up the mountain.

Throwing himself again upon his steed, he abandoned the road and galloped across the rugged heights. The deep dry channel of a torrent checked his career, and his horse, stumbling upon the margin, rolled with his rider to the bottom. Pelistes was sorely bruised by the fall, and his whole visage was bathed in blood. His horse, too, was maimed and unable to stand, so that there was no hope of escape. The enemy drew near, and proved to be no other than Magued, the renegado general, who had perceived him as he issued forth from the city, and had followed single in pursuit. "Well met, señor alcaide!" exclaimed he, "and overtaken in good time. Surrender yourself my prisoner."

Pelistes made no other reply than by drawing his sword, bracing his shield, and preparing for defence. Magued, though an apostate, and a fierce warrior, possessed some sparks of knightly magnanimity. Seeing his adversary dismounted, he disdained to take him at a disadvantage, but, alighting, tied his horse to a tree.

The conflict that ensued was desperate and doubtful, for seldom had two warriors met so well matched or of equal prowess. Their shields were hacked to pieces, the ground was strewn with fragments of their armour, and stained with their blood. They paused repeatedly to take breath ; regarding each other with wonder and admiration. Pelistes, however, had been previously injured by his fall, and fought to great disadvantage. The renegado perceived it, and sought not to slay him, but to take him alive. Shifting his ground continually, he wearied his antagonist, who was growing weaker and weaker from the loss of blood. At length Pelistes seemed to summon up all his remaining strength to make a signal blow ; it was skillfully parried, and he fell prostrate upon the ground. The renegado ran up, and putting his foot upon his sword, and the point of his scimitar to his throat, called upon him to ask his life ; but Pelistes lay without sense, and as one dead. Magued then unlaced the helmet of his vanquished enemy, and seated himself on a rock beside him, to recover breath. In this situation the warriors were found by certain Moorish cavaliers, who marvelled much at the traces of that stern and bloody combat.

Finding there was yet life in the Christian knight, they laid him upon one of their horses, and aiding Magued to remount his steed,

proceeded slowly to the city. As the convoy passed by the convent, the cavaliers looked forth and beheld their commander borne along bleeding and a captive. Furious at the sight, they sallied forth to the rescue, but were repulsed by a superior force, and driven back to the great portal of the church. The enemy entered pell-mell with them, fighting from aisle to aisle, from altar to altar, and in the courts and cloisters of the convent. The greater part of the cavaliers died bravely, sword in hand; the rest were disabled with wounds and made prisoners. The convent, which was lately their castle, was now made their prison, and, in after-times, in commemoration of this event, was consecrated by the name of St. George of the Captives.

CHAPTER V.

Meeting between the Patriot Pelistes and the Traitor Julian.

The loyalty and prowess of the good knight Pelistes had gained him the reverence even of his enemies. He was for a long time disabled by his wounds, during which he was kindly treated by the Arab chieftains, who strove by every courteous means to cheer his sadness and make him forget that he was a captive. When he was recovered from his wounds they gave him a magnificent banquet, to testify their admiration of his virtues.

Pelistes appeared at the banquet clad in sable armour, and with a countenance pale and dejected; for the ills of his country evermore preyed upon his heart. Among the assembled guests was Count Julian, who held a high command in the Moslem army, and was arrayed in garments of mingled Christian and Morisco fashion. Pelistes had been a close and bosom friend of Julian in former times, and had served with him in the wars in Africa; but when the Count advanced to accost him with his wonted amity, he turned away in silence and deigned not to notice him; neither, during the whole of the repast, did he address to him ever a word, but treated him as one unknown.

When the banquet was nearly at a close, the discourse turned upon the events of the war; and the Moslem chieftains, in great courtesy, dwelt upon the merits of many of the Christian cavaliers who had fallen in battle, and all extolled the valour of those who

had recently perished in the defence of the convent. Pelistes remained silent for a time, and checked the grief which swelled within his bosom as he thought of his devoted cavaliers. At length, lifting up his voice, "Happy are the dead," said he, "for they rest in peace, and are gone to receive the reward of their piety and valour! I could mourn over the loss of my companions in arms, but they have fallen with honour, and are spared the wretchedness I feel in witnessing the thralldom of my country. I have seen my only son, the pride and hope of my age, cut down at my side; I have beheld kindred, friends, and followers falling one by one around me, and have become so seasoned to those losses that I have ceased to weep. Yet there is one man over whose loss I will never cease to grieve. He was the loved companion of my youth, and the steadfast associate of my graver years. He was one of the most loyal of Christian knights. As a friend he was loving and sincere; as a warrior his achievements were above all praise. What has become of him, alas! I know not. If fallen in battle, and I knew where his bones were laid, whether bleaching on the plains of Xeres, or buried in the waters of the Guadalete, I would seek them out and enshrine them as the relics of a sainted patriot. Or if, like many of his companions in arms, he should be driven to wander in foreign lands, I would join him in his hapless exile, and we would mourn together over the desolation of our country!"

Even the hearts of the Arab warriors were touched by the lament of the good Pelistes, and they said—"Who was this peerless friend, in whose praise thou art so fervent?"

"His name," replied Pelistes, "was Count Julian."

The Moslem warriors stared with surprise. "Noble cavalier," exclaimed they, "has grief disordered thy senses? Behold thy friend living, and standing before thee, and yet thou dost not know him! This, this is Count Julian!"

Upon this, Pelistes turned his eyes upon the count, and regarded him for a time, with a lofty and stern demeanour; and the countenance of Julian darkened, and was troubled, and his eye sank beneath the regard of that loyal and honourable cavalier. And Pelistes said, "In the name of God, I charge thee, man unknown! to answer. Dost thou presume to call thyself Count Julian?"

The count reddened with anger at these words. "Pelistes," said he, "what means this mockery? Thou knowest me well; thou knowest me for Count Julian?"

"I know thee for a base impostor?" cried Pelistes. "Count Julian was a noble Gothic knight; but thou appearest in mongrel Moorish garb. Count Julian was a Christian, faithful and devout; but I behold in thee a renegado and an infidel. Count Julian was ever loyal to his king, and foremost in his country's cause: were he living, he would be the first to put shield on neck and lance in rest, to clear the land of her invaders:—but thou art a hoary traitor! thy hands are stained with the royal blood of the Goths, and thou hast betrayed thy country and thy God. Therefore, I again repeat, man unknown! if thou sayest thou art Count Julian, thou liest! My friend, alas! is dead; and thou art some fiend from hell, which has taken possession of his body to dishonour his memory and render him an abhorrence among men!" So saying, Pelistes turned his back upon the traitor, and went forth from the banquet, leaving Count Julian overwhelmed with confusion, and an object of scorn to all the Moslem cavaliers.

CHAPTER VI.

How Taric el Tuerto captured the City of Toledo through the Aid of the Jews, and how he found the famous Talismanic Table of Solomon.

CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

While these events were passing in Cordova, the one-eyed Arab general, Taric el Tuerto, having subdued the city and vega of Granada, and the Mountains of the Sun and Air, directed his march into the interior of the kingdom to attack the ancient city of Toledo, the capital of the Gothic kings. So great was the terror caused by the rapid conquests of the invaders, that, at the very rumour of their approach, many of the inhabitants, though thus in the very citadel of the kingdom, abandoned it and fled to the mountains with their families. Enough remained, however, to have made a formidable defence; and, as the city was seated on a lofty rock, surrounded by massive walls and towers, and almost girdled by the Tagus, it threatened a long resistance. The Arab warriors pitched their tents in the vega, on the borders of the river, and prepared for a tedious seige.

One evening, as Taric was seated in his tent meditating on the mode in which he should assail this rock-built city, certain of the patrols of the camp brought a stranger before him. "As we

were going our rounds," said they, "we beheld this man lowered down with cords from a tower, and he delivered himself into our hands, praying to be conducted to thy presence, that he might reveal to thee certain things important for thee to know."

Taric fixed his eye upon the stranger : he was a Jewish rabbi, with a long beard which spread upon his gabardine, and descended even to his girdle. "What hast thou to reveal?" said he to the Israelite. "What I have to reveal," replied the other, "is for thee alone to hear : command, then, I entreat thee, that these men withdraw." When they were alone he addressed Taric in Arabic : "Know, O leader of the host of Islam," said he, "that I am sent to thee on the part of the children of Israel, resident in Toledo. We have been oppressed and insulted by the Christians in the time of their prosperity, and now that they are threatened with siege, they have taken from us all our provisions and our money; they have compelled us to work like slaves, repairing their walls; and they oblige us to bear arms and guard a part of the towers. We abhor their yoke, and are ready, if thou wilt receive us as subjects, and permit us the free enjoyment of our religion and our property, to deliver the towers we guard into thy hands, and to give thee safe entrance into the city."

The Arab chief was overjoyed at this proposition, and he rendered much honour to the rabbi, and gave orders to clothe him in a costly robe, and to perfume his beard with essences of a pleasant odour, so that he was the most sweet smelling of his tribe; and he said, "Make thy words good, and put me in possession of the city, and I will do all and more than thou hast required, and will bestow countless wealth upon thee and thy brethren."

Then a plan was devised between them by which the city was to be betrayed and given up. "But how shall I be secured," said he, "that all thy tribe will fulfill what thou hast engaged, and that this is not a stratagem to get me and my people into your power?"

"This shall be thy assurance," replied the rabbi : "ten of the principal Israelites will come to this tent and remain as hostages."

"It is enough," said Taric; and he made oath to accomplish all that he had promised; and the Jewish hostages came and delivered themselves into his hands.

On a dark night, a chosen band of Moslem warriors approached

the part of the walls guarded by the Jews, and were secretly admitted into a postern gate and concealed within a tower. Three thousand Arabs were at the same time placed in ambush among rocks and thickets, in a place on the opposite side of the river, commanding a view of the city. On the following morning Taric ravaged the gardens of the valley, and set fire to the farm-houses, and then breaking up his camp, marched off as if abandoning the siege.

The people of Toledo gazed with astonishment from their walls at the retiring squadrons of the enemy, and scarcely could credit their unexpected deliverance. Before night, there was not a turban nor a hostile lance to be seen in the vega. They attributed it all to the special intervention of their patron saint, Leocadia; and the following day, being Palm Sunday, they sallied forth in procession,—man, woman, and child,—to the church of that blessed saint, which is situated without the walls, that they might return thanks for her marvellous protection.

When all Toledo had thus poured itself forth, and was marching with cross and relic and solemn chaunt towards the chapel, the Arabs, who had been concealed in the tower, rushed forth and barred the gates of the city. While some guarded the gates, others dispersed themselves about the streets, slaying all who made resistance; and others kindled a fire and made a column of smoke on the top of the citadel. At sight of this signal the Arabs, in ambush beyond the river, rose with a great shout, and attacked the multitude who were thronging to the church of St. Leocadia. There was a great massacre, although the people were without arms, and made no resistance; and it is said, in ancient chronicles, that it was the apostate Bishop Oppas who guided the Moslems to their prey, and incited them to this slaughter. The pious reader, says Fray Antonio Agapida, will be slow to believe such turpitude; but there is nothing more venomous than the rancour of an apostate priest, for the best things in this world, when corrupted, become the worst and most baneful.

Many of the Christians had taken refuge within the church, and had barred the doors; but Oppas commanded that fire should be set to the portals, threatening to put every one within to the sword. Happily the veteran Taric arrived just in time to stave the fury of this reverend renegado. He ordered the trumpets to call off the troops from the carnage, and extended grace to all the sur-

viving inhabitants. They were permitted to remain in quiet possession of their homes and effects, paying only a moderate tribute; and they were allowed to exercise the rites of their religion in the existing churches, to the number of seven, but were prohibited from erecting any others. Those who preferred to leave the city were suffered to depart insafely, but not to take with them any of their wealth.

Immense spoil was found by Taric in the alcazar, or royal castle, situated on a rocky eminence, in the highest part of the city. Among the regalia treasured up in a secret chamber, were twenty-five regal crowns of fine gold, garnished with jacynts, amethysts, diamonds, and other precious stones. These were the crowns of the different Gothic kings who had reigned in Spain, it having been the usage, on the death of each king, to deposit his crown in this treasury, inscribing on it his name and age (1).

When Taric was thus in possession of the city, the Jews came to him in procession, with songs and dances, and the sound of timbrel and psaltry, hailing him as their lord, and reminding him of his promises.

The son of Ishmael kept his word with the children of Israel; they were protected in the possession of all their wealth, and the exercise of their religion; and were, moreover, rewarded with jewels of gold, and jewels of silver, and much monies (2).

A subsequent expedition was led by Taric against Guadalaxara, which surrendered without resistance. He moreover captured the city of Medina Celi, where he found an inestimable table which had formed a part of the spoil taken at Rome by Alaric, at the time that the sacred city was conquered by the Goths. It was composed of one single and entire emerald, and possessed talismanic powers; for tradition affirms that it was the work of genii, and had been wrought by them for King Solomon the Wise, the son of David. This marvellous relic was carefully preserved by Taric, as the most precious of all his spoils, being intended by him as a present to the caliph; and in commemoration of it, the city was called by the Arabs, Medina Almeyda; that is to say, "The City of the Table (3)."

(1) Conde, Hist. de las Arabes en España, c. 12.

(2) The stratagem of the Jews of Toledo is recorded briefly by Bishop Lucas de Tuy, in his chronicle, but is related at large in the chronicle of the Moor Rasis.

(3) According to Arabian legends, this table was a mirror revealing all great events; insomuch that by looking on it the possessor might behold battles and sieges and feats

Having made these and other conquests of less importance, and having collected great quantities of gold and silver, and rich stuffs and precious stones, Taric returned with his booty to the royal city of Toledo.

CHAPTER VII.

Muza ben Nozier. — His Entrance into Spain, and Capture of Carmona.

Let us leave for a season the bold Taric in his triumphant progress from city to city, while we turn our eyes to Muza ben Nozier, the renowned emir of Almagreb, and the commander-in-chief of the Moslem forces of the west. When that jealous chieftain had despatched his letter commanding Taric to pause and await his coming, he immediately made every preparation to enter Spain with a powerful reinforcement, and to take command of the conquering army. He left his eldest son, Abdalasis, in Caervan, with authority over Almagreb, or Western Africa. This Abdalasis was in the flower of his youth, and beloved by the soldiery for the magnanimity and the engaging affability which graced his courage.

Muza ben Nozier crossed the strait of Hercules with a chosen force of ten thousand horse and eight thousand foot, Arabs and Africans. He was accompanied by his two sons, Meruan and Abdelola; and by numerous illustrious Arabian cavaliers of the tribe of Koreish. He landed his shining legions on the coast of Andalusia, and pitched his tents near to the Guadiana. There first he received intelligence of the disobedience of Taric to his orders, and that, without waiting his arrival, the impetuous chieftain had continued his career, and with his light Arab squadrons had overrun and subdued the noblest provinces and cities of the kingdom.

The jealous spirit of Muza was still more exasperated by these tidings. He looked upon Taric no longer as a friend and coadjutor, but as an invidious rival, the decided enemy of his glory; and he determined on his ruin. His first consideration, however, was to secure to himself a share in the actual conquest of the land, before it should be entirely subjugated.

of chivalry, and all actions worthy of renown; and might thus ascertain the truth of all historic transactions. It was a mirror of history, therefore, and had very probably aided King Solomon in acquiring that prodigious knowledge and wisdom for which he was renowned.

Taking guides, therefore, from among his Christian captives, he set out to subdue such parts of the country as had not been visited by Taric. The first place which he assailed was the ancient city of Carmona: it was not of great magnitude, but was fortified with high walls and massive towers, and many of the fugitives of the late army had thrown themselves into it.

The Goths had by this time recovered from their first panic; they had become accustomed to the sight of Moslem troops, and their native courage had been roused by danger. Shortly after the Arabs had encamped before their walls, a band of cavaliers made a sudden sally one morning before the break of day, fell upon the enemy by surprise, killed above three hundred of them in their tents, and effected their retreat into the city; leaving twenty of their number dead, covered with honourable wounds, and in the very centre of the camp.

On the following day they made another sally, and fell on a different quarter of the encampment; but the Arabs were on their guard, and met them with superior numbers. After fighting fiercely for a time, they were routed and fled full speed for the city, with the Arabs hard upon their traces. The guards within feared to open the gate, lest with their friends they should admit a torrent of enemies. Seeing themselves thus shut out, the fugitives determined to die like brave soldiers rather than surrender. Wheeling suddenly round, they opened a path through the host of their pursuers, fought their way back to the camp, and raged about it with desperate fury until they were all slain, after having killed above eight hundred of the enemy (1).

Muza now ordered that the place should be taken by storm. The Moslems assailed it on all sides, but were vigorously resisted; many were slain by showers of stones, arrows, and boiling pitch, and many who had mounted with scaling-ladders were thrown headlong from the battlements. The alcaide, Galo, aided solely by two men, defended a tower and a portion of the wall, killing and wounding with a cross-bow more than eighty of the enemy. The attack lasted above half a day, when the Moslems were repulsed with the loss of fifteen hundred men.

Muza was astonished and exasperated at meeting with such formidable resistance from so small a city; for it was one of the few

(1) Abulcasim. *Perdita de España*, lib. i. c. 13.

places, during that memorable conquest, where the Gothic valour shone forth with its proper lustre. While the Moslem army lay encamped before the place, it was joined by Magued, the renegado, and Count Julian, the traitor, with one thousand horsemen, most of them recreant Christians, base betrayers of their country, and more savage in their warfare than the Arabs of the desert. To find favour in the eyes of Muza, and to evince his devotion to the cause, the count undertook, by wily stratagem, to put this gallant city in his power.

One evening, just at twilight, a number of Christians, habited as travelling merchants, arrived at one of the gates, conducting a train of mules laden with arms and warlike munitions. "Open the gate quickly," cried they; "we bring supplies for the garrison, but the Arabs have discovered, and are in pursuit of us." The gate was thrown open; the merchants entered with their beasts of burden, and were joyfully received. Meat and drink were placed before them; and after they had refreshed themselves they retired to the quarters allotted to them.

These pretended merchants were Count Julian and a number of his partisans. At the hour of midnight they stole forth silently, and, assembling together, proceeded to what was called the Gate of Cordova. Here setting suddenly upon the unsuspecting guards, they put them to the edge of the sword, and, throwing open the gates, admitted a great body of the Arabs. The inhabitants were roused from their sleep by sound of drum and trumpet, and the clattering of horses. The Arabs scoured the streets; a horrible massacre was commenced, in which none were spared but such of the females as were young and beautiful, and fitted to grace the harems of the conquerors. The arrival of Muza put an end to the pillage and the slaughter, and he granted favourable terms to the survivors. Thus the valiant little city of Carmona, after nobly resisting the open assaults of the infidels, fell a victim to the treachery of apostate Christians (1).

(1) Cron. Gen. de España, por Alonza el Sabio, p. iii, c. 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

Muza marches against the City of Seville.

After the capture of Carmona, Muza descended into a noble plain, covered with fields of grain, with orchards and gardens, through which glided the soft-flowing Guadalquivir. On the borders of the river stood the ancient city of Seville, surrounded by Roman walls, and defended by its golden tower. Understanding from his spies that the city had lost the flower of its youth in the battle of the Guadalete, Muza anticipated but a faint resistance. A considerable force, however, still remained within the place, and what they wanted in numbers they made up in resolution. For some days they withstood the assaults of the enemy, and defended their walls with great courage. Their want of warlike munitions, however, and the superior force and skill of the besieging army, left them no hope of being able to hold out long. There were two youthful cavaliers of uncommon valour in the city. They assembled the warriors and addressed them. "We cannot save the city," said they, "but at least we may save ourselves, and preserve so many strong arms for the service of our country. Let us cut our way through the infidel force, and gain some secure fortress, from whence we may return with augmented numbers for the rescue of the city."

The advice of the young cavaliers was adopted. In the dead of the night the garrison assembled, to the number of about three thousand, the most part mounted on horseback. Suddenly sallying from one of the gates, they rushed in a compact body upon the camp of the Saracens, which was negligently guarded, for the Moslems expected no such act of desperation. The camp was a scene of great carnage and confusion; many were slain on both sides. The two valiant leaders of the Christians fell covered with wounds; but the main body succeeded in forcing their way through the centre of the army, and in making their retreat to Beja in Lusitania.

Muza was at a loss to know the meaning of this desperate sally. In the morning he perceived the gates of the city wide open. A number of ancient and venerable men presented themselves at his tent, offering submission and imploring mercy; for none were left

in the place but the old, the infirm, and the miserable. Muza listened to them with compassion, and granted their prayer; and the only tribute he exacted was three measures of wheat and three of barley from each house or family. He placed a garrison of Arabs in the city, and left there a number of Jews to form a body of population. Having thus secured two important places in Andalusia, he passed the boundaries of the province, and advanced with great martial pomp into Lusitania.

CHAPTER IX.

Muza besieges the City of Merida.

The army of Muza was now augmented to about eighteen thousand horsemen; but he took with him but few foot soldiers, leaving them to garrison the conquered towns. He met with no resistance on his entrance into Lusitania. City after city laid its keys at his feet, and implored to be received in peaceful vassalage. One city alone prepared for vigorous defence, the ancient Merida, a place of great extent, uncounted riches, and prodigious strength. A noble Goth named Sacarus was the governor; a man of consummate wisdom, patriotism, and valour. Hearing of the approach of the invaders, he gathered within the walls all the people of the surrounding country, with their horses and mules, their flocks and herds, and most precious effects. To insure for a long time a supply of bread, he filled the magazines with grain, and erected windmills on the churches. This done, he laid waste the surrounding country to a great extent, so that a besieging army would have to encamp in a desert.

When Muza came in sight of this magnificent city, he was struck with admiration. He remained for some time gazing in silence upon its mighty walls and lordly towers, its vast extent, and the stately palaces and temples with which it was adorned. "Surely," cried he, at length, "all the people of the earth have combined their power and skill to embellish and aggrandise this city! Allah Achbar! Happy will he be who shall have the glory of making such a conquest!"

Seeing that a place so populous and so strongly fortified would be likely to maintain a long and formidable resistance, he sent

messengers to Africa to his son Abdalasis, to collect all the forces that could be spared from the garrisons of Mauritania, and to hasten and reinforce him.

While Muza was forming his encampment, deserters from the city brought him word that a chosen band intended to sally forth at midnight and surprise his camp. The Arab commander immediately took measures to receive them with a counter surprise. Having formed his plan, and communicated it to his principal officers, he ordered that, throughout the day, there should be kept up an appearance of negligent confusion in his encampment. The outposts were feebly guarded; fires were lighted in various places, as if preparing for feasting; bursts of music and shouts of revelry resounded from different quarters, and the whole camp seemed to be rioting in careless security on the plunder of the land. As the night advanced, the fires were gradually extinguished, and silence ensued, as if the soldiery had sunk into deep sleep after the carousal.

In the mean time, bodies of troops had been secretly and silently marched to reinforce the outposts; and the renegado Magued, with a numerous force, had formed an ambuscade in a deep stone-quarry by which the Christians would have to pass. These preparations being made, they awaited the approach of the enemy in breathless silence.

About midnight, the chosen force intended for the sally assembled, and the command was confided to Count Tintero, a Gothic cavalier of tried prowess. After having heard a solemn mass, and received the benediction of the priest, they marched out of the gate with all possible silence. They were suffered to pass the ambuscade in the quarry without molestation: as they approached the Moslem camp, every thing appeared quiet; for the foot soldiers were concealed in slopes and hollows, and every Arab horseman lay in armour beside his steed. The sentinels on the outposts waited until the Christians were close at hand, and then fled in apparent consternation.

Count Tintero gave the signal for assault, and the Christians rushed confidently forward. In an instant an uproar of drums, trumpets, and shrill war-cries burst forth from every side. An army seemed to spring up from the earth; squadrons of horse came thundering on them in front, while the quarry poured forth legions of armed warriors in their rear.

The noise of the terrific conflict that took place was heard on the city walls, and answered by shouts of exultation; for the Christians thought it rose from the terror and confusion of the Arab camp. In a little while, however, they were undeceived by fugitives from the fight, aghast with terror, and covered with wounds. "Hell itself," cried they, "is on the side of those infidels; the earth casts forth warriors and steeds to aid them. We have fought, not with men, but devils!"

The greater part of the chosen troops who had sallied were cut to pieces in that scene of massacre, for they had been confounded by the tempest of battle which suddenly broke forth around them. Count Tendo fought with desperate valour, and fell covered with wounds. His body was found the next morning, lying among the slain, and transpierced with half a score of lances. The renegade Magued cut off his head and tied it to the tail of his horse, and repaired with this savage trophy to the tent of Muza; but the hostility of the Arab general was of a less malignant kind. He ordered that the head and body should be placed together upon a bier, and treated with becoming reverence.

In the course of the day, a train of priests and friars came forth from the city to request permission to seek for the body of the count. Muza delivered it to them, with many soldierlike encomiums on the valour of that good cavalier. The priests covered it with a pall of cloth of gold, and bore it back in melancholy procession to the city, where it was received with loud lamentations.

The siege was now pressed with great vigour, and repeated assaults were made, but in vain. Muza saw at length that the walls were too high to be scaled, and the gates too strong to be burst open without the aid of engines; and he desisted from the attack until machines for the purpose could be constructed. The governor suspected, from this cessation of active warfare, that the enemy flattered themselves to reduce the place by famine; he caused, therefore, large baskets of bread to be thrown from the wall, and sent a messenger to Muza to inform him, that if his army should be in want of bread, he would supply it, having sufficient corn in his granaries for a ten years' siege (1).

The citizens, however, did not possess the undaunted spirit of their governor. When they found that the Moslems were con-

(1) Bleda, Crónica, lib. ii. c. 11.

structing tremendous engines for the destruction of their walls, they lost all courage, and, surrounding the governor in a clamorous multitude, compelled him to send forth persons to capitulate.

The ambassadors came into the presence of Muza with awe; for they expected to find a fierce and formidable warrior in one who had filled the land with terror: but, to their astonishment, they beheld an ancient and venerable man, with white hair, a snowy beard, and a pale emaciated countenance. He had passed the previous night without sleep, and had been all day in the field: he was exhausted, therefore, by watchfulness and fatigue; and his garments were covered with dust.

"What a devil of a man is this," murmured the ambassadors one to another, "to undertake such a siege when on the verge of the grave! Let us defend our city the best way we can; surely we can hold out longer than the life of this greybeard."

They returned to the city, therefore, scoffing at an invader who seemed fitter to lean on a crutch than wield a lance; and the terms offered by Muza, which would otherwise have been thought favourable, were scornfully rejected by the inhabitants. A few days put an end to this mistaken confidence. Abdalasis, the son of Muza, arrived from Africa, at the head of his reinforcement: he brought seven thousand horsemen, and a host of Barbary archers, and made a glorious display as he marched into the camp. The arrival of this youthful warrior was hailed with great acclamations, so much had he won the hearts of the soldiery by the frankness, and suavity, and generosity of his conduct. Immediately after his arrival, a grand assault was made upon the city; and several of the huge battering engines being finished, they were wheeled up, and began to thunder against the walls.

The unsteady populace were again seized with terror; and, surrounding their governor with fresh clamours, obliged him to send forth ambassadors a second time to treat of a surrender. When admitted to the presence of Muza, the ambassadors could scarcely believe their eyes; or that this was the same withered white-headed old man, of whom they had lately spoken with scoffing. His hair and beard were tinged of a ruddy brown; his countenance was refreshed by repose, and flushed with indignation; and he appeared a man in the matured vigour of his days. The ambassadors were struck with awe. "Surely," whispered they, one to the

other, "this must be either a devil or a magician, who can thus make himself old and young at pleasure!"

Muza received them haughtily. "Hence," said he, "and tell your people I grant them the same terms I have already proffered, provided the city be instantly surrendered; but, by the head of Mahomet, if there be any further delay, not one mother's son of ye shall receive mercy at my hands!"

The deputies returned into the city pale and dismayed. "Go forth! go forth!" cried they, and accept whatever terms are offered: of what avail is it to fight against men who can renew their youth at pleasure? Behold, we left the leader of the infidels an old and feeble man, and to-day we find him youthful and vigorous (1)!"

The place was, therefore, surrendered forthwith, and Muza entered it in triumph. His terms were merciful. Those who chose to remain were protected in person, possessions, and religion: he took the property of those only who abandoned the city, or had fallen in battle; together with all arms and horses, and the treasures and ornaments of the churches. Among these sacred spoils was found a cup, made of a single pearl, which a king of Spain, in ancient times, had brought from the temple of Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This prize was presented by Muza to the caliph, and placed in the principal mosque of the city of Damascus (2).

Muza knew how to esteem merit even in an enemy. When Sacarus, the governor of Merida, appeared before him, he lauded him greatly for the skill and courage he had displayed in the defence of his city; and, taking off his own scimitar, which was of great value, girded it upon him with his own hands. "Wear this," said he, "as a poor memorial of my admiration; a soldier of such virtue and valour is worthy of far higher honours."

He would have engaged the governor in his service, or have persuaded him to remain in the city, as an illustrious vassal of the caliph, but the noble-minded Sacarus refused to bend to the yoke of the conquerors; nor could he bring himself to reside contentedly in his country, when subjected to the domination of the infidels.

(1) Conde, p. i. c. 13. [Ambrosio de Morales. — N. B. In the Chronicle of Spain, composed by order of Alonzo the Wise, this anecdote is given as having happened at the siege of Seville.

(2) Marmol. Descript. de Africa, t. i. l. 2.

Gathering together all those who chose to accompany him into exile, he embarked, to seek some country where he might live in peace, and in the free exercise of his religion. What shore these ocean-pilgrims landed upon has never been revealed; but tradition vaguely gives us to believe that it was some unknown island, far in the bosom of the Atlantic (1).

CHAPTER X.

Expedition of Abdalasis against Seville and the "Land of Tadmir."

After the capture of Merida, Muza gave a grand banquet to his captains and distinguished warriors in that magnificent city. At this martial feast were many Arab cavaliers who had been present in various battles; and they vied with each other in recounting the daring enterprises in which they had been engaged, and the splendid triumphs they had witnessed. While they talked with ardour and exultation, Abdalasis, the son of Muza, alone kept silence, and sat with a dejected countenance. At length, when there was a pause, he turned to his father, and addressed him with modest earnestness. "My lord and father," said he, "I blush to hear your warriors recount the toils and dangers they have passed, while I have done nothing to entitle me to their companionship. When I return to Egypt, and present myself before the caliph, he will ask me of my services in Spain; what battle I have gained; what town or castle I have taken. How shall I answer him? If you love me, then, as your son, give me a command, entrust to me an enterprise; and let me acquire a name worthy to be mentioned among men."

The eyes of Muza kindled with joy at finding Abdalasis thus ambitious of renown in arms. "Allah be praised!" exclaimed he; "the heart of my son is in the right place. It is becoming in youth to look upward, and be aspiring. Thy desire, Abdalasis, shall be gratified."

An opportunity at that very time presented itself to prove the prowess and discretion of the youth. During the siege of Merida the Christian troops which had taken refuge at Beja had reinforced

(1) Abulcasim, *Perdida de España*, l. i. c. 13:

themselves from Peñafior, and, suddenly returning, had presented themselves before the gates of the city of Seville (1). Certain of the Christian inhabitants threw open the gates and admitted them. The troops rushed to the alcazar, took it by surprise, and put many of the Moslem garrison to the sword; the residue made their escape, and fled to the Arab camp before Merida, leaving Seville in the hands of the Christians.

The veteran Muza, now that the siege of Merida was at an end, was meditating the recapture and punishment of Seville at the very time when Abdalasis addressed him. "Behold, my son," exclaimed he, "an enterprise worthy of thy ambition! Take with thee all the troops thou hast brought from Africa; reduce the city of Seville again to subjection, and plant thy standard upon its alcazar. But stop not there. Carry thy conquering sword into the southern parts of Spain: thou wilt find there a harvest of glory yet to be reaped."

Abdalasis lost no time in departing upon this enterprise. He took with him Count Julian, Magued el Rumi, and the Bishop Oppas, that he might benefit by their knowledge of the country. When he came in sight of the fair city of Seville, seated like a queen in the midst of its golden plain, with the Guadalquivir flowing beneath its walls, he gazed upon it with the admiration of a lover, and lamented in his soul that he had to visit it as an avenger. His troops, however, regarded it with wrathful eyes, thinking only of its rebellion and of the massacre of their countrymen in the alcazar.

The principal people of the city had taken no part in this gallant but fruitless insurrection; and now, when they beheld the army of Abdalasis encamped upon the banks of the Guadalquivir, would fain have gone forth to make explanations, and intercede for mercy. The populace, however, forbade any one to leave the city, and, barring the gates, prepared to defend themselves to the last.

The place was attacked with resistless fury. The gates were soon burst open; the Moslems rushed in, panting for revenge. They confined not their slaughter to the soldiery in the alcazar, but roamed through every street, confounding the innocent with the guilty in one bloody massacre, and it was with the utmost diffi-

(1) Espinosa. Antiq. y Grand. de Seville, lib. ii. c. 3.

culty that Abdalasis could at length succeed in staying their sanguinary career (1).

The son of Muza proved himself as mild in conquest as he had been intrepid in assault. The moderation and benignity of his conduct soothed the terrors of the vanquished, and his wise precautions restored tranquillity. Having made proper regulations for the protection of the inhabitants, he left a strong garrison in the place to prevent any further insurrection, and then departed on the further prosecution of his enterprise.

Wherever he went his arms were victorious; and his victories were always characterised by the same magnanimity. At length he arrived on the confines of that beautiful region comprising lofty and precipitous mountains, and rich and delicious plains, afterwards known by the name of the kingdom of Murcia. All this part of the country was defended by the veteran Theodomir, who by skilful management had saved a remnant of his forces after the defeat on the banks of the Guadalete.

Theodomir was a stanch warrior, and a wary and prudent man. He had experienced the folly of opposing the Arabs in open field, where their cavalry and armour gave them such superiority. On their approach, therefore, he assembled all his people capable of bearing arms, and took possession of the cliffs and mountain-passes. "Here," said he, "a simple goatherd, who can hurl down rocks and stones, is as good as a warrior armed in proof." In this way he checked and harassed the Moslem army in all its movements, showering down missiles upon it from overhanging precipices, and waylaying it in narrow and rugged defiles, where a few raw troops could make stand against a host.

Theodomir was in a fair way to baffle his foes and oblige them to withdraw from his territories; unfortunately, however, the wary veteran had two sons with him, young men of hot and heady valour, who considered all this prudence of their father as savouring of cowardice, and who were anxious to try their prowess in the open field. "What glory," said they, "is to be gained by destroying an enemy in this way, from the covert of rocks and thickets?"

"You talk like young men," replied the veteran. "Glory is a prize one may fight for abroad, but safety is the object when the enemy is at the door."

(1) Conde, p. i. c. 14.

One day, however, the young men succeeded in drawing down their father into the plain. Abdalasis immediately seized on the opportunity, and threw himself between the Goths and their mountain fastnesses. Theodomir saw too late the danger into which he was betrayed. "What can our raw troops do," said he, "against those squadrons of horse that move like castles? Let us make a rapid retreat to Orihuela, and defend ourselves from behind its walls."

"Father," said the eldest son, "it is too late to retreat; remain here with the reserve, while my brother and I advance. Fear nothing; am not I your son, and would I not die to defend you?"

"In truth," replied the veteran, "I have my doubts whether you are my son. But if I remain here, and you should all be killed, where then would be my protection? Come," added he, turning to the second son, "I trust that thou art virtually my son; let us hasten to retreat before it is too late."

"Father," replied the youngest, "I have not a doubt that I am honestly and thoroughly your son, and as such I honour you; but I owe duty likewise to my mother, and when I sallied to the war she gave me her blessing as long as I should act with valour, but her curse should I prove craven and fly the field. Fear nothing, father; I will defend you while living, and even after you are dead. You shall never fail of an honourable sepulture among your kindred."

"A pestilence on ye both," cried Theodomir, "for a brace of misbegotten madmen! What care I, think ye, where ye lay my body when I am dead. One day's existence in a hovel is worth an age of interment in a marble sepulchre. Come, my friends," said he, turning to his principal cavaliers, "let us leave these hot-headed striplings and make our retreat; if we tarry any longer the enemy will be upon us."

Upon this the cavaliers and proud hidalgos drew up scornfully and tossed their heads: "What do you see in us," said they, "that you think we will show our backs to the enemy? Forward! was ever the good old Gothic watch-word, and with that will we live and die!"

While time was lost in these disputes, the Moslem army kept advancing, until retreat was no longer practicable. The battle was tumultuous and bloody. Theodomir fought like a lion, but it was

all in vain: he saw his two sons cut down, and the greater part of their rash companions, while his raw mountain troops fled in all directions.

Seeing there was no longer any hope, he seized the bridle of a favourite page who was near him, and who was about spurring for the mountains. "Part not from me," said he, "but do thou at least attend to my counsel, my son; and, of a truth, I believe thou art my son, for thou art the offspring of one of my handmaids who was kind unto me." And indeed the youth marvellously resembled him. Turning then the reins of his own steed, and giving him the spur, he fled again from the field, followed by the page; nor did he stop until he arrived within the walls of Orihuela.

Ordering the gates to be barred and bolted, he prepared to receive the enemy. There were but few men in the city capable of bearing arms, most of the youth having fallen in the field. He caused the women, therefore, to clothe themselves in male attire, to put on hats and helmets, to take long reeds in their hands instead of lances, and to cross their hair upon their chins in semblance of beards. With these troops he lined the walls and towers.

It was about the hour of twilight that Abdalasis approached with his army, but he paused when he saw the walls so numerous garrisoned. Then Theodomir took a flag of truce in his hand, and put a herald's tabard on the page, and they two sallied forth to capitulate, and were graciously received by Abdalasis.

"I come," said Theodomir, "on the behalf of the commander of this city, to treat for terms worthy of your magnanimity and of his dignity. You perceive that the city is capable of withstanding a long siege, but he is desirous of sparing the lives of his soldiers. Promise that the inhabitants shall be at liberty to depart unmolested with their property, and the city will be delivered up to you tomorrow morning without a blow; otherwise we are prepared to fight until not a man be left."

Abdalasis was well pleased to get so powerful a place upon such easy terms, but stipulated that the garrison should lay down their arms. To this Theodomir readily assented, with the exception, however, of the governor and his retinue, which was granted out of consideration for his dignity. The articles of capitulation were then drawn out; and, when Abdalasis had affixed his name and

seal, Theodomir took the pen and wrote his signature. "Behold in me," said he, "the governor of the city!"

Abdalasis was pleased with the hardihood of the commander of the place in thus venturing personally into his power, and entertained the veteran with still greater honour. When Theodomir returned to the city, he made known the capitulation, and charged the inhabitants to pack up their effects during the night, and be ready to sally forth in the morning.

At the dawn of day the gates were thrown open, and Abdalasis looked to see a great force issuing forth; but, to his surprise, beheld merely Theodomir and his page in battered armour, followed by a multitude of old men, women, and children.

Abdalasis waited until the whole had come forth; then, turning to Theodomir, "Where," cried he, "are the soldiers whom I saw last evening, lining the walls and towers?"

"Soldiers have I none," replied the veteran. "As to my garrison, behold it before you. With these women did I man my walls; and this, my page, is my herald, guard, and retinue."

Upon this the Bishop Oppas and Count Julian exclaimed that the capitulation was a base fraud, and ought not to be complied with; but Abdalasis relished the stratagem of the old soldier, and ordered that the stipulations of the treaty should be faithfully performed. Nay, so high an opinion did he conceive of the subtle wisdom of this commander, that he permitted him to remain in authority over the surrounding country, on his acknowledging allegiance and engaging to pay tribute to the caliph; and all that part of Spain, comprising the beautiful provinces of Murcia and Valencia, was long after known by the Arabic name of its defender, and is still recorded in Arabian chronicles as "The land of Tadmir."

Having succeeded in subduing this rich and fruitful region, and having gained great renown for his generosity as well as valour, Abdalasis returned with the chief part of his army to the city of Seville (1).

(1) Conde, p. i. Crónica del Moro Rasis. Cron. Gen. España por Alonzo el Sabio, p. iii. c. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

Muza arrives at Toledo.—Interview between him and Taric.

When Muza ben Nozier had sent his son Abdalasis to subdue Seville, he departed for Toledo, to call Taric to account for his disobedience to his orders; for, amidst all his own successes, the prosperous career of that commander preyed upon his mind. What can content the jealous and ambitious heart? As Muza passed through the land, towns and cities submitted to him without resistance; he was lost in wonder at the riches of the country, and the noble monuments of art with which it was adorned. When he beheld the bridges, constructed in ancient times by the Romans, they seemed to him the work, not of men, but of genii. Yet all these admirable objects only made him repine the more that he had not had the exclusive glory of invading and subduing the land, and exasperated him the more against Taric for having apparently endeavoured to monopolise the conquest.

Taric heard of his approach, and came forth to meet him at Talavera, accompanied by many of the most distinguished companions of his victories, and with a train of horses and mules laden with spoils, with which he trusted to propitiate the favour of his commander. Their meeting took place on the banks of the rapid river Tietar, which rises in the mountains of Placencia, and throws itself into the Tagus. Muza, in former days, while Taric had acted as his subordinate and indefatigable officer, had cherished and considered him as a second self; but now that he had started up to be a rival, he could not conceal his jealousy. When the veteran came into his presence, he regarded him for a moment with a stern and indignant aspect. "Why hast thou disobeyed my orders?" said he. "I commanded thee to await my arrival with reinforcements, but thou hast rashly overrun the country, endangering the loss of our armies and the ruin of our cause."

"I have acted," replied Taric, "in such manner as I thought would best serve the cause of Islam; and in so doing I thought to fulfil the wishes of Muza. Whatever I have done has been as your servant; behold your share, as commander-in-chief, of the spoils which I have collected." So saying, he produced an immense trea-

sure in silver and gold, and costly stuffs, and precious stones, and spread it before Muza.

The anger of the Arab commander was still more kindled at the sight of this booty, for it proved how splendid had been the victories of Taric; but he restrained his wrath for the present, and they proceeded together in moody silence to Toledo. When he entered this royal city however, and ascended to the ancient palace of the Gothic kings, and reflected that all this had been a scene of triumph to his rival, he could no longer repress his indignation. He demanded of Taric a strict account of all the riches he had gathered in Spain, even of the presents he had reserved for the caliph; and, above all, he made him yield up his favourite trophy, the talismanic table of Solomon. When all this was done, he again upbraided him bitterly with his disobedience of orders, and with the rashness of his conduct. "What blind confidence in fortune hast thou shown," said he, "in overrunning such a country, and assailing such powerful cities with thy scanty force! What madness, to venture every thing upon a desperate chance, when thou knewest I was coming with a force to make the victory secure! All thy success has been owing to mere luck, not to judgment nor generalship."

He then bestowed high praises upon the other chieftains for their services in the cause of Islam; but they answered not a word, and their countenances were gloomy and discontented, for they felt the injustice done to their favourite leader. As to Taric, though his eye burned like fire, he kept his passion within bounds.

"I have done the best I could to serve God and the caliph," said he, emphatically; "my conscience acquits me, and I trust my sovereign will do the same."

"Perhaps he may," replied Muza bitterly; "but, in the meantime, I cannot confide his interests to a desperado, who is heedless of orders and throws every thing at hazard. Such a general is unworthy to be entrusted with the fate of armies."

So saying, he divested Taric of his command and gave it to Magued the renegade. The gaunt Taric still maintained an air of stern composure. His only words were, "The caliph will do me justice!" Muza was so transported with passion at this laconic defiance, that he ordered him to be thrown into prison, and even threatened his life.

Upon this, Magued el Rumi, though he had risen by the disgrace of Taric, had the generosity to speak out warmly in his favour.

"Consider," said he, to Muza, "what may be the consequences of this severity. Taric has many friends in the army; his actions, too, have been signal and illustrious; and entitle him to the highest honours and rewards, instead of disgrace and imprisonment."

The anger of Muza, however, was not to be appeased; and he trusted to justify his measures by despatching missives to the caliph, complaining of the insubordination of Taric, and his rash and headlong conduct. The result proved the wisdom of the caution given by Magued. In the course of a little while Muza received a humiliating letter from the caliph, ordering him to restore Taric to the command of the soldiers "whom he had so gloriously conducted," and not to render useless "one of the best swords in Islam (1)!"

It is thus the envious man brings humiliation and reproach upon himself, in endeavouring to degrade a meritorious rival. When the tidings came of the justice rendered by the caliph to the merits of the veteran, there was general joy throughout the army; and Muza read, in the smiling countenances of every one around him, a severe censure upon his conduct. He concealed, however, his deep humiliation, and affected to obey the orders of his sovereign with great alacrity: he released Taric from prison, feasted him at his own table, and then publicly replaced him at the head of his troops. The army received its favourite veteran with shouts of joy, and celebrated with rejoicings the reconciliation of the commanders; but the shouts of the soldiery were abhorrent to the ears of Muza.

CHAPTER XII.

Muza prosecutes the scheme of conquest.—Siege of Saragossa.—Complete subjugation of Spain.

The dissensions, which for a time had distracted the conquering army, being appeased, and the Arabian generals being apparently once more reconciled, Muza, as commander-in-chief, proceeded to complete the enterprise by subjugating the northern parts of Spain. The same expeditious mode of conquest that had been sagaciously adopted by Taric was still pursued. The troops were lightly armed, and freed from every superfluous incumbrance.

(1) Conde, p. i. c. 15.

Each horseman, beside his arms, carried a small sack of provisions, a copper vessel in which to cook them, and a skin which served him for surcoat and for bed. The infantry carried nothing but their arms. To each regiment or squadron was allowed a limited number of sumpter mules and attendants, barely enough to carry their necessary baggage and supplies. Nothing was permitted that could needlessly diminish the number of fighting men, delay their rapid movements, or consume their provisions. Strict orders were again issued, prohibiting, on pain of death, all plunder excepting the camp of an enemy, or cities given up to pillage (1).

The armies now took their several lines of march. That under Taric departed towards the north-east, beating up the country towards the source of the Tagus, traversing the chain of Iberian or Arragonian mountains, and pouring down into the plains and valleys watered by the Ebro. It was wonderful to see, in so brief a space of time, such a vast and difficult country penetrated and subdued; and the invading army, like an inundating flood, pouring its streams into the most remote recesses.

While Taric was thus sweeping the country to the north-east, Muza departed in an opposite direction; yet purposing to meet him, and to join their forces in the north. Bending his course westwardly, he made a circuit behind the mountains, and then, advancing into the open country, displayed his banners before Salamanca, which surrendered without resistance. From hence he continued on towards Astorga, receiving the terrified submission of the land; then turning up the valley of the Douro, he ascended the course of that famous river towards the east; crossed the Sierra de Moncayo, and arriving on the banks of the Ebro, marched down along its stream, until he approached the strong city of Saragossa, the citadel of all that part of Spain. In this place had taken refuge many of the most valiant of the Gothic warriors, the remnants of armies, and fugitives from conquered cities. It was one of the last rallying points of the land. When Muza arrived, Taric had already been for some time before the place, laying close siege. The inhabitants were pressed by famine, and had suffered great losses in repeated combats; but there was a spirit and obstinacy in their resistance surpassing any thing that had yet been witnessed by the invaders.

(1) Conde, p. i. c. 15.

Muza now took command of the siege, and ordered a general assault upon the walls. The Moslems planted their scaling-ladders and mounted with their accustomed intrepidity, but were vigorously resisted; nor could all their efforts obtain them a footing upon the battlements. While they were thus assailing the walls, Count Julian ordered a heap of combustibles to be placed against one of the gates, and set on fire. The inhabitants attempted in vain from the barbican to extinguish the flames. They burnt so fiercely, that in a little while the gate fell from the hinges. Count Julian galloped into the city mounted upon a powerful charger, himself and his steed all covered with mail. He was followed by three hundred of his partisans, and supported by Magued, the renegado, with a troop of horse.

The inhabitants disputed every street and public square; they made barriers of dead bodies, fighting behind these ramparts of their slaughtered countrymen. Every window and roof was filled with combatants; the very women and children joined in the desperate fight, throwing down stones and missiles of all kinds, and scalding water, upon the enemy.

The battle raged until the hour of vespers, when the principal inhabitants held a parley, and capitulated for a surrender. Muza had been incensed at their obstinate resistance, which had cost the lives of so many of his soldiers. He knew also that in the city were collected the riches of many of the towns of eastern Spain. He demanded, therefore, beside the usual terms, a heavy sum to be paid down by the citizens, called the contribution of blood; as by this they redeemed themselves from the edge of the sword. The people were obliged to comply. They collected all the jewels of their richest families, and all the ornaments of their temples, and laid them at the feet of Muza; and placed in his power many of their noblest youths as hostages. A strong garrison was then appointed, and thus the fierce city of Saragossa was subdued to the yoke of the conqueror.

The Arab generals pursued their conquests even to the foot of the Pyrenees. Taric then ascended along the course of the Ebro, and continued along the Mediterranean coast, subduing the famous city of Valencia, with its rich and beautiful domains, and carrying the success of his arms even to Denia.

Muza undertook with his host a wider range of conquest. He overcame the cities of Barcelona, Gerona, and others that lay on

the skirts of the eastern mountains : then crossing into the land of the Franks, he captured the city of Narbonne, in a temple of which he found seven equestrian images of silver, which he brought off as trophies of his victory (1). Returning into Spain, he scoured its northern regions along Galicia and the Asturias, passed triumphantly through Lusitania, and arrived once more in Andalusia, covered with laurels, and enriched with immense spoils.

Thus was completed the subjugation of unhappy Spain. All its cities and fortresses, and strongholds, were in the hands of the Saracens, excepting some of the wild mountain tracts that bordered the Atlantic, and extended towards the north. Here, then, the story of the conquest might conclude, but that the infatigable chronicler, Fray Antonio Agapida, goes on to record the fate of those persons who were most renowned in the enterprise. We shall follow his steps, and avail ourselves of his information, laboriously collected from various sources; and truly, the story of each of the actors in this great historical drama bears with it its striking moral, and is full of admonition and instruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

Feud between the Arab generals.— They are summoned to appear before the Caliph at Damascus. — Reception of Taric.

The heart of Muza ben Nozier was now lifted up, for he considered his glory complete. He held a sway that might have gratified the ambition of the proudest sovereign, for all western Africa and the newly-acquired peninsula of Spain were obedient to his rule; and he was renowned throughout all the lands of Islam as the great conqueror of the west. But sudden humiliation awaited him in the very moment of his highest triumph.

Notwithstanding the outward reconciliation of Muza and Taric, a deep and implacable hostility continued to exist between them; and each had busy partisans who distracted the armies by their feuds. Letters were incessantly despatched to Damascus by either party, exalting the merits of their own leader and decrying his rival. Taric was represented as rash, arbitrary, and prodigal, and as injuring the discipline of the army, by sometimes treating

(1) Conde, p. i. c. 16.

it with extreme rigour, and at other times giving way to licentiousness and profusion. Muza was lauded as prudent, sagacious, dignified, and systematic in his dealings. The friends of Taric, on the other hand, represented him as brave, generous, and high-minded; scrupulous in reserving to his sovereign his rightful share of the spoils, but distributing the rest bounteously among his soldiers, and thus increasing their alacrity in the service. "Muza, on the contrary," said they, "is grasping and insatiable: he levies intolerable contributions, and collects immense treasure, but sweeps it all into his own coffers."

The caliph was at length wearied out by these complaints, and feared that the safety of the cause might be endangered by the dissensions of the rival generals. He sent letters, therefore, ordering them to leave suitable persons in charge of their several commands, and appear, forthwith, before him at Damascus.

Such was the greeting from his sovereign that awaited Muza on his return from the conquest of northern Spain.

It was a grievous blow to a man of his pride and ambition; but he prepared instantly to obey. He returned to Cordova, collecting by the way all the treasures he had deposited in various places. At that city he called a meeting of his principal officers, and of the leaders of the faction of apostate Christians, and made them all do homage to his son Abdalasis, as emir or governor of Spain. He gave this favourite son much sage advice for the regulation of his conduct, and left with him his nephew Ayub, a man greatly honoured by the Moslems for his wisdom and discretion, exhorting Abdalasis to consult him on all occasions, and consider him as his bosom counsellor. He made a parting address to his adherents, full of cheerful confidence; assuring them that he would soon return, loaded with new favours and honours by his sovereign, and enabled to reward them all for their faithful services.

When Muza sallied forth from Cordova to repair to Damascus, his cavalcade appeared like the sumptuous pageant of some Oriental potentate; for he had numerous guards and attendants splendidly armed and arrayed, together with four hundred hostages, who were youthful cavaliers of the noblest families of the Goths, and a great number of captives of both sexes, chosen for their beauty, and intended as presents for the caliph. Then there was a vast train of beasts of burden, laden with the plunder of Spain; for he took with him all the wealth he had collected in his conquests, and

all the share that had been set apart for his sovereign. With this display of trophies and spoils, showing the magnificence of the land he had conquered, he looked forward with confidence to silence the calumnies of his foes.

As he traversed the valley of the Guadalquivir, he often turned and looked back wistfully upon Cordova, and, at the distance of a league, when about to lose sight of it, he checked his steed upon the summit of a hill, and gazed for a long time upon its palaces and towers. "O Cordova!" exclaimed he, "great and glorious art thou among cities, and abundant in all delights. With grief and sorrow do I part from thee; for sure I am it would give me length of days to abide within thy pleasant walls!" When he had uttered these words, say the Arabian chronicles, he resumed his wayfaring; but his eyes were bent upon the ground, and frequent sighs bespoke the heaviness of his heart.

Embarking at Cadiz, he passed over to Africa with all his people and effects to regulate his government in that country. He divided the command between his sons Abdelola and Meruan, leaving the former in Tangier, and the latter in Cairvan. Thus having secured, as he thought, the power and prosperity of his family, by placing all his sons as his lieutenants in the country he had conquered, he departed for Syria, bearing with him the sumptuous spoils of the west.

While Muza was thus disposing of his commands, and moving cumbrously under the weight of wealth, the veteran Taric was more speedy and alert in obeying the summons of the caliph. He knew the importance, where complaints were to be heard, of being first in presence of the judge; beside, he was ever ready to march at a moment's warning, and had nothing to impede him in his movements. The spoils he had made in his conquests had either been shared among his soldiers, or yielded up to Muza, or squandered away with open-handed profusion. He appeared in Syria with a small train of war-worn followers, and had no other trophies to show than his battered armour, and a body seamed with scars. He was received, however, with rapture by the multitude, who crowded to behold one of those conquerors of the west, whose wonderful achievements were the theme of every tongue. They were charmed with his gaunt and martial air, his hard sun-burnt features, and his scathed eye. "All hail," cried they, "to the sword of Islam, the terror of the unbelievers! Behold the true

model of a warrior, who despises gain, and seeks for nought but glory!"

Taric was graciously received by the caliph, who asked tidings of his victories. He gave a soldier-like account of his actions, frank and full, without any feigned modesty, yet without vain glory. "Commander of the faithful," said he, "I bring thee no silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor captives; for what spoils I did not share with my soldiers I gave up to Muza, as my commander. How I have conducted myself the honourable warriors of thy host will tell thee; nay, let our enemies the Christians be asked if I have ever shown myself cowardly, or cruel, or rapacious."

"What kind of people are these Christians?" demanded the caliph.

"The Spaniards," replied Taric, "are lions in their castles, eagles in their saddles, but mere women when on foot. When vanquished, they escape like goats to the mountains, for they need not see the ground they tread on."

"And tell me of the Moors of Barbary."

"They are like Arabs in the fierceness and dexterity of their attacks, and in their knowledge of the stratagems of war; they resemble them, too, in feature, in fortitude, and hospitality; but they are the most perfidious people upon earth, and never regard promise or plighted faith."

"And the people of Afranc,—what sayest thou of them?"

"They are infinite in number, rapid in the onset, fierce in battle, but confused and headlong in flight."

"And how fared it with thee among these people? Did they sometimes vanquish thee?"

"Never, by Allah!" cried Taric with honest warmth, "never did a banner of mine fly the field. Though the enemy were two to one, my Moslems never shunned the combat!"

The caliph was well pleased with the martial bluntness of the veteran, and showed him great honour; and wherever Taric appeared he was the idol of the populace.

CHAPTER XIV.

Muza arrives at Damascus. — His interview with the Caliph. — The Table of Solomon. — A rigorous sentence.

Shortly after the arrival of Taric el Tuerto at Damascus the caliph fell dangerously ill, insomuch that his life was despaired of. During his illness tidings were brought that Muza ben Nozier had entered Syria with a vast cavalcade, bearing all the riches and trophies gained in the western conquests. Now Suleiman ben Abdelmelec, brother to the caliph, was successor to the throne; and he saw that his brother had not long to live, and wished to grace the commencement of his reign by this triumphant display of the spoils of Christendom. He sent messengers, therefore, to Muza, saying, "The caliph is ill, and cannot receive thee at present; I pray thee tarry on the road until his recovery." Muza, however, paid no attention to the messages of Suleiman, but rather hastened his march, to arrive before the death of the caliph. And Suleiman treasured up his conduct in his heart.

Muza entered the city in a kind of triumph, with a long train of horses and mules and camels laden with treasure, and with the four hundred sons of Gothic nobles as hostages, each decorated with a diadem and a girdle of gold; and with one hundred Christian damsels, whose beauty dazzled all beholders. As he passed through the streets he ordered purses of gold to be thrown among the populace, who rent the air with acclamations. "Behold," cried they, "the veritable conqueror of the unbelievers! Behold the true model of a conqueror, who brings home wealth to his country!" And they heaped benedictions on the head of Muza.

The caliph Walid Almanzor rose from his couch of illness to receive the emir, who, when he repaired to the palace, filled one of its great courts with treasures of all kinds: the halls, too, were thronged with the youthful hostages, magnificently attired, and with Christian damsels, lovely as the houris of Paradise. When the caliph demanded an account of the conquest of Spain, he gave it with great eloquence; but, in describing the various victories, he made no mention of the name of Taric, but spoke as if every thing had been effected by himself. He then presented the spoils

of the Christians as if they had been all taken by his own hands; and when he delivered to the caliph the miraculous table of Solomon, he dwelt with animation on the virtues of that inestimable talisman.

Upon this, Taric, who was present, could no longer hold his peace. "Commander of the faithful!" said he, "examine this precious table, if any part be wanting." The caliph examined the table, which was composed of a single emerald, and he found that one foot was supplied by a foot of gold. The caliph turned to Muza and said, "Where is the other foot of the table?" Muza answered, "I know not; one foot was wanting when it came into my hands."

Upon this, Taric drew from beneath his robe a foot of emerald of like workmanship to the others, and fitting exactly to the table. "Behold, O commander of the faithful!" cried he, "a proof of the real finder of the table; and so is it with the greater part of the spoils exhibited by Muza as trophies of his achievements. It was I who gained them, and who captured the cities in which they were found. If you want proof, demand of these Christian cavaliers here present, most of whom I captured; demand of those Moslem warriors who aided me in my battles."

Muza was confounded for a moment, but attempted to vindicate himself. "I spake," said he, "as the chief of your armies, under whose orders and banners this conquest was achieved. The actions of the soldier are the actions of the commander. In a great victory, it is not supposed that the chief of the army takes all the captives, or kills all the slain, or gathers all the booty, though all are enumerated in the records of his triumph." The caliph, however, was wroth, and heeded not his words. "You have vaunted your own desert," said he, "and have forgotten the deserts of others; nay, you have sought to debase another who has loyally served his sovereign: the reward of your envy and covetousness be upon your head!" So saying, he bestowed a great part of the spoils upon Taric and the other chiefs, but gave nothing to Muza; and the veteran retired amidst the sneers and murmurs of those present.

In a few days the Caliph Walid died, and was succeeded by his brother Suleiman. The new sovereign cherished deep resentment against Muza for having presented himself at court contrary to his command, and he listened readily to the calumnies of his enemies; for Muza had been too illustrious in his deeds not to have many enemies. All now took courage when they found he was out of

favour, and they heaped slanders on his head; charging him with embezzling much of the share of the booty belonging to the sovereign. The new caliph lent a willing ear to the accusation, and commanded him to render up all that he had pillaged from Spain. The loss of his riches might have been borne with fortitude by Muza, but the stigma upon his fame filled his heart with bitterness. "I have been a faithful servant to the throne from my youth upwards," said he, "and now am I degraded in my old age. I care not for wealth, I care not for life, but let me not be deprived of that honour which God has bestowed upon me!"

The caliph was still more exasperated at his repining, and stripped him of his commands, confiscated his effects, fined him two hundred thousand pesants of gold, and ordered that he should be scourged and exposed to the noontide sun, and afterwards thrown into prison (1). The populace, also, reviled and scoffed at him in his misery; and as they beheld him led forth to the public gaze, and fainting in the sun, they pointed at him with derision, and exclaimed—"Behold the envious man and the impostor: this is he who pretended to have conquered the land of the unbelievers!"

CHAPTER XV.

Conduct of Abdalasis as Emir of Spain.

While these events were happening in Syria, the youthful Abdalasis, the son of Muza, remained as emir or governor of Spain. He was of a generous and benignant disposition, but he was open and confiding, and easily led away by the opinions of those he loved. Fortunately his father had left with him, as a bosom counsellor, the discreet Ayub, the nephew of Muza; aided by his advice, he for some time administered the public affairs prudently and prosperously.

Not long after the departure of his father, he received a letter from him, written while on his journey to Syria; it was to the following purport:—

"Beloved son; honour of thy lineage; Allah guard thee from all harm and peril! Listen to the words of thy father. Avoid all treachery, though it should promise great advantage; and trust not in him who counsels it, even though he should be a brother.

(1) Conde, p. l. c. 17.

The company of traitors put far from thee; for how canst thou be certain that he who has proved false to others will prove true to thee? Beware, O my son, of the seductions of love. It is an idle passion, which enfeebles the heart, and blinds the judgment: it renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes. If thou shouldst discover any foible of a vicious kind springing up in thy nature, pluck it forth, whatever pang it cost thee. Every error, while new, may easily be weeded out; but if suffered to take root, it flourishes, and bears seed, and produces fruit an hundred fold. Follow these counsels, O son of my affections, and thou shalt live secure."

Abdalasis meditated upon this letter; for some part of it seemed to contain a mystery which he could not comprehend. He called to him his cousin and counsellor, the discreet Ayub. "What means my father," said he, "in cautioning me against treachery and treason? Does he think my nature so base that it could descend to such means?"

Ayub read the letter attentively. "Thy father," said he, "would put thee on thy guard against the traitors Julian and Oppas, and those of their party who surround thee. What love canst thou expect from men who have been unnatural to their kindred; and what loyalty from wretches who have betrayed their country?"

Abdalasis was satisfied with the interpretation, and he acted accordingly. He had long loathed all communion with these men; for there is nothing which the open ingenuous nature so much abhors as duplicity and treason. Policy, too, no longer required their agency; they had rendered their infamous service, and had no longer a country to betray: but they might turn and betray their employers. Abdalasis, therefore, removed them to a distance from his court, and placed them in situations where they could do no harm; and he warned his commanders from being in any wise influenced by their counsels, or aided by their arms.

He now confided entirely in his Arabian troops, and in the Moorish squadrons from Africa, and with their aid he completed the conquest of Lusitania to the ultimate parts of the Algarbe, or west, even to the shores of the great Ocean sea (1). From hence,

(1) Algarbe, or Algarbia, in-Arabic signifies the west, as Axarkia is the east, Algufia the north, and Aquibla the south. This will serve to explain some of the geographical names on the peninsula which are of Arabian origin.

he sent his generals to overrun all those vast and rugged sierras, which rise like ramparts along the ocean borders of the peninsula; and they carried the standard of Islam in triumph even to the mountains of Biscay, collecting all manner of precious spoil.

"It is not enough, O Abdalasis," said Ayub, "that we conquer and rule this country with the sword. If we wish our dominion to be secure, we must cultivate the arts of peace, and study to secure the confidence and promote the welfare of the people we have conquered." Abdalasis relished a counsel which accorded so well with his own beneficent nature. He endeavoured, therefore, to allay the ferment and confusion of the conquest; forbade, under rigorous punishment, all wanton spoil or oppression, and protected the native inhabitants in the enjoyment and cultivation of their lands, and the pursuit of all useful occupations. By the advice of Ayub also, he encouraged great numbers of industrious Moors and Arabs to emigrate from Africa, and gave them houses and lands; thus introducing a peaceful Mahometan population into the conquered provinces.

The good effect of the counsels of Ayub were soon apparent. Instead of a sudden but transient influx of wealth, made by the ruin of the land, which left the country desolate, a regular and permanent revenue sprang up, produced by reviving prosperity, and gathered without violence. Abdalasis ordered it to be faithfully collected, deposited in coffers by public officers appointed in each province for the purpose; and the whole was sent by ten deputies to Damascus, to be laid at the feet of the caliph,—not as the spoils of a vanquished country, but as the peaceful trophies of a wisely-administered government.

The common herd of warlike adventurers, the mere men of the sword, who had thronged to Spain for the purpose of ravage and rapine, were disappointed at being thus checked in their career, and at seeing the reign of terror and violence drawing to a close. "What manner of leader is this," said they, "who forbids us to make spoil of the enemies of Islam, and to enjoy the land we have wrested from the unbelievers?" The partisans of Julian also whispered their calumnies. "Behold," said they, "with what kindness he treats the enemies of your faith: all the Christians who have borne arms against you, and withstood your entrance into the land, are favoured and protected; but it is enough for a Christian to have befriended the cause of the Moslems to be singled out

by Abdalasis for persecution, and to be driven with scorn from his presence."

These insinuations fermented the discontent of the turbulent and rapacious among the Moslems; but all the friends of peace and order and good government applauded the moderation of the youthful emir.

CHAPTER XVI.

Loves of Abdalasis and Exilona.

Abdalasis had fixed his seat of government at Seville, as permitting easy and frequent communications with the coast of Africa. His palace was of noble architecture, with delightful gardens extending to the banks of the Guadalquivir. In a part of this palace resided many of the most beautiful Christian females, who were detained as captives, or rather hostages, to ensure the tranquillity of the country. Those who were of noble rank were entertained in luxury and magnificence; slaves were appointed to attend upon them, and they were arrayed in the richest apparel and decorated with the most precious jewels. Those of tender age were taught all graceful accomplishments; and even where tasks were imposed, they were of the most elegant and agreeable kind. They embroidered, they sang, they danced, and passed their time in pleasing revelry. Many were lulled by this easy and voluptuous existence; the scenes of horror through which they had passed were gradually effaced from their minds, and a desire was often awakened of rendering themselves pleasing in the eyes of their conquerors.

After his return from his campaign in Lusitania, and during the intervals of public duty, Abdalasis solaced himself in the repose of this palace, and in the society of these Christian captives. He remarked one among them who ever sat apart, and neither joined in the labours nor sports of her companions. She was lofty in her demeanour, and the others always paid her reverence; yet sorrow had given a softness to her charms, and rendered her beauty touching to the heart. Abdalasis found her one day in the garden with her companions: they had adorned their heads with flowers, and were singing the songs of their country; but she sat by herself and wept. The youthful emir was moved by her tears, and ac-

costed her in gentle accents. "O fairest of women!" said he, "why dost thou weep, and why is thy heart troubled?" "Alas!" replied she, "have I not cause to weep, seeing how sad is my condition, and how great the height from which I have fallen? In me you behold the wretched Exilona, but lately the wife of Roderick, and the Queen of Spain, now a captive and a slave!" And, having said these words, she cast her eyes upon the earth, and her tears began to flow afresh.

The generous feelings of Abdalasis were aroused at the sight of beauty and royalty in tears. He gave orders that Exilona should be entertained in a style befitting her former rank; he appointed a train of female attendants to wait upon her, and a guard of honour to protect her from all intrusion. All the time that he could spare from public concerns was passed in her society; and he even neglected his divan, and suffered his counsellors to attend in vain, while he lingered in the apartments and gardens of the palace, listening to the voice of Exilona.

The discreet Ayub saw the danger into which he was falling. "Oh Abdalasis!" said he, "remember the words of thy father. 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of the seductions of love. It renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes!'" A blush kindled on the cheek of Abdalasis, and he was silent for a moment. "Why," said he, at length, "do you seek to charge me with such weakness? It is one thing to be infatuated by the charms of a woman, and another to be touched by her misfortunes. It is the duty of my station to console a princess who has been reduced to the lowest humiliation by the triumphs of our arms. In doing so, I do but listen to the dictates of true magnanimity."

Ayub was silent, but his brow was clouded; and for once Abdalasis parted in discontent from his counsellor. In proportion as he was dissatisfied with others or with himself, he sought the society of Exilona; for there was a charm in her conversation that banished every care. He daily became more and more enamoured; and Exilona gradually ceased to weep, and began to listen with secret pleasure to the words of her Arab lover. When, however, he sought to urge his passion, she recollected the light estimation in which her sex was held by the followers of Mahomet, and assumed a countenance grave and severe.

"Fortune," said she, "has cast me at thy feet: behold I am thy captive and thy spoil. But though my person is in thy power, my

soul is unsubdued; and know that, should I lack force to defend my honour, I have resolution to wash out all stain upon it with my blood. I trust, however, in thy courtesy as a cavalier to respect me in my reverses, remembering what I have been; and that, though the crown has been wrested from my brow, the royal blood still warms within my veins (1)."

The lofty spirit of Exilona, and her proud repulse, served but to increase the passion of Abdalasis. He besought her to unite her destiny with his, and share his state and power, promising that she should have no rival nor co-partner in his heart. Whatever scruples the captive queen might originally have felt to a union with one of the conquerors of her lord, and an enemy of her adopted faith, they were easily vanquished; and she became the bride of Abdalasis. He would fain have persuaded her to return to the faith of her fathers; but though of Moorish origin, and brought up in the doctrines of Islam, she was too thorough a convert to Christianity to consent, and looked back with disgust upon a religion that admitted a plurality of wives.

When the sage Ayub heard of the resolution of Abdalasis to espouse Exilona, he was in despair. "Alas, my cousin!" said he, "what infatuation possesses thee? Hast thou then entirely forgotten the letter of thy father? 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of love: it is an idle passion, which enfeebles the heart and blinds the judgment.'" But Abdalasis interrupted him with impatience. "My father," said he, "spake but of the blandishments of wanton love; against these I am secured by my virtuous passion for Exilona."

Ayub would fain have impressed upon him the dangers he ran of awakening suspicion in the caliph, and discontent among the Moslems, by wedding the queen of the conquered Roderick, and one who was an enemy to the religion of Mahomet; but the youthful lover only listened to his passion. Their nuptials were celebrated at Seville with great pomp and rejoicings, and he gave his bride the name of Omalisam; that is to say, she of the precious jewels (2); but she continued to be known among the Christians by the name of Exilona.

(1) Faxardo, *Corona Gothica*, t. i. p. 492. Joan. Mar. de Reb. Hisp. l. vi. c. 27.

(2) Conde, p. i. c. 17.

CHAPTER XVII.

Fate of Abdalasis and Exilona. — Death of Muza.

Possession, instead of cooling the passion of Abdalasis, only added to its force; he became blindly enamoured of his beautiful bride, and consulted her will in all things; nay, having lost all relish for the advice of the discreet Ayub, he was even guided by the counsels of his wife in the affairs of government. Exilona, unfortunately, had once been a queen, and she could not remember her regal glories without regret. She saw that Abdalasis had great power in the land; greater even than had been possessed by the Gothic kings; but she considered it as wanting in true splendour until his brows should be encircled with the outward badge of royalty. One day, when they were alone in the palace of Seville, and the heart of Abdalasis was given up to tenderness, she addressed him in fond yet timid accents. "Will not my lord be offended," said she, "if I make an unwelcome request?" Abdalasis regarded her with a smile. "What canst thou ask of me, Exilona," said he, "that it would not be a happiness for me to grant?" Then Exilona produced a crown of gold, sparkling with jewels, which had belonged to the king, Don Roderick, and said, "Behold, thou art king in authority, be so in thy outward state. There is majesty and glory in a crown; it gives a sanctity to power." Then putting the crown upon his head, she held a mirror before him that he might behold the majesty of his appearance. Abdalasis chid her fondly, and put the crown away from him; but Exilona persisted in her prayer. "Never," said she, "has there been a king in Spain that did not wear a crown." So Abdalasis suffered himself to be beguiled by the blandishments of his wife, and to be invested with the crown and sceptre and other signs of royalty (1).

It is affirmed by ancient and discreet chroniclers, that Abdalasis only assumed this royal state in the privacy of his palace, and to gratify the eye of his youthful bride; but where was a secret ever confined within the walls of a palace? The assumption of the insignia of the ancient Gothic kings was soon rumoured about, and

(1) Cron. Gen. de Alonzo el Sabio, p. 3. Joan. Mar. de Reb. Hisp. lib. vi. c. 27. Conde, p. i. cap. 19.

caused the most violent suspicions. The Moslems had already felt jealous of the ascendancy of this beautiful woman; and it was now confidently asserted that Abdalasis, won by her persuasions, had secretly turned Christian.

The enemies of Abdalasis, those whose rapacious spirits had been kept in check by the beneficence of his rule, seized upon this occasion to ruin him. They sent letters to Damascus accusing him of apostacy, and of an intention to seize upon the throne in right of his wife, Exilona, as widow of the late King Roderick. It was added, that the Christians were prepared to flock to his standard, as the only means of regaining ascendancy in their country.

These accusations arrived at Damascus just after the accession of the sanguinary Suleiman to the throne, and in the height of his persecution of the unfortunate Muza. The caliph waited for no proofs in confirmation; he immediately sent private orders that Abdalasis should be put to death, and that the same fate should be dealt to his two brothers who governed in Africa, as a sure means of crushing the conspiracy of this ambitious family.

The mandate for the death of Abdalasis was sent to Abhilbar ben Obeidah and Zeyd ben Nabegat, both of whom had been cherished friends of Muza, and had lived in intimate favour and companionship with his son. When they read the fatal parchment, the scroll fell from their trembling hands. "Can such hostility exist against the family of Muza?" exclaimed they. "Is this the reward for such great and glorious services?" The cavaliers remained for some time plunged in horror and consternation. The order, however, was absolute, and left them no discretion. "Allah is great," said they, "and commands us to obey our sovereign." So they prepared to execute the bloody mandate with the blind fidelity of Moslems.

It was necessary to proceed with caution. The open and magnanimous character of Abdalasis had won the hearts of a great part of the soldiery, and his magnificence pleased the cavaliers who formed his-guard: it was feared, therefore, that a sanguinary opposition would be made to any attempt upon his person. The rabble, however, had been embittered against him from his having restrained their depredations, and because they thought him an apostate in his heart, secretly bent upon betraying them to the Christians. While, therefore, the two officers made vigilant dis-

positions to check any movement on the part of the soldiery, they let loose the blind fury of the populace, by publishing the fatal mandate. In a moment the city was in a ferment, and there was a ferocious emulation who should be first to execute the orders of the caliph.

Abdalasis was at this time at a palace in the country not far from Seville, commanding a delightful view of the fertile plain of the Guadalquivir. Hither he was accustomed to retire from the tumult of the court, and to pass his time among groves and fountains, and the sweet repose of gardens, in the society of Exilona. It was the dawn of day, the hour of early prayer, when the furious populace arrived at this retreat. Abdalasis was offering up his orisons in a small mosque which he had erected for the use of the neighbouring peasantry. Exilona was in a chapel in the interior of the palace, where her confessor, a holy friar, was performing mass. They were both surprised at their devotions, and dragged forth by the hands of the rabble. A few guards, who attended at the palace, would have made defence; but they were overawed by the sight of the written mandate of the caliph.

The captives were borne in triumph to Seville. All the beneficent virtues of Abdalasis were forgotten; nor had the charms of Exilona any effect in softening the hearts of the populace. The brutal eagerness to shed blood, which seems inherent in human nature, was awakened; and woe to the victims when that eagerness is quickened by religious hate! The illustrious couple, adorned with all the graces of youth and beauty, were hurried to a scaffold in the great square of Seville, and there beheaded, amidst the shouts and execrations of an infatuated multitude. Their bodies were left exposed upon the ground, and would have been devoured by dogs, had they not been gathered at night by some friendly hand, and poorly interred in one of the courts of their late dwelling.

Thus terminated the loves and lives of Abdalasis and Exilona, in the year of the Incarnation seven hundred and fourteen. Their names were held sacred as martyrs to the Christian faith; but many read in their untimely fate a lesson against ambition and vain glory, having sacrificed real power and substantial rule to the glittering bauble of a crown.

The head of Abdalasis was embalmed, and enclosed in a casket, and sent to Syria to the cruel Suleiman. The messenger who bore

it overtook the caliph as he was performing a pilgrimage to Mecca. Muza was among the courtiers in his train, having been released from prison. On opening the casket, and regarding its contents, the eyes of the tyrant sparkled with malignant satisfaction. Calling the unhappy father to his side: "Muza," said he, "dost thou know this head?" The veteran recognised the features of his beloved son, and turned his face away with anguish. "Yes! well do I know it," replied he; "and may the curse of God light upon him who has destroyed a better man than himself."

Without adding another word, he retired to Mount Deran, a prey to devouring melancholy. He shortly after received tidings of the death of his two sons, whom he had left in the government of Western Africa, and who had fallen victims to the jealous suspicions of the caliph. His advanced age was not proof against these repeated blows, and this utter ruin of his late prosperous family; and he sank into his grave, sorrowing and broken-hearted.

Such was the lamentable end of the conqueror of Spain; whose great achievements were not sufficient to atone, in the eye of his sovereign, for a weakness to which all men ambitious of renown are subject, and whose triumphs eventually brought persecution upon himself, and untimely death upon his children.

Here ends the legend of the Subjugation of Spain.

LEGEND

OF

COUNT JULIAN AND HIS FAMILY.

In the preceding legends is darkly shadowed out a true story of the woes of Spain. It is a story full of wholesome admonition, rebuking the insolence of human pride, and the vanity of human ambition, and showing the futility of all greatness that is not strongly based on virtue. We have seen, in brief space of time, most of the actors in this historic drama disappearing, one by one, from the scene, and going down, conqueror and conquered, to gloomy and unhonoured graves. It remains to close this eventful history, by holding up as a signal warning the fate of the traitor, whose perfidious scheme of vengeance brought ruin on his native land.

Many and various are the accounts given in ancient chronicles of the fortunes of Count Julian and his family; and many are the traditions on the subject still extant among the populace of Spain, and perpetuated in those countless ballads sung by peasants and muleteers, which spread a singular charm over the whole of this romantic land.

He who has travelled in Spain in the true way in which the country ought to be travelled, sojourning in its remote provinces, rambling among the rugged defiles and secluded valleys of its mountains, and making himself familiar with the people in their out-of-the-way hamlets, and rarely-visited neighbourhoods, will remember many a group of travellers and muleteers, gathered of an evening around the door or the spacious hearth of a mountain venta, wrapped in their brown cloaks, and listening with grave and profound attention to the long historic ballad of some rustic troubadour, either recited with the true *ore rotundo* and modulated cadences of Spanish elocution, or chanted to the tinkling of a guitar. In this way, he may have heard the doleful end of Count Julian and his family recounted in traditionary rhymes, that have been handed down from generation to generation. The particulars, however, of the following wild legend are chiefly gathered from the writings

of the pseudo Moor, Rasis. How far they may be safely taken as historic facts, it is impossible now to ascertain; we must content ourselves, therefore, with their answering to the exactions of poetic justice.

As yet every thing had prospered with Count Julian. He had gratified his vengeance; he had been successful in his treason, and had acquired countless riches from the ruin of his country. But it is not outward success that constitutes prosperity. The tree flourishes with fruit and foliage while blasted and withering at the heart. Wherever he went, Count Julian read hatred in every eye. The Christians cursed him as the cause of all their woe; the Moslems despised and distrusted him as a traitor. Men whispered together as he approached, and then turned away in scorn; and mothers snatched away their children with horror if he offered to caress them. He withered under the execration of his fellow-men; and last, and worst of all, he began to loathe himself. He tried in vain to persuade himself that he had but taken a justifiable vengeance: he felt that no personal wrong can justify the crime of treason to one's country.

For a time, he sought in luxurious indulgence to soothe, or forget, the miseries of the mind. He assembled round him every pleasure and gratification that boundless wealth could purchase; but all in vain. He had no relish for the dainties of his board; music had no charm wherewith to lull his soul, and remorse drove slumber from his pillow. He sent to Ceuta for his wife Frandina, his daughter Florinda, and his youthful son Alarbot; hoping, in the bosom of his family, to find that sympathy and kindness which he could no longer meet with in the world. Their presence, however, brought him no alleviation. Florinda, the daughter of his heart, for whose sake he had undertaken this signal vengeance, was sinking a victim to its effects. Wherever she went, she found herself a by-word of shame and reproach. The outrage she had suffered was imputed to her as wantonness, and her calamity was magnified into a crime. The Christians never mentioned her name without a curse, and the Moslems, the gainers by her misfortune, spake of her only by the appellation of Cava, the vilest epithet they could apply to woman.

But the opprobrium of the world was nothing to the upbraiding of her own heart. She charged herself with all the miseries of these disastrous wars; the deaths of so many gallant cavaliers; the

conquest and perdition of her country. The anguish of her mind preyed upon the beauty of her person. Her eye, once soft and tender in its expression, became wild and haggard; her cheek lost its bloom, and became hollow and pallid; and at times there was desperation in her words. When her father sought to embrace her, she withdrew with shuddering from his arms; for she thought of his treason, and the ruin it had brought upon Spain. Her wretchedness increased after her return to her native country, until it rose to a degree of frenzy. One day, when she was walking with her parents in the garden of their palace, she entered a tower, and, having barred the door, ascended to the battlements. From thence she called to them in piercing accents, expressive of her insupportable anguish and desperate determination. "Let this city," said she, "be henceforth called Malacca, in memorial of the most wretched of women, who therein put an end to her days." So saying, she threw herself headlong from the tower, and was dashed to pieces. The city, adds the ancient chronicler, received the name thus given it, though afterwards softened to Malaga, which it still retains, in memory of the tragical end of Florinda.

The Countess Frandina abandoned this scene of woe, and returned to Ceuta, accompanied by her infant son. She took with her the remains of her unfortunate daughter, and gave them honourable sepulture in a mausoleum of the chapel belonging to the citadel. Count Julian departed for Carthage, where he remained plunged in horror at this doleful event.

About this time, the cruel Soleiman, having destroyed the family of Muza, had sent an Arab general, named Alahor, to succeed Abdalasis as emir or governor of Spain. The new emir was of a cruel and suspicious nature, and commenced his sway with a stern severity that soon made those under his command look back with regret to the easy rule of Abdalasis. He regarded with an eye of distrust the renegade Christians who had aided in the conquest, and who bore arms in the service of the Moslems; but his deepest suspicions fell upon Count Julian. "He has been a traitor to his own countrymen," said he; "how can we be sure that he will not prove traitor to us?"

A sudden insurrection of the Christians who had taken refuge in the Asturian mountains quickened his suspicions, and inspired him with fears of some dangerous conspiracy against his power. In the height of his anxiety, he bethought him of an Arabian sage

named Yuza, who had accompanied him from Africa. This son of science was withered in form, and looked as if he had outlived the usual term of mortal life. In the course of his studies and travels in the east, he had collected the knowledge and experience of ages, being skilled in astrology and, it is said, in necromancy, and possessing the marvellous gift of prophecy or divination. To this expounder of mysteries Alahor applied, to learn whether any secret treason menaced his safety.

The astrologer listened with deep attention and overwhelming brow to all the surmises and suspicions of the emir; then shut himself up to consult his books, and commune with those supernatural intelligences subservient to his wisdom. At an appointed hour, the emir sought him in his cell. It was filled with the smoke of perfumes: squares and circles and various diagrams were described upon the floor; and the astrologer was poring over a scroll of parchment covered with cabalistic characters. He received Alahor with a gloomy and sinister aspect, pretending to have discovered fearful portents in the heavens, and to have had strange dreams and mystic visions.

"O emir," said he, "be on your guard! Treason is around you, and in your path: your life is in peril. Beware of Count Julian and his family."

"Enough," said the emir. "They shall all die! Parents and children—all shall die!"

He forthwith sent a summons to Count Julian to attend him in Cordova. The messenger found him plunged in affliction for the recent death of his daughter. The count excused himself, on account of this misfortune, from obeying the commands of the emir in person, but sent several of his adherents. His hesitation, and the circumstance of his having sent his family across the straits to Africa, were construed by the jealous mind of the emir into proofs of guilt. He no longer doubted his being concerned in the recent insurrections, and that he had sent his family away, preparatory to an attempt, by force of arms, to subvert the Moslem domination. In his fury, he put to death Siseburto and Evan, the nephews of Bishop Oppas, and sons of the former king; Witiza, suspecting them of taking part in the treason. Thus did they expiate their treachery to their country in the fatal battle of the Guadalete.

Alahor next hastened to Carthagena, to seize upon Count Julian.

So rapid were his movements that the count had barely time to escape with fifteen cavaliers, with whom he took refuge in the strong castle of Marcuello, among the mountains of Arragon. The emir, enraged to be disappointed of his prey, embarked at Carthagea, and crossed the straits to Ceuta, to make captives of the Countess Frandina and her son.

The old chronicle from which we take this part of our legend presents a gloomy picture of the countess in the stern fortress to which she had fled for refuge; a picture heightened by supernatural horrors. These latter the sagacious reader will admit or reject according to the measure of his faith and judgment; always remembering, that, in dark and eventful times, like those in question, involving the destinies of nations, the downfall of kingdoms, and the crimes of rulers and mighty men, the hand of fate is sometimes strangely visible, and confounds the wisdom of the worldly wise, by intimations and portents above the ordinary course of things. With this proviso, we make no scruple to follow the venerable chronicler in his narration.

Now so it happened, that the Countess Frandina was seated late at night in her chamber in the citadel of Ceuta, which stands on a lofty rock, overlooking the sea. She was revolving, in gloomy thought, the late disasters of her family, when she heard a mournful noise, like that of the sea-breeze, moaning about the castle walls. Raising her eyes, she beheld her brother, the Bishop Oppas, at the entrance of the chamber. She advanced to embrace him, but he forbade her with a motion of his hand; and she observed that he was ghastly pale, and that his eyes glared as with lambent flames.

* "Touch me not, sister," said he with a mournful voice, "lest thou be consumed by the fire which rages within me. Guard well thy son, for blood-hounds are upon his track. His innocence might have secured him the protection of heaven, but our crimes have involved him in our common ruin." He ceased to speak, and was no longer to be seen. His coming and going were alike without noise, and the door of the chamber remained fast bolted.

On the following morning, a messenger arrived with tidings that the Bishop Oppas had been made prisoner in battle by the insurgent Christians of the Asturias, and had died in fetters in a tower of the mountains. The same messenger brought word that the Emir Alahor had put to death several of the friends of Count Julian,

had obliged him to fly for his life to a castle in Arragon, and was embarking with a formidable force for Ceuta.

The Countess Frandina, as has already been shown, was of courageous heart; and danger made her desperate. There were fifty Moorish soldiers in the garrison; she feared that they would prove treacherous, and take part with their countrymen. Summoning her officers, therefore, she informed them of their danger, and commanded them to put those Moors to death. The guards sallied forth to obey her orders. Thirty-five of the Moors were in the great square, unsuspecting of any danger, when they were severally singled out by their executioners, and, at a concerted signal, killed on the spot. The remaining fifteen took refuge in a tower. They saw the armada of the emir at a distance, and hoped to be able to hold out until its arrival. The soldiers of the countess saw it also, and made extraordinary efforts to destroy these internal enemies, before they should be attacked from without. They made repeated attempts to storm the tower, but were as often repulsed with severe loss. They then undermined it, supporting its foundations by stanchions of wood. To these they set fire, and withdrew to a distance, keeping up a constant shower of missiles to prevent the Moors from sallying forth to extinguish the flames. The stanchions were rapidly consumed; and when they gave way the tower fell to the ground. Some of the Moors were crushed among the ruins; others were flung to a distance, and dashed among the rocks: those who survived were instantly put to the sword.

The fleet of the emir arrived at Ceuta about the hour of vespers. He landed, but found the gates closed against him. The countess herself spoke to him from a tower, and set him at defiance. The emir immediately laid siege to the city. He consulted the astrologer Yuza, who told him that, for seven days, his star would have the ascendant over that of the youth Alarbot: but after that time the youth would be safe from his power, and would effect his ruin.

Alahor immediately ordered the city to be assailed on every side, and at length carried it by storm. The countess took refuge with her forces in the citadel, and made a desperate defence; but the walls were sapped and mined, and she saw that all resistance would soon be unavailing. Her only thoughts now were to conceal her child. "Surely," said she, "they will not think of seeking him among the dead." She led him, therefore, into the dark and dis-

mal chapel. "Thou art not afraid to be alone in this darkness, my child?" said she.

"No, mother," replied the boy, "darkness gives silence and sleep." She conducted him to the tomb of Florinda. "Fearest thou the dead, my child!" "No, mother, the dead can do no harm,—and what should I fear from my sister?"

The countess opened the sepulchre. "Listen, my son," said she. "There are fierce and cruel people who have come hither to murder thee. Stay here in company with thy sister, and be quiet as thou dost value thy life!" The boy, who was of a courageous nature, did as he was bidden, and remained there all that day, and all the night, and the next day until the third hour.

In the mean time the walls of the citadel were sapped, the troops of the emir poured in at the breach, and a great part of the garrison was put to the sword. The countess was taken prisoner and brought before the emir. She appeared in his presence with a haughty demeanour, as if she had been a queen receiving homage; but when he demanded her son, she faltered, and turned pale, and replied, "My son is with the dead."

"Countess," said the emir, "I am not to be deceived; tell me where you have concealed the boy, or tortures shall wring from you the secret."

"Emir," replied the countess, "may the greatest torments be my portion, both here and hereafter, if what I speak be not the truth! My darling child lies buried with the dead."

The emir was confounded by the solemnity of her words; but the withered astrologer, Yuza, who stood by his side regarding the countess from beneath his bushy eyebrows, perceived trouble in her countenance and equivocation in her words. "Leave this matter to me," whispered he to Alahor; "I will produce the child."

He ordered strict search to be made by the soldiery, and he obliged the countess to be always present. When they came to the chapel, her cheek turned pale and her lip quivered. "This," said the subtle astrologer, "is the place of concealment."

The search throughout the chapel, however, was equally vain, and the soldiers were about to depart, when Yuza remarked a slight gleam of joy in the eye of the countess.

"We are leaving our prey behind," thought he; "the countess is exulting."

He now called to mind the words of her asseveration, that her