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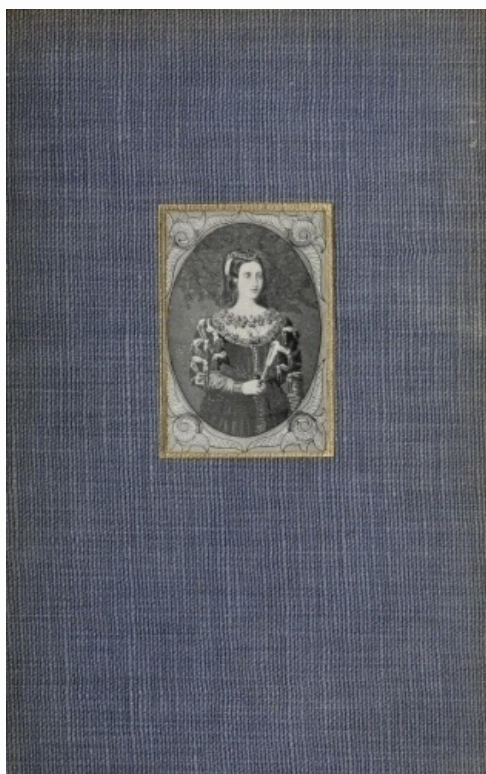
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(etext transcriber's note)



The Darro and Torre de Comares.



# OLD COURT LIFE IN SPAIN

BY

**FRANCES ELLIOT**

AUTHOR OF "OLD COURT LIFE IN FRANCE," ETC.



*ILLUSTRATED*

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VOLUME II.  
— — —

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## Old Court Life in Spain

### CHAPTER I

#### Fiesta of the Corpus Domini



HE time is early summer; the sky an unbroken sphere of blue, as deep and smooth as a turquoise, canoping the blanched domes and pinnacles of the cathedral and illuminating with ineffable splendour the elegant galleries of the Giralda tower. No shade anywhere, on plaza, *patio*, or river bank; nothing but a blazing sun, making golden motes; the thinly leaved palms scarcely leaving a reflection on the hot earth.

It is the Fiesta of the Corpus Domini. The whole city of Seville is astir, the procession is passing, Don Pedro following bareheaded, attended by Don Juan de Mañara, Ferran de Castro, Don Garcia Padilla, and many others, under a gorgeous canopy, and so delicately fair and flaxen-haired does he look, he is more like a young saint than a king.

Behind him walk the archbishop wearing a jewelled mitre, and the chapter in rich copes and robes, followed by the knights of the military orders of Santiago and Calatrava, the cross upon their breasts, armed *cap-à-pie*, with nodding plumes, each knight with his flag and cognisance borne by page and esquire; a magnificent procession, set off by the sombre background of monks, penitents, choristers, and chanting canons intoning the offices of the Church.

Now all who have seen a religious procession in Spain will understand the splendour of it. The mediæval magnificence of the robes, wrought in plaques of solid gold and incrustated with priceless jewels, the brilliant glow of sacred banners, the sheen of the steel caps and armour; and above all the amazing glitter of the gigantic dolls (or *pasos*), larger than life, dressed in the most gorgeous robes, representing the Saviour, the Virgin, and saints and martyrs. To the sound of trumpets, drums, and cymbals they advance in a blaze of tapers and torches, carried on platforms of wood, through the narrow streets, over which silken awnings are drawn from house to house, every soul present, from the king down to the last of *los pobres*, prostrate on the stones.

The Virgin first, diamond-crowned, of gigantic height, with deep-set glassy eyes, one big hand ablaze with rings, raised in benediction; San Fernando, habited in steel, his helmet raised to display his glistening visage, his royal mantle sewn with the emblem of the *Nodo* of Castile and Leon; the local saints, Justina and Rufina, who, refusing to worship the Phœnician idol Salambo in her temple in Triana, suffered martyrdom; San Tomas and San Lazarus, and the imaginary Santiago, as a heavenly knight, Protector of Spain, clad in the white mantle of his order, a broadsword by his side, and a glory round his casque, carrying the baton of command.

From the balconies and the *miradores* float damask draperies, striped Moorish stuffs, and wreaths of feathers and flowers; fans wave incessantly in the heavy air, and long black mantillas fall over eyes lustrous under meshes of coal black hair—to the wild ringing of every bell in the city, led by the boom of the Giralda, and petards exploding as of a city taken by assault.

As the procession passes the stone balcony of the Palacio del Ayuntamiento, Don Pedro's mistress, Maria de Padilla, flashes forth, a dark vision of beauty, crowned with a regal circlet as though she were a queen, by her side her little son Alonso, dark-eyed as she is herself.

Such a sight causes the archbishop to tremble lest a speedy judgment should follow on himself. Yet, spite of the chanting and the prayer, the sacred *pasos* with their hard unearthly eyes reflecting, as it were, the horror expressed by the archbishop, Don Pedro at once arrests the procession, and with a gracious gesture signs to Maria to descend and take her place beside him. And so godless is he in the eyes of all men, he would insist, but for the confusion which ensues by the sudden stopping of such a crowd and the screaming and cries of those who were pressed together,—when, in the confusion, the glove which he carries in his hand, worked with the arms of Castile, drops on the ground.

Don Juan de Mañara, who is nearest to Don Pedro, rushes to pick it up, but is forestalled by one of the chapter, a stalwart young priest, by name Don Jaime de Colminares. As he is in the very act, on bended knee, of returning the glove, a youth all aflame with passion rushes forth and stabs him in the breast.

A gleam, a cry, a quiver, and all is over. Not a voice is raised, not a hand stirs. Even the archbishop is mute in presence of the king, but his pallid face and the terrified glances of the chapter say more than words.

Not so Don Pedro, who stamps his foot with wrath as he faces the assassin, the least moved among them all.

"Who are you?" asks the king, his voice trembling with rage, "who dare to assume my prerogative of life and death?"

"My name, my lord, is Emanuel Perez," is the prompt answer as he meets Don Pedro's furious glance with honest eyes.

"Why have you killed this man?" demands the king, maddened at his coolness, his hand on the hilt of a wrought dagger at his waist, while the archbishop and the chapter draw round to listen.

"My lord," answers Emanuel, falling on his knees, for the majesty of the king has subdued him, "I had my reasons. Ask me not to speak evil of dignitaries," and he gazes round at the rampart of glaring eyes.

"Speak," answers the king; "the dead is silent, the living man must tell the tale. Speak, or tortures shall

make you. Were it even myself you had to accuse, I command you, speak. The crime is public, so shall be the punishment. I live before my people."

Cries of "Castila! Castila!" come from the excited crowd. Caps are flung in the air and loud *vivas!* come from the beggars and ruffians of the street.

Behind Don Pedro rises the Moorish arch of the Puerta del Perdon, a sheet of delicate carving, white as snow, framing his figure as in a picture. Above rises the cathedral, a gigantic pile of richly carved cornices and tier above tier of carved parapets and domes, the walls ornamented with innumerable niched figures, bosses, roses, and stars. On one side of the street lies the murdered priest in his sacerdotal robes, the painted dolls on the other, the stately form of the archbishop between, his hands folded, his eyes cast down in prayer, the affrighted chapter gathering about him in purple robes, and behind the populace eagerly pressing round the king.

Then Emanuel speaks: "Sire, my father is a *zapatero* (shoemaker); I follow the same trade. We are poor but honest, no one reviles us. My lord, I had a sister," as the word passes his lips he quivers all over, and looking down on the canon's blood, which has made for itself a little runnel among the stones, he savagely stamps on it, while at the word "sister" a cynical smile passes over the king's lips and the majesty of his attitude relaxes.

"She was *hermosa*," continues Emanuel, not noticing the change, "*muy hermosa*. Every one looked at her. She went to confession in the cathedral at the altar near the image of Santo Cristoforo, twice, three times—we could not think why she went so often—then she disappeared. We sought her everywhere, in the market, the stalls, the exchange, by the river, in the narrow alleys, and at the gates. No one had seen her. After some days her body was found in a deep ditch near the river. Then we knew the truth, and who had dealt with her. Of the foul deed and who had done it we spoke. Three days after, my father's body was brought to us, stabbed to the heart. Then, upon the wounds of Christ, I swore an oath to kill the beast who wore the robe of God to defile it, and I have kept my word."

In the tumult of his soul, Emanuel forgot the presence of the king, the crowd, the occasion, all but his passion of vengeance.

"And if the crime was so public," asks the king, whose attention has deepened as he proceeded, "and your father talked so loud that he was stabbed for it, what punishment did the archbishop and the chapter impose on the canon?"

"His punishment!" cries Emanuel. "Ha! that is just it. His punishment! *Por Dios!*"—and such a volley of words comes he can scarcely articulate—"The chapter! Yes, the chapter held a court in the sacristy with closed doors, the villains! and condemned him *not to say Mass for one year!*"

"Then," cries Don Pedro, in his harsh voice and a bitter smile on his face, for the young man's courage pleases him, and his honest eyes, "I condemn you, Emanuel *el zapatero*, to pass one year without making shoes."

A loud shout of applause rises from the *pobres*. Those near the steps of the cathedral repeat it to others farther off, the people in the streets shout it to those at the windows, and these to the crowds pressed on the terrace-roofs, so that the king's justice is known to all.

"Yes, my lord archbishop," speaks the king, resuming in a moment all the dignity of the sovereign, as he turns to where he stood carrying in his hand the pastoral staff, a wonder of ancient workmanship—"yes, my lord archbishop, and most venerable chapter, from whose ranks so notable a light has been extinguished, I have spoken, I am *El Rey Justiciar*. Rich or poor, prince or beggar are the same to me. As to you, Emanuel," turning to the young man, "I believe you are worthy of better things. From this day I name you a soldier, and attach you among the Alguazils who guard my person. Be as faithful for my honour as you have been for your own and you shall soon be promoted to a command."

## CHAPTER II

### Don Pedro—Maria de Padilla—Albuquerque



IN the upper story of the Alcazar is Don Pedro's retiring room, overlooking the central Patio de las Doncellas below, the soft echo of ever-bubbling fountains and runnels mingling with the songs of birds hidden among the luxuriant foliage of palms and fragrant plants.

But little in keeping with the harmony without is the carved door by which the apartment is entered, still hung with the heads of four unjust judges placed there by the king as a warning to evil-doers. It is a small and secluded room, cut off from the state apartments of the upper story, appropriated to the use of Doña Maria del Padilla, panelled with cedar, broken by coats of arms in red, blue, and gold shields, portraits of kings of Castile and Moorish caliphs, emblems and badges, gilt "castles" and rampant "lions"; the ceiling rich in carved rafters, dividing into deep compartments, ornamented with bosses and lozenges in the same bright hues, by which the effect of the dark wood is greatly heightened; sconces for candles and circles for torches also on the walls, showing that it is the habit of the king to use the room by night as well as day. Little sun enters, and what does penetrate comes from lofty casements darkened by panes of painted glass, reflecting in turn on the deeply tinted *azulejo* tiles of the floor, always so noticeable a detail in Moorish chambers.

In a dark corner a secret stair descends to the caliph's bedroom on the ground floor, an arrangement suited to the erratic habits of Don Pedro, who constantly comes and goes at all hours of the day and night and can thus enter without being observed.

He is seated on a high-backed chair with his back to the light, a mere youth in appearance—his stormy life ended before he was thirty—in which one seeks in vain for the murderous epithet of *El Cruel*. But as his face turns towards the light, the fair locks about his shoulders darken into a dull red and the blue eyes assume a strangely sinister expression. Opposite to him stands his great minister, Albuquerque. During two

troubled reigns he has guided the helm of state through troubled periods of rebellion, Moorish wars, and conspiracies. At the death of King Alfonso he skilfully maintained Mary of Portugal—his first protectress—as regent for her son; a difficult task, for as long as he lived Alfonso treated his mistress, Eleanor de Guzman, as a queen.

Astute and ready-witted Albuquerque has long understood the inherent cruelty of the young king, as well as his obstinacy. He fostered his boyish fancy for his kinswoman, Maria de Padilla, the better to rule him, until it ripened into such an overwhelming passion that his own influence was undermined. With good cause he curses the day he brought her to Seville, especially since she has borne the king a son, and her enmity to him has grown into an open attack upon his authority. Now, with the knowledge of the queen mother, he has come with a proposition calculated greatly to curb if not to end her power.

Albuquerque is barely past the prime of life, but his thin, deeply lined face gives him a look of age. His black Spanish eyes are turned full on his master. Too cunning to betray the intense anxiety he feels, only a slight flush on his cheek tells of his emotion. Well he knows the perverse disposition of the royal youth before him, and that the very fact of a too great insistency will only rouse him to violent opposition, especially on a subject touching him so nearly as that which he has come to discuss. Still he feels that what he has to say is of such paramount importance to the state that, spite of himself, the tones of his voice deepen and his manner acquires a solemn earnestness.

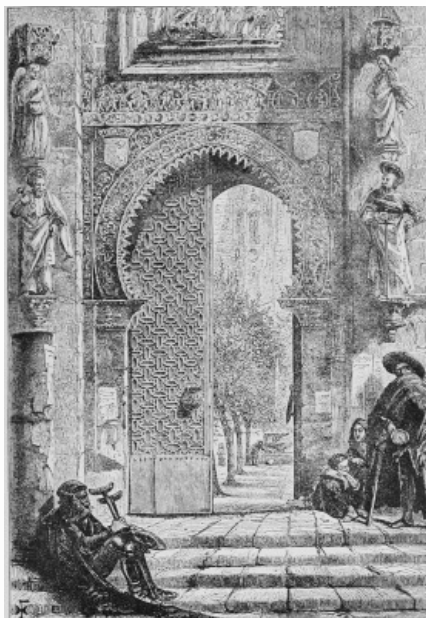
"A disputed succession, my lord," he urges, watching the effect of his bold words; "Maria de Padilla's children conspiring in every corner of the kingdom, as do now the bastards of your father, Enrique de Trastamare, and his brothers Don Fadique and Don Telmo. Have they not read us a lesson in rebellion? God alone knows what an arduous task was mine to prevent his naming his favourite, Don Enrique, to the succession, and shutting you, my lord, up in a monastery for life. Is Castile again to endure the same evil from which I have freed it? Invoke not Nemesis again, my Lord. You have suffered enough from the same cause to know its bitterness. Think what blood has flowed from that infatuation of your father's, and the death of Doña Eleanor still to be avenged by the great house of Guzman."

But here Albuquerque is arrested by such a sudden glance of fury from the king, he wisely desists.

"Maria is my kinswoman," he continues in another tone, skilfully changing his line of attack. "I brought her to Seville."

Don Pedro listens in haughty silence. Dark passions gather on his brow as the well-chosen words fall from the lips of the great minister. At the mention of his children by Maria de Padilla he gives an indignant start and seems about to interrupt his smoothly flowing periods. But carried, spite of himself, by the weight of his arguments, he withholds himself; and, with darkly glancing eyes, silently assents, especially as the name of Enrique passes Albuquerque's lips.

The concluding sentence as to the disinterestedness of Albuquerque in regard to Maria de Padilla he treats with evident contempt. It is clear that



**A GATE OF THE COURT OF THE ORANGES, SEVILLE CATHEDRAL.**

sort of pretence does not touch him, for he well knows that it was Maria's determination to throw off her kinsman, not consideration of the good of Castile, which led him to urge any measure which would weaken her influence.

"Keep to the matter in hand," he says sternly. "I understand you press on me a royal marriage for reasons of State; you need not diverge from that point. It is an act repugnant to me. Why not open war and an alliance with England and the Black Prince?" he continues, passing his hands slowly through the meshes of his long fair hair. "I know the serpent's trail is over Castile. I have crushed the mother and those with her, but the rest of the brood I could not reach."

"But you did well, my lord," answers Albuquerque with a dark smile. "A couple of Infantes more or less, ha! ha! Who cares whether they live or die but their mother, and she was dead? To wring their necks and send them spotless to paradise was a worthy deed. Would that their brothers lay as low as they."

"Do not give me all the credit," breaks in the king, mollified by this applause. "If ever minister acted for himself it was you. Who chose the guards? Who bribed the captain-general? Who? But let it lie. We will not quarrel over the spoil like low accomplices. The deed was done, and well done;" and with a discordant laugh he joins in the ghastly jest with a voice that freezes the blood by its merciless cruelty.

"Yes, my lord," replies Albuquerque, "it is so. You will do well to rid Castile of the other traitor too. For if Don Enrique de Trastamare dies suddenly, or is *killed*" (here the astute minister pauses as if weighing in his mind by what means the happy consummation of his death could be accomplished), "there is his brother, the young Grand Master Fadique, who would at once take his place, backed by the knighthood of Santiago and Calatrava, and be upheld by all your enemies. It is the same blood, my lord, the same ambition then as now. 'The throne! the throne!' is the war-cry of the bastards, and France is ever ready to fan the flame."

"True," answers Don Pedro, "I am surrounded by foes. If I am a devil, they have made me so. From my birth, my life has been endangered by their machinations, I and my mother also. Fadique is the best. He has a soft face and winning ways. He says he hates his brother. He may be a traitor," he continues, rising from his chair and pacing up and down the room with the uneasy step of a beast of prey. "What matter? I use him as a tool; though," and he suddenly stops and falls into a muse, "there was a time, when my father was alive—we were boys then, playing in these gardens together—that he did somewhat win my heart, and I showed it. I was a fool then. But now, let us fight it out." Then resuming his restless pacing up and down: "Can I trust Fadique?" he mutters.

"Tush!" cries Albuquerque, moved out of his calmness by this unusual sensibility; "he will stab you first and then succeed you. The treachery of the race, their greed of power, is patent everywhere. The people speak of it in the wine shops, the beggars make songs and sing them in the streets, and the soldiers——"

"No, by God! Not my soldiers!" cries Pedro, quickly arresting him. "I will not believe it. Not my soldiers! They are true! Fadique may or may not be false, what matter? I tell you" (impatiently) "I use him as a 'tool.' "

"My Lord," replies Albuquerque, lifting his deep-set eyes upon his master, "although young, I perceive you are already skilled in kingcraft. Nothing answers like diversion. You have dealt wisely in setting up one brother against the other. In making Fadique Grand Master of Santiago the jealous spleen of Don Enrique is fed and nourished. He has no position in Castile. But about that prophecy, my lord," continues Albuquerque—seeking to return to the important matter on which his mind is set, which Don Pedro is obviously seeking to avoid—"of which I spoke to your Grace. Do you intend to verify it by the lack of rightful heirs? Pardon me, my lord, I speak in the interest of Castile. As far as your Highness's pleasure is concerned, I have shown that I grudge not my own kinswoman Maria." At her name the king turns paler than was his wont and reseats himself. "Were I ambitious, I might scheme for a crown on her head and on her son's. But I appeal to your Highness if I have not ever preferred your honour to my own? But reasons of State and the unsettled condition of the kingdom demand not only that you espouse a great princess, but that her hand should bring a strong alliance."

"And the princess is called?" asks Don Pedro, with a sarcastic smile. "Doubtless her name is ready."

"Yes, my lord, the Lady Blanche, daughter of the Duke of Bourbon, and niece of the most Christian King of France. Repute says she is comely, and her great youth and motherless condition under a warlike father promises her submissive. What says your Highness?"

"And in my turn I desire to ask *you* a question, Albuquerque," replies Don Pedro, who sits in deep thought as sentence after sentence falls from the great minister. "When do you intend afterwards to return to Seville?"

"I, to Seville, my lord? I do not catch your Grace's meaning. Whenever the service of your Highness permits me."

"I would advise you," replies the young king, sardonically, "for your safety, to delay it as long as possible. If you affianced me to the Lady Blanche, you will find a warm welcome from Maria at your return. What her revenge may hatch, you best know. I warn you. You are a bold man, Albuquerque. Better face a lioness robbed of her whelps than an outraged woman."

The grave Albuquerque laughs outright. "A woman's fury is a small matter, your Highness, and court report says that you yourself hold it cheap. The welfare of my master is what I regard. If your Highness holds the obstacles as light as I do, we will have the espousals at the Alcazar, and Maria shall hold the new queen's robe."

"No, no, never!" cries Don Pedro, stung into real feeling by the remembrance of her he loved and the insult to be put on her. "If this is done at all, it must be distant and secret. *She* shall be spared the knowledge until all is over. I would rather lead a dozen campaigns against the French and Du Guesclin into the bargain in open field, than lend my hand to this matter. I a wife—a queen—a consort—what am I to do with her? Will she replace that other who nestles in my breast?" and a look of love comes into his eyes which softens them into real beauty. No one can tell what that hard face can express until that one chord is struck to which his whole being vibrates.

"The princess will bring France in her hand and peace in your councils. Your Highness is not bound to separate from——"

"Yes, yes, I understand; but would Maria's proud heart accept it? 'Peace in my councils and strife at my board!' I cannot undertake it. An older man might do it, but, Albuquerque, I am young, and though men call me *El Cruel*, I am also *El Justiciar*. Now that is not justice. She has borne me children. She is like no other woman—I love her."

"Leave my kinswoman to me, sire; only consent and I will answer for her. But, my lord, forgive me if I say that if you thus *half-hearted* enter into this scheme, you will bring more calamity on Castile, more war and misery than we have now to battle with. Women, my liege, are but cheap in your eyes as yet. But any wrong done to a royal princess such as the Lady Blanche, any insult, *any dishonour*"—the king looks up sharply—"would bring on us the whole power of France. Your Highness knows it," he adds deprecatingly, watching the king's grave face. "If done, it must be *well* done, or let alone."

"And who says *no*?" answers the inscrutable young sovereign. "Who says that I shall not become, under

the Lily of France, the most adoring of husbands; a very Hercules to his Omphale? Methinks the scene rises before me in the *patio* below—the daughter of France and I seated under the palms, Nubian slaves waving feather fans over us, lest any fly or insect touch her soft cheek, while your kinswoman Maria”—(here the king gives a discordant laugh)—“watches behind a screen, subdued and gentle.”

Albuquerque frowned. To this, then, had come all his wise reasonings, his statecraft, his far-seeing policy; a jest, worse than a jest, a scoff in the mouth of that sardonic youth whose service he held. Well he knew him, and that once in that mocking mood no more was to be done with him.

Raising his eyes to the cynical young face which faced him, a low laugh still on his lips, somewhat of the contempt he felt looked out, spite of himself, and Don Pedro marked it and for a moment yielded to the influence of his powerful mind.

“Albuquerque, I will consider your reasons and give you my decision,” he says, with a natural majesty of manner he knows well how to assume. “Until then, let this matter rest. As soon as I can ride I shall order my further progress towards Burgos. There we will hold a council as to the threatened rising of Enrique de Trastamare. He has many followers at Toledo and will endeavour to take the city and garrison. But my friends the Jews, headed by Samuel Levi, will take care of my interests.”

The haughty bearing of the young king strangely jarred upon the feelings of Albuquerque.

After all, the discussion of the marriage might be called (seeing his relationship to Maria de Padilla) almost a *personal* question, and that he had been and was acting magnanimously in the matter he felt to his heart's core. The ill-concealed contempt of the king wounded and offended him as it had never done before. He reddened under the mocking glance of Don Pedro, his eyes half in jest, half in anger, fixed on him as if reading the embarrassment of his thoughts.

At length, with a silent dignity no ridicule could reach, he slowly gathered up his papers, and bowing low craved leave to depart. “God preserve your Highness,” were his words. “You need not to be told I hold your commands absolute, but, sire, as your servant, I once more crave you to remember the prophecy of which I spoke—‘*To be stabbed and succeeded by his brother.*’ The Gitano died for these traitorous words against your Grace, but still dying he persisted in repeating them.”

“An excellent joke, a capital pleasantry! Adieu, good Albuquerque, God have you in His holy keeping till we next meet and you bring me some new command,” are the king's laughing words, to all appearance as light-hearted as a bird.

And as Albuquerque disappears under the shadow of the Moorish arches beyond the door, he laughs still louder.

“That parting shaft of his about the prophecy was not so bad,” he mutters. “All the same, I wonder if it will come true. A man can but die once, and that his worst enemy should kill him is but natural and just. Still, most noble bastard, Don Enrique, we will have a tussle for it ere it comes to that, and if the Lady Blanche strengthens my arm, why then, *por Dios*, we will marry her!”

How Albuquerque's project prospered will now appear; the present upshot being that it was secretly arranged between the king and himself to despatch his half-brother, the Infante Fadique, “the Grand Master” as he was called, to Narbonne to ask the hand in marriage of the Lady Blanche, niece of the King of France.

A mission which prospered marvellously, seeing that within a month Don Fadique acted as his brother's proxy at their solemn espousals in the Gothic Cathedral of St. Just, the darkly painted figures of saints and angels in the flamboyant windows of the choir casting down mystic shadows on the form of a pale young girl in the very bud of youth, kneeling at the altar beside a royal youth with the sweetest and softest eyes, his elegant figure set off by the magnificent robes of the Grand Master of Santiago, so stiff with gold embroidery and jewels, on mantle and *justaucorps*, that they stood up of themselves.

## CHAPTER III

### Blanche de Bourbon



HE Princess Blanche de Bourbon, sister to the Queen of France, wife of Charles V., lived in the old fortress of Narbonne, beside the sea, in those romantic days when ladies' robes were sewn with *fleur-de-lis* and heraldic devices, dragons, and coats of arms—wore pointed shoes, long chains from the waist, and high coifs and head draperies incredible in our eyes.

She was young, only fifteen, small and delicate in stature, with a tender, beseeching look, as seeking for fondness and protection from those around her. By nature she was little fitted to command or to dazzle, but rather to creep into the heart of manly affection and nestle there.

The very name of the King of Castile gave her the horrors, and when called into the presence of her father and told she was to marry him, she lay three days on her bed without speaking. Imagine her feelings when she took courage to look at his proxy, of all his brothers the most like the king!

But Don Fadique was altogether cast in a slighter mould, fitted rather for a lady's bower than the stern ranks of the battle-field. His address was soft and gentle, and no amount of provocation could call up on his features any resemblance to that tempest-torn expression that so often disfigured the countenance of Don Pedro. It is true that at the time of his mother's death, when certain suspicious circumstances pointed to foul play, he had joined in the rebellion of his brother, Enrique, but he had rallied afterwards to the king, and was the only one of his family who gave him a loyal allegiance. As the nearest relation of Don Pedro, he was selected by Albuquerque as proxy for the king.

In such haste was the great minister to avail himself of the half-promise of marriage he had obtained—hastened by the ravages of the Free companies of France in the north—that he immediately despatched Don Fadique with a splendid retinue, without ever reflecting upon his personal fitness for the mission; fitness indeed as a consort, but not as a proxy, for he was specially created to please a lady's eye. His large brown eyes had the sweetest expression, and there was a womanly softness about him, united to the manly bearing



of a knight, that suited exactly his half-military, half-religious position as Grand Master of the order of Santiago.

Of all created beings Blanche was the simplest and the best; unselfish, trusting, relying on the faith of others, utterly inexperienced and easily impressed by kindness, of which she had not known much.

Her mother died at her birth. Her brothers were always away at the court, in Touraine, or in the camp. Her women and her friend, Claire de Coucy, were her only companions, so that when the brilliant cortège of knights and nobles arrived at Narbonne, and Don Fadique, Grand Master of Santiago, most becomingly attired in the splendid robes of his order, a great jewelled cross on his breast, and a heavy chain of gems sparkling around his neck, advanced to kiss her hand, so happy was she in the respite from the dreaded Don Pedro, so frankly affectionate in her sisterly confidence, that the very charm of her innocence became a fatal snare to him.

Not that Don Fadique nourished any thought of treason towards his brother's bride. No plan or project of supplanting him had entered his brain when selected by Albuquerque as nearest of blood to the king. He had neither foreseen nor imagined the danger in which he was placed by reason of the manifold charms of the Lady Blanche, and that he would be more than man to resist them.

Alas for the fair-haired Grand Master! Hour by hour he yielded. Did she love him? was the question that rang through his brain day and night. On the answer his life depended. But how could he ask? Honour, loyalty, chivalry forbade. Yet the time must come when he would



**Puerta del Vino, in the Plaza de los Algibes, Alhambra.**

have to know. Could he see this innocent creature delivered over a prey to his licentious brother without one word of warning? Without one devoted friend to shield her from the deadly intrigues of a court wholly under the spell of Maria de Padilla?

And that warning. What did it mean? Love to himself? Great Heaven! And if she did not love him in return? The doubt brought agony. A woman would have been more easily deciphered, but this royal girl was all simplicity and guilelessness. When her little hand rested in his as, attired with all the pomp of the Queen of Castile, and blazing with the rich jewels sent by Don Pedro, he, with a wildly beating heart, led her to the nuptial supper, it lay as trustingly in his as though he had been her brother.

Poor young Grand Master! How was he to know if that young heart fluttered alone for him, or if those pulses beat to the music of another voice?

A thousand good resolutions were formed when Blanche was absent. But they were all scattered to the winds when her soft eyes rested on his, with that appealing look that was so touching. After all, he meant no harm, only he *must* know whether she loved him or not. Life was intolerable without; and as the putting of this question grew more and more difficult as time wore on, he left Narbonne without asking it.

Now Blanche is at Valladolid, in the Gothic palace, with its dark *patio* and big angular casements, which still jut out over the street just as they did then.

She is expecting the king, who is to arrive that very night. Need I say that she is quite beside herself with terror? Resistance is vain; as well might the helpless lamb resist the butcher's knife.

The dreadful hour has come when she is to be eaten up by the royal ogre, and she can only lie and sob in the quaint painted chamber prepared for her. Claire de Coucy, quite unconscious of what is really breaking Blanche's little heart (for she has kept her own counsel in all but hatred of Don Pedro), is busying herself about her, with many entreaties not to make herself look a fright. Even if she does hate the king, is there not Don Fadique, and all those other splendid Sevillianos, specially Don Juan de Mañara, whose fame has reached Narbonne, as the boldest lover in Spain?

"Surely it is not so hard to be a queen, and live in sunny Seville, in the beautiful Alcazar!" says Claire, turning over the marriage ring all the time, an uncut emerald of priceless value, which Blanche has flung on the floor and, unlike her gentle self, stamped on.

There lie the marriage gifts. The jewelled diadem and sceptre, as Queen of Castile; the Oriental combs and bracelets, cut in antique silver, the collar of sapphire, the solid links of sequins, the rare Tunisian lace and Algerine embroideries, jewelled fans, and veils of rarest lace of such delicate texture, no one had ever seen the like before. All sent in perfumed chests of sandalwood, covered with royal crowns.

To Claire, who is just out of a convent, and has never seen a marriage or a bride, it does occur that Blanche is strangely still and sad; but she supposes it is the proper thing, and that Blanche knows best, so she

goes on turning over the marriage gifts with little exclamations of delight, as each fresh object seems to her more lovely than the last.

But when, all in a moment, as Claire is winding round her waist a light Moorish scarf, worked in a perfect kaleidoscope of silken thread and pearls, Blanche (unable any longer to keep silent) staggers up and falls upon her neck, sobbing as if her heart would break, it is the most astonishing event her small experience has ever conceived.

Much more, when Blanche, putting her rosy lips to Claire's shell-like ear, whispers in a voice choked with tears: "I love him, I love him! I cannot go to Don Pedro. I know he will kill me. I hate him. I won't go! Be kind to me, Claire, and help me, for I love him!"—her astonishment turns into terror, for she thinks Blanche is gone quite mad.

"Love whom?" she gasps, feeling cold all over, and letting the scarf drop to support the quivering form of Blanche.

"Who? Why, Don Fadique to be sure," she answers, blushing all over. "Why—you must be blind, Claire, not to see it—at Narbonne. Who else could it be?"

And Blanche's fair head, covered with small child-like curls, drops upon Claire's friendly neck and buries itself there, as she clings to her tighter and tighter.

"Oh, Blanche!" was all Claire could say, being too utterly staggered to remonstrate. "Don Fadique! Why, he is your husband's brother? Oh, Blanche, do you mean what you say?"

"Yes, I do," falters out Blanche, in an almost inaudible voice "I love him, oh, I love him!"

The very uttering of these words gave her courage. The secret had passed her lips. The spell of silence was broken.

"Don Fadique!" exclaims Claire. "Why, he must be the greatest traitor in the world."

"He does not know it!" returns Blanche, reddening to the roots of her hair. "He does not guess it. He is an angel." As she speaks, a quick, warm light comes into her eyes, a soft flame rises on her cheeks, kindling up her whole face with an inexpressible glow. Even her slender figure seems to gather strength and height. "No! no! you must say nothing against him! He is perfect."

Claire, who was very pious, and just out of a convent, where the nuns had taught her all men were dangerous and to be avoided, actually recoiled. That a wife should love her lord and receive presents from him and letters was admissible, even among the nuns—but another man!

Her pretty hands dropped from Blanche's waist, and for some moments she could not speak.

"What!" she exclaims at last. "Holy Mary, what a horror!" at which the poor little queen takes courage to reply:

"A husband, Claire, why you seem to forget I have never seen him. How can I love a man I do not know? I have seen Don Fadique. That makes a great difference. If Don Pedro is what they say, and strangles women, I do not see how I can ever love him. So I told my father. I did say *that*, Claire. I suffered very much. You know it, you cruel girl. I was brought here against my will. I shall die when I see the king, I shall die," she repeats shuddering. "Besides, why did he send Don Fadique to marry me in his name? If I had never seen him, I could not love him."

A sweet pout came over her childish face as she gazed into Claire's eyes, confident that these arguments must convince her.

But Claire only shook her head, and continued to stand aloof. The teaching of the nuns still held her. Was it not better that Blanche *should* die and be buried, sooner than not love her husband? Yet the gentle little queen had used a mighty weapon in talking of her death. Death was so awful, so far away from the fresh rosy life of Claire, that with the charming inconsistency of youth, Claire, impetuous and ardent in all things, in a moment forgetting all about the nuns, flung her arms round Blanche's neck.

"Dear, dear princess," was all she could utter, "don't talk of death. I know it is very wrong, but I love you too well to chide you. Promise me that you will not speak to Don Fadique any more. Say an *Ave* when he comes near you, and make the sign of the Cross when you feel his eyes. Remember, whether you like it or not, you are Don Pedro's wife. No! no! don't push me away. It is true. Great princesses and queens must learn to command themselves more than other folk. My father said so, before I left Navarre, and that I was not to follow what you did, because you were of royal blood."

Then Blanche and Claire, fully reconciled, sat down side by side to talk under the shadow of the Gothic casement, which lit up the room; the freckled colour of the painted glass falling upon them in patches of glowing light, as the trees outside swayed to and fro; Claire going on about her duty to her husband and to her new country. She was quite eloquent, and repeated all the fine things which had been taught her out of history. Not only *Aves* and crossings, but fasting and penance were suggested by the ingenious Claire, as helps against temptation, until poor Blanche, quite stupefied, took up a lute which lay upon the seat and hummed a French love song; and Claire, remembering there was a string of pearls loose in the wedding robe in which Blanche was to appear before the king, kissed her and went out.

## CHAPTER IV

### Don Fadique's Declaration of Love



WHILE Blanche sat all alone, the arras gently lifted and Don Fadique stood before her. Not gay and triumphant as she had seen him at Narbonne, but pale and grave and habited in a grey *justaucorps* with a simple hood—more in the guise of a penitent than a gay young knight.

"My princess," and he kissed her hand, carefully looking round to assure himself that they were alone, "I am come to ask you a last favour before the king arrives. Already his presence is signalled on the outskirts of the city."

At that dreaded name, Blanche, whose soft face had broken into the sunniest of smiles as Don Fadique entered, trembled and sank back against the wall. At that one word, "the king," the soft glamour her imagination had conjured up, vanished. She was the bride of the cruel tyrant all men hated. He was at hand to claim her. She burst into tears.

"Sweet Blanche," and Don Fadique's eyes melted at her distress, as taking her tenderly by the hand, upon which he impressed another fervent kiss, he knelt on the floor before her, "be comforted, and listen to me. The time is come when we must part. For a moment, it seemed to me a dream of heavenly bliss, and that, standing in my brother's place, I could claim you for ever. But now I am less than nothing in your eyes. Tell me, oh, tell me," and a sigh broke from him, so deep, his very soul seemed poured out in it, "tell me quickly, for our time is short. You will not quite hate me?"

Some wild words were on Blanche's lips, but remembering the expostulations of Claire she checked them, blushed hotly over brow and neck, hesitated, and said nothing.

"Your pity is all I dare ask," he continues, drawing nearer and leaning over her, as she shrinks away among a pile of embroidered cushions, anxiously turning her eyes towards the drapery behind which Claire had disappeared. "Of all men I am the most wretched. There is one whom I love more than anything on earth, and I am nothing to her. If it were not so——"

He broke off abruptly, but there is something so bitter and hopeless in his tone that, spite of an involuntary pang of jealousy, Blanche's eyes turned on him full of sympathy.

"I am so sorry," she replies, simply. "I think all the world should care to please you. But"—the jealous feeling is growing spite of herself—"if any one——"

At this moment Don Fadique stooped and grasped her arm with such a wild look that she stopped. "If," lowering his voice, "if this lady," and he paused to touch her hand, "loved me—could love me at all; if I could hold her for an instant as mine own—though the whole kingdom of Spain were between us——"

Blanche's gaze has grown dreamy. This was love then. Simple as she was she understood it. Oh! Claire, Claire. If he felt so, what would she think of her, and her face paled and her lips quivered.

"Do I know the lady?" she asks, then pauses to steady her voice, while Fadique gazes down at her with a swift searching glance, terrified by one word to shatter the rapturous conviction which her trouble gave him.

"Yes, you know her well," is all he says, and he seizes her hand and covers it with kisses. "Do you love me?"

No word comes to her blanched lips, but she bows her head and softly answers to the pressure of his fingers. On the imprisoned hand is the diamond ring of her espousal. It *would* gleam out, though she tries not to see it. Oh! where was Claire? What would she say to her? Alone with Don Fadique, she feels all her good resolves melting.

For nearly a minute Blanche let Fadique hold her hand. There was no sound below in the *patio* to distract them, only the chiming of the great bells of San Pablo close by across the square, the beautiful flamboyant portal reared against the sky.

Blanche lay quite still while Fadique covered her little hand with kisses, even the lace ruffles she wore at her wrist he kissed.

A moment before no words could express how she dreaded the king, but with her hand in his, listening to his muttered words of love, the earth seemed to melt away, and she was suddenly transported to some unknown paradise, full of infinite felicity.

She knew she was doing wrong and that Claire would bitterly reproach her—perhaps go away in disgust and leave her.

But for all that she could not help it; and after all, what was a crown, or Claire, or Castile, or France, or the most Christian king, her kinsman, or her father, compared to the lover with angelic eyes kneeling before her?

It might be that they never should be alone again, and that she might not be allowed to speak to him, for Don Pedro was, they told her, a devil of jealousy—*that* she could readily believe—and that he possessed every vice human nature can compass. If this was indeed the last time, would it not be too cruel to be cold to Fadique in this *one hour* when his heart spoke to hers?

Blanche was but a child, cause and effect were unknown to her; but love, first love, that blessed light direct from heaven, had transformed her



A VIEW IN TOLEDO.

whole being, and from a simple, tranquil-hearted girl, content to pass her days joyously as the birds do,

without thought, she had become a sensitive, anxious woman, trembling beneath that terrible prescience that comes with the first lesson of life; and when Fadique, after a long silence, asked her again: "Are you sure you love me? Say it once more, Blanche, and that you will never love another man," in a low voice she answered earnestly: "Yes, I love you. I did not know what love was, until you came to Narbonne," and then, unable to bear the strain upon her, she hid her pale face on his shoulder. "What will Don Pedro do to me?" she cried, trembling all over with a sudden revulsion. "What will he say to me? I feel so treacherous and wicked, and yet it is not my fault."

"No," answers Fadique, pressing her slight form to his and still holding her imprisoned hand. "It is the fault of those who forced you into such a marriage. That is the sin; but remember, my own Blanche, though silent, I am ever near you at the Court. One heart at least bleeds for you."

"I am sure I hear footsteps!" cries Blanche, starting back and standing upright listening—"What will Claire say? Am I indeed such a sinner?"

"Claire? By Santiago! what has she to do with us? Claire? Ah! do not look at me so, Blanche, or you will break my heart."

"Oh, that mine was broken too, and I were dead!" she sobs.

"Then let us die together," replies Don Fadique.

They are standing hand in hand, backed by the high Gothic casement. The fretted frame, filled with devices, crowns, and coats of arms, casts a pale reflex on them. The sun is setting behind the castellated towers of San Pablo, opposite, and soft fragrant shadows gather in the chamber. Both in their hearts are longing that this moment may last for ever.

Deeper and deeper the shadows fell, engulfing the two young figures in its gloom, save where a shaft of vivid light fell upon them like a sword, the point turned towards them.

"My love," murmurs Don Fadique, passionately, "do you hear me?"

As Blanche moved in response, a sudden light was in her eyes that had never been there before—a Moorish scarf Claire had placed around her fell from her waist.

"This shall be my talisman," cries Don Fadique, stooping to pick it up, "the token of your love, and my safeguard in battle. You will not refuse me?"

"Oh! hide it, hide it," whispers Blanche under her breath. "Claire may come in and miss it."

Then there was a dead silence which neither of them broke.

Suddenly, with a crash like thunder, the clatter of horses' feet rises up from the *patio*; the clang of armed men is in the air, the roll of cumbrous equipages, and the shrill voice of drums and clarions. Now a single horseman rides in and challenges the guard. Then there is the sound of marching of many feet and the far-off blare of trumpets.

Blanche rose to her feet, speechless with terror. Was the king already there? Where could Claire be?

Then comes the echo of many steps in the antechamber, and Claire rushes in through the arras as Don Fadique disappears by a door on the other side.

Following Claire appears a tall and stately *jefe*, holding a white wand of office, with many crosses and decorations on his breast, and a high plumed hat in his hand, which he doffs, bowing low.

"Madam, the Queen," says he, in a sonorous voice, again inclining himself to the ground, "it is my duty to apprise your Majesty that the king is now passing the drawbridge outside the city. A royal page bears his greeting to your Grace."

"Claire, oh, Claire!" sighs Blanche, casting herself into her arms. "Oh! *why did you leave me?*"

## CHAPTER V

### Marriage at Valladolid



HE ancient city of Valladolid lies on low ground and is watered by the Pisuerga, a broad river for this waterless land.

Although so far in the north, Valladolid was at this time considered the official capital of Castile, and therefore it was there that Blanche had come to meet her much dreaded bridegroom.

A more uninviting city does not exist in Spain, as we see it now, and although it suffered cruelly from the invasion of the French in the Peninsular War, uninteresting it must always have been. No charm leads one's thoughts lovingly to Valladolid. The cathedral is hideous. Only the front of San Pablo and the Collegiata de San Gregorio, a magnificent gift of Cardinal Ximenes, dwell in the mind.

Of course, with the exception of San Pablo, these buildings were erected centuries after Don Pedro's reign, and one asks oneself what Valladolid could have been then?

There are no environs. The river flows through flat banks with no timber except long lines of thin poplars, the poorest of all trees, and beyond, the eye wanders over endless plains towards Burgos and Salamanca to the borders of Portugal.

But now, forgetting the present aspect of the city, we must go back to the 3d of June, 1375, the day on which Don Pedro was to arrive to meet the new queen, espoused in his name by his brother, the Grand Master of Santiago, to be kept as a great festival, for which thousands had assembled from all parts of the kingdom. For indeed, in those days of perpetual warfare, a *fiesta* was well esteemed, as they were very rare, especially in the north, inhabited by a more serious and impassioned race of hardy men than the lighthearted southerners of Andalusia.

Now this occasion had been seized as a gift from heaven, especially as it was to take the form of a tournament, in which the Infante Don Fadique was to take part, as well as the Infante of Aragon, and Don

Juan de Mañara, known in all ages as "Don Juan," the favourite of the king, gambler, reveller, and seducer, and that graceful but treacherous knight, Don Garcia de Padilla, brother of Maria, both being in attendance on the king. The queen-mother, Doña Maria of Portugal, had also journeyed from Seville to welcome the young queen, and Albuquerque followed her, full of alarm for the result of the alliance he had brought about.

Much had been heard of the strange qualities of the young king, about whom men's minds were divided. Such mysterious crimes were attributed to him, such unheard-of brutalities, that it was generally supposed he acted under the influence of magic spells, wrought on him by his mistress, Maria de Padilla, held by the populace as a witch accursed by God and man.

Those who had not seen him, and they were many, and the women especially, who had heard harrowing tales of his misdeeds, crowded into Valladolid, where, accommodation not being easily obtained except for the rich, the season being summer, had built themselves huts of branches along the river, and camped out there, as near as possible to the green *vega* where the tournament was to be held.

And a wonderful sight it is, and almost beautiful to behold, under a heaven one sheet of unbroken blue, golden lights resting on the gaudy colours within the enclosed space, carpeted with grass; lofty gateways, making the four entrances, adorned with coloured tiles in blue and gold; tents of variegated rich stuffs, luxuriously fitted up for the convenience of each knight about to take part in the tilt; galleries hung with brocade and cloth of gold; turreted towers in silk striped black and yellow, from which hang banners; fountains furnished with bowls of silver to refresh the knights, over which court pages keep guard; stands for the musicians, covered balconies for the ladies, where the sparkle of dark eyes and rounded arms peep out of delicate draperies; and in the centre, the gaudiest of all, the royal pavilion, "as high as three lances," blazing with cloth of gold, trimmed with feathers and flowers, the flag of Castile and Leon floating overhead, beside the emblazoned *Nodo* of Castile, and the French lilies impanelled on the same shield—the interior protected from the sun by tinted awnings, under which rise three crimson thrones, for the king, queen, and queen-mother, "Matrique" to the bride, and all around the soft whispering of leaves, the cooing of doves and pigeons, brought, Moorish fashion, in cages, and the splash of abundant waters.

The time fixed for the tournament was at the setting of the sun, but from the earliest dawn the populace had crowded into every available space, and been entertained with *seguidillas* and *zambras* danced by bronzed *gitanas* to the clink of castanets, and there were races of tame elephants with silken howdahs, jumpers and tossers of ball, and Moorish jugglers whose tricks were wonderful and set all the peasants agape with joy.

It was known that the king's brother, the Grand Master, would break a lance, and it was thought that the young king himself would run at the ring in honour of his bride. But this was said only by those who did not know, for in the first place Don Pedro, a young warrior full of conceit and constantly risking his life in battles, disdained all these courtly pageants; and in the second place, he had arrived at Valladolid in so bad a temper that his attendants feared to approach him.

Never was a royal bridegroom so ill-disposed for mirth as Don Pedro when, habited in a royal mantle draped over a crimson surcoat trimmed with fur, and wearing a helmet encircled by a crown, *panached* with snowy feathers, he took his seat on his throne in the centre of the pavilion, Albuquerque, his *padrino* or godfather, behind him, to the cry of "Castilla! Santiago! Santiago! *Viva el Rey Justiciar!*"

Beside him, on a less elevated seat, sat his mother, Queen Maria.

As the bride-queen, white as her name, and trembling in every limb, advances to place herself on a chair of state on his right hand, the king—who now sees her for the first time, having purposely delayed his entrance into Valladolid until the last possible moment—rises to salute her; when, at the aspect of terror depicted on her face, in evident wrath he suddenly turns to address Albuquerque, pointing contemptuously to the poor princess who sinks back into the arms of Claire.

"*Sangre de Dio!* Signor Conte," mutters the king, loud enough to be heard, "a pretty consort you have chosen. I am not wont to be considered an ogre in ladies' eyes, but doubtless the Lady Blanche, spite of her baby-face, has met some *damoiselle* at her father's court whose remembrance turns me to a monster in her eyes. By my Patron Saint (if I have one), before the day is over I will assure myself who is the cuckoo who has soiled my nest."

"My lord, these are most unworthy suspicions," returns Albuquerque, with that calm dignity of manner before which the king's petulant humour so often yields. But not so now. Surrounded by those who have fostered his evil passions, he knows that his every look and movement will be duly reported by her brother, Don Garcia, to Maria de Padilla.

From this moment to the end of the pageant he hardly addresses himself to Blanche or turns towards her, but with an angry scowl, his steely eyes wander unceasingly over the crowd of brilliant knights who, singly or together, gallop past the royal *estrado* to salute him and the queen.

Spite of herself, Blanche, revived by the strong essences Claire used to restore her, begins to be attracted by the brilliant show. She is the chief figure in this mimic war; the noblest dames of Castile are there to do her homage; the queen-mother comforting her with gentle words, and when Claire, who stands behind her chair, whispers into her ear, "Do you see him, there under the flag-staff in the centre? He wears a long white mantle over his armour, and your scarf upon his arm. Oh! is he not charming?" a mist passes before her eyes, the tell-tale colour mounts to her cheeks, and forgetting Don Pedro and all her fears past, present, and to come, she leans forward, a wild look in her eyes, towards the spot where Don Fadique has reined up his charger, to head the knights of Santiago preparing to salute the king and the new queen. This passed in an instant, but not before Don Pedro had noted it, and his naturally pallid face grows white with rage.

"Madam," says he, addressing Blanche for the first time, who, at the sound of his harsh voice, starts back aghast, "it seems that the favour you deny me, you accord to my brother. Happy youth! Doubtless he will know how to profit by it."

Utterly unable to reply, Blanche shrank back, as if about to faint, but terror so far gave her strength that

she found voice to reply that at Narbonne it was her duty towards his Grace to receive his brother well.

"I doubt it not, madam," answers Don Pedro with a bitter sneer. "Yes, at Narbonne you made good use of your time, doubtless. I was a cursed fool to send him there," he mutters. Then, turning his back upon her, he addresses himself to Don Juan, the big tears streaming slowly down poor Blanche's cheeks.

Alas! alas! This insult seems the last drop in her cup of misery. Poor little queen! her heart is bursting, and nothing but her horror of the king, whose cold eyes follow her wherever she turns, prevents her sobs from being heard by all the court.

At this moment, amid the blare of trumpets, the roll of drums and clash of cymbals, the chimes of all the bells of the city clashing, and the frantic shouts of the mob, pressing forward at every point where they can find standing room along the barriers, a gallant company of knights, attended by their esquires, galloped into the centre of the field in a general *mêlée*; the Knight of the Dragon, Don Juan de Cerda—who, could he have foreseen the future, would then and there have forfeited his fealty to a recreant king; the Knight of the White Rose, Don Diego de Guzman; the unknown knight, his turban protected by chains of finest steel interwoven with the folds of dazzling white, and white his tunic and mantle, on his left arm a shield, in his right hand a slender lance, mounted on a raven-black charger, and attended by two slaves in Moorish dress, black from casque to toe, his visor down—said to be the Moorish king of Granada, Ben Hade, come in disguise, to break a lance with the Christians; the two Medinas, Celi and Sidonia, a tribe of Aguilars, every man of the name a hero in the track of war, the de Cuevas, Cipuntes, Cabras, Perez del Pulgar, and the great southern noble, Ponce de Leon, arrived from the plains of Xeres, where he ruled more powerful than the king; the judges of the lists, stranger knights, marshals, swordsmen, bowmen; pages, gorgeous in silk and samite, heralds in gold and embroidered tabards; and last, and chiefest, in splendid armour, the Lord of the Tournament, the Grand Master de Santiago, attended by the knights of his order in the absence of the king.

Small of stature, but light and elegant, his heavy accoutrements can not conceal the grace of every movement, or the mastery with which he manages his horse, a fiery chestnut, curveting and prancing, as he takes his place in the centre of the lists amid cries of "*Plaza! Plaza por los Infante! Santiago! Santiago!*"

Conscious that Blanche's eyes are upon him, and knowing nothing of what has just passed between her and Don Pedro, and that her poor little heart is melting in fear, he takes advantage of every opportunity to place himself before the royal pavilion, thirsting for one look of her sweet eyes, a gesture, a sign, to feel the assurance of her love; but he looks in vain.

Many tilts are run. The stranger knight unhorses several riders. When called on by the herald to raise his visor he courteously declines, rides three times round the field, displaying his colours, the Moorish cognisance of yellow on a black ground, then vanishes through the open gates, his black slaves after him. Many sharp blows are then exchanged and wounds inflicted in this mimic warfare, to the delight of the king, who rises to his feet loudly laughing and clapping his hands as the vanquished knights are carried from the field.



**A STREET IN TOLEDO.**  
From an etching by Charles A. Platt.

Then, to the cries of *Dios y España*, four cavaliers ride forth, with violet surcoats over their coats of mail, and run a Moorish tilt with reeds instead of lances, an elegant pastime of Granada worthy of the courtly Moslems with whom Don Pedro is so much in league, while stringed instruments strike up a joyful measure, and castanets are played by the *gitanos* who dance a *seguidilla* before the king.

Many of the great nobles, offended at the insolent bearing of Don Pedro, have not, as yet, taken their lances out of rest, but have only ridden round at the opening of the lists, at which great wonder is expressed among the spectators, and much discontent amid their followers.

Now, all are in honour bound to break a lance, in the *Grande Mêlée*, with Don Fadique, who takes his place in the centre of the field. Whether it is out of courtesy to his youth and royal rank, or that, by a kind of miracle, his lady-love being present, his arm is strengthened to do wonders in her eyes, many a famous noble

has the worst of it, at which wild cries are again heard of "*Santiago! Viva el Gran Maestro! Viva el Infante!*"

A grand procession ends the tournament, around the golden pole set up in the centre, from which depends a laurel crown woven with pearls, which, according to the rules, ought to be presented to the victor by the young queen. But Don Pedro, in savage mood (for the success of his brother has deeply angered him), has willed it otherwise.

With his large eyes fixed in a disdainful stare he gives no heed to the tilting, and scarcely responds to the salutations of the noble knights who gather under the pavilion.

When Don Fadique stations himself in front to salute him and the two queens, Don Pedro—who at that moment is talking eagerly with the Lord of Montenev, from time to time turning towards Albuquerque, as if to inform him of some important fact—turns and fixes his eyes upon him with such a glare of rage that Don Fadique never advances at all to claim the guerdon he was to receive, and retreats to his tent, the king at the same time suddenly rising, and signalling to the gaudy herald, displaying his particoloured costume in the last rays of the sunset which light up the west, to the delight of the townsfolk, to approach.

Like all the world the herald dreads the king, and comes riding as fast as his horse can carry him.

"Vain knave!" says Don Pedro surveying his brilliant garb, "can you find nothing better with which to fill your time, than serving as a popinjay to the people? Break up the lists. I have had enough of it; and see you do it quickly."

And now, slowly, as the day falls, along the river bank under the shade of the poplar avenues, passes the procession, winding into the deep and narrow streets of Burgos.

Before the cathedral, public tables are spread with highly flavoured viands such as Spaniards love, to be washed down by strong Xeres wine served out of great earthen jars, so big it seems as if thousands could be satisfied.

Don Pedro would have ridden alone into the city, but for the remonstrances of Albuquerque and of his mother, who, with tears implored him not to rouse the suspicions of his subjects by such a disregard of royal custom as to allow his bride to return alone.

Thus while all the citizens wait beside the tables (none caring to fall to until the king's return) a flourish of clarions and trumpets suddenly announces his presence, preceded by a troop of men-at-arms in the low cap and close-setting jerkin of that warlike time. Don Pedro himself mounted on a coal-black war-horse, the jewelled reins held by two great nobles, the Lord of Bertrayo and the Sevillian Don Enrique de la Cerda, husband of Doña Maria de Coronel.

Beside him, but somewhat in the rear, rides the queen, her bridal veil enveloping her like a shroud, and it is well so, for her ashen cheeks and sunken eyes would tell a tale of suffering no words could express.

Following after her comes the queen-mother, mounted on a white mule shod with gold, her eyes cast down, and with a visage full of sorrow.

As the young queen passes, the word goes round that she is an unwilling bride. "And no wonder, poor soul," answers a richer burgher, who has pushed himself forward and looks into her white face, "if she knows the sort of husband she is espousing. He kills all who come to him."

"An ill-omened couple," whispers a fat countrywoman into his ear. "Look at the king, he never turns his eyes on the poor young thing, but rides straight on, and so fast her horse cannot keep pace with him. Why does he marry her? It is plain to see he hates her. I wonder how the young queen will like his *harem*? They say he lives like a Moor, and keeps a whole bevy of slaves shut up in the castle of Carmona."

"Poor soul, I would not be in her shoes, and have to face his mistress, Maria de Padilla," says another woman; "and after all, why should the king flout her if he likes a pretty face?"

"Belike some one has cast a spell on him," observes a little man in a black *capa* and mantle, the city *medico*.

"Aye," is the reply, "a jealous woman has overlooked her."

And so it came to be understood among the crowd that the king had been bewitched and never would care for his girl queen.

"God grant he may not murder her," are the last words of the fat countrywoman as they all move on to where the tables are spread.

The king meanwhile is hurrying in the most unseemly fashion, indifferent to the discomfort he causes to those behind, especially to the Lady Blanche, who with her two royal rein-holders, the Grand Master Don Fadique and the Infante of Aragon, not daring to look up, is now separated from him, which greatly mars the effect of the pageant.

The knights, having changed their armour while Queen Blanche was in her retiring room, reappear in fanciful suits of many-coloured silk and brocade, their helmets replaced by graceful caps, ornamented with gems and pearls, in readiness for the nuptial banquet.

Don Juan de Mañara is most conspicuously attired in the excess of the mode, of no great beauty, but with so bold an eye, it is said of him he fears neither the living nor the dead. In all his wildest excesses Don Juan is the king's companion, but never for murder, injustice, or spoil. No wantonness is too great for him where women are concerned, and woe to the wife or maid who takes his fancy.

No one can rival Don Juan in the jewels he wears except the southern lord, Ponce de Leon, whose robe of pale silver tissue is covered with uncut stones, and his head encircled by a wreath of orient pearls taken from a Moorish emir whom he has slain.

Don Enrique de la Cerda, the king's favourite before Don Juan, but so much better than he that the people of Seville call him jeeringly *El Santo*, is attired in a dark velvet suit quite at variance with his usual magnificence. It is rumoured that he is out of favour on account of his beautiful wife, Doña Maria de Coronel, upon whom the king has cast eyes of love, a distinction which, contrary to fealty and allegiance as understood in those times, Cerda has not appreciated, and has not only shut her up in his castle of Cerda, but is inclined to listen to the overtures of Enrique of Trastamare and forsake the king altogether.

The board blazes with flowers, Moresque porcelain, and glittering plate; precious candelabras of sculptured silver shed a soft light, and jewelled vases and golden cups give it back in intensest colours, as the king and queen enter to the sound of trumpets and take their place in the centre, beside them the royal princes and the Infante of Aragon, the ministers of state, and such ambassadors and envoys as have been invited to the tournament.

Wonderful to relate, Blanche is wreathed in smiles. This is Claire's doing. She has contrived to convey to her a message from the Grand Master, promising an interview for the morrow, when the king rides to Segovia. As the brother of the king, Don Fadique sits at her side. For an instant their hands meet, and such a thrill of pleasure shoots through her little heart as gives her courage to face every mishap. Child as she is, she clings to happiness. The future is an unveiled mystery. Why despair?

From Don Fadique her eyes wander to Don Pedro, placed on her other side. He has the same smooth face as his brother, but sterner and loftier, and a majesty of expression all his own. He is not frowning now, and the change is marvellous. No one could compare the two brothers.

"Who knows," Blanche begins to ask herself, peeping at him from under her long eyelashes, "if he really is such a monster as report gives out? Can anything be more perfect? His long wavy hair hanging in heavy curls." At this moment he is leaning over her in conversation with Don Fadique. No shade of displeasure is on his face, as he casts on her such a glance as brings blushes to her cheek. Alas! alas! could she but read the treachery of his heart as he plays with the lace tissue of her robe, and lowers his voice to a soft whisper as he addresses her, she would flee from the hall, the city, and the land.

Little did the light-hearted daughter of Navarre understand the passions, deep down and fierce, of the Spaniards. Not voluble and capricious like the French, but sullen, silent, sinister, hiding all emotion under a mask. This she did not understand, nor that she had mortally offended Don Pedro, who but dissembled his revenge, storing up each word and look she thoughtlessly addressed to Don Fadique.

Poor Blanche!—her bright little head, encircled with the regal diadem—let her enjoy her brief moment of triumph. Little by little her heart is yielding to the fascinations of Don Pedro, the most brilliant cavalier she could have conjured up even in her dreams, and she feels that if he would but take her to his arms, she would tell him all her tale; how every one has frightened her, and that now she is ready to love him for ever and aye. It is all right now, and she feels so happy, she talks incessantly to Don Fadique in the pauses, telling him all she feels, which makes him inexpressibly wretched, and he casts on her the most longing glances, as a precious treasure he has lost, and heaves great sighs as he raises his eyes to her laughing face—at which she is really grieved, trying by all possible means to console him.

Don Pedro looks on with a strange, fixed smile. Now and then he even joins in the conversation with a loud harsh laugh, which, to say the truth, frightens Blanche, but, delighted at the change in his bearing towards herself, she interprets it all as "men's ways," and hopes in time to grow accustomed to him. Every one could not be so gentle as the Grand Master, who, after all, was half a priest, so Claire said; and of the two, ignorant Blanche said in her heart, how much more she admired the rough blunt ways of the king.

Once indeed, when talking with Don Fadique, she turned round quickly to address Don Pedro, and met his eyes riveted on her with such a cruel stare, she grew cold all over. And it was strange that when he gave the signal for the company to separate, instead of leading her to the bridal chamber, as she had been told he would, he made her a low bow and retired attended by Don Juan de Mañara and Don Garcia de Padilla.

"I wonder if I have offended him," she whispers to Claire, who is in waiting behind her chair. "I am afraid something must be wrong. Surely he ought not to have left me on our wedding night? What have I done? In the morning he was wroth without a cause, to-night he is gracious with still less reason."

"You might have spoken less with the Grand Master," is Claire's reply. "I cannot abide Don Pedro," Claire says, when they have reached the solitude of the queen's apartment. "I am sure he has some secret chamber where he hangs up those who do not please him, like Blue Beard in his castle. For the sake of your life be on your guard, my queen. You may depend on the Grand Master, but the king is *not* to be trusted."

"Oh, dear Claire, I am sure you are mistaken! Now I am as unhappy as ever, just when I thought all was coming right! Why did not the queen-mother come to the banquet? She is kind and gracious. I could have taken courage to consult her. I have no friend but Fadique, and now I am afraid even of him."

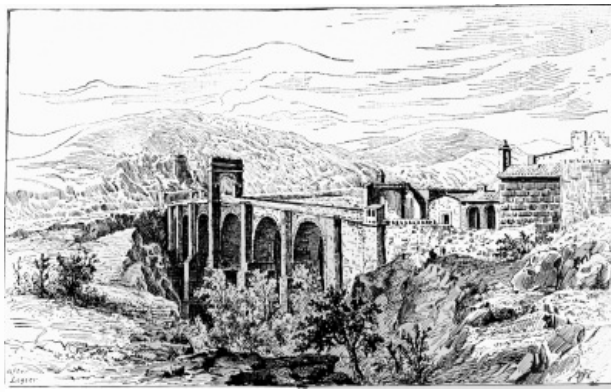
And once again the tell-tale tears gather in her eyes, as she buries herself in Claire's arms.

"Mind, Claire, we must not meet Fadique to-morrow. It might anger the king. And oh! he is so charming, I would do anything to please him."

"Who?" asks Claire, leaning down to where the queen's curly head rests on her arm.

"Why, Don Pedro, of course," is the answer. "No one can compare to him! Terrible but beautiful! Oh! if he would but love me! Alas! why did he go?" So, murmuring to each other, the queen calls in her tiring women, and prepares for rest.





ALCANTARA.

## CHAPTER VI

### Cloister, Valladolid.—Castle of Talavera



LL sleep, save that within a most lovely cloister of Gothic arches, over which the clustering branches of many vines tremble in the night air, comes the sound of voices, now near, now far, as the speakers pass and repass from opposite sides along the marble floor, and the echo of a harsh, discordant laugh breaks the silence.

"*Por Cristo!* I will go!" cries a loud voice, desecrating the fair night by its rough accent, as three muffled figures emerge for a moment into the light, where a lofty portal opens into the centre of the cloister, filled with the graves of monks, who even in death cling to the sacred precincts.

"I will go, and no man shall hinder me! With me shall come my trusty Don Juan and our brother Garcia. Ha! ha! Mañara," addressing the tallest of the three figures, "you are always ready. How many ladies expect you in Seville at the Calle near the Lonja? See how sober a man is your sovereign. One lady love is all I claim. One, ineffable, divine! Now, I ask in all fairness, and I appeal to you, Mañara, can Albuquerque here (who has limed me like a falcon) reproach me if I fly back to the nest of love, after I have seen the baby-faced traitress he has chosen? *Sangre de Dio!* The thought of Maria makes me mad."

His speech was succeeded by a dead silence. Don Juan did not answer. There was a brutal coarseness of expression in the king which, as a knight and a caballero, he disapproved. Not so the third figure, Don Garcia de Padilla, standing a little aloof, as waiting to be addressed, who bowed to the ground, then further retreated into the gloom cast by the shadow of the clustered columns.

Then the grave voice of Albuquerque responds: "My lord, you have no just cause of suspicion against the queen. She is very young, and could be moulded like wax in your hand."

"That is my affair!" answers the king, whose choleric temper is rising. "As facile as a dancing-girl. Nay, more so, for aught I know—for those devils of *gitañas* have a code of honour of their own. I have proved her. Even in my presence she could not conceal her love for the cursed bastard. I never wanted a wife; you forced her on me. But such a one as this is not worthy to mate with our jester. We will duly dispose of her, were she a thousand times cousin to the King of France."

"Beware, my lord, what you do," interposes Albuquerque, with the unhesitating frankness he alone dared use.

But Don Pedro continues without heeding him: "There is a prophecy about me, you say, of which you think much, '*I must kill or be killed.*' Excellent reasoning! We will see to it by-and-by. For the present, the Lady Blanche shall spend her honeymoon in the strong castle of Talavera, and the Grand Master may find the air of exile favourable to his health."

To all this, spoken in a hard, grating voice, with the incessant and uneasy movement which always marked Don Pedro's bursts of fury, Albuquerque, his arms folded under his mantle, listened in silence.

Whether Don Pedro had expected some violent reproaches and was angered that they did not come, or whether, knowing the madness of what he was about to do, he had laid himself out to combat argument and reason, the effect of enraging him was all the same. He trembled with passion, and struck upon the pavement with his heel.

At length, unfolding his arms, Albuquerque speaks: "My liege, I have guided the councils of your kingdom in the time of your father, called 'the Wise,' and in the regency of your mother, called 'the Good'; I have been your own pilot in many a stormy sea. Now I resign these gracious powers with which you have invested me into your hands, much worthier than mine. But before taking my leave, allow me to remind your Highness that the truce with Aragon is expired; that by divers hostile acts you have angered your old ally, the King of Granada, and that Enrique de Trastamare, with his army, is marching on Toledo, where he has many and powerful partisans. His alliance with His Most Christian Majesty was known to me, and therefore I wrought on your Grace to espouse the Lady Blanche, which would have traversed this scheme, and brought France to your aid; but as——"

"Have you done?" thunders the king, so loud as to send a flight of night birds scudding across the sky.

"No, my lord, I have not done. Behind all this is His Holiness the Pope—long angered by the favour you show Mussulmen and Jews—seeking a cause to place you and Castile under an interdict; the Lady Blanche of Bourbon will serve him well for this. And as to your Castilian subjects, I warn your Highness to proffer no offers of advancement to Cerda, husband of Doña Maria Coronel. To my certain knowledge he is engaged in treasonable practices with Don Enrique; and the lady, my lord—here a cold smile for an instant lit up Albuquerque's face—*will never yield!*"

"To hell with them and you," roars Don Pedro, beside himself with rage. "You too, as report says, hold your papers in the hands of my brother, and will meet other traitors at his camp. Cursed hypocrite and treacherous counsellor, begone from my presence! Tread not Castilian soil again, I warn you."

"Except as a conqueror," is the calm reply. "May your Highness raise the glory of Castile as high as my desire, and you will win the world." And the great minister passed down the dark aisle as tranquil as on a gala day, the shadow of the light vine-trellis clinging to the groined arches striking upon his mantle—the sound of his footsteps growing fainter and fainter, until finally they were lost in the murmurs of the night breeze.

Spite of his passion a spell of silence sat upon the king. The voice of his guardian angel rose within him, and on his lips was the cry, "Return, return, Albuquerque;" but the good impulse promptly vanished, and with a mocking laugh he turned to Don Juan. "Have the horses saddled and the escort ready, I ride at break of day." Then, striding down the aisle, he disappeared.

Poor Blanche! Her dream is over. She awoke to find Don Pedro gone—Don Fadique fled—and a bench of bishops appointed to consult upon her supposed misdeeds. Proof there was none against her—not even of witchcraft, which was the popular accusation at times when all others failed. But, for all that, the bishops were much too terrified at the king not to pronounce her guilty.

The Duke of Bourbon, her father, and the most Christian king, her brother-in-law, by the mouth of a herald sent to Seville, storm and threaten—but what could be said against the judgment of these holy men?

Both justice and knowledge in those days lay in the Church, and Don Pedro had managed so cunningly, and Maria de Padilla had so carefully spread abroad diabolical accusations, that Blanche was held to be guilty of incest.

If the marriage by proxy common among kings and great princes were not respected as a point of chivalrous honour, by the person selected by the husband to represent him in the sacred rite, no crowned head would be safe. It was usual for a man of mature years to be chosen on such occasions, not a gay young *infante* like Don Fadique; but, on the other hand, his near relationship to the king was deemed sufficient guarantee for his honour, and knightly honour in those days was much more considered than either virtue or religion.

Thus this accusation against Blanche appealed to the most violent prejudices of the time. She was supposed to have offended against that unwritten code which is the safeguard of kings.

No one cared for details. Degraded into a criminal, laden with contempt, she was sent under a strong escort to the castle of Talavera de la Reina on the Tagus, not far distant from Toledo; and Don Fadique saved his life by flight into Portugal.

Vainly did the queen-mother warn her son of the risk he ran in thus offending a French princess, and endeavour to procure for Blanche some gentler treatment. Don Pedro mocked at her as he had mocked at Albuquerque. He told her plainly that if she importuned him she should follow Blanche into a prison. "There were plenty of castles," he said, "in Castile for troublesome queens, as there were cords and daggers for traitors!"

Had Claire not been left her, Blanche would have died. Her horror of the king returned greater than ever. "He will kill me! He will kill me!" she kept repeating, "with a Moorish bowstring. His cruel blue eyes pierce me like a knife. Oh! Claire, I wish it were over!"

Then she raved of Navarre and Narbonne. Called on Don Fadique for help, and implored Claire to carry her to the convent, and bury her out of sight.

For two days they rode over the plains, avoiding the steep defiles of the Guadarrama Mountains, expecting death at every halting-place. The faint hope of a rescue haunted the mind of Claire, but she did not speak of it to Blanche. Where were the Grand Master and all the noble knights of Santiago? Surely they would not allow such a crime? But no white-mantled horsemen came galloping over the plain; no flag of knight or esquire fluttered in the grey atmosphere. The same dull lines seemed endless.

At length they descended into the gorges of a deep treeless valley, through which the broad Tagus flows by rocky boundaries, very different from the laughing river which runs by the leafy groves of Aranjuez, and reflects that bright and elegant palace of the Bourbons in its crystal flood.

On a height, to the right, rose the castle of Talavera de la Reina, built of small bricks faced with stone, an irregular fortress of Gothic times.

As the portcullis was raised to admit Queen Blanche, Claire, whose eyes were everywhere, was delighted to observe that it was in a ruinous condition, having lately sustained a siege, and that it appeared slenderly garrisoned for a royal fortress. A wild hope of escape possessed her, especially when the governor, who advanced to hold the queen's bridle on bended knee, appeared in the person of a gracious young cavalier, wearing on his breast the cross of Santiago.

Even Blanche roused herself to bestow on him a sweet smile, and graciously replied to his words of welcome.

Conducted by him, and followed by serving-men and seneschals, Blanche casting uneasy looks around, mounted the narrow turning stair, which led to the dreary suite of rooms known as "the royal chambers." At every door stood a man-at-arms, halberd in hand, immovable as a statue.

"It seems I am considered a dangerous prisoner," she said, turning with a winning smile towards the governor, who walked at her left hand. "What care two poor women require to keep fast locked up! A good watch-dog, such as we have in Navarre to guard the sheep, would be sufficient."

"Madam, I grieve in aught to displease your Highness," is the reply; "but I act under strict command, as the king's officer. The presence of armed troops near Toledo gives some alarm——"

"Armed troops!" interrupts Claire, arresting Blanche's progress with her hand; "and who commands them?"

The governor hesitated. Claire's eyes, a pair of brilliant orbs with glancing Gallic fire, were turned full upon him.

"Oh, tell me, is it the Grand Master of Santiago?" cries Blanche, thinking that Don Fadique might be near. "You are not bidden to imprison our souls."

"Madam," answers the young governor, bowing to the ground, "I dare not refuse the command of the Queen of Castile. The armed bands I speak of are the skirmishers of Don Enrique de Trastamare, who is advancing from the north on the city of Toledo. It is said that some French mercenaries are with him."

"Oh! thank the blessed Virgin for that," ejaculates poor Blanche, clasping her hands and uttering a silent prayer. "They have thought of me at last. Oh, the dear French; it seems to me I could embrace the roughest of the soldiers! Oh, that I were with them, and had never left that pleasant land! Are they far off? Can I see them pass? Is there no tower or battlement from which I could wave a greeting to them? Oh, say——?"

"Madam," answers the governor, gravely—Claire finds him extremely sympathetic, with his dark moustache and pointed beard, small aristocratic head, and dark black eyes, capable of saying so many things—"I have already overstepped my duty. Your Grace must be merciful, and press me no further. Believe me, madam, did it depend on me, not only this wish of yours, but all others, would be met even before expressed. I, too, come of French blood. My mother was from Bayonne."

"Your name?" asks Blanche. "The king is happy in possessing so loyal an officer."

"Alvarez de Varga," is the reply. "As a boy, I was reared at Seville, as one of the pages of the queen."

"What queen?" asks Claire, hastily. "Not——"

"No, madam; my gracious mistress was Mary of Portugal. I was chosen among many as the companion of Don Pedro."

"Oh! the Saints protect me! then you love him?" exclaims Blanche, shrinking back against the wall.

"Not more than is set down in my duty, madam," is his quick reply. "In my hands you are as safe as in the palace of Narbonne. Rather would I sever limb from limb, than that harm should come to your Highness under my charge."

"Thank heaven!" was all that Blanche could murmur, for her lips had turned bloodless from terror.

"Tell me, Don Alvarez," asks Claire, who never let a propitious occasion slip, "did you know Don Fadique, the Grand Master, at the Court?"

"Right well; he is my master. We were playmates together, until the death of his mother scattered the Infantes far and wide. Don Fadique," he adds, reading the breathless interest expressed in both the fair ladies' eyes, now riveted upon him, "is of a temper to attach all who approach him. Even the queen, with so many causes of displeasure against the children of Doña Eleanor de Guzman, who led away the fancy of her consort, always cherished him."

"Tell me," says Claire, in her eagerness placing her hand upon his arm, "does Don Fadique ride with his brother, Don Enrique, against the king? Will he join in the siege of Toledo?"

"Noble *demoiselle*, whom I account French from her accent," answers Don Alvarez, again bowing low, a great admiration breaking into his face as his eyes wander over Claire's tall and supple form, "your zeal for your royal mistress touches me to the soul. But, by my faith, I do not know where the Grand Master is; but if I did, it is not my place to tell."

"Oh, say not so, Sir Governor," answers Claire, "you are our only friend. We are of all ladies the most dejected. Do not treat us prisoners who as have done ill, but as innocent sufferers consigned to your care."

"Such is my conviction, fair lady," is Don Alvarez's answer, "but prisoners you are. In all that I can, count on me as your slave. Will it please your Grace"—addressing Blanche—"to pass up to the second storey, and view the apartments which have been prepared for you?"

With a deep sigh, Blanche followed him. Her arms fell to her side. To be so near rescue, yet bound within these walls!

As to Claire, the affairs of state did not affect her at all. She was fully occupied in considering what advantage she could take of the evident admiration of the governor.

Discreet as he meant to be, he could not control his eyes; one look had betrayed him to the astute pupil of the nuns, whose zeal for Blanche wanted no stimulating.

"I will make the governor love me, and free the queen," was her thought, and as, step by step, she followed Blanche up the stairs, passing by narrow lancet windows that let in the light, the whole project simplified itself so marvellously in her brain that already they were careering forth upon the plains on two fleet Spanish barbs, accompanied by Don Alvarez, to the outposts of Don Enrique de Trastamare.



Patio de los Leones, the Court of the Lions, Alhambra.

## CHAPTER VII

### Don Pedro and Maria de Padilla



HE inner *patio*, on the left hand, as you enter the Alcazar, where trees of magnolia and pomegranate wave together among hedges of red roses, has always been called the *Patio de Maria Padilla*.

It is known that her royal lover raised rooms on the flat, Moorish roof, and decorated them magnificently for her use.

Charles V. took his chapel from them, and his comfortable bed-rooms where he could at least, with convenient surroundings, encounter his formidable attacks of gout.

Maria's tiring-room, with its long range of *miradores* (windows), immediately over Don Pedro's gorgeous portal, is not only a capital post of observation, but a wonder to behold. The walls, a snowy mass of lace-work cut in stone, are relieved by encrusted tiles of a deep and ruddy colour. Beneath the golden cupola of fretted stalactites, a perfumed fountain sheds clouds of spray, and banks of flowers and myrtle scent the air.

On each of the four sides are recesses for divans, on which lie piled up cushions wrought in the looms of Granada, the walls covered with Eastern stuffs, stiff with gold and tissue, Gothic characters wrought into borders and tessellated edgings, each recess supported by pillars, round which twist serpents of gold and enamel, with eyes of enormous emeralds giving a life-like glare. Behind screens of golden trellis, woven with the brilliant blossoms of fresh flowers, are the heavy draperies which shroud the doorways, bearing the royal monogram and *nodo*, and in one corner a hidden entrance leading into the apartments of Don Pedro. But one step of her light feet, and Maria is in the presence of the king!

So lived for years this terrible beauty—a fan her sceptre, and love's seat her throne!

Some are born queens; others achieve greatness. There are peasant princesses and baseborn empresses; sultanas of the buskin, and *kadines* of the lute; modest violets, born in the purple, and imperial beauties like the rose, unapproachable and supreme; but if ever a woman was created to reign, it was this haughty and cynical tyrant who, under the most enticing form, concealed a will of steel, remorseless, fearless, merciless, and cold.

Maria has been called a witch, and her power over Don Pedro attributed to magic, but she dealt in no charms save those that nature had bestowed on her, and an intelligence far above her age.

Now she sits desolate, the pillared *miradores* are closed, the heavy curtains drawn. Not that it is night, for the summer sun blazes over the city, and such as are abroad in the streets seek the narrow Moorish alleys and the shadow of deep *patio* gates to breathe.

But the lady of love is sorrowful. A heavy presentiment of evil is in her soul. She has long known through her spies, that Albuquerque is engaged in a conspiracy against her. What it exactly is she has been long in finding out. Like Damocles' sword it hung over her head, and now she knows it! And a mad fury possesses her which she no longer cares to control.

Not only has she overwhelmed Albuquerque with accusations, but she has branded him as a traitor and renegade against the king.

Up to this time outward observances of courtesy have been observed between them, especially in the presence of Don Pedro, but now words of direct menace have passed, received on the part of Albuquerque in dignified silence, as the paltry onslaught of an enemy he disdains.

It is war to the knife between the cool-headed minister and a passionate woman, blinded by a sense of wrong to herself and the children she has borne the king. Many weeks have passed since she has seen Don Pedro, who left her in displeasure anent the burning question of his marriage. He was going to hunt, he told her, in the mountains of Segovia, in obvious subterfuge, for he had not been there at all, nor can she learn for certain whether he is at Burgos or Valladolid, nor when he will return. And this treatment from a lover, whom she has hitherto swayed with absolute power!

As the name of Pedro rises to her lips, she raises herself and sits upright.

"He dared to talk to me of marriage," she cries, clenching her hands until the henna-tipped fingers mark the palm. "Alliance with France! Before, it was I who was to wear the crown; I, whose beauty he said was to work miracles upon the people; I, whose craft was to sway his councils; I, Maria de Padilla, to crush out rebellion, and now he would bring in a stranger to put me to open shame—me and the son I have borne him! Oh, Pedro! Pedro! Was it for this you lured me to you? No, no! This wrong does not come from you, but from that crafty knave, Albuquerque, who has been bribed to ruin me!"

As she spoke, all her tears seemed in an instant to dry up. Her face grew dark, as she put back the long black hair that veiled her cheeks, and gathered herself together where she lay.

"If it is a duel between us two, I accept it. One must fall. It shall not be Maria de Padilla. To dare to bring a wife to Pedro. A wife! ha! ha! Blanche of Bourbon! She shall never reign in Castile! I will prevent it! Alliance, indeed, and marriage! I will light up such a war that they shall curse the day they named her. What? Come into Spain to rob me of my Pedro? Never! No, not if I call Beelzebub himself to help me!"

As she sits there, her widely opened eyes fixed on the shadowed splendour of the walls, the gold, and the panels, the waving filagree work, and the arches, she looks like a beautiful demon.

Then a flood of tender recollections comes to her. She thinks of the first days when she came a young girl to her kinsman's house in Seville, how Albuquerque threw her in the king's path as a humble flower he was invited to pick up. The glory of his love, the triumph of her power, almost a queen—more than a sultana—the crown within her grasp—and now, fallen so low that he has left her without a word. Yes! He has sacrificed her to his ambition; what more has she to hope? By this act Albuquerque's ascendancy is proclaimed. This royal marriage is a proof of it. Pedro has many enemies—Aragon, Navarre, France, brothers and ambitious nobles. Slowly the truth comes to her, and again she flings herself back in an agony of despair. Again the fountain of her tears is poured out. "Pedro! oh, Pedro!" is all she can utter.

As the king's name passes her lips, a mailed hand puts back the arras which hangs before the door, and he himself stands before her, the dark steel helmet on his head, and the loose auburn locks worn long making his naturally pallid face look whiter. Save for his breastplate, he is in complete armour, travel-stained and mud-besplashed as one who had ridden long and furiously. Nor does his countenance denote a mind at ease. Every feature in his face betrays an anxiety and care seldom seen there. Instead of that upright, masterful bearing which strikes fear into his enemies, his manner of entering is hurried and agitated.

"You called me, Maria," he says tenderly, gathering her prostrate form into his arms, "and I am here."

But ere the words have passed his lips, Maria has sprung to her feet.

"What, my lord!" she cries, with a mocking laugh, "so soon from Valladolid? Where is the Lady Blanche? Have you tired of her already? Is Albuquerque with you, listening behind the arras? If *he* is a traitor to me, *you* are a greater."

Then her mood changes, and tearing herself away from his outstretched arms she flings herself back upon the divan. "Oh, you are cruel, cruel!" she sobs. "For years you have enjoyed the treasure of my love—all I could give you. Who swore to make me his queen before the Church? to name my child his successor? And now you have wedded, stealthily, secretly, treacherously, and Albuquerque has helped you! Oh, Pedro, you have broken my heart! Go to your white-faced princess. She will deceive you, as you have me. Let me go!" she shrieks, as the king endeavours to draw her closer to him, and the sound of her voice echoes in the painted vestibules as she struggles to free herself. "Touch me not. Not with a finger. You shall not stay me; I will die as proudly as I have lived in this palace where I have triumphed. Here, on this pavement our feet have pressed so long together; within these halls where you have so often dallied with me!"

Then, by a sudden movement flinging back the curtains, she rushes forward into the open gallery of the *mirador*, but in an instant the strong arms of Pedro are round her.

All that tenderness could devise he essays to calm her. Slowly and sadly she yields to his touch, and listens to his entreaties for forgiveness. No one could have recognised the cruel Pedro in this impassioned youth. Truly it might be said she had bewitched him!

"Maria," he whispers, covering her with kisses, as she lies faint and exhausted in his arms, "believe me, if I am married, it is for your good."

"'My good,' false one? What good can come to me by losing you?"

"By making you greater than the queen!" answers, Pedro, looking down with glowing eyes upon the lines of her exquisite figure, and that royal contour of neck and brow that marks her supreme among women.

"But I *am* queen," she answers, looking up at him, as the colour returns slowly to her cheeks. "YOUR queen. There is no other. Why did you listen to Albuquerque and put that woman between us?"

"Ah! sweet love, why?" sighs the love-sick Pedro, his whole soul melting as he gazes at the enchantress.

Who is like her? Who? By heaven, this black-browed Andalusian would put the pale daughters of the north to shame, were she but a beggar!

"Yes, Maria, I hate Blanche of Bourbon as much as you! She shrank from me with loathing. Not a smile, not a word—all were for Fadique, the treacherous boy. *Por Dios!* he shall be stripped of his honours, and your brother Garcia shall take his place as Grand Master of Santiago. By this time Fadique is on his way to Portugal. I have rooted out the viper, and scorned the royal *demoiselle*. Mark that, Maria, *scorned her*, and left her. Your voice called me and I am here. And I am glad of it. Come what may. Let Du Guesclin and the French avenge her. Kings, queens, and powers—though the whole world stands before me, I will have none of her, I have sworn it on the Gospel." And in a passion of newly awakened love, he strains Maria to him in a wild embrace.

"But how can I trust you," she whispers, her eyes meeting his. "You have deceived me once, you may again."

"But you are not the only one, Maria. I am also deceived, cajoled. *Por Dios!* my vengeance shall fall on more than her. Don Fadique—" He paused.

"Away with these half-words," cries Maria, the feeling of power coming to her again as, eagerly seizing the king's hands, she draws him to her and brings her glowing face close to his. "What of Fadique? How could you trust him?"

"Yes," answers Pedro slowly. "The Judas! It was Albuquerque who insisted on sending him as my proxy, 'devoted to *me*,' he said. Ha! ha!" and he burst into a harsh laugh. "He met her at Narbonne, and passed the nuptial ring on her finger. Let God judge the hand that smites her, for smitten she shall be for her treason, and that speedily."

"What?" cried Maria, her dark eyes kindling with light. "Do you really mean——?"

"I mean what I say," answers the king, sullenly. "The Queen of Castile and Leon is not as a trump in a hand of cards to be passed from brother to brother. It is a foul crime on my throne and person. At Valladolid I saw it at a glance. So I took horse, and I am here. At least one woman is true to me, and that is you, Maria." And again he clasps her to his breast. "Lie there, sweetheart, it is your home."

"And Don Fadique?" asks Maria, her face hardening as she remembers how the handsome Grand Master has always treated her with scant courtesy. "Is he long to taste the bliss provided for him? Methinks that the sons of Eleanor de Guzman live but to play tricks upon your Grace."

"Would that they had but one neck," roars Don Pedro, "that I could finish them at a blow! Maria, I know you have a grudge against Fadique; console yourself. A choice revenge awaits him and the Lady Blanche shall pay for *all!*"

A gleam of hate passed into his eyes, and was reflected in those of Maria, who, breathlessly listening, drank in every word.

"Some day, who knows? Life is short. A draught of Xeres wine—a silken thread—even the too heavy pressure of a scarf. All these kill well (accidentally of course) and may send the soul of Blanche to heaven! God rest her soul! Do you say *Amen*, Maria? Ha! ha!"—how hollow and mocking is his laugh!—"Are you happy now?" he asks, twisting her long fingers in his own, and gazing at her with his full merciless eyes. "All your enemies have fallen Maria; I wait but to strike sure."

"And shall Blanche really die?" again whispers Maria, her eyes glittering like a snake. "Die by some swift death? Swear it to me, Pedro."

He did not speak, but smiling down on her as he held her in one arm, with his right hand, he unsheathed the jewelled dagger he wore beneath his girdle, until the steel, catching a ray of sunlight imprisoned in the dark room, flashes with a dangerous reflex.

"This shall settle all, love," he answers. "Now let me go to the bath to refresh me. See how the dust lies on me for I rode hard. I have done sixty miles without drawing rein, with relays of



CHARLES V.—1519.

horses, to come to you. Let me go," as she clings to him as though terrified to lose him. "We will meet anon in the gardens, and the Moorish slaves from Granada shall dance to us."

One more embrace, and he had picked up his plumed helmet and placed it on his head, and down the narrow steps of the private stair his mailed feet clanked.

Maria stood erect before the fountain which seemed to sing in the marble basin to a wild rhythm as the spray fell, and such a murderous look came upon her face as would have turned to stone all who were in her power. Then, sounding a golden whistle, her slaves came running in, and with a gesture she commanded that the curtains before the *mirador* should be withdrawn.

Like a conqueror, the setting sun comes blazing in, engulfing all the gorgeous tints of wall, dome, draperies, and pavement in its rays, while cythars, flutes, and viols make harmony without—she, moving to her toilette, as one whose thoughts are far away, while the long locks of her ebon hair are delicately smoothed with golden combs before a silver mirror, ere she descends to the garden to join the king.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Don Fadique Goes to Seville

HE Grand Master Don Fadique was not with his brother Enrique. In the first moment of his flight from Valladolid he had crossed the frontier into Portugal.

There, among goatherds and shepherds, for awhile he lay concealed, and when reflection



came to him in this solitude, his conscience sorely pricked him for his disloyalty to the king. Whatever punishment his brother and sovereign inflicted on him he felt would be his due. It was not that he mistook Don Pedro's mind in his treatment of the Lady Blanche, nor did his love and pity for her suffer any diminution, but he could not rid himself of the conviction that he had been a traitor. Blanche's innocence alone had preserved him from a crime.

His upright and loyal nature revolted against the thought, and in his flight, as he struck the rowels into the glossy sides of the sorrel jennet on which he was mounted, causing it to rear and prance, he felt he could not put distance enough between himself and the dear object of his love.

Poor Blanche! Sweet Blanche! Where was she now? How fared it with her? Did she love him still? And then he checked himself for these guilty thoughts, and drawing from his doublet his jewelled rosary, he vainly tried to drown his thoughts in prayer.

Arrived within the strong fortress of Coimbra, on the coast of Portugal, he heard that his brother Enrique was advancing, at the head of an army, on Toledo, while Don Pedro lingered inactive at Seville. This seemed most strange!

There were rumours that he was waiting for the advance of the English to support him against the French king, furious at the imprisonment of Blanche in the castle of Talavera on the Tagus.

At length a royal messenger arrived at Coimbra direct from the king, an honourable messenger, wearing the *noda* and *banda*, the bearer of a letter from Don Pedro.

"Come to Seville," he wrote, "dear brother, and let us live at peace. I am about to hold a tourney and tilt of reeds on the plains of the Guadalquivir, near the city, and I can ill lack the absence of the Grand Master of Santiago among my knights. A friendly greeting to you, and a safe conduct on the road. Your quarters are at the Alcazar at Seville, from whence I write.—PEDRO."

"And I will go!" cried Don Fadique. "It may perhaps give me the occasion to help the queen. Perhaps Pedro has come to a better mind; he changes suddenly. Or it may be that at this time of risings and rebellions, he may desire the support of the knights of Santiago and the presence of their Grand Master."

Those of his friends and attendants at Coimbra strove vainly to dissuade him from putting faith in the friendship of the king. It was, at best, they represented, a rash resolve, especially to go to Seville and the Alcazar. If he would join him, let them meet in the open camp, not put himself into danger within a palace inhabited by Maria de Padilla.

At this Don Fadique grew wroth. "What!" he answered, "do you take me for a craven that cannot defend himself? Maybe, surrounded by enemies, he may think of me more kindly. Read the gracious words. Look at the royal messenger, whom we all know as a man who would not lend himself to fraud or treachery. My brother generously sets me free, and I can use that freedom as well at Seville as at any other place. Let Maria de Padilla do her worst. Rather than consume my life in this fortress, I would face the devil himself. Enrique may join with the enemies of Castile and bring Du Guesclin's free lances to spoil the land, but my place is by my brother in tournament or battle—I will go!"

Buckling on his richest suit of armour, over which he wore the short crimson mantle of his order, with the cross of Santiago embroidered on his breast, he set forth, accompanied by a goodly band of followers hastily armed; also with him he took a little page, his foster-brother, who had never left him, and loved him with the affection of a child.

On the eighth day from his departure he reached the banks of the Tagus, at an old town called Castel Bianco, where he rested.

Now the tale runs, and I will neither deny nor assert it, that the Grand Master received here a message from Queen Blanche, informing him how near she was, and that at night he went out disguised, and, taking a boat, dropped down the river to Talavera, and there saw the Lady Blanche, thanks to the complaisance of the gallant governor—who was so wildly in love with Claire, he could refuse her nothing. This is *said*, and that a plan of escape was formed by which Blanche could reach Toledo, on which the French were advancing to reinforce the army of Don Enrique el Cavalier, and that Don Fadique at Seville should apprise her of Don Pedro's movements by means of the little page.

Speaking personally, I do not believe that the Grand Master ever went to the castle or saw Blanche at all, after the remorse he had felt and the confessions he had made, to say nothing of the danger to the queen if Don Pedro found it out. And Don Pedro did find out everything in the most extraordinary way, as people said, by black magic, and that Maria de Padilla looked upon a crystal and saw all she desired to tell the king.

## CHAPTER IX

### Murder of Don Fadique



IN the fifteenth day from his departure from Coimbra, Don Fadique beheld the domes and pinnacles of Seville—proud Seville as it is called—the Empress of the Plains.

The weather is dark and stormy. Even in the sunny South such changes occur, especially towards the equinox, to which the time approaches. As far as the eye can reach black clouds drive angrily before a northern blast, rushing as it were to bank themselves together towards the sea, and the wind rattles among the windows of the few pleasure-houses which stand outside the walls, swaying the fronds of the palms and the bamboos as if to tear them from the ground.

By the time Don Fadique, riding faster and faster, has reached the fork in the road beside the Hospital del Sangre, the heavens look like a second Deluge.

"Cover yourself well, my boy," said he to the little page, as he drew his own dark *manto* over his armour. "The hurricane will be soon upon us. We shall be fortunate if we reach the Alcazar in time."

As they passed what are now the boulevards, such trees as there were swayed and bowed to the fierce

blast, and quickly succeeding thunder was heard among the hills. Not a sound reached them as they struck through the streets to where the beautiful cathedral stands, consecrated as a Christian church by Fernando el Santo, and as yet but little altered from the mosque it was before.

It was part of Don Pedro's policy in all things to favour the Moors. Indeed, there were times in his strange moods when he swore he was a Mohammedan himself.

As the herald sounds his trumpet-call before the gate of the Alcazar, waiting for the portcullis to be raised, an aged pilgrim in tattered raiment rises up suddenly before Fadique.

"Turn back, my son. Turn while you may," and he lays his hand on his horse's bridle. "Take warning by the heavens! The elements are at war. So is man. For the sake of your dead mother I speak. Enter not the Alcazar. Warned by a vision, I girded up my loins, and have walked from the Sierra Morena here. As the blood of Eleanor de Guzman was shed on the stones of Seville, so shall be yours."

"I heed you not, old man," answered Don Fadique, shaking him off impatiently, provoked at his insistence in barring his progress. "Hie you back whither you came. My brother has bid me to Seville, and I am come," and with that he spurred his horse forward; but the noble animal, as though scenting some evil influence in the air, pranced and plunged, and with the utmost difficulty was prevented from turning back.

Again the trumpet sounds a shrill blast. In vain! The Alcazar seems turned into a castle of the dead. No guards are upon the walls, no soldiers on the lookout in the Moorish towers which flank the portcullis. To the summons of the men-at-arms no response is given; the royal standard is not lowered as to an Infante Grand Master of Santiago, nor is there any answer to the reiterated knocking of the little page with the hilt of his sword upon the thickly barred panels of the door. Dismally does the blue-eyed boy look up at his master, a whole soul of love in his eyes, as if gazing at him for the last time, and loudly do his followers murmur to each other at the strange lack of welcome.

Nor can Don Fadique account for it. Growing impatient as the rain begins to fall, he looks about him on all sides. There is no preparation for the tournament of which the letter of Don Pedro spoke. No line of tents along the river bank with rich devices, or pinnacles of silken pavilions dressed with colours and flags breaking the long lines of the Huerta. The streets are silent and empty as the rain now pours down; the vast mosque stands isolated and solitary, veiled by rising mists. No eager crowd gathers round the Puerta del Sol or in the court of the Naranjos, as when festivals and ceremonies draw strangers to Seville. The howling of a dog alone breaks the silence.

At length, with no outward sign, the portcullis is slowly raised, and Don Fadique, spurring his horse, gallops in, but rapidly the great panels sink again, shutting out all his train. As the clink of the iron bolt is heard falling into the staples, a shrill cry of agony rises in the air. The hand of the little page who followed him on foot has been severed from the wrist as he hung onto Don Fadique's bridle, and lies upon the stones before him.

Don Fadique is alone; no return is possible; his heart sinks within him at the sight, but he can neither help the poor page shut outside, nor liberate himself. It is too late.

Within the Patio de la Monteria the shadows of the Moorish arches rise black in the darkness of the storm, all save the portal of Don Pedro, which blazes out tier upon tier up to the gilded dome.

More and more astonished, Don Fadique dismounts and fastens his horse's bridle to an iron hook in one of the pillars, and looks round, the glossy-skinned animal giving a whinny of delight as he passes his hand mechanically over its sleek neck. It is the last token of affection he is destined to receive!

Suddenly a burst of shrill laughter from the long row of *miradores* over the portal arouses him to a full sense of his danger. That he has been betrayed by his brother is certain.

As a drowning man is said in an instant to review all his former life, so Don Fadique recalled the many warnings of evil which had come to him, renewed even at the gate of the Alcazar.

Still his gallant heart did not fail, but when he saw above at the *mirador* a dark-haired lady leaning out with lustrous eyes, a chill shot through his veins. He felt that his end was near.

Then in the midst of the rattle of the storm, the roll of the thunder, and the quickly succeeding flashes of lightning, there arises a sudden uproar, the clash of weapons, and the heavy tread of mailed feet. Nor has Don Fadique long to wait to assure himself of the welcome Don Pedro has prepared for him.

From under the glowing shadows of the golden portal, a band of armed men rush forth, who drag him forward through tapestried doorways to dimly gorgeous ante-chambers with deeply sunk cedar ceilings overhead, into suites of halls lined with painted panels and *azulejo* tiles darkly resplendent in escutcheons of castle, lion, bar, tower, and that mysterious *nodo* which clasps Aragon with Spain,—into the precincts of the great Patio de las Doncellas, so purely beautiful in the whiteness of its lacy arcades.

There, upon the Caliph's burnished throne, sits Don Pedro, a canopy of gold over his head and damascened draperies behind. A terrible frown knits his brow and his eyes are dilated with rage, but Don Fadique does not heed. Forcing back the guards, he flings himself upon his knees before him.

"Brother! brother!" he cries, "what means this hostile array? I have come upon your word. Tell me that you have not deceived me!"

"Stand off, bold traitor!" answers the king savagely, casting him from him. "Have you forgotten your perfidy at Narbonne? Do you think I did not know that, and all else? Were you fool enough to imagine that I loved you?" and as he speaks he breaks into one of those fiendish peals of laughter, ever so terrible a climax to his wrath. "Surely, if the Lady Blanche is your leman, you are ready to shed your blood for her sake?"

Before this burst of passion the Grand Master stands as if turned to stone.

"What!" continues Don Pedro, ascribing his silence to fear. "Does your heart fail you in my presence? If so it is well," and he arises as if about to rush upon him.

"Do with me as you list, brother!" answers the Grand Master, "but I swear to you, by this symbol of the living Christ"—and he raises the jewelled cross of his sword high in the air—"for me, the queen is as pure as when she left her mother. Let him who says other stand forth." With that, tearing his mailed glove from his hand, he flings it upon the floor, the scales of the metal ringing on the marble. "Don Pedro of Castile, will you



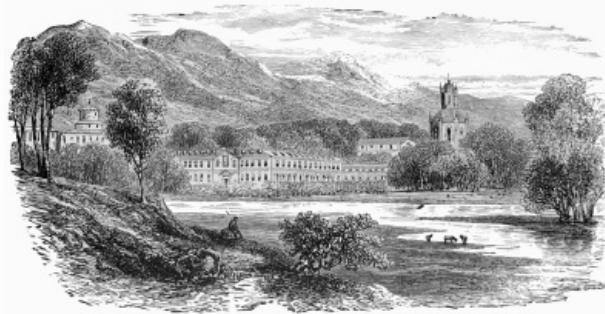
cross swords with me?" he asks, advancing to the foot of the throne where Don Pedro has seated himself, his eyes gleaming with fury. "By my faith!" and scorn is in Don Fadique's voice, "you do well not to defend so vile a charge. Blood enough has flowed—my mother's, my little brother's, and now my own, whom you have lured here treacherously to slay. Oh! shame and disgrace of knighthood!"

"Miscreant!" roars Don Pedro, wounded to the quick at this reproach. "Prepare to die! On earth your time is short, and, *por Dios!* you deserve your fate, you smooth-faced hypocrite! Better to be an open foe like Enrique, than a caitiff conspirator! Out on you, you bastard! I will not cross swords with you!"

Stung by his insolence, Don Fadique is rushing upon him, when Don Garcia de Padilla interposes from behind and holds him back.

"Señor Infante, Grand Master of Santiago, you are my prisoner," he says, laying his hand on his shoulder, and the men-at-arms move forward from the entrance to where he stands.

"I am no man's prisoner!" cries Don Fadique, putting his hand on his sword. "If all were as faithful to the king, he would have truer followers than he has. Nor shall you take me, vile instrument of a strumpet's vengeance," turning to draw his weapon upon Don Garcia, but the hilt of the sword had become so entangled in the embroidered scarf he wears, taken from the queen at Valladolid, nothing will move it.



A VIEW IN ARANJUEZ.

"Officers," commands the king, rising from the throne and passing on through the gilded arches into the Hall of the Ambassadors beyond, with that majesty he knows so well how to assume—"do your duty."

But the guards held back, spite of the order of the king. Don Fadique was an Infante, a great caballero, almost equal to Don Pedro, the Grand Master of Santiago, and moreover, though unarmed, boldly facing them.

"Traitors!" exclaims Don Garcia, drawing his rapier, "do you hesitate?" Then they all fell on Don Fadique, and a struggle for life ensued.

"God and Santiago to my aid!" cries Fadique, rushing from side to side of the open *patio* pursued by the men-at-arms, Don Garcia all the while standing in his place, and Don Pedro from behind the arches suddenly appearing, and shouting out: "At him! At him! Traitor and bastard! Kill him!"

At last, one of the officers—Hermanes by name, excited by the anger of the king, and seeing that the others were but half-hearted in their attack, touched by the desperate defence of an unarmed man—struck Don Fadique such a blow on the shoulder as felled him to the ground, with his face downwards, the rest falling on him until he died, his long auburn hair, clotted with blood, making a glory round him where he lay.

From the depths of the *patio* Maria de Padilla appeared, her taper fingers clasping the pearl embroideries of her long robe with such force, that as she moved she strewed them on the floor. She had seen all, hidden by the panels of a Moorish door.

Not for an instant had Don Fadique escaped her, from the moment he entered the Court of the Monteria until his mutilated body lay before her. He was her prey. Now she could assure herself that life was gone. In the calm of death he was beautiful, the last agony only marked in the widely open eyes, full of defiance, and the bloodless lips parted as with a groan.

So like was the dead face to Don Pedro, that for an instant Maria's heart melted, and she turned away.

"What, Maria," exclaimed Don Pedro, sneeringly, "fear you to look on the face of a dead enemy? Rather tremble before a living one! The boy is dead; all traitors deserve to die"; and advancing from where he stood in the archway, he spurned the body with his foot, laying bare the pool of blood in which it lay.

And strange to say, after the lapse of five centuries, the stain is there on the marble pavement *still*, close under three clustered pillars of green porphyry, supporting a richly worked Moorish arch.

But before Maria can reply, a shrill cry rises from the white pillars that makes the *patio* ring, and an ancient dame hurries forward, and with her stick puts back the guards who stand around.

With a horrified glance at the upturned face of the dead Grand Master, she turns upon the king:

"What bloody work is this, Don Pedro? I have a right to ask, for I reared you both at my breast. Oh! my child, my child!" sinking down beside him on the ground, and tenderly gathering the dead form in her arms. "Oh, my Fadique, my little one. So much you were alike, the queen-mother only knew you from the crown embroidered on Pedro's robe. Even the queen loved the boy." Then with a piercing shriek she raises herself from the ground, and her sunken eyes travel round upon the group, first on the king, then on Maria de Padilla. "Let the hand that struck him be accursed!"

"He was my enemy, and I killed him," answers Don Pedro, but he did not chide her, nor question her right to speak.

"It is that accursed woman!" and the nurse raises her bony fingers and points towards Maria as her tall

figure disappears in the deep shadow of the arches. "May Satan take her! And that soon! She has falsely accused him. Oh, Pedro! I loved you as much as him. Now I curse you, you cruel king! By the same bloody death shall you also die. The witch!" shaking her fist towards the spot where Maria has vanished; "a thousand such as *she* may be found in Spain, but who will replace the true brother that you have lost?" As she speaks, a strange fire shines in her dim eyes, and her wrinkled face is transfigured with a sudden light. The voice in which she speaks seems not her own, but strong and vigorous, as though a wave of youth had passed over her.

"I have spoken," and she fell prostrate on the body of Don Fadique as the captain of the guard drew his sword, as if to smite her, and his men made a circle round.

"Ask the king if I shall die," turning to Don Pedro, who has covered his face with his hands. "I care not, but let me lay him on my breast. Oh! child of my love, the youngest and the best!"

"Harm her not, Ruy Gomez," orders the king, "and let her go." And in deep thought he turns away.

In his general contempt for all mankind, the king held his nurse in great esteem. When he was sick or wounded she tended him, and in his darkest moods she could approach him when others fled.

But for his promise to Maria de Padilla, he would never have slain a brother who came in peace, under his roof, and now another is to die likewise; he had given her his word. Thinking of all this his brow grew dark as he mounted the secret stair which led into his retiring-room, with the skeleton heads of the four unjust judges hung over the door.

No one dared enter, and for three days and nights he lay there in darkness.

## CHAPTER X

### Don Pedro—Alcazar—The Queen-Mother—Maria de Padilla



HE Hall of the Ambassadors, literally a blaze of iris hues and gold, is crowned by a lofty dome, and sheeted with a Moorish mosaic of mother-of-pearl and crystal.

Around range the medallions of the ancient Gothic kings, over four golden-barred balconies breaking the richness of the wall, dividing triply-grouped arches, light as dreams, resting on pillars of green and red porphyry, so tall and slender it seems as if a breath would shatter them.

From an open portal is disclosed a palace garden flushed with roses, and bordered by blossoming orange-trees, set in large porcelain pots. Butterflies flutter round delicate fountains banked up with tropical plants exquisite in perfume, and long vistas of bowery walks exclude the sun.

A warm and genial air beats in from without, and permeates around. Nor is the fairness of the earth less than the brightness of the sky—intensely blue, not a cloud visible; and although the Alcazar stands in the midst of a noisy city, the silence and solitude are complete.

Everything in this apartment is disposed for the king. He is greatly changed. A mortal illness has seized him, and he has barely escaped with his life. As he moves feebly along the marble floor, he is supported on either side by Don Juan de Mañara and Garcia de Padilla, then sinks exhausted upon a pile of eastern cushions prepared for him on an *estrado*. Naturally the two favourites, who tend him with anxious care, hate each other with the deadly bitterness of rivals, ever on the watch to turn every word and action against each other; especially Garcia de Padilla, a coarse likeness of his beautiful sister, always on the lookout for his own interests, and ready to pander to the basest vices of the king.

It would really seem as if the prayers and litanies offered up for Don Pedro's life (especially by his Jewish subjects, whom he greatly favours) have been efficacious in saving his life.

Pale and feeble as he now appears, the steely hardness of his blue eyes is even more remarkable than in health, and the harsh intonation of his voice comes with a strange vigour from one so weak.

As he sinks exhausted on a divan, a waft of music comes from the *patio* without, a twanging of guitars deftly handled, and the silver tone of viols, with the clapping of hands of the Nubian slaves who swarm in the palace; the music ever and anon broken by the soft tones of a lute, played with infinite skill by a Moorish captive, whose nimble fingers mark and accentuate the rhythm.

"What do the fools mean?" demands Don Pedro, as burst after burst of music penetrates into the hall.

"Rejoicing, my lord," answers Garcia, "at your Highness's happy recovery."

"Recovery—*por Dios!* and it was time, unless I was to chant the rest of my life in purgatory. Is it true that, counting on the report of my death, the bastard Enrique has had himself crowned at Toledo, and struts at the Alcazar like any peacock? Can it be possible my brain is weak? or was it a dream in my delirium?"

A silence follows, which neither the supple Garcia nor the politic Don Juan cares to break. Absolute quiet has been enjoined. Yet it is as much as their heads are worth not to reply.

"If you do not find your tongues quickly, my friends, the axe shall silence them for ever. Ho! slave," and with a loud sound, he strikes with a handle of iron on a plate of steel.

In an instant the music ceases, and a gigantic Nubian, perfectly unclothed, appears armed with a marble-hilted javelin.

Something in the sudden apparition of this grotesque figure, as if the earth had opened to cast him forth, so strikes the fancy of the king that he laughs aloud.

"Begone, Hassan," he says, "I did but jest; the necks of my loving companions are precious. But, *amigos mios*, I counsel you, trifle not with me. I am patient at no time, and now that my reason is scarcely settled from the disturbance it has had, I am dangerous to play with."

"Play with!" replies Don Juan, who cares little for threats of any kind. "God forbid! Your Grace knows I fear nought. You shall judge of my faithfulness, for I am here ready to answer all you please to ask."

"How *here?*" asks Don Pedro, reddening with a sudden flush. "Where else should you be?"

"Why, with the new king at Toledo," promptly answers Mañara, nettled at the mention of the axe. "The new king, who is crowned by right and authority of the Holy Father, Urban V.; Don Pedro of Castile being legally and civilly defunct, by reason of the ban of excommunication pronounced against him, it is the fashion now to cry, 'Long live *El Rey Enrique el Caballero*.' Perhaps your Grace did not know that you were already dead?"

As he speaks an ashy pallor spreads over the king's face, and out of his bloodless lips the words come thickly:

"So, so, at Toledo!" he gasps, clenching his hands in the cushions at his head. "Crowned? My brain turns. It was not a dream?"

"By my faith, no, an army is encamped outside on the Tagus, a garrison within. The troops a little mixed in nationality it is true, but the promise of the support of the great companies under Du Guesclin, to be sent to restore the Lady Blanche——"

"Restore the Lady Blanche? Why, she is locked up in the castle of Talavera, out of which no woman ever came alive. It is you, Don Juan, who play the fool!" exclaims Pedro, raising himself up, and seizing him savagely by the shoulder. "By the living Christ! your life is in my hand."

"I care not," is the retort, shaking off the king's hand, who, weaker than he deems himself, falls back muttering curses. "Your Grace has questioned me, I tell the truth. Don Enrique holds Toledo, the Lady Blanche is with him. Here is Don Garcia, ask him, if you doubt me. The queen, your mother, had no power to march troops against the Conde de Trastamare while you lay between life and death."

As he speaks, a sullen fury falls on the king. He sits perfectly motionless, his head pressed between his hands.

"Call hither the Lady Padilla," he says, in a voice so veiled it is scarcely audible.

So quickly did her presence answer the summons it would seem as though she had been hiding near at hand. Her dark face shone out against the glitter of the many-hued hall. A long white robe falls to her feet, and she waits until the king addresses her.

"In my sickness, Maria," says Don Pedro, in a voice that still sounds unfamiliar to those around (Maria starts with an alarmed glance and looks at him), "you tended me night and day. Why were you silent on what touches me so nearly as the advance of Enrique upon Toledo and the escape of the queen?"

"Because," answers Maria, her eyes softening into a glance of ineffable love, "your life was dearer to me than all else. What did it matter if the Bastard reigned from the Pyrenees to the Pillars of Hercules if my Pedro died?"

"There spoke the true woman!" exclaims the king. "Now, by my faith, you have conquered me, Maria, quite." Then taking her hand, he draws her down upon the seat beside him.

"Listen to me, Juan and Garcia," turning to them, "you know me, I am *El Rey Justiciar*. In evidence of the love I bear this lady, and to put to rest once for all any questions which might arise by reason of the many traitors around me, at my death, I declare as successor to the throne of Castile, the Infante Alonso, Maria de Padilla's son. At the earliest moment our ministers shall ratify the act, and call on my nobles to do homage to him as my heir. Are you satisfied now, sweet one? This will seal the bond," and he draws her face, glowing with triumph, towards his own, and impresses a kiss on her warm lips.

"And Blanche?" whispers Maria in an undertone, but not so low but that both Don Juan and her brother hear.



ON THE DARRO.

From an etching by Samuel Colman.

"Ah, Maria, will you still keep me to my bargain?" answers Don Pedro, with a sigh.

"Yes," quickly responds Maria, "I do, especially now that she is at large."

"At large? I cannot believe it. But, Maria—Blanche, divorced and dishonoured, cannot harm you. I shall

never set eyes on her again."

"Yes, sire, but as long as she lives, she will raise up France against you."

"And if she dies, do you think they will let me bide?"

"My sister," puts in Don Garcia, "leave the matter to the judgment of the king. Urge him no more, I pray you, at a moment he has, by such a signal act of favour, named your child successor to the throne."

"Truly, I love not Blanche," says Don Pedro, "I will speedily take Toledo, and imprison her where she shall not escape. But *her life*—"

"Yes, *her life!*" cries Maria, rising from the *estrado*. "It is mine, you promised me. I claim it."

"Now, *por Dios*, Maria, but you press me sore. Is it that you seek to be queen yourself?"

"Perhaps," she answers, carelessly. "What if I do? Have you not told me a thousand times I was born to wear a crown?"

"This is no time for trifling," answers Don Pedro, sternly. "I have made your son a future king. Let that suffice. The blood of Fadique clings to me still. I saw him in my fever, there, outside, in the *patio*, where he fell bathed in blood. And now another ghost will haunt me in that pale-faced *demoiselle*. So nearly had I passed into the silent land beyond the grave that to my weakened brain shadows came to me as real. I fain would add no more to that dim company which rise up in the silent night to curse me."

As the words pass his lips, a page, fancifully attired as an Eastern slave, appears between the golden pillars of the hall, and, after prostrating himself on the ground, raises his arms aloft in Moorish fashion, and announces: "The queen-mother."

Hastily advancing, Mary of Portugal stands before her son. On her face are the signs of deep emotion, almost of terror, as she hastily observes the impression her presence has produced.

"My son," she says, in a low voice, "my son," and as she speaks the words she stretches out her arms to embrace him. Then raising her head, her eyes fall upon the figure of Maria de Padilla, erect in the shadow behind, and in a moment the words she was about to utter die on her lips, and a tremor passes over her.

"You here!" her face flushing crimson, "you—Jezebel—that come between my son and me. I might have guessed it. I came to speak of mercy, before you who live by blood. Of honour—to one who never knew the word. Well do I know you and the current of your thoughts, and that you would prompt my son to an act of cruelty that will shake his very throne, and place him in the certainty of an alliance of vengeance."

Silent, inscrutable, stands Maria, but Don Pedro interposes: "To what action do you allude, my mother?" he asks.

"What!" answers the queen, exasperated by his manner. "The intended murder of Blanche, in order that she may reign."

"And if so," comes from Maria, in a deep-toned voice, "Doña Maria, the Queen, what is that to you?"

"I speak not to you," is Mary's answer, her passion waxing hot. "I am here to address my son. Think you, sire, the Queen of France will hear unmoved that her sister's life has been sacrificed to *her*? That the alliance on which you count, of Aragon and Navarre, will stand when the hosts of France, led by Du Guesclin, shall scour Castile? Already a new king has risen in Toledo who rests his title on this royal lady's name whom this false woman would lead you to sacrifice. Restore to Blanche her rights, and the league against you will fall asunder."

"Madam," answered Don Pedro, "I am the guardian of the crown I wear. Meanwhile, I warn you," and he broke off to give one of those strange discordant laughs, "that, like my sainted father, your husband, beauty with me is paramount. She whom nature crowns is queen. Behold her here," taking Maria by the hand. "I command you, therefore, Doña Maria, my mother, in my presence to treat the Lady Padilla with the respect her many charms command. To me she is the brightest jewel in my crown, and I will prove it, too, shortly to you and all the world."

As he paused, the queen's countenance fell, and her whole attitude changed. Exposed to the full battery of Maria's insolent eyes, it was *she* who appeared the suppliant, and *Maria* the queen.

"My son," she says, speaking in a very different tone to that she used on entering, "will you not grant me the same power of speech you accord to the least of your subjects?"

"Have you any more to say, madam?" he asks, turning wearily from her. "If not, the audience is ended. When I stood in need of help in my fever and lay between life and death, you feared to enter."

"Oh, Pedro," cries the unhappy mother, the tears streaming down her face, "believe it not. On my knees I entreated that fiend who rules you to let me pass, and she barred my access by the guards, whom she had the insolence to command to arrest the mother of their king! It was I, as self-appointed regent, that have kept the realm together when it was believed that you were dead! That you find any troops or treasure is due to *me*."

"Ah! Pedro," she continues, advancing to where he lay, and seizing one of his unwilling hands, "let us speak together alone. I would convince you that in sparing the life of Blanche you insure your own;" and she turns such an imploring glance at him, that it touches even his hard heart.

"Will it please you, fair lady, to give place for a short space to the queen-mother?" says Don Pedro, addressing Maria, whose attitude has never changed.

"Whatever your Grace commands shall be my duty to obey," is her answer, the submission of her words contrasting strangely with the dark scowl which knits her brow.

"Be it so, sweetheart. I have that to say touching yourself, which will surprise her. It were best said in your absence." And rising feebly upright, he leads her by the hand into the inner *patio*, and lover-like kisses her hand.

At this moment, Garcia de Padilla, who has remained an unobserved witness of the interview, rushes forward, and, with effusive courtesy, offers his arm to the king to assist him to his seat, bows to the ground, and is lost to view among the pillars.

Then, resuming the conversation with the queen: "You forget, my mother," says Don Pedro, as he places her beside him (it is said, he never was more dangerous than when he assumed a gracious air), "that this

*demoiselle* of France, who bears my name, has been convicted of incest with my brother Fadique by a council of bishops appointed for that purpose, and that, far from being a prisoner, she is at this moment free, in the city of Toledo, under the chivalric custody of my rival and successor, Enrique el Caballero. You forget I am superseded, dishonoured. Ha! ha! Yes! dishonoured by these bastards, whom you had not the sense to wring the necks of, when they were young."

"Yes, Pedro, but I am confident all this will be set right. I have received such assurance during your illness, from Toledo, that I know you will overcome your brother whenever you take the field. As to Blanche —"

"Yes, madam," interrupting her, "but as yet I am too weak to wield a weapon. I think you can have little to say to me," he adds coldly, "that the Lady Padilla could not hear. It is her son I have named my successor, and the lady declares she is my lawful wife. What if I proclaim her such to the assembled Cortes?"

"Mother of God!" cries the queen, clasping her hands, a look of absolute horror on her face, "give me patience! To be so mocked at by my son! Such madness is impossible!"

"Not a whit! Not a whit!" he exclaims, facing the infuriated queen. "Now, by the heavens above, Blanche of Bourbon shall die! And speedily too! My mind is made up."

Alas! The strain upon the unhappy mother is too great. As the king utters these words, she staggers backwards, a deadly pallor overspreads her face, and with a wild cry of "My son! My son!" holding out her arms in the vain hope of his support, she falls fainting on the floor, and is borne away by her ladies waiting without in the *Patio de las Doncellas*.

## CHAPTER XI

### A New King—Enrique de Trastamare



GAIN we are at Toledo, on the banks of the dark Tagus, a river full and strong, flowing for three hundred and seventy-three miles from the lonely mountains of Biscay to the port of Lisbon.

The wild and melancholy Tagus! A very river of fate, now darkly rushing beside blackening rocks, now meandering sweetly by the meadows of the Huerta del Rey, whispering by the Baths of Florinda under King Wamba's old palace, or turning the Moorish mills which still supply the city with corn.

Many and many a tale could old Tagus tell of races come and gone since the Jews fled to Tarshish when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, but black and silent it goes its way under the walls of the stuccoed palace of the Taller del Moro, where all the guests bidden to a festival were slain; the Gothic-towered church of San Juan de los Reyes, with its masses of votive chains hung outside, and the ancient synagogues of La Blanca and El Transido, trellised with honeycombed carvings on the walls, the Holy of Holies shrouded by eastern veils. An arch-ancient river, as one may say, looking into streets so narrow that Roman consuls and Gothic kings had to pass on foot or in litters.

Hebrews, Romans, Goths, and Moors have possessed Toledo, but of all it is the Moor who has most left his mark. Moorish is the Puerta del Sol by which you enter, a magnificent Arab arch blazing in the sun, and Moorish is the Alcazar which crowns the hill with its long façade of *miradores* and towers.

Here the new king, Enrique de Trastamare—by his own election—holds his court, accompanied by that great minister, Albuquerque, who has turned against his late master, Don Pedro, and the powerful northern noble, Don Rodrique Alvarez, who devotes his riches and his weapons to his cause.

From the first, Enrique wisely threw in his chance with the northern powers, and now the repudiation and imprisonment of Queen Blanche has given a new strength to his alliance.

The ire of the French king is greatly roused by the ill-usage of his sister-in-law; Navarre is with him to a man, and Aragon friendly.

To many, Enrique has come as a saviour to a much-tormented land. No one was safe from the attacks of Don Pedro, and his own discontented subjects appealed to the Pope, who has placed Castile under an interdict.

If Don Pedro dies, his brother will undoubtedly succeed him. If he lives, he is strong enough to fight him. As yet but a few of his allies have joined him, but report says he is speedily to be reinforced by *Les Grandes Compagnies* under the Constable Bertrand du Guesclin, so that the bold step of marching on Toledo was not so foolhardy an enterprise as it appears.

The adjacent hills are white with his tents, and squadrons of horse are posted low down on the banks of the Tagus to guard the bridge and the Moorish mills which supply the city with bread.

His flag—a tower on a red ground—proudly floats over the city, and men-at-arms, bowmen, soldiers, knights, and that promiscuous rabble which follows a camp, pass and repass through the narrow streets, where, side by side with the rich fruits and products of the land are locksmiths and workers in steel blades as thin and fine as a needle, yet more fatal than an axe, the heavier scimitars and broadswords in common use, and hamps and chains and locks; painters who expose gaudy likenesses of saints and madonnas; moulders of Moorish *azulejo* tiles, the deep rich colour lighting up the dark holes which serve for shops; skilled wood-carvers of roofs and spandrels, crests and medallions; workers in brass with forge and file; and carpenters with planks of wood and heaps of shavings—all these different trades piled pell-mell on each other.

In hot weather an awning is stretched across the *calle*, where a big tree leans out, serving as a lounge for Asturian porters, ready to bear any weight, close to a blank wall, with an elaborate doorway sunk into the soil, and green with mildew, leading to a synagogue up a narrow alley.

In front a *paseo*, or plaza, is planted with rows of trees, overhanging the gorge of the Tagus, and rough benches are set, on which two Jews are seated engaged in earnest talk.

Although under the rule of Don Pedro the Jews are in such favour that it is said by his enemies he has

adopted their faith, they still, from habit, wear their national dress, a long, loosely-fitting gabardine with a girdle, long yellow boots lined with fur, and a high, square cap of a peculiar cut.

Such is the costume of the two men; the elder, Father Isaac, with the aquiline nose and piercing black eyes of his nation, his thin features ending in a long beard; the younger, Cornelius, of the same type, but ruddier and stouter, and with far less distinction in his coarse physiognomy.

"By the God of Abraham, El Caballero Don Enrique shall rue it!" speaks this one in a louder tone, seeing that the plaza is utterly deserted for the street, the hum of which reaches them dimly, broken by the continual chiming of the bells from the cathedral close by. "His entrance into the city was a surprise. Without that renegade Ben Hassan's help, he could not have kept his unruly troops together—already the Aragonese had threatened to go back. And now he is safe in the Alcazar, and refuses to meet the bond. '*He will pay when he is at Seville,*' he says,—very fine!"

"At Seville he will never be," answers the elder Jew in a lower tone, a gleam of hatred lighting up his deep-set eyes, "at least, while Don Pedro lives. At no better interest can we place our gold than to maintain him who is the rightful king and the friend of Israel. Ben Hassan is a traitor, and deserves to die as a scapegoat for his people."

"You speak well, Father Isaac," is the rejoinder. "Think you that Don Pedro will ever forgive our tribe? His spies are everywhere; and he is sure to know, though *he* now lies sick at Seville."

From long habits of caution, to this direct question the old Jew for awhile did not answer; then, with a cautious glance round to see that no one lurked among the trees, replied:

"A trusty Hebrew is on the way to Seville, to offer the king the supplies he may require; also charged with rich presents of jewels, and a crown of fine gold to Maria de Padilla. Were *she* queen, Israel would return to its ancient glory in the land."

"They say Blanche of Navarre has escaped, and is in sanctuary in the cathedral. Is this true, Father Isaac?"

"I know not, for certain; but if she expects help from France, by the body of Moses, son Cornelius, before it comes Enrique will not be here."

"I understand the will of our nation is to expel him, Father Isaac; but have they the *power*?"



**The Hall of Justice, Alhambra.**

"Gold, my son, gold is the axle on which turns the world. By this the humble Israelite is often stronger than kings. Our only danger is lest the destroying angel strike Don Pedro dead. While he lives, the protector of the Hebrews shall be richly furnished for his enterprise, and we of the tribe of Levi within this city will spread ducats broadcast to pave the way. Had it not been for that renegade Hassan (whom the Almighty consume in Gehenna), our conspiracy were already ripe."

"And do you think this great outlay of our hard-won substance needed?" asks the younger Jew, a hungry look in his eyes, like a dog robbed of his bone. "Father Isaac, Don Pedro is not sure. May not Samuel Levi have misreckoned? A man who turns against his own blood and dabbles with Moorish superstitions is little to be counted on."

"Impossible," answers the elder man, his black eye lighting up with the fire of youth. "By the great Jehovah! let no such miscalculation mar our action. The oppression of ages on our nation has made us cowards. A craven race we are. We will—and we will not—if it costs us gold. Now our very existence in this land of Castile hangs on Don Pedro; Don Enrique hates us. The French will torture us and spoil us, as do the hunters for the soft fur that wraps the bosom of the hapless hare. Once let us have news from Samuel Levi that the king is recovered, and has marched from Seville upon Toledo, these hands of mine," and he holds up his pointed, delicate fingers, "shall open to him a postern."

"There will be much bloodshed," answers Cornelius, thoughtfully, "and our dwellings may be sacked."

"Bury our treasure, then, son Cornelius, we must bear that. The Hebrews in Toledo, once masters before the Moors, are still numerous. Our foes are divided. All is prepared. The bribes are ready. He can raise no gold. Already the ground is mined under his feet, and then"—and he stretches forth his hand and points to the vast expanse of river, mountain, rocky gorge, and undulating plain, the white tents of the pretender visible through the foliage—"this alien camp shall give place to the royal standard, and the Hebrew name again be raised high among the nations. Then, son Cornelius, we shall receive what interest we choose to ask for our gold."

"But blood will flow in rivers, my father, before that comes; who knows if not ours?"

"Speak not of it, my son," answers the older man, veiling his face with his hands, "I love neither danger nor poison. If Blanche dies"—but what he was about to say is drowned in a tumult of voices rising from the street, and soon a rabble of boys and men fill the *paseo*, while below, the music of trumpets and fifes thunders through the close alley, as a gallant body of knights, attended by their esquires, march towards the old square of the Zocodover (restricted as to size, as is all else in Toledo), where the lists have been prepared for a passage of arms between the chief officers of Aragon and Navarre.

## CHAPTER XII

### Don Enrique and Albuquerque in Council



HE scene changes to the Arab court of the Alcazar, where, under lines of granite columns, knights and courtiers, heralds and pages, pass in and out. Nothing speaks of a city entered by surprise, and held on chance.

To look at the radiant scene, on which a fierce sun shoots down, no one would imagine that, but a few weeks since, Don Enrique was wandering over Spain, an outcast and a rebel.

Presently a burly, thick-set noble appears, wearing a dark velvet *manto*, high fur-edged cap, and Cordoba boots, provided with spurs which clank as he moves. His presence instantly impresses silence on those around; for Don Jaime Alvarez is as rough in his manners as are his native Asturian mountains; not a man to be trifled with at home or abroad. He at least clearly estimates the dangers of the present position, and casts a grim scowl on the frivolous idlers loitering about.

As he leans over the balustrade, halfway up the sculptured marble stair, his eye wanders round as if in search of some one, and again he frowns as he notes the careless bearing of the sentinels who guard the entrance, and the peals of laughter which break from time to time from the undercurrent of talk below.

But he has not long to wait. His satisfied glance shows it as a dark figure emerges from the crowd and he is joined by Albuquerque, much changed since his last interview with Don Pedro in the cloisters of the church of San Juan at Valladolid. The great minister, disgusted by the ingratitude of his master and the insults of Maria de Padilla, has changed sides, and is now attached to the varying fortunes of Don Enrique. He is thinner, and slightly bent, and his once commanding eyes are dimmer and sadder.

As he approaches Don Jaime, an audible sigh passes his lips. Now, instead of at once settling the affairs of state with the unruly Don Pedro, who bears more respect to him than to any one else, he must consult with a colleague who naturally regards him with suspicion as a renegade, who from a bitter enemy has become a doubtful friend.

"Shall we sit apart in the gallery?" Albuquerque asks, after ceremonious greetings have been exchanged between the rival counsellors, as they mount the steps together to the upper gallery, supported by slender pillars rising from a carved balustrade of singular richness in scroll work, stars, and arabesques; "or shall we enter the apartments?"

"The heat is great," is the reply, "let us remain here."

"Have you informed Don Enrique of the news?" anxiously asks Albuquerque, eyeing doubtfully the set face of the man before him. "I myself have not seen him this morning."

"If you mean his Grace the king, I have not either," answers Don Jaime drily, his naturally ill-favoured countenance darkening into a most unpleasant expression.

"But he must instantly know what has happened," returns Albuquerque.

"His Grace, as I understand," replies Don Jaime, "is somewhat indisposed, and has not yet risen."

"Nevertheless, let us go to him instantly," urges Albuquerque, "the greatest results depend on what has occurred."

"I scarcely view the matter in that light," answers the other coldly. "We conquer or we fall by the fortune of war. It is not a struggle in which a woman more or less——"

"A woman!" breaks in Albuquerque; "but this is a queen, who carries in her hand France and Navarre. She is here, in sanctuary within the cathedral. The importance of her presence cannot be underrated."

"It is natural that *you* should think so," retorts Don Jaime, with a sneer. "You brought her into Spain to establish alliances for Don Pedro. Now these have failed, you would use her on the other side."

"But, my lord, while we are here bandying unseemly words," replies Albuquerque, unmoved by the covert insult implied, "time flies. Let us at once crave an audience of Don Enrique, and expose to him our views."

"His Highness King Enrique, you mean, I presume," replies Don Jaime, greatly nettled. "This is the second time I have corrected you, my lord minister. *You*, at least, should not question the title which your abandonment of his brother's cause so greatly facilitated. This, and the excommunication of the Pope of Rome which legalised it."

But Albuquerque was not to be drawn into further discussion on so dangerous a subject. He simply bowed and made way for the Asturian noble to pass first under the carved portal which led into the royal rooms.

In a small but lofty chamber, wainscotted with wrought walnut wood and lighted by one of those high casements which run along the front of the Alcazar and give so much dignity to the noble façade, sits Enrique el Caballero.

Quite young, but older than Don Pedro, this son of the unhappy Eleonora de Guzman has already braved death again and again with dauntless valour. In person he is tall and fair like his brothers. The same well-cut features, and chestnut hair lying in crisp, close curls under a velvet cap, thrown back on a broad, clear brow,

and a skin so delicate that the choice lace collar worn at his neck is not more white.

It is not for nothing that Enrique is named El Caballero. A suave gentleness, almost feminine, is the characteristic of his face. Frank, firm, and courteous, he charms all who approach him; but when offended, like a true Spaniard, he can be both unforgiving and vindictive. A certain mobile expression about his mouth tells of strong passions ill-repressed, but the gracious smile so readily called up is as a mask to his feelings. Altogether, a man capable of the tenderest benevolence and of the bitterest hate.

Of all the children of Eleonora de Guzman, Enrique is the cleverest and the best. Often wandering alone in the mountains, and only saved from starvation by the shepherds of the grassy Biscayan valleys—fighting with the freebooters who lurk on the frontiers, escaping into Navarre, where he vainly pleads for help, or despatching unavailing offers to the French king of firm alliance and support if he places him on the throne—Enrique has ever maintained himself orthodox to the Church, and as such is openly favoured by the Pope.

Thus, little by little, he has collected a band of followers about him; and now, confident of help from France, and strengthened in his claims by the report of Don Pedro's death, he has entered Toledo.

As he sits at a table covered with papers, a sheet of heavily-embroidered drapery at his back, a more gallant young prince would be hard to find, as, doffing for a moment his jewelled cap, he signs to Albuquerque and Don Jaime to be seated.

"To what good fortune," he asks, "am I indebted for this early visit?"

"My lord," replies Albuquerque, as he places himself beside the table, "I am already late in imparting the important intelligence. The Lady Blanche of Bourbon has escaped, and is now within the cathedral. Your brother, Don Pedro, is restored to health, and is advancing on this city."

In a moment the smiling face of the young prince changes to an expression of gravest thought.

"By the bones of Santiago, this is a wondrous change!" he exclaims. "My brother, though still civilly deceased, rises from a bed of death to fight me, and the lady comes to aid me. Is she alone?"

"As far as we know," is the reply, "one female attendant only is with her. The Lady Blanche is invaluable as a hostage."

"In what sense?"

"Your Highness may at once dictate peace to Don Pedro by giving her up."

"Never!" cries Don Enrique. "Even to speak of it is a crime. My lord," rising and turning sharply on Albuquerque, "you forget whom you now serve. The perfidious policy of my brother never shall be mine."

"I do not advocate perfidy," is the dignified reply of the unmoved statesman, "but it is my duty to point out your Grace's present advantage."

"Away with such proposals!" exclaims Enrique, his cheeks reddening under the waves of chestnut hair. "By the Queen of Heaven! I hold you a poor counsellor to advocate such crooked means. As a sister I greet her and will protect her. Her youth and hapless fate touch me deeply. Poor Fadique! how well he loved her! It cost him his life."

After this brief passage of arms between the new king and his former enemy, Enrique reseats himself, his face still aglow with emotion, and signs to Albuquerque, who has also risen, to do the same. It is the minister who speaks first, with the imperturbable composure of a man who cares no more for the chances of life than for the throw of dice upon a board.

"Your Grace is sure of the support of the Great Companies, if you can hold Toledo until they arrive."

"If," quickly rejoins Don Enrique. "If, where is the doubt? Look out beyond," and he points to the opposite hills over the dark gorge through which the Tagus flows; "are not those our tents glistening in the light? Are not those our standards flying in the wind? The lances of our gallant squadrons of horse catching the sun? Below our body of archers, whose special charge it is to guard our person? Does all Spain show a company of men more gallant? Every one of them would die



A VIEW OF GRANADA.

rather than harm come to me! Listen to the trumpet-call ringing on the heights! Hark! it is answered from the garrison within the city. Are these not more than enough to keep possession of what we have?"

A long silence follows.

"God forbid, your Grace," Albuquerque replies, while the triumphant glances of Don Jaime seem to shame the coldness of his manner, "that I say ought to arrest the natural ardour of so chivalrous a prince. But there are many dangers which make me venture to suggest a peace. Your Highness entered Toledo by



surprise; a strong party, especially among the Jews within the city, favours your brother. Your army is made up of many ill-assorted elements. The Castilian hates the Aragonese; the men of Portugal are jeered at for their coarseness by such French mercenaries as have joined your standard. Toledo is a large and straggling city, ill-calculated to resist a siege without a much larger garrison than you possess. And as to his Grace, my late master, who knows but that his sickness is but a feint to put you off your guard? True that the Lady Blanche is here, and that both France and Navarre may send reinforcements, as soon as time allows, but they are not here. Besides, our funds run low. The devil take the Hebrews in this city! The interest they demand is so exorbitant I know not where to find money to pay the troops, who are already clamouring for pay."

"The chance of war, the chance of war!" cries Don Enrique, chafing under these prudent considerations. "Fortune favours the bold. Had I reasoned thus on the rugged slopes of the Asturias, I should not be sitting now within these walls. What say you, Don Jaime, ever so faithful to me in all changes?"

"I say that your Grace is born to reign."

"Yes," is the reply, "there is something within me that tells me so. No matter what happens, my star will prevail. The throne, the throne, nothing but the throne!" As he speaks an almost glorified look shines on his face, in which all the charm of the expression is brought out by a radiant smile, as he gazes over the expanse of city and plain to the snow-tipped range of Guadarrama, dim in the distance.

"Does he see visions, this boy?" thought Albuquerque, gravely observing him and but little impressed by this outburst of youthful confidence. "Pardon me, my lord, if I recall you to the present time. You will surely at once visit the Lady Blanche, and free her from the discomforts of the cathedral; the worthy chapter will be at a loss how to entertain so delicate a princess."

"Yes, yes, I will at once proceed to the cathedral to offer her such hospitality as a soldier can command. Call the *jefe* of my household, and cause the state apartments to be prepared as are fitting for her, and such attendants as have escaped with her."

"And what is far more important," adds Albuquerque, "I will send off instant despatches to the most Christian king, informing him of the presence of his kinswoman, and urge on him the need of quick support."

"May the Christian king not chance to remember that it was *you*, Albuquerque, who brought her into Spain? The sight of your name may raise suspicion. But no matter," observing the frown which rises on his face at the ill-timed jest. "By my faith! I would not be in the shoes of the Governor of Talavera, who has favoured the queen's escape; for favour her he must, else she never would have passed the gates of that invincible fortress. Pedro will invent new tortures to punish him; what say you, Albuquerque?" and more than a touch of irony betrays itself in Don Enrique's voice as he recalls the sufferings the policy of Albuquerque have entailed on him. "Your kinswoman, Maria, too, will have a new grudge against me, and work some diabolical charm. Methinks I see myself in effigy, burning upon a blazing pile, my life-blood ebbing as, drop by drop, the wax falls into the flame! Ha! ha! If it were only with witches and warlocks I had to do! But God is with the just! and the Holy Father's blessing is potent."

No answering look of mirth responded to his words; a sad expression was on the fallen minister's brow as he gravely saluted and quitted the chamber, leaving Enrique and Don Jaime to arrange the preparations for his immediate visit to the cathedral.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Queen Blanche in Sanctuary



HE bright morning which broke so auspiciously at the Alcazar has darkened. The deep shadows of gathering clouds press up from the horizon and veil the city in a soft mist. The many towers and domes of the Cathedral rise up like landmarks on a shadowy sea; the delicate tracery of the gilded spire, capped by a crown of thorns, catching some latent sunbeam hidden in the lining of a cloud, alone stands out apparent in the gloom.

Like the Cathedral of Seville, the original Gothic church, in which the Wambas and the Witasas had worshipped according to the Gothic creed from the earliest ages, had become a mosque under the Moors, to be again consecrated by San Fernando, who, smelling blasphemy in the very walls, pulled them down and laid the foundations of the present church, finished two centuries later, in the florid style of that *barocco* union of the east and west so common in Spain.

Nothing can be worse than the situation. It stands absolutely in a hole. But it is within that this shrine of marble is wonderful. The clustered pillars of five vast naves, a marble space in the centre as wide and long as a hippodrome, the solid bulk of the *retablo* a blaze of gold, separating the high altar from the nave; the sculptured semi-circle of the absis broken by chapels, niches, shrines, and tombs sunk in the deepness of shadow, where kings and archbishops repose; the superb pavement in marble, lapis lazuli, porphyry, and agate lighting up the floor, rare pictures on the walls, statues, carvings, and huge bronze doors leading into the choir, the double pulpits coated with gold, the glorious screen in *alto relieve*, and the superbly painted windows casting down warm shadows as of ruby, emerald, and sapphire on the floor.

Deeper and deeper fall the shadows, and more and more solemn gathers the half-light, save for a glimmer far in the distance where a dim lamp burns before an altar of most delicate tracery flanked by two lofty windows, the front shut in by a brazen rail, while a lacelike shroud of exquisite stonework rises behind, reaching as with giant leaps to the heavily groined roof.

In the farthest corner, crouching beside the altar, sits Blanche, her feet resting on an embroidered cope, brought by the pitying priests, Claire close beside her. Both are so still in the waves of gloom outside, that they might pass for statues on a tomb, pressed close together, habited in hood and cape as Carmelites.

"I shall die," whispers Blanche, "if no one comes before night," and a cold shudder passes over her.

"Dear Blanche, keep a good heart, after all we have gone through. Here at least we are safe. I wish to heaven," adds Claire, "*he* were, who has staked his life to bring us here."

"Ah, Claire, you are in love, and that comforts you. I have no one to care for me since I parted with Fadique, God grant that he is saved. But, Claire, are you quite sure that the priest understood he was to inform the Conde de Trastamare that I am here?"

"Yes," is the answer; "what a miracle it was that he is in possession of Toledo. Had it been Don Pedro, he would have broken the sanctuary as sure as fate."

"I should like to see this Enrique de Trastamare," whispers Blanche, her white face lighting up for an instant at the thought of a possible protector. "I am sure he is good, because he fights against that horrible monster Pedro. After all, I am a queen; the King of France will rescue me. You remember the Governor of Talavera said the French were marching on Toledo, and that was why we were to come here. For my part I would have rather gone in quite another direction, towards Navarre. Ah! how I tremble when I think of it all, and that mule that kicked me off, just as we were leaving the castle by the narrow path! I wonder I was not killed; I am sure I am bruised!"

"And our danger," adds Claire, glad to see Blanche's mind disengaged from the continual terror she endures, "when we passed the outer tents of the encampment, in our Carmelite disguise (how clever of the governor to think of it), and those soldiers asked us so rudely if we would absolve them! Oh, how I shake when I think of it. All seemed over with us; and so it would have been, if that handsome Aragonese knight had not come up, and perceived from our accent that we were French, and conducted us across the lines," here Claire breaks off with a heavy sigh, and Blanche kisses her tenderly and inquires what ails her.

"Can you ask? When you know I cannot tell if he is safe across the frontier, my valiant Raoul! Alas! alas! if he falls into Don Pedro's hands! Oh, the noble heart!" and she puts her hands before her eyes to shut out the horrid image her fancy has called up. "When he gave his love to me, I told him he must save my queen, else I would never look at him!"

"But this is a fearful place!" cries Blanche in a louder voice, peeping out into the nave, the desolation of her position coming over her. "Do you hear that noise!" as a sudden echo rebounds from aisle to aisle. "I am sure there are spirits here," and trembling all over, she clings to Claire.

"Be comforted, my queen. Some one will come. The priest who serves us is very kind, and he assured me of the favour of the chapter. Believe me, we shall not be forgotten. Collect yourself, dear princess. You know what Raoul said of Don Enrique?"

"Oh, I am dead of cold and fright!" answers Blanche, bursting into tears. "I care not if I die—one stab and all is over! I dream every night of Don Pedro, a dagger in his hand, and just as I am about to escape, the point falls here," and she lays her hand upon her neck. "I know it will end so. All die who offend Don Pedro."

"See!" cries Claire, as the darkness enveloping the lengthening lines of the gigantic pillars lifts, and a glint of light strikes like living fire on the famous statue of the Virgin, recovered from the Moors by San Fernando, seated upon an altar on a silver throne, and glittering with jewels, an exquisite canopy of fretted pinnacles of saints shrouding it, "See! the Holy Mother herself has come to comfort us."

## CHAPTER XIV

### Don Enrique Welcomes Queen Blanche to Toledo



OURS pass, struck out from the Giralda tower in many-toned bells, each bell with its own name and recognised by its tone. Figures had glided in and out, dwarfed to pigmies by the vast size. Groups had formed at distant shrines, to vanish as they came. Veiled women had knelt on the marble pavement, and a crowd had gathered round a preacher in a far-off aisle.

At length, when hope seemed dead, the shrill blast of trumpets and the clatter of horses' feet came to the ears of the ever-watchful Claire, from the direction of the Puerta de los Leones, dull at first, and low, but marvellously distinct.

Then steadily advancing footsteps are heard approaching, the heavy tread as of a company of armed men whose mailed feet fall heavy on the marble pavement.

With beating hearts Blanche and Claire start to their feet to await their doom.

The glare of many torches is thrown forward, calling up fantastic shapes; an armed figure emerges, clearly defined against the light, a long Castilian sword at his side, and a mailed hand is stretched forward.

"Welcome to Toledo, madam," says the voice of Enrique de Trastamare. "Never could we have esteemed ourselves more happy in the fortune of war than by your presence."

As he speaks Blanche throws herself at his feet; her veil falls back. She weeps, but her tears do not mar the fresh beauty of her face.

"Save me, my lord!" she cries. "Save me, for the love of God."

She clasps her hands, as if addressing a deity. Her sobs drown her voice, which still murmurs, "Save me! Save me!"

Enrique's eyes fill with tears. He stoops and raises her, imprinting on her cheek a royal kiss of welcome.

"You will not betray me to Don Pedro?" she whispers, seizing his mailed hand.

"Betray you!" he answers, greatly moved. "Rather die! If I am a crowned king, I am no less a belted knight. There is no right of chivalry more precious than the succour of distress, especially that of a royal lady allied to us by marriage. Our entrance into the city of Toledo was by surprise; there are here no noble ladies to form your court at the Alcazar; but such rough welcome as a soldier can afford is yours, fair queen. I pray you to honour our quarters with your presence, where I have already ordered such preparations to be made as are possible."

Something in the voice and aspect of Enrique so powerfully reminded Blanche of Fadique, that she remained utterly speechless, to the great distress of Claire, who whispered into her ear, "For the sake of the Virgin, who has sent him, thank him as he deserves."

Enrique, quickly penetrating the sense of the words, saluting her graciously, replied:

"I desire no thanks from the queen. If I did, I much mistake me if the noble *demoiselle* with whom I speak could not as fittingly reply as her mistress."

At this compliment, spoken with all the charm of Spanish gallantry, Claire blushes deeply, and holds down her head.

"Pardon me, my lord," and Blanche stops suddenly as Enrique draws her gently forward in the direction of the portal, "if I ask of the welfare of your brother, the Grand Master?"

Her voice trembled as she named him, and her face grew ashy white. Instead of answering her, Enrique paused abruptly and laid his disengaged hand on her shoulder, as if to support her. His silence, and the care with which he bore her up alarmed her. Slowly she turned her eyes upon his face, clouded by grief, and a faint cry escaped her.

"Is he dead?" she asked, in a voice almost inaudible.

"He is," was the answer.

"By whose hand did he fall?"

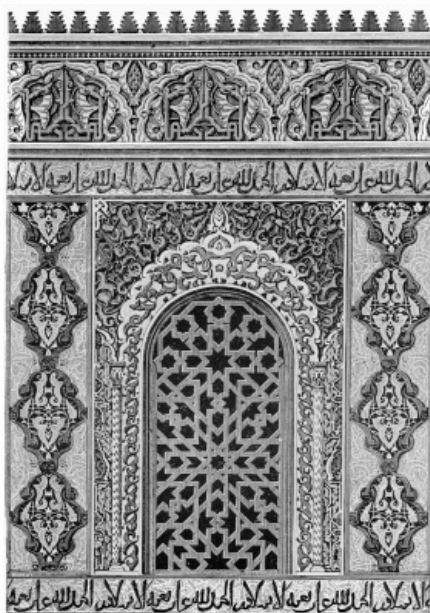
"By that of my brother, Don Pedro. He called him to the Alcazar, and smote him in the Hall of the Ambassadors at Seville."

Exhausted by the long ride from Talavera, the vigil in the cathedral, and the agitation of meeting with Don Enrique, this cruel blow was too much. Ere he had spoken Blanche fell into a swoon so death-like that as Claire knelt before her under the glare of the torches, she asked herself if life would ever return?

Great was the compassion of Don Enrique as he looked down on her fair young face.

"Let the nearest leech be summoned instantly," he commands, turning to an attendant. "Meanwhile, ask the good fathers if they have no strong waters to sprinkle on the queen, or no relics at hand which, by their virtue, will bring the dead to life. Even I, a soldier, have heard in camp of the virtue of Santa Leocadia, whose bones lie in the Sacristy. Let every means be tried. Madam," turning to Claire, vainly trying by every art to revive her mistress, "my royal sister is happy indeed to possess such a friend; I will myself remain and assist you."

The strong waters brought by the priests effected no immediate cure. No relics were forthcoming. It was not deemed meet that Santa Leocadia should be removed from her consecrated shrine at the command of a newly-made king, not sure of



A WINDOW IN THE ALHAMBRA.

his title. For, be it noted, the appearance of the Pretender, Enrique de Trastamare, in the cathedral, and his determination to carry away the Lady Blanche was most unwelcome to the chapter, who were thus deprived of their sanctuary dues, the actually reigning sovereign alone having the privilege of recompensing them.

At length a leech arrives in the person of an aged Jew well-known in her city at the beginning and end of life. Quickly he opens a vein, and as, drop by drop, the blood flows over the delicate skin, her eyes open, and again she breathes.

No sooner has consciousness returned to the queen than it is Claire's turn to give way. Tottering backwards she seems about to fall. But the brave girl, ever faithful to her charge, forces herself to overcome the passing weakness and tend her mistress, on whose pale cheeks a faint tinge of colour has stolen.

"Dear Blanche, hear me!" cries Claire, passionately seizing her hand and carrying the cold fingers to her lips. "On my knees I conjure you to live, for yourself, for me! For France, our pleasant land, where we shall return. Rouse yourself, Blanche. Sit up," and she essays to raise her in her arms, while Enrique, with looks of the tenderest pity, assists her.

At length, more dead than alive, she is placed on a litter bearing the device of "the Castle" (the same as was used by the pious Queen Berengaria when she came to Mass), and is carried from the cathedral up the hill to the square of the Zocodover, on her way to the Alcazar.

## Taking of Toledo by Don Pedro—Death of Queen Blanche



WITHIN an incredibly short time Don Pedro marched from Seville with a well-disciplined army and gained possession of Toledo, principally by the connivance of the Jews, Father Isaac himself with his own hands opening the postern of the Gate of San Martino. Many of the citizens who had believed the king to be dead or dying, at the news of his approach joined themselves with the Jews in a close conspiracy in his favour, greatly strengthening his cause.

The siege was short and rapid. Don Enrique had only time to escape by night from the Alcazar in disguise, with his most faithful adherents; his showy but inefficient army, comprised, as Albuquerque had reminded him, of so many heterogeneous elements, ill-paid and ill-fed, melted away before the disciplined troops of his brother, and Blanche, poor Blanche, was seized in the Alcazar and sent far away from all hope of succour into Andalusia to the castle of Xeres.

But this is not enough for Don Pedro. After the most solemn promises of pardon to those citizens of Toledo who had acknowledged his brother, no sooner had he manned the walls and floated the "Castle and the Lion" at the four towers of the Alcazar, than every one of his brother's adherents was denounced.

In this, Father Isaac did cruel service, gratifying the private vengeance of his nation under the pretext of treachery to the king. A terrible massacre followed; head after head was struck off in the presence of Don Pedro, until the executioners rested from sheer fatigue.

"I am *El Rey Justiciar*," are his cruel words, "let my enemies feel there is no mercy for traitors." One of the accused, an old *caballero*, who had refused to pay an exorbitant interest to a Jew, a friend of Father Isaac's, was a venerable citizen of good repute, who had taken no part in the insurrection. His son rushed forward and implored the king to spare him. "Take my life, my lord!" cried he, "not his!" and he flung himself upon his knees before him in an agony of supplication.

"Not a whit, not a whit!" answered Don Pedro commanding his guards to drive him back. "If you so love death, share it together," and the father and son both fell under the axe.

The barbarous death of Doña Urraca de Osorio at this time has become historical. When Don Pedro learned that her husband, Alvarez de Guzman (the son of Guzman el Bueno, who saved Spain from the Moors at the siege of Tarifa), had gone over to his brother in the siege of Toledo, he caused her to be seized and burnt alive in the public square of Seville before the Ayuntamiento. Her maid, Leonora Davilo, was with her. As the wind was high at the time, Doña Urraca's clothes were displaced, and her body exposed to the jeers of the brutal Sevillians, when the faithful Leonora leaped into the flames, and casting herself as a veil on her mistress was burned with her. Thus they are both represented on Doña Urraca's monument in the church of San Isidoro at Santa Ponce, a short distance from Seville, built by Guzman el Bueno, with little idea that his own daughter-in-law would be interred there under circumstances of such horror.

And now the great name of Albuquerque is heard for the last time. Faithful to the cause of Don Enrique as he had been to that of Don Pedro, he met his former master, at his particular request, at the ancient town of Toro, lying in the open expanse of plains between Salamanca and Zamora, in order to endeavour to negotiate better terms for his new master.

Of what passed between Don Pedro and his great minister there is no record, but the sudden death of Albuquerque immediately after the interview is not without suspicion of foul play.

The southern district of Spain, within the bounds of Andalusia, extending from Seville to Cadiz, is still a mystery as in days of yore. Great open alluvial plains, utterly treeless, stretch into boundless perspectives, the home of the wild bull in its pristine ferocity. The Guadalquivir flows onwards in a torpid tide among canals and open trenches down to the sea, a most unpoetic river in all but the name. All is grey, misty, and desolate, a "no man's land," to which even the waves of the Mediterranean bring no delight, for the shallow beach sends back the water so far it barely covers the sandy shore.

On these shores the old Continent of Europe seems to die out, to make place for the youthful splendour of Africa opposite, visible in the line of the picturesque Atlas range rising across the straits; old Europe worn out, and melting into the sea before the defiance of its stalwart rival.

Xeres de la Frontiera is the only town on this low marshy coast. The Xeres of that day—not famed for wine and commerce as in our time—was a small fortified place taken from the Moors, enclosed by walls; and precisely because the Xeres of that day was desolate and lonely, it was selected for the place of the queen's imprisonment.

Blanche—oh! so changed! her young face drawn, her delicate cheeks marked with fine lines, her childlike eyes dim, her slight figure bowed as if by age, her flaxen curls streaked with grey, although she has scarcely reached the years of womanhood—is indeed an object of compassion! All hope gone, knowing that she must die. And so living day by day as the months roll on and she measures the dull routine of sunrise and sunset across those cruel plains, which cut her off from all humanity.

One image haunts her, the gallant young Infante who dared to love her. And from him her thoughts wander to his brother, El Caballero, who was about to send her to Navarre with an escort when he was surprised at Toledo, and is now almost as helpless as herself; in her enfeebled brain the lineaments of the two brothers become mingled, and the gentle Fadique seems to live again in the gracious Enrique, whom all men love.

What matter? She is doomed. Incapable of hate or love; no passion is left within her. Even the craving for liberty is gone. She feels she could not use it, were it hers; and thus she sits, day after day, on the summit of a castellated tower, under a low wall, hand in hand with Claire.

That she has loved or been loved seems so impossible, a feeble smile rises on her lips as she thinks of it. That she has been born to pomp and greatness is equally incredible in her abject condition. To hold a flower

in her hand, to scent the perfume of herbs borne by the breeze, to watch the flight of sea-gulls which skim across the plain, to note the accidents of the seasons, golden autumn breaking into grey winter, then passing to the glad garments of the spring, on the shadowy outlines of the mountains of La Mancha, is to her mind as a never-ending wonder that the world should thus go on. It is *she* alone who is dead, while all nature lives triumphant!

The entrance of the old crone who performs such menial offices as she requires is a boon as something human, yet even she scowls at her with envy because she is a queen.

"What devil's deed have you in your mind?" she mutters, as she sweeps the floor, casting malignant glances at Blanche, seated beside Claire. "Are you expecting a saviour, mistress? Ha! ha! None will come to Xeres. You do not answer? You can weep, therefore you can speak."

"We are French," answers Claire, speaking for Blanche. "We mean you no offence by our silence. But, for the sake of mercy, tell us, good mother, is there really no means of escape from this prison?"

"None," answers the woman, pursing up her thin lips as if it gave her a certain satisfaction. "Think not of it. From hence you go to the gates of death. I can tell you that. Misfortune is the road to a better world. It comforts me to think you are as wretched as I am myself. Fare you well, ladies, till to-morrow. There is not a chamber in the castle nor a step on the stairs that is not slippery with human blood. They die, every soul of them, who come here."

As she speaks she turns her back to go, when Blanche rushes after her. Roused from her torpor by these horrible words, she seizes the old hag by the shoulders and looks wildly into her eyes.

"Richly, richly would my father requite you, did you save me."

"Your father?" retorts the woman. "Where is he? Meanwhile they would wring my old neck, and you be no better. No! no!"

"Stay! stay!" cries Blanche, keeping hold on her. "It consoles me to hear another voice and not always to listen to the owls hooting outside, or the ticking of the death-watch in the walls."

"Let go," answers the old woman, extricating herself rudely from her weak grasp, "or you shall serve yourselves, mistresses. I cannot help you. When I was young I could not protect myself. Here, not the Holy Virgin herself can save you." As she speaks she bars the door and disappears, a sneering smile upon her face, furrowed with wrinkles.

Except this woman, no one but the governor enters. He is a stern, morose Castilian, eliminating all expression from his face as he looks at Blanche, yet with a certain kindness of expression and gesture he cannot altogether disguise, which pains her, for she would gladly think that the world is as dead and buried as she is herself. Not even Claire can comfort her now—Claire, her whole soul in her eyes, watching her every movement, while her own thoughts turn to the fate of the lover who, at her command, risked his life to liberate the queen.

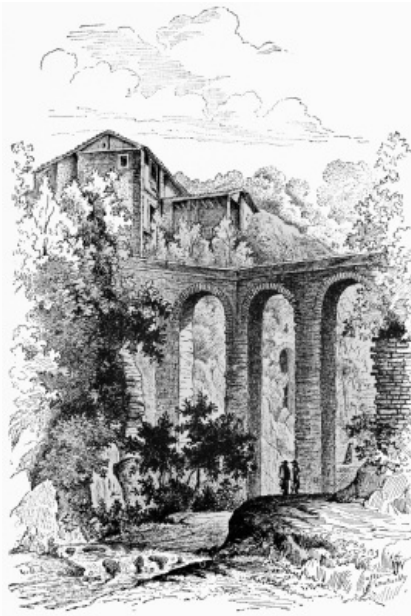
One evening, sitting together at sunset on the tower, the sound of horses' feet galloping rapidly on the grass rouses them. A white terror is in Blanche's eyes as she fixes them on Claire, who, leaning over, can perceive a little company of men-at-arms rapidly approaching, bearing a flag with the king's badge.

*No word is said*, but when the governor enters, as is his custom, to serve their evening meal, Claire, standing behind her chair, observes his eyes, at moments when he thinks Blanche's attention is distracted, fixed on Blanche with a glance full of pity.

*No word is said*, but below, in the courtyard, comes the sound of a loud harsh voice; the step of sentinels louder and quicker, and around an unwonted stir.

Blanche, sitting listless, pays no heed, but Claire goes and comes in the narrow tower, peering through the small arched slits which serve for light, listening to every sound. Then all dies away as night closes.

"For to-night we are safe," is her thought; but suddenly in the darkness, to her sharp ears comes that same harsh voice with which she seems familiar. She has heard it at Valladolid. Can it be the king? One purpose only could bring him here, the death of Blanche. Ah! how can she save her? If to give her life, how gladly she would be the sacrifice! A thousand wild schemes whirl in her brain; but she says nothing, and Blanche,



**THE AQUEDUCT NEAR GRANADA.**

save that she has turned deadly pale, has not spoken.

But when the moonlight comes, and Claire is unbinding the long tresses of her hair and combing out those childish curls, now half grey, which lent so sweet an expression to her innocent young face when she came to Valladolid, a knock is heard at the door, and lo! a priest enters.

Now as, from time to time, Blanche has been allowed to confess, this does not startle Claire as much as it might seem; but when the priest says, entering the vaulted chamber and addressing Blanche, "My daughter, have you prayed?" she knows that her hour has come.

A piercing scream escapes from Claire as she falls on her knees beside her mistress, but Blanche rises up with the aspect of a queen.

"My father," she answers, "I pray always, for I have died out of the world."

"It is well, my daughter," and the priest raises his hand over her in benediction as she kneels before him; but there is a tremor in his voice he cannot suppress, and old as he is and practised in the ways of death, tears stand in his eyes as he looks at her young face.

A solemn silence follows neither cares to break.

It is the priest, who speaks first in a voice which trembles spite of himself.

"It is not without reason, my daughter, that we are enjoined to pray. We know not when God may see fit to call our souls to him."

"I understand," answers Blanche in a voice so low it can only be heard by reason of the great silence, "you mean I am to die."

"My daughter," and now, unable to command his grief, sobs shake his words, and poor Claire, clinging wildly to her mistress, as if by her loving arms she could keep her in life, utters the most piercing cries.

"My sister," and Blanche turns to her, "for such you are in love, disturb not my last hour with your grief, but rather rejoice with me that I am leaving a world in which I have suffered so much. I wonder I have been allowed to live so long. But, my father," addressing the priest, "listen to me before I die: I am innocent of the crime imputed to me. I was condemned unheard. But there is a tribunal above, before the living God, to absolve me. There I summon my husband, the King of Castile, to appear. We shall meet shortly. By the sword he has lived; and by the sword he shall die. It has been revealed to me."

"My daughter," replies the priest, taking her hand in his, "such invocations are wicked. Leave vengeance to God."

Blanche bows her head in obedience. But the prophecy is uttered, and the dark spirits which keep watch over human life have heard and noted it.

Then calling for paper, which Claire, gathering herself up from the floor, gave her with trembling hands, hanging over her the while as if each breath she drew was precious beyond life, Blanche wrote some words addressed to Don Pedro, and bound the paper with a black ribbon from her neck.

"I pray you, my father, to hold what is here written as sacred. Deliver it in person to the king. Tell him you saw me die."

So calm is Blanche and her voice so clear, as she fixes her large eyes steadfastly on the priest, as if looking beyond him into another world, that neither he nor Claire dare trouble her with words.

Then she confesses, kneeling on the stones, and at the conclusion, taking the priest's hand in hers, she meekly kisses it, and begs to be interred at Xeres.

"For else," she says, "they may dispute the possession of my body in death as they have done in life, and the king's mistress, Maria de Padilla, might do some dishonour to it, which is not meet, seeing that I am of royal blood, and the rightful Queen of Castile."

And even in the agony of her grief Claire wondered to hear Blanche speak with such dignity and judgment, for, up to that time since they had left Toledo, her senses had seemed dulled, and she had said nothing of all that was in her mind.

Anon the low door creaks on its hinges and a figure appears, completely shrouded in black. The head is covered by a cowl with slits for eyes; in one hand is a torch, which throws a glare in the chamber like blood;

the other lies concealed in the mantle.

At this horrible sight Blanche loses all her composure. She shrieks aloud, and burying herself in the arms of Claire clings closely to the stone walls.

But the priest exhorting her with holy words, she speedily regains her courage, and turning to the executioner speaks with a gentle voice.

"Friend, I pardon you. You must obey the king, who sends you, as I do in dying here." And rising to her feet, a kind of glory gathers on her face; all her young beauty comes back to her again, such as she was when, as a happy girl, she left Narbonne a bride.

"I am but eighteen years old, and I am about to die, a virgin, as I have lived. The crown which was put on my head was one of sorrow; I hope to find a better in another world. My father," turning to the priest, who is bowed down with grief, "if it be possible, commend me to my sister, the Queen of France, and to my father, and tell them I have not disgraced them by any act."

And with these words upon her lips, she kneels down, the executioner seizes her, and passes the fatal bowstring round her throat.

According to a legend of the time, Blanche of Bourbon was interred in the old cathedral at Xeres, but as an entirely new building was erected in 1695, no record of her burying-place remains.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Death of Maria de Padilla—Don Juan de Mañara



OREMOST in the fighting at Toledo, when Don Pedro drove out Don Enrique de Trastamare and took Queen Blanche prisoner, was his favourite, Don Juan de Mañara, an historical profligate of no small fame in poetry and music, and dreaded by husbands and fathers.

Vainly did they lock the gates of their *patios* and put iron bars over the windows; he penetrated everywhere. The *Commendatore* whom Don Juan killed in a duel about his daughter Doña Anna, was but one of the many whom he had injured, only the *Commendatore* cursed him, and the curse cleaved to him, although it is not true that as a *statue*, he invited him to supper, as he does in Mozart's opera, and was dragged down to hell.

The stage Don Giovanni is a very elegant señor, with fine feathers, bright clothes, golden chains, velvets, and lace; but the real man clothed himself as plainly as his master, Don Pedro, in a dark doublet, with a leather *capa*, or head-piece, quite innocent of gew-gaws, and as heavy a mantle as a Castilian can wear.

Living in warlike times, when men rapped out their swords on every occasion, Don Juan was ready for whatever adventure might befall, giving no quarter and receiving none; little given to vanity of any sort, or smoothness of speech in the passages of the *duelo* or on the battle-field, spending his leisure between the dice-box and the wine flagon.

In person he was dark-featured, too bronzed and weather-beaten for actual beauty, but with plenty of that dash and bravery which please a lady's eye. Careless, remorseless, sensual, neither God nor devil had terrors for him, but he never shed blood wantonly, and was incapable of butchering women, like his master, or of treacherous assassination or murder of any kind.

How he remained in favour so long, spite of his outspoken comments on Don Pedro, was due to his well-tryed devotion. His contempt for the whole family of the Padillas was notorious, specially for Don Garcia, whom he qualified as a base flatterer and parasite, ready to sell Don Pedro like Judas Iscariot.

Don Pedro had few friends; revolt and hatred had thinned his party, and the followers of Enrique de Trastamare were continually increased by the horror of some new crime.

Had the king given heed to Don Juan he would never have sacrificed Doña Bianca or the Grand Master Fadique to the jealous fury of Maria de Padilla. Every mishap which had been foretold by Albuquerque and the queen-mother had followed, as was indeed apparent, after these cruel deeds.

At this time his life and his throne were in jeopardy and he knew it. Not only had the death of Blanche moved France to the core and allied Charles V. with Enrique, but it had so profoundly offended the Castilian sense of honour that a formal remonstrance was drawn up by his own nobles, an insult at which his fierce temper flamed out, and but for the certainty of coming war a bloody punishment would have been the result.

"The throne! the throne!" is the war-cry of El Caballero, who, no longer a fugitive, has constituted himself the avenger of the queen; and word has come to Seville that Aragon and Navarre have declared in his favour, as well as many of the cities in old Castile, and that Blanche's kinsman, the Comte de la Marche, of the royal blood of St. Louis, has joined Du Guesclin and the *Grande Compagnie* despatched by the King of France, now marching south to join them.

Hitherto prosperous in his wickedness, since Blanche's death a curse cleaves to Don Pedro. Has he read her letter and does he know that she has summoned him to appear at the heavenly tribunal, where neither lying nor hypocrisy will avail him? Who can say? Dead or alive, Don Pedro is inscrutable.

At this time Maria de Padilla falls suddenly sick of a mortal malady. Stretched on an Oriental couch of purple stuff, within her golden-walled chamber she lies longing for the return of Don Pedro, far away battling in Aragon. Plunged in the torpor of a sudden fever, her hand vaguely wanders among the meshes of her glossy hair, still sown with the pearls she had placed there overnight. From whom does she shrink, this terrible beauty, gathering herself together until her henna-tipped fingers sinking into her flesh, she cries loudly for Don Pedro, and shriek after shriek comes from her as she flings herself into the arms of her slaves?

It is an evil death, haunted by phantoms. No priest comes to soothe her dying moments. She is held to be a witch, in league with the Evil One. The sacraments of the Church cannot be brought to such as she. But on Don Pedro's return to Seville she is laid to rest in the cathedral under the dome of the Capilla Real, beside

the sovereigns of Castile, and such regal titles as were refused her in life are given to her in death.

The Cortes are assembled, and Don Pedro solemnly proclaims her his lawful wife and her children, one son and three daughters, legitimate. No one believes it, though witnesses are called as having been present at the ceremony, but no one dares to deny it and Maria de Padilla is buried as she has lived—a queen.

Whatever Don Pedro feels at the loss of the woman he loved, he conceals it. This is no time for grief. Furious at the growing success of El Caballero, Don Pedro signs a hasty peace with Aragon, and threatens to attack his ancient allies, the Moors.

Much alarmed, they send an ambassador to Seville, in the person of Mahomed Barbarossa, the *Rey Bermejo*, charged with rich presents to appease him.

In the midst of a superb procession rides the Red King, the accoutrements of his horse set with jewelled fringes; on his head he wears the green turban of the followers of the Prophet, and in the centre, conspicuous among a galaxy of gems, three enormous rubies are set, the middle one, known as “the Balax,” big as a pigeon’s egg. When he beholds Don Pedro in royal robes, standing on the threshold of his gorgeous portal, surrounded by such of the brilliant Castilians who as yet are true to him, the dusky emir is moved to smile, and as he dismounts to kiss Don Pedro’s hand, the Balax gleaming like fire on his head, his steely blue eyes fix on it greedily, and it is clear to Don Juan who stands behind, that strong passion of some kind moves him.

Long he contemplates in silence the turban of the Moor; then, turning abruptly to Don Juan, he whispers: “What right has the Infidel to wear such gems? While my treasury is empty he comes here to flaunt them in my face. Mark me, *amigo mio*, I will have that Balax before the day is old. It is worth a king’s ransom and will some day stand me in good stead.”

“I pray your Grace not to contemplate so villainous a project,” is Don Juan’s reply. “You have enemies enough, methinks, without making more. I will not help you. I am willing to second you, as my liege and sovereign, in the field or the *duelo*, to the death, but by St. Helena or any other male or female saint, I cannot stand by you in a matter of open spoiling of your guest.”

“No, but the gems, the gems,” returns the king in the same whisper. “I never saw the like! I cannot take my eyes from them!”

“That may or may not be. It is no concern of mine, my lord. I am no merchant to adjudge their value; nor do I care for such toys except on the bosom of the fair, where I would be before your Grace in plucking them. Otherwise, let every man and every Moor, I say, possess his own; and if the emir likes to deck himself like a peacock he is free for me.”

As the day falls and the bells of the Giralda tower and of all the towers in the churches of Seville have ceased their clang, a sumptuous banquet is spread in the Hall of the Ambassadors.

Darker and darker grows Don Pedro’s brow as the feast continues, and more and more anxiously his eyes turn towards the entrance leading into the Patio de las Doncellas.

As the innumerable courses of *pilau*s and curries, conserves and sweetmeats are served in honour of his guests, with the finest wines of Xeres and Malaga, and golden basins with perfumed water and embroidered napkins are offered between each course, Don Pedro can scarcely master his impatience.

A stony silence falls on all the company from the grim humour of the king. Don Juan is absent, but Don Rodrigues with the other familiars are there, and Emanuel *El Zapatero*, now captain of the body-guard, stands behind his chair, and as if conscious that something is about to happen, never takes his eyes from his master’s face.

But the strangeness of the position reaches its climax when the emir, rising from the gold-embroidered divan on which he is stretched to pledge the king, Don Pedro neither moves nor responds in any way, but sits with his eyes fixed, as if fascinated, on the Balax in his turban.

Suddenly, at some secret sign given by Emanuel, he strikes the table with his fist, and from each of the pillared openings the hall is filled with troops, armed to the teeth, and behind his chair arises, as if by magic, the naked figure of a Nubian slave bearing an axe.

Ere one can draw breath he falls upon the Red King, who, taken unawares, has not even time to draw his dagger. At the same moment each Moorish knight is seized from behind by a Castilian trooper and dragged into the outer court of the Monteria, where he finds his horse, arms, and slave, receiving at the same time stern injunctions to cross the frontier of Castile before sunrise.

Alone in the hall, Don Pedro advances to where the unhappy Red King lies dead upon the floor, hard by the spot where the blood of Don Fadique stains the marble.

“Dog, and son of a dog!” he exclaims, “did you think to come to Seville to rival *me*? Dead or alive, I will have the rubies,” and, stooping down with his own hand he plucks them from his turban. “Such a stone as this,” he says, reflectively, holding up the Balax to the light, as if unable to detach his eyes from it, “I never saw, though I am cunning in gems. It is unequalled. It may save my crown. Who knows? Till then I will cherish it as a lover does his mistress. In my bosom I will place thee, wondrous stone, next to my heart of hearts.”<sup>[A]</sup>

Don Juan, though wholly disapproving these barbarities as useless and uncivilised, instead of falling away from his master like the rest, applies himself to strengthen his cause. To the dissipated and the young he holds out the prospect of unlimited license; to the ambitious, power; to





**Death of "El Gran Capitan."  
From a Painting by M. Crespo.  
National Exhibition of Fine Arts, Madrid, 1884.**

the covetous, domains. Nothing is left undone that can determine the wavering and secure the doubtful. "The ultimate success of the pretender of Trastamare," he says, "is an event utterly improbable; and even should he come, it would only be to enrich his own followers by a fearful reckoning among those who have opposed him."

Subtle arguments these, and admirably suited to the temper of the times, when men's minds were swayed either by venal and selfish motives, or by the terror of ruin and massacre.

Don Juan lives in a narrow street, a stone's throw from the gate of the Alcazar. His house still remains, a curious monument of the times; a small, low building with a quaint projecting attic and casements guarded by rows of low Saracenic arches.

Of course there is a fountain in the small pillared *patio* where he received his friends. If it is the same little pillar of spray as in Don Juan's time hummed and splashed through the long summer days, I cannot say, or if he was served by the identical Leporello we know so well, and scolded by the shrewish wife Doña Elvira, who always sings in "*alt.*" But it is certain that the low door of his house gave access nightly to crowds of rollicking guests and fair masked señoras, and that the king in disguise often stepped across the street from the Alcazar to take part in the revelry.

The real Don Juan lives in evil times. Seville is growing desperate with the tyranny of the king. The name of Enrique el Caballero is whispered everywhere as a saviour to an oppressed people. It is said indeed that he has again been proclaimed king at Cahorra by his followers, at the head of the *Grandes Compagnies*, and that Charles V. of France treats with him as friend to friend.

The priests despise Don Pedro because he lies under an interdict, and no masses can be said in the churches; the libertines hate him because he judges them severely and gives such large measure to himself; and the lovers and husbands because no woman is safe.

No two men are of the same mind in this divided city. The houses are barricaded, the towers turned into fortresses, the iron lattices of the windows, where true lovers whisper, into loopholes for pikes and arrows; the black crosses in the plazas are stained with blood, and the dead often lie unburied in the *calle*. In all these disorders Don Juan is a leader, cutting down the king's enemies like dogs, and anathematising all rebels to his cause. "Let us make merry ere we die," is the cry of the *Sevillianos*, not knowing what may befall; and so they pass the time in the certainty of coming warfare between Don Enrique and the king, in rioting and profligacy.

The very priests live like gallants, and the nuns trail silken gowns. Merry-makings and orgies are held even in the churches, and drinking and dancing are common among the graves, much to Don Juan's delight as a scoffer and a blasphemer, who gaily foots it to a rattling measure with the bones.

From dancing the citizens get to fighting; a few cry for Don Pedro, but more shout for El Caballero and thus from bad to worse the evil days pass along.

There is a homely proverb which says, "The devil will have his own." This is proved in the history of Don Juan de Mañara. During an orgy, at which another noted gallant and profligate, Don Santiago de Augebo, is present, a *gitana* of great beauty slips in to sell flowers to the noble señors lounging in drunken mirth among the wine-cups.

Impudent gitana! Swords are drawn and a free fight for her possession instantly ensues, Don Santiago getting the upper hand and seizing on her, spite of her screams.

"Now, by all the saints and devils!" cries Don Juan, touched by the genuine terror of the girl, "give us also a chance, Señor Caballero," and as the other opposes him, although in his own house, he draws his rapier and falls on him with such thundering blows that Santiago sinks insensible on the floor.

The gitana, somewhat above her class, and very beautiful, kisses Don Juan's hand, which he returns by raising her and pressing his lips to hers. Then plunging his hand into the depths of his doublet he pulls out a well-filled purse, which he gives her with a glance out of his wicked eyes, such as the stage Don Giovanni bestows on Zerlina and with like effect, much to the amazement of the company, who rise up to shout and laugh as he conducts her with mock solemnity to the gate of the *patio*—especially Don Santiago, by this time recovered, and swearing secret vengeance on Don Juan.

To the Leporello of that day, by name Gesuelo, Don Juan secretly issues his commands to find out all he can about the gitana, which is done by the ready-witted knave, who tells him her name is Caritad, and that her father abandoned her mother at her birth.

But next morning, with the fumes of last night's wine the image of Caritad vanishes, and he orders a great supper in honour of Don Pedro, to which all the gallants of Seville are bidden.

"Death to the king's enemies" is the toast, and Don Pedro himself graces the board with his presence. But a cloud of care rests on his young face. All looks dark. The Black Prince, on whose help he has so firmly relied, has not responded to his repeated calls for help, while Enrique is supported by the presence of the redoubtable Du Guesclin or *Clayquin* as he is called in contemporary history. Now they have entered Spain, and actually Toledo, Burgos, Salamanca, Palencia, and other cities of the north are with them. The King of Portugal is doubtful in his allegiance, the passes of the Pyrenees swarm with French adventurers and rebels, tramping down to join Enrique's camp at Logroño; and worse than all, his little son, Alonso, Maria de Padilla's child, his only male heir and successor, is dying. Ever since the death of Blanche the horrors of a violent and speedy death possess him. Do as he will, curse, carouse, murder, and blaspheme, he cannot shake off the sinister foreboding. The murder of the *Rey Bermejo* has alienated the Moors, and Seville, his own Seville, is wavering.

As the banquet proceeds and the heads of the guests begin to turn under the effect of the choice wines of Andalusia, passed round in golden cups and goblets, Don Juan suddenly rises and drinks the health of the *hereditary ally of Castile*—the hero of Crécy and Poitiers—Edward, the Black Prince—now lying encamped in Guienne at Bordeaux; extols his prowess and generosity, and cunningly passing on to vaunt the respect and affection he bears to his master the king, announces his speedy arrival in Spain with the flower of the English chivalry unrivalled in the world.

Don Juan knows this is a lie, and that the Black Prince has shown no sign, but that matters little if only he can succeed in impressing the company with the belief that he is on the road to fight Don Enrique. Indeed, to do this is the principal aim of the banquet, and he takes care to bring forward the intelligence at a moment when no one is in a condition either to canvass or to dispute it.

The name of the Black Prince is coupled with those of the English knights who accompany him—Captain de Buch, Thomas of Canterbury, Montfort, and the gallant and elegant Chandos. The feats of arms performed in the taking of Toledo by Don Pedro are remembered, and also the ugliness of the women, except indeed the Jewesses. The humiliating particulars of Don Enrique's flight are detailed, and loud laughter ensues at his sham coronation at Burgos. But no one dares to mention that the *Grandes Compagnies* have entered Castile commanded by the Comte de la Marche, of the royal blood of St. Louis, and Du Guesclin, and that with Don Enrique they are marching upon Seville!

At the mention of his brother's name the king's passion blazes out; he clenches his fist and the veins swell on his forehead. Starting to his feet, his blue eyes travel round the room, as if he would read on each countenance the bias of the mind within. Then, seizing a jewelled cup, which he holds on high, he drinks: "Death to the bastard, and by the Holy Cross of Compostella may he burn in Hell!"

There is a pause. No one echoes this savage curse of brother to brother. Even the well-seasoned profligates around are sobered for an instant by the unnatural toast.

In the general silence which follows, Leporello or Gesuelo makes his way to his master with a musk-scented letter in his hand, bound with a blue ribbon.

Cutting the ribbon with his dagger, Don Juan (like a man accustomed to such missives) glances at the signature, then lets it fall. What matter? It is signed Amina. Who is Amina? He has already forgotten!

When the king rises to depart, Don Juan accompanies him to the portal of the Alcazar, followed by the soberer guests. The open letter lies upon the floor. It is perceived by Don Santiago who, raising it on the point of his rapier, reads these words aloud: "Come to me, false one, come ere I die. Amina."

Shouts of laughter follow, and deep draughts of wine are drunk to speed her parting soul to purgatory; not forgetting the health of the gitana Caritad, with whom Don Santiago swears he will cut out Don Juan.

Meanwhile Don Juan wanders on from the Alcazar into the dark streets. A vague notion possesses him he is going to visit some one, but if it be his new love Caritad, or his ancient flame Amina, of whom he has long lost sight, or both, he cannot clearly define. From the streets he turns into the Plaza de San Francesco, and perceives a light in a house opposite the Palace of the Ayuntamiento (the first floor still remains, all *miradores*, like the wooden houses in England). On approaching, a silken ladder appears attached to the balcony.

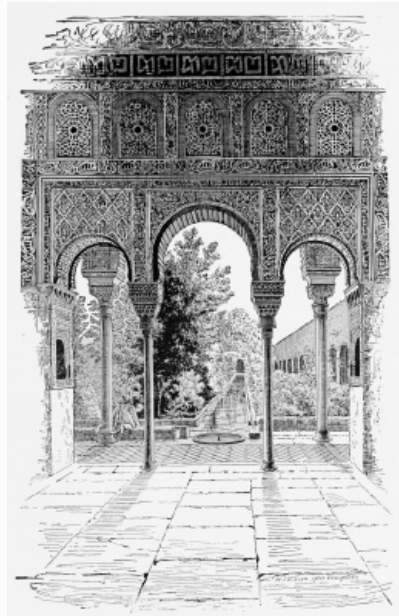
"By St. Anthony! a public tryst!" Don Juan mutters. "Which of the fair ones I seek thus openly hangs out the signal?"

Then he falls into a deep cogitation as to the owner of the house. But Gesuelo has the list of the three hundred and three noble ladies he loves in Seville, and such peasants too who are worthy of his attention, and it was thus he came to know Zerlina, and gave such trouble to that poor fool Masetto. For the life of him, he cannot now remember who lives here, but in a confused way he recalls the letter which he feels for in his vest and misses.

"Confusion," he mutters to himself. "Into whose hands has it fallen? Meanwhile, here goes!" he cries aloud, "Caritad or the Devil; it is all the same to me, so it be a woman," and he vaults on the rounds of the ladder and swings himself up to the bars of the balcony.

Within he pauses. All is dark. Somehow, the abundant moon shining outside does not penetrate into the room. To see clearly he must remove his mask, when he discerns from an inner chamber the glimmering of a taper.

Drawing his sword he rushes forward and finds himself before a couch closely shrouded. With haste he removes the draperies and beholds a lady sleeping. Stooping to observe her more closely, with a beating heart he removes a veil, and his eyes fix themselves on the hideous aspect of a corpse festering in its shroud! *This is his first warning.*



**THE GARDEN OF THE GENERALIFE, GRANADA.**

Later, at midnight, in the ancient quarter of the Macerena, Don Juan falls in with a funeral procession, with torches, singing, and banners. It is some grandee of high degree, doubtless—there are so many muffled figures, mutes carrying silver horns, the insignia of knighthood borne upon a shield, a saddled horse led by a shadowy page, and the dim forms of priests and monks chanting death dirges.

Don Juan can recall no death at court or among the nobles, and this is plainly a funeral of quality. Nor can he explain a midnight burial, a thing unknown except in time of war or plague; so, advancing from the dark gateway where he stood to let the procession pass, he addresses himself to one of the muffled figures and asks: "Whose body are they bearing to the Osario at this strange time?"

"Don Juan de Mañara" is the reply. "Will you follow, and say a prayer for his sinful soul?"

As these words are spoken, the procession seems to pause, and one advances who flings back the wreaths of flowers which lie around the face, and lo! Don Juan beholds his own visage in the coffin!

Spellbound he seems to join the ghastly throng which wends its way to the Church of Santa Iñes. Here other spectral priests appear to meet it and carry the bier into the nave, where next morning he is found by the nuns, coming into matins, insensible on the floor! *This is the second warning.*

After this the name of Don Juan was heard no more at court. Whither he went, no one knew, not even Gesuelo. At length he was discovered in a monastic dress, living in a hospital he had founded for the old and bedridden, on the banks of the Guadalquivir, opposite the Golden Tower where Don Pedro kept his treasure,—a quaint old building which still remains close to the custom-house. You cannot pass a day in Seville without remarking it as you follow along the wharf crowded with merchant ships and steamers, placed a little back but conspicuous by its whiteness.

On an ancient portal, much ornamented in that *barocco* style into which Seville fell when ceasing to be Moorish, are graven these words:

Sancta Caridad  
Domus Pauperum  
Scala Cœli.

On one side are the high windows of a Gothic hall, where aged men sit, so shrunk and old one seems to think death has forgotten them. A low iron-bound door leads you farther into the nave of a noble church, supported by twisted pillars such as Raphael loved to paint as the background of his frescoes.

It is very still and rather dark, for red blinds are drawn over the windows, but you plainly perceive the high altar, gay with coloured marbles, and on the highest step where you plant your foot there is a monumental slab let into the pavement, engraven with these words:

Cenizas del peor  
Nombre que ha habido  
en el Mundo,  
Don Juan de Mañara.<sup>[B]</sup>

The disappearance of Don Juan from the stormy scene was little heeded by Don Pedro in all the confusion of civil war. He was but a bolder sinner than the rest, and that he had turned from the devil to the priest was a contemptible proof of weakness.

No gallant rode down the bank of the Guadalquivir without launching a sneer at the old Gothic pile where, habited in sackcloth, he tended the sick and the dying to the last day of his life.

A riotous band still remained about the king for midnight adventure, to spoil churches, sack convents, waylay travellers, fight duels, and guzzle good Val de Peñas within the gilded walls of the Alcazar. But even the terrified nobles by-and-by fall away from Don Pedro, who has hardened into such a tyrant men fly from

him as from a fiend.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Don Enrique again Crowned King—Flight of Don Pedro



THE time has now come that Don Pedro knows not where to turn. All Spain is divided by civil war. Seville, his own Seville, is full of conspirators, awaiting the arrival of Don Enrique to declare for him; and the Black Prince, on whom he so confidently reckoned, remains absolutely deaf to his appeals.

Even were he willing to repent, he is for ever shut out from salvation in this world and the next. No church is open to him; no priest, however base, dare shrive him for his sins. He is as one accursed.

What those words were, traced by the dying hand of Blanche, no man yet knows—not his closest friends, and they are few; but ever since a strange gloom clings to him which never lifts, and in his sleep he wrestles as in throes of agony.

Events succeed each other with dramatic rapidity. His ally, Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, alarmed at the passage of the French, breaks the alliance and joins with the King of Aragon against him.

Enrique, worshipped by his followers, is again solemnly crowned within the ancient capital of Burgos, in that lovely cathedral, embroidered like a state robe, lately completed, his *padrino* and godfather being the great warrior Du Guesclin, the first commander of the age, although it is said he can neither read nor write.

The Comte de la Marche, cousin of Blanche, and also of the House of Bourbon, represents the King of France, and stands on his right hand on the steps of the high altar, under that glorious window which floods the space with light, along with marshals and generals, Castilian and French, condes and great lords of Aragon, and a lordly show of knights and *caballeros* from Leon and Andalusia.

The troops are, as usual in such levies, mixed in nationalities and wanting in unity and discipline, but commanded by Du Guesclin who dares contemplate defeat?

"Remember, most valiant constable," had said to him his master Charles, the King of France, son of the unfortunate John, prisoner in England, "I shall owe you more than if you gained me a province, if you destroy the murderer of Blanche."

Nor should this command be forgotten in Du Guesclin's justification later on; Charles was his liege lord; he had issued his orders, and in the feudal spirit of the age, at *any price* Du Guesclin is bound to obey.

Open and generous, Enrique makes gifts to all, forgetting he has as yet nothing to bestow. Condes and princedoms drop from his hand on all around (real *châteaux en Espagne*). There is no end to his *largesse*, and so successful is this method that in twenty-five days he holds the south and marches on Toledo, where he is received with cries of "Long live Enrique the merciful, who comes to save us from our enemy, Don Pedro."

Again Enrique is at the lordly Alcazar overlooking the everlasting plains, from whence he was so ignominiously driven by Don Pedro and the Jews. Again behold him, the very picture of a young king whom fortune favours, as he descends the stately flights of stairs and moves once more among the magnificent ranges of colonnades which hold up the great *patio*, to receive the salutations of long lines of knights and nobles who have flocked from all parts to his standard.

What a tossing of feathers and flash of arms around! True lovers' knots on shields and shoulders, helmets shaded with waving plumes, lances bound with gaily-embroidered scarves, the inlaid handles of swords and falchions sparkling with gems, and corselets and breastplates bound in with glittering girdles.

Enrique comes in war but he wears the dress of peace, as one at ease, certain of success. Let Pedro flaunt the morions, casques, shields, bucklers, and weapons of conflict, Enrique has already assumed the *débonnaire* air of a well-established monarch sure of his subjects' love. (That he is a bastard with no legal right to the throne is forgotten in the general triumph.)

Graceful and polished in his manners as becomes *El Rey Caballero*, the personal charm he exercises over all who approach him is unbounded, especially when compared to the morose cynicism of Don Pedro, who mocks ere he destroys.

Sir Hugh Calverley and many English knights and esquires of the free companies which have overrun France in the late wars are with him during the present inactivity of the Black Prince at Bordeaux, and his old friend and loyal supporter, the Asturian noble, Don Jaime Alvarez, rules his counsels as heretofore. Pope Urban V., incensed at the blasphemies and profligacy of Don Pedro, subsidises and blesses him. Even the rough warrior Du Guesclin yields to the fascination of his address, an influence destined soon to lead him to the commission of a crime by which his good name is for ever tarnished.

No female element fills in the frame of this chivalrous court. He has a wife, her name casually occurs, but there all information ends. At all events, no woman takes a prominent part in his career, as with his brother Don Pedro.

Meanwhile the king, warned by his ministers that he is no longer safe in Seville, rides out of the gates guarded by a small troop of men-at-arms, commanded by the faithful Emanuel, and accompanied by his chancellor, Fernando de Castro, Don Martino Lopez de Cordova, Grand Master of Alcantara, Don Diego Gomez, Don Mem Rodrigues, a warlike captain who has taken the place of Don Juan de Mañara in his confidence, and some others.

You may count his adherents on your fingers they are so few. Even that pampered villain Garcia de Padilla has forsaken him since his sister's death, and gone over to the winning side, and along with him are Orosco, Mendoza, and La Vega.

The three daughters of Maria de Padilla accompany him, young girls whose names leave no record on the

page of history—Costanza married John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, son of Edward III., and thus established a claim, often asserted but never seriously entertained, to the throne of Castile; and Isabel, the younger, espoused his brother Edmund of Cambridge.

But, dearer than child or friend, Don Pedro carries with him his treasure and the famous ruby (Balax) of the Moors hid in his bosom.

The outlook is not cheerful. Spite of his constant boast of close alliance with the English, the Black Prince at Bordeaux as yet has made no sign. It is true that his daughter Costanza is at this time affianced to her cousin, the Infante of Portugal, and Don Pedro rides straight over the Sierra Morena to the frontier, certain of the protection of his uncle the king.

Don Diego Gomez is sent forward from Talavera, where he waits, to hasten the marriage. The Infanta is ready; with her she brings the crown of Castile, the jewels of her mother, Maria de Padilla, and such dower as is required; anything he has, even the Balax, so that Costanza is wedded!

It is a matter of life or death. All depends on Portugal. An uncle, an ally, a natural protector—it is impossible he can fail.

Don Diego returns. The King of Portugal will not receive him. He declines the marriage with Costanza for his son, the visionary crown, treasure, all—and warns Don Pedro sternly from crossing the borders of his kingdom upon peril of his life.

Many of his followers now forsake him in his need. But the chancellor, Don Fernando de Castro, is faithful, and Mem Rodrigues and Emanuel are ready to offer up their lives.

An absolute fugitive, Don Pedro craves from his uncle a safe conduct into Galicia, the only province in Spain, except Murcia, which still acknowledges him as sovereign.

In this miserable plight he arrives in the fruitful valley of beautiful Monterey in a most disconsolate condition, at the very moment that Don Enrique and Du Guesclin enter the city of Seville.

Yet even now the track of blood follows Don Pedro. As he passes through Santiago, the holy city of pilgrimage, where lie the relics of the Protector of Spain, after dining in company with the Archbishop, he calls him to the gate and has him murdered before his eyes, as well as the *Decano* or Dean, within the precincts of the cathedral.

Express after express flies in swift-rigged boat across the Bay of Biscay to Bayonne, addressed to the Black Prince and to his ally, that arrant traitor, the King of Navarre, who is with him at Bordeaux.

No answer comes. At last, driven to despair, Don Pedro himself rides forward to the coast, fits out a galley at La Groyne, and sets sail for Bayonne, escorted by all the vessels he can find, to plead his cause in person before the Prince of Wales.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Don Pedro Appeals to Edward the Black Prince to Replace Him on the Throne



HE Black Prince—so named from the dark colour of his armour, and only fifteen years old when he was made a knight on the victorious field of Crécy by his father Edward III., and named by him Duke of Guienne and Seneschal of Aquitaine,—is the most notable figure of his day. Fabulously brave and romantically merciful, his modesty and generosity are only equalled by his military skill. Bearing in the field the device of the King of Bohemia, killed in the battle of Crécy, three plumes erect, with the motto "*Ich dien*," his sword has never known defeat.

Three years have now elapsed in peace, during which time he has resided in royal state at Bordeaux with his wife, "the fair maid of Kent," a period of inaction as irksome to himself as to those stormy spirits about him.

Nothing therefore could be more welcome to him than the news that Don Pedro had actually disembarked at Bayonne to solicit his help to regain his crown. As yet the policy of England had been undecided; now his father must take a side, and the prospect of war fills him with joy.

Promptly he despatches the Lord of Payme and other nobles to welcome him when he lands, and to bring him with all honour to Bordeaux.

The sumptuous pavilion prepared for their meeting lies outside the city, among pleasant meadows by the banks of the wide Garonne, that noble estuary which cuts into the land with the importance of an inland sea.

It is shaped in three compartments, the central one occupied by the Black Prince, that to the right assigned to Don Pedro, and that to the left to the King of Navarre, at the present moment paying his court to Prince Edward as holding the winning hand.

The interior is lined with rich tissues and brocaded silks, the draperies of cloth of gold held up by swords and lances, battle-axes and steel helmets—giving a warlike aspect to what would otherwise have been simply a luxurious and splendid bower.

Skins of animals killed in the chase cover the floor and are also attached to the lower portion of the pillars which support the light roof, adorned with flags and banners, the standard of St. George conspicuous in the front. Beneath, on a table, lies a glancing axe, ready, if needful, for all emergencies.

Outside, the building is covered with silken curtains under ranges of feathers, tassels, and streamers flaunting in the light breeze, and at the tented entrance are placed two large shields, one bearing the cognisance of the Black Prince, the other the arms of England quartered with the *fleur-de-lis* of France.

Around gathers a brilliant court. Seneschals bedecked with chains of gold, chamberlains in rich robes,

worked with the escutcheons of England and of Aquitaine, pages, warriors, the captains of companies who have followed Edward in all his wars, hoary soldiers grown grey in many battles, nobles arrayed in historic armour come down from generations of warlike ancestors, bearing great names, Gallic and English, illustrious in themselves and enhancing the greatness of their master. The two younger brothers of the Prince of Wales, John of Gaunt, as brilliant as a popinjay, to be ever known in history as "Time-honoured Lancaster," his younger brother, Edmund, Duke of York and Cambridge, a gallant young prince—both wearing the blue badge of the new Order of the Garter at their knee, and emulous of attracting the notice of Don Pedro's young daughters, of whose beauty report says much. The two Marshals of Aquitaine, Sir Guiscard of Angoulême and Sir Stephen Coffington; Beauchamp, Lord of Abergavenny, Lord Ralph Neville of Warwick, Clayton, Sir John Tyrrell, Sir Hugh Hastings, the trusted ally of England Jean de Montfort, and, though last, not least, the manly figure of Chandos, of whom in these wars one hears so much—politician, tactician, and constable of all the provinces of France. Others may assume various modes and fantastic changes in dress and accoutrement, but Chandos never changes and always appears in armour of proof, arrayed to take the field.

In the centre, backed by the fanciful outline of the gay pavilion, stands the Black Prince, ready at the first imitation of Don Pedro's arrival to advance and welcome him to his domains.

To suit the occasion, he is attired in a costume equally recalling the court and the camp. A loose surcoat of blue velvet, heavily embroidered with the arms of England, partly conceals the light suit of chain armour which clings to his form; at his waist is a girdle to which an axe and sword are attached, and on his head a cap edged by a jewelled coronet, from which rise the three heron's feathers of his device.

Lofty in nature is the prince, square and solid in limb and chest, his hair cut short as convenient for his helmet, his upper lip, after the Norman fashion, covered with a thick moustache which mingled with his beard, light brown in colour, and long and luxuriant. Somewhat prominent large hazel eyes look out of a well-moulded face remarkable for mildness of expression, his whole personality singularly engaging, an impression only heightened as the fine curves of his lips open with the candour of a natural smile.

"Our ally tarries on the way," he says, scanning



**THE INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE, ALHAMBRA.**

the bare expanse of the sandy track before him, bordering the Garonne, broken by the lines of vineyards in the more cultivated lands. "Perhaps he would make us feel that we have been remiss in replying to his various messages. Nothing but absolute obedience to my father's order would have kept me so long silent, in face of the news of his great need."

The prince addresses himself to Chandos, who stands immediately behind him, his wrinkled countenance already showing marks of the hard life he has led in camps and battles, but, as he speaks, he lays his hand lightly on the shoulder of his brother Lancaster, looking out with eager eyes in the same direction as himself.

"How now, my young gallant, are you impatient to behold the Spanish beauties? Who knows if you do not lose your fickle heart to one? These señoritas of Andalusia must surely inherit some of their mother, Maria de Padilla's boasted charms."

The downy cheeks of young Lancaster turn to a rosy red at general attention being thus openly called to him. He turns aside, somewhat annoyed that his curiosity has been detected by his brother, and mutters something about a leveret of a certain breed which he expects from Spain. The excuse is received by the prince with a light laugh, and in a lower voice he continues his conversation with Chandos.

"I confess that nothing but the king's actual presence on English soil would have decided me to look with favour on the expedition he comes to propose."

"I agree with you, my lord," is the answer of Chandos. "A campaign in the centre of Spain is a dangerous venture with a nation of enemies at our back."

"Yet," adds the Black Prince, and a serious expression comes into his eyes, "the personal appeal of an allied prince is difficult to refuse, especially under the present circumstances of his arrival. But much as I should rejoice once more to draw the sword, I can bind myself to nothing but an interchange of courtesies at present."

"Right, my lord," answers Chandos, "I am of the same mind as your Grace. Besides, it appears to my humble judgment that a sovereign rejected by the whole nation cannot have an altogether clean chronicle to

show. Report, at least, is not favourable to Don Pedro, who has gained the nickname of *El Cruel*."

"Tut, tut," answers the prince impatiently, "subjects must obey their masters. I myself have no patience with these Castilian nobles who call in a bastard in place of their lawful king. Until I see cause to change, my sympathies are all with Don Pedro."

"But your Highness will promise nothing, I trust, without direct permission of the king, your father?"

"Of course not," answers the prince. "Have I not said so? My powers, as yours, are limited to our provinces of Guienne and Aquitaine. A descent into Spain altogether exceeds my instructions; but I shall much marvel if the king, my honoured father, and his ministers do not share my feelings in the matter of our ancient ally, driven to such straits as *personally* to present himself with his daughters, a suppliant at our court."

Chandos bowed but made no further observation. It was clear his mind was against Don Pedro, of whose wanton acts of cruelty and bad faith he had heard so much. As far as his counsels were concerned, he would have the King of Castile bound down so strictly that he could not escape from his engagements. He knew that the loyal nature of the prince was too ready to take every man at his own value, especially at a time when he and his young brothers were longing to take the field.

At this moment the King of Navarre appeared, coming from the interior of the pavilion, a ready smile on his lip little indicative of the treachery within.

"Will your Grace join us," asks the Black Prince, receiving him with the gracious courtesy so natural to him that it was felt alike by all, "in a descent into Spain, which undoubtedly will be the purport of the king's visit to us here?"

Now, as the King of Navarre has secretly sworn upon the Sacrament an alliance with Enrique de Trastamare, giving him and the *Grandes Compagnies* of Du Guesclin passage over the Pyrenees at the same moment that he is joining with the Black Prince in the friendly reception of Don Pedro—this question, so frankly put, is difficult to parry. Before the open gaze of Edward his keen eyes drop, and with some hesitation he is understood to say that where the hero of England leads he will gladly follow, but that the smallness of his kingdom, placed between two great powers, will prevent his personal interference in the war.

Turning from him with a frown, the prince again anxiously directs his eyes to the path along the banks of the river by which Don Pedro is to approach. This time he does not look in vain.

In the track of a vivid sun ray, which bursts from a mass of clouds on the western horizon, the brilliant colours of flags and banners break among the green branches of a low avenue of willows, to be caught up and reflected in the broad current of the Garonne; the dark forms of mounted horsemen on caroling steeds are followed by lords and attendants standing out on the grey landscape, in all the bravery of those romantic times where embroidered devices, crests, arms, and mottoes form a necessary part of dress, along with richly inlaid arms and costly robes edged with fur.

First rides Don Pedro, mounted on a Spanish barb, caparisoned with velvet housings; but as a fugitive and a suppliant he has rejected all the pompous display prepared for him, and appears in a dark cap and sombre mantle which covers his high black boots worn to the thigh.

Close beside him appear Emanuel and Mem Rodrigues, whose watchful eyes never leave him, among friends or foes. Whatever he may be to others, he is dear to them, and they well know in what continual danger he lives.

Behind him come his three daughters, the youngest but a lovely child, each mounted on easy-going jennets, his chancellor, and the few of his court who have not forsaken him on the road.

The mournful appearance of Don Pedro and the consciousness that he has been wanting to his royal guest in the attention due to an ally, so move the warm heart of the Black Prince that, bowing to the ground, he advances rapidly to embrace him, while Don Pedro, who has at once dismounted, would only have kissed his hand.

"Welcome, sire, to the territory of England," cries the prince, addressing him in the French tongue, which both speak fluently. "I esteem myself happy to offer my personal homage to your Grace in my own name and in that of my royal father."

"I thank you," is Don Pedro's laconic answer, turning upon him a curious gaze in which something of the bitterness of the disregarded suppliant appears. That he, an anointed sovereign, had been forced by the prince's coldness to journey here, raises in his breast a wave of bitter pride which, in his revengeful nature, may in part explain the perfidy of his subsequent conduct.

"And you, fair flowers of Spain," continues the Black Prince, turning to the Infantas, who had also dismounted and who gather timidly round the prince to make obeisance, "I would welcome you also, and express my deep regret that my consort, the Princess of Wales, to whose tender care I would have consigned you, has by reason of her condition not been able to leave Angoulême to meet you. Meanwhile, my brothers of Lancaster and York, nearer of your age and therefore more apt than myself in judging of your needs, will take her place in all necessary courtesies."

John of Gaunt bashfully advances to take his place among the young princesses with his brother, both much encouraged by the glimpse of the lovely eyes of Doña Costanza, glowing like stars under the folds of a black mantilla which descends almost to her feet, while Don Pedro gravely acknowledges the salutations of the warriors and the court, and expresses his thanks for the magnificence of the courtesy with which he has been received.

"Can the stricken heart of a sovereign know comfort," he says, in his high and trilliant voice, singularly unpleasant after the agreeable intonation of the Black Prince, "against whom his people and those of his own blood have turned traitors, it is alone at the hands of your Grace. This moment of meeting with you, most illustrious Prince, is the only instant of consolation I have enjoyed since I left my rebellious country, given up to the horrors of civil war. I come in the guise of a beggar, but it is to one who can replace me on the throne."

Whether Don Pedro, from long habits of hypocrisy, really believed what he said is doubtful, but he had at least the art of convincing those whom he addressed. This faculty of deceit, his specious flattery, his royal air,

even under the modest garb he wore, at once fascinated the frank and open-hearted prince, overjoyed at the prospect of a speedy campaign to reinstate him.

As they pass into the pavilion where a sumptuous collation has been prepared, Edward himself, spite of the protest of his guest, not only offers to the king the golden embossed salver of scented water to wash his hands, but during the first course stands to serve him, behind his chair, before taking his own seat at the board.

"I know my place as a subject," are his words, "and I pray your Grace not to impede me in the fulfilment of my duty."

Not so Chandos, who observes Don Pedro at his ease, and marks with suspicion the sinister expression of his young face, and the falseness of the smile he calls up in answer to the hearty greetings of the prince.

Adversity and dissipation had already scored with hard lines that yet boy-like countenance. The faultless mould of feature is still there, as we see it perpetuated in the bust at Seville, but a perfidious glance mars its beauty.

Small and thin in stature, Don Pedro is entirely overtopped by the English prince, who sits erect and strong as a young oak beside the willow-like suppleness of his Spanish guest.

Much discussion of ways and means takes place between them after the collation, the Black Prince lending a willing ear to the representations of Don Pedro and his reiterated promises to reinstate the English king in such subsidies as should be advanced to him in order to raise a fighting army to take the field.

From Bordeaux Don Pedro passes to Angoulême with his daughters—in the same state, accompanied by the Black Prince, his young brother, the King of Navarre, and the Duke of Lancaster, in whose young heart the girlish beauty of Doña Costanza has made a serious impression—to salute the princess, who is daily expecting her confinement.

The reticence of the Black Prince alarmed Don Pedro. No decision of any kind as to the support he had come to seek could be extracted from him; open-hearted and honest almost to a fault, he had been so earnestly implored by Chandos to enter into no semblance of an engagement before he had obtained the assent of his father, Edward III., that he absolutely put a bridle on his lips whenever Don Pedro sought speciously to approach the subject so near his heart, until he had received the royal sanction. That such sanction would come he felt convinced, the very idea of an open attack upon royalty (in those feudal times held so sacred and inviolable) would probably have sufficed to ensure the consent of King Edward, but more amply so when united to the political advantages ensured by a close alliance with Castile.

Not only is a formal permission demanded by the Black Prince himself to march into Spain, but it is backed by the official protest of Don Pedro against the manifold wrongs and injuries inflicted on him.

Of gifts the Black Prince will have none. To him jewels and treasures come as ignoble bribes; but in the meantime at least it is open to Don Pedro to lavish presents on the Princess of Wales as an indirect mode of gaining her goodwill. A table of curious workmanship, set with priceless gems, is presented and long preserved in England, and, though last not least, the precious Balax, destined so strangely to find a central place in the English crown.

Nothing could exceed the lavish promises of Don Pedro. The lordship of Biscay, which, as close to Guienne, is important, is conferred on the Black Prince and his heirs for ever, signed with the seal of Castile, a curious state document which remains in England to this day—Pedro binding himself also, by the most solemn oaths, to pay large subsidies to the English troops, and equal parts of the general cost of the war to the Prince himself; a rich dowry to the Infanta Costanza, forthwith affianced to the young Duke of Lancaster, already languishing in a not hopeless passion which is, he thinks, to insure to him the crown of Spain—she, in the meantime, as well as her two sisters, to remain at Bayonne as hostages for her father's word.

All this was concluded in the presence of Charles of Navarre, surnamed "the Bad," who, having secretly largely facilitated the passage of the *Grandes Compagnies* into Spain against Don Pedro, now receives from him the grant of the provinces of Guipuzcoa and Alava, the town of Vittoria, and any other he may choose to claim, upon condition that he will serve in person in the coming expedition against Don Enrique.

As to the Black Prince, the martial ardour within him is already at fever heat. There is something inexpressibly attractive to him in the prospect of meeting his ancient rival, Du Guesclin, in the field. The constable had good reason for extolling the magnanimity of the prince in the matter of his brother Oliver, taken prisoner in the battle of Poitiers by Thomas of Canterbury—and though ready to engage against each other in battle, their feeling is of friends.

In these days of mercenary warfare no shame was felt in passing from one side to the other if the pay was good. "To live by the sword" was a noble profession, and the needy knight or commoner must go where battle leads.

From the Black Prince downwards, every English trooper and archer was enthusiastic in the cause of Don Pedro. Even the calm Chandos was infected, if not convinced, in the face of such constant denials, and specious explanations on his part. Like his master Plantagenet he grudged every day that detained him inactive in Guienne until the authority of Edward III. was received.

As a preliminary, heralds were at once sent into Castile to summon the English and Gascon knights who had taken service with *Don Henry the Bastard* (so was the brilliant Caballero designated in these state papers) "to repair to the prince's standard with all speed," an order instantly obeyed by Sir Hugh Calverley, Sir Eustace d'Ambrecourt, Walter Hewitt, and the Lords of Devereux and Neville, to the considerable weakening of Don Enrique's army.

At length the long-desired decision came from the council, assembled at the Court of Windsor, 1366, which set forth that it was "noble and honourable, as well as just and advantageous, to assist Don Pedro, King of Castile and Leon, in his legal rights," and that his Highness Edward Prince of Wales, was authorised to march with the forces he might think fit to effect the same, under the command of Lord John Chandos, High Constable of Aquitaine, Sir Guiscard d'Angoulême, Sir Stephen Coffington the great standard-bearer of St. George, Lord Beauchamp of Abergavenny, Neville, Clayton, Tyrrell, Hastings, Cheney, Boteler, Willoughby,



Felton, Loring, the prince's grand chamberlain and bannister, besides his foreign followers, De Buch, D'Armagnac, D'Albert, and others.

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Black Prince Defeats Don Enrique and Reinstates Don Pedro.—Don Enrique Murders Don Pedro.—Death of Don Enrique.



They are in a romantic age of youth and *fanfaronnade*. Our *dramatis personæ* are overflowing with the sap of life. Of the three Plantagenets, the Black Prince is in the prime of life and fame, his two young brothers in the heyday of valour and love. Don Pedro, little past thirty, a professed lady killer and seducer, and Enrique de Trastamare, the ideal Caballero, a few years older. Add to these those who have vanished from the scene, Blanche of Castile, but fifteen when she was married, and Maria de Padilla, dying in the flower of her days, there results a circle of youth, beauty, and romance unparalleled in history.

As for a tournament these ardent spirits prepare for battle. Only Du Guesclin is wise and old, also Chandos, who endeavours to allay the universal ferment in men's blood. But what is their influence against the spirit of the age?

When Don Enrique finds himself on the 3d of



A VIEW IN SEGOVIA.

From the engraving by D. Roberts after the painting by J. Cousin.

April, 1367, face to face with the Black Prince, he has but one idea, to rush on him at once and make an end! Strategy and prudence are cast to the winds. "Let us fight like true knights and carry the crown upon a lance!" is his idea.

Envoys arrive from France and entreat him to avoid a general engagement with the English chivalry, the finest in the world, led by the Prince of Wales, but he will have none of their advice. He will fight at once, and even shifts his advantageous position, against the counsel of Du Guesclin, on the other side of a small river which divides the camps—to deal his blows nearer.

"Your Grace will be beat," says Du Guesclin, scanning with well-practised eye the battle-field.

"I tell you that this very night I shall be either dead or a prisoner."

"I shall win!" cries the enthusiastic Caballero. "Santiago and Spain are with me. But as the Prince of Wales is a valiant knight, and my brother a lying traitor, that he may know the realm is mine, and that I am fighting in support of my right, I will send him a cartel to tell him what is my intent."

"I well perceive," said the Black Prince, more prudent in his councils, but as enthusiastic as the rest, when informed of this intention, "that the bastard Enrique is a valiant prince and shows good courage; so, not to be behind him in courtesy, I will also address to him a letter in which I will call on him, according to the laws of honour, to relinquish the crown which he has unjustly seized."

Upon which—always following out the idea of a knightly encounter in which each side sets forth their right by the voice of a herald or trumpeter—Enrique replies: "To the most puissant Edward, Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine and Guienne: that King Don Pedro has not, as he pretends, and as the prince imagines, governed his kingdom well, but as a tyrant and a traitor, verily giving orders to murder the Lady Blanche, his lawful wife, and Doña Leonora d'Aragon, his aunt—also his cousins of the royal blood—and Doña Bianca de Villena for her goods; that also he killed his three brothers, Don Fadique, Juan, and Pedro, as well as Martin Gil d'Albuquerque his minister, Don Juan d'Aragon and others; and that neither did he respect the wives and daughters of divers nobles, or the rights of the Pope and the Church,—for which cause and others too long to be detailed, and having no allegiance or followers in the kingdom, his subjects, to deliver themselves from so dangerous a ruler, have been pleased to name us his successor with universal acclamation."

But this royal exchange of courtesies did not deter the Black Prince from fighting desperately. A complete victory was gained at Navarrete. Enrique lost all his train and equipage, the great Constable Du Guesclin being the victim as he had foretold, and taken prisoner.

Prostrate on his knees, Don Pedro thanks the Black Prince, who modestly replies as he raises and

embraces him:

"Not to me, but to God, who has given us the victory, give praise."

This happened on a Saturday. Next day Don Pedro formally requested the Black Prince to allow him "to put to death all his rebellious soldiers, so that they might raise no more disturbance in the kingdom against him."

"Never, by the blood of Christ!" cried the indignant Plantagenet, horrified at his bloodthirsty ally; "I did not come into the kingdom of Spain to act as your Grace's headsman, but as your defender." And from that moment their cordial relations ceased, and the germs of that coolness and suspicion were sown which so soon led to a formal breach between them.

"You will find that the King of Castile is not worth the trouble you have taken to reinstate him," observed Du Guesclin to the Black Prince, who, treated him, as his prisoner, with every kind of distinction and soon after set him at liberty without ransom.

"I begin to think you are right," was the prince's answer, deeply moved at Don Pedro's cruelty.

Nor did he in this only show the cloven foot. The subsidies he had promised for the troops were unpaid; all his engagements were broken. As soon as he found himself once more safe in Seville and reinstated in his rights, incessant expresses were sent to Burgos, where the prince lodged, in the ancient monastery of Las Huelgas, outside the gates, still remaining a most interesting monument of that chivalric time, and to Valladolid where he moved later—but *no money*.

Nor was the province of Biscay ever ceded to him. In fact the only item that was fulfilled of the agreement was the marriage of the ardent young Lancaster with Costanza de Castilla.

At length, after the delay of many months, disgusted and disillusioned, the Black Prince led back his army to Bordeaux, bearing the germs of the fatal malady of which he died soon after.

Again the scales of fortune turn in this strife between brother and brother. Deprived of the support of the English, the monstrous cruelties of Don Pedro again alienate all his subjects, and Don Enrique, supported by France and Aragon, in company with Du Guesclin, again leads an army into the field.

"I swear, by the cross of Christ," cries the romantic Caballero, so apt a prototype of that fantastic time, "that alive I will never again leave Castile!" And by a succession of events too complicated to detail, he does again possess the kingdom, and Don Pedro, defeated and driven at bay, finds himself blockaded in the castle of Montiel, Don Enrique and Du Guesclin holding the country round.

The castle of Montiel lies on the side of an escarped and precipitous rock, amid the rugged flanks of the Sierra Morena, that lofty barrier which divides Spain from Portugal. It is a fortress of no great size, but at that time it was surrounded by strong walls, and from its position deemed impregnable.

Beneath open dark caves, the refuge of hunters and shepherds, emerald breasted valleys musical with streams, and arrowy peaks known only to the eagle and the heron; the black defiles of the *Despeñaperros* break between where the dead bodies of Moors once carpeted the soil—and beyond the bare corn tracts of La Mancha open out, and smiling vine terraces purple with fruit.

(Dear to the modern mind is the name of the Sierra Morena, as Don Quixote's country, where you may follow him as a living man between Montiel and Toledo. The Cueva de Montesino, where he sojourned with Sancho Panza, the Posada de la Melodia, where he cut the necks of the wine-skins for Moors, the Venta de las Cardenas, where Dorothea and her lover were wounded, the scene of his penance in the mountain cleft, and Sierra Nueva, where he liberated the slaves.)

Below, in the Campo de Montiel, beside the bare shores of a chain of lakes bordering the course of the river Guadiana, Don Enrique and Du Guesclin are watching in their tents. *How can they seize the king?*

This question is asked twenty times a day. No one answers; and, if they seize him, *what will they do with him?* To this there is no answer either.

There are no traitors in the castle of Montiel. Mem Rodrigues is with the king, along with the faithful Emanuel, and the governor, Garcia Morano, is a true man.

Now it happens that Mem Rodrigues is very friendly with Du Guesclin, in that in-and-out fashion common between foes who drink out of the same wine cup to-day and run at each other's throats to-morrow.

Hearing that he, Du Guesclin, commands a detachment of the troops below, Rodrigues sends him a message, requesting a private meeting, which Du Guesclin willingly grants, along with a safe conduct.

Within his tent they meet and exchange mutual compliments. Mem Rodrigues does not affect to deny the straits in which his master lies, or Du Guesclin his determination to take him.

Then Mem Rodrigues, in a casual way, observes to the great leader, who sits in deep thought, leaning his forehead on his hand at a table with weapons ranged at his touch: "That whatever reward Don Enrique may have offered him in treasure, titles, or lands, the dukedom of Soria for instance (an entire province lying under Navarre, almost a kingdom in itself), my master, Don Pedro, will make good and more, if you will let him go."

Encouraged by the silence of Du Guesclin, who has never moved, Mem Rodrigues continues: "Surely, it will redound more to your honour, Señor Condestable, to release so great a king, rather than to set up a pretender."

As if touched by a scorpion, the burly Breton starts, his rugged features darken, and a dangerous glitter lights up his deep-set eyes.

"By my troth, Sir Knight," he answers, clenching his fist and letting it fall heavily on the table, causing the arquebuse and daggers on it to rattle ominously, "do you take me, Bertrand Du Guesclin, for a knave or for a fool, to act such a traitor's part? Speak to me no more on such a subject, if you desire to continue my friend."

So Mem Rodrigues says no more, and returns to the castle discomfited.

Of all this Don Enrique is informed. "I thank you, gallant Du Guesclin," is his answer, "for this and all

other marks of your regard. Methinks, all the same, I am better able to reward your service than Pedro, without a rood of land, now for the second time driven forth by his people. Further pleasure me now, I pray you, in this matter, by informing your friend Mem Rodrigues, that you will do all you can to forward his desire if he will prevail on the king to come to your tent to arrange means of escape."

Now the drift of this speech was plain to the Breton leader, neither wanting in cunning nor foresight. He had sent back Mem Rodrigues with an angry denial, now he is bidden to call him again, and eat his own words in a treacherous message. Can he doubt the purpose of Don Enrique?

A look passes between them. Death is in their eyes. Nothing more is said.

The treason is obvious; Du Guesclin asks time for reflection.

Reflect he did, and decided, and by that act fouled his glorious blazon with a blot never to be effaced!

Abandoned by all, without winter provisions or friends, those still with him unable to help him, the unfortunate Don Pedro, upon the strength of a safe conduct, sworn to by Du Guesclin, determines to capitulate.

It is in the month of March, on the 23d. In those elevated peaks winter still reigns. Snow lies thick on the mountains, blocking the deep ravines, and rending giant cliffs.

Far below, in a cold mist, lies the wide-spreading plains of La Mancha. No ray of sun breaks the veil, as Don Pedro, on horseback, emerges from the portcullis of the castle, clad in a heavy mantle which entirely conceals his figure, the hood pressed over his face. As he passes beneath, his eye catches the figure of an eagle over the arch, and under it the words "*Torre de Estrella*." With horror he remembers that in the letter which Blanche addressed to him before her execution (where she solemnly calls on him to meet her beyond the grave), it is at the "*Torre de Estrella*" she foretells that he shall die.

Great as is the shock at that moment, he tries to laugh it off. He never has cared for prophecies, why now? But something about it strikes his senses with awe. Words from the dead are certain to come true. This is distinctly a message. What matter? And the same reckless courage comes over him as of old. If to die, he will sell his life dearly. Perhaps it is a dream. Who knows?

So, carefully guiding his steed, he passes down the narrow path, zigzagging the descent in wide-lying circles. The wind rises and howls in his face, the crannies of the rocks groan as if haunted by demons, and a storm of sleet and hail strikes full upon him, driving him back each step he takes. Hardly can the wiry little horse he bestrides make way against the blast. But, in one of those rapid changes so common in the south, before he has reached the plain the fleecy clouds have lifted, driven back by the raging wind, the sky clears, and a sickly sun shines out on the surface of the lakes, beside which the tents of the encampment lie, protected by strong barricades, under groups of low scrub and tempest-torn oaks.

No guard turns out to receive him, no flourish of trumpets heralds his approach; the sentinels, enveloped in heavy garments to shield them from the cold, pass to and fro indifferent beneath the banner of Castile, floating wildly in the wind, nor do they salute him as he enters the tent.

After a few words have passed between Don Pedro and Du Guesclin, whose embarrassment is apparent as he parries his questions as to the plan formed for his escape, and alarmed at the manner in which he is received, he moves forward and calls to Mem Rodrigues, who has remained outside the tent, in a loud voice.

"Let us go!" are his words; "it is time."

Seizing the bridle of his horse he is about to mount, when he is intercepted by one of Du Guesclin's cousins.

"Wait a moment, my lord," he says; "there is no haste," and he draws him again into the tent.

Before he can reply, Don Enrique, who is watching, appears close to Don Pedro, armed at all points.

At first Don Pedro does not recognise him, not having seen him for many years, until the same cousin who seized the bridle of his horse, whispers:

"Sire, take care, your enemy is upon you," and Enrique, now face to face with his brother, calls out in a voice which comes to him as a sinister echo out of long past years:

"Where is that son of a Jew who calls himself King of Castile?"

Upon which, dropping his mantle, Don Pedro, his face convulsed with passion, shouts out:

"You are a liar, Enrique de Trastamare. It is I who am king, the lawful son of King Alonso."

Then, with all the concentrated fury of years of ferocious hate, the brothers fall upon each other in a death grapple.



**Surrender of Granada.**

Don Pedro, being the stronger of the two, throws Don Enrique on the floor. Laying his hand on his dagger, he is about to finish him, when the powerful form of Du Guesclin is thrust forward. For a moment his dark scathed face gazes down on the deadly struggle; then with the words, "*Mi quito in pungo rey freza seriva, mon Señor, ye n'ote et ne mets pas Roi mars u'ters, mon seigneur,*" he seizes Don Pedro by the leg and turns him over on the undermost side. Enrique, thus freed from his grasp, drawing out a long poniard, instantly stabs him in the breast, after which the whole party fall to and finish him.

Thus was Blanche's prophecy fulfilled, "That at the *Torre de Estrella* by a violent death Don Pedro should die and answer for her murder in another world." As Don Pedro had left unburied the body of his brother, Don Fadique, in the court of the Alcazar, so was his own body left exposed for three days on the earth, bathed in blood, that all might see he was really dead; also the bodies of Mem Rodrigues and Emanuel, who had rushed in to aid their master, and were killed in the struggle.

The governor of Montiel at once surrendered, and was pardoned by Enrique, as was the chancellor Fernando de Castro, over whose tomb was placed this inscription:—

"*Aqui yace Don Fernando Perez de Castro, toda la fedelidad de España.*"

Thus all that remained of this "high and mighty king, Don Pedro," as set forth on his portal in Alcazar of Seville, were his three illegitimate daughters, Costanza and Isabel, married to the brothers of the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Edmund of Cambridge, Duke of York; Beatrix, the oldest, becoming a nun.

After all, El Caballero died young, reigning but eleven years, and it is recorded that on his deathbed he heartily repented of his rebellion and the murder of his brother.

"Be faithful to France," said he to his son Juan, who succeeded him, 1380; "but above all, draw to your side the followers of my brother Pedro. They are true *hidalgos*, who were faithful to him on the losing side."

Bertrand Du Guesclin, or Claquin, received the price of his baseness in the Dukedoms of Molinos and Soria, but, as with Judas, the possession of great riches gave him no pleasure. He afterwards sold them for a small sum and returned to France, a sorrowing and a dishonoured man; and Charles the Bad received, I am happy to say, the reward of his treason in a series of defeats at the hand of Enrique de Trastamare.

## CHAPTER XX

### Juan I.—Enrique el Enfermo



HE Court vacillates between Burgos and Valladolid, both cities of the plain. Since the death of Don Pedro the charms of Seville are neglected.

All the fighting is in the north, mostly with Aragon and Portugal.

Valladolid (Belad-Waled of the Moors) remains much the same dull, ugly town, without a charm; to be greatly favoured by-and-by by Philip the Second, when his time comes to reign, as one of the centres of the Inquisition, and a convenient place to burn heretics in the great Plaza.

But Burgos has become a noble city, much altered and embellished since the homely days of the Cid Campeador, when his Suelo stood on the ridge of the hill facing east, near the royal castle where he and Doña Ximena were received at their marriage with such honour by King Fernando and the queen.

The king was always talking, but Ximena held down her head and seldom gave an answer to anything he said. "It is better sure to be *silent* than *meaningless*," she said.

Fernando el Santo, in succession to Fernando the First, afterwards laid the foundations of the cathedral standing at the base of the hill, and his successors finished it; that gracious sanctuary which rears itself, so pure and white, out of the tawny land. Too ornate and minute perhaps, but lovely all the same—pointed steeples transparent in fine stone-work and open to the sky, an army of statues glistening in the sun up to the spandrels and the dome, and semicircles, colonettes, and arches by the score—every ledge and cornice filled, until the eye turns away fatigued by the prodigality of ornament. Inside the *coro* a mass of golden entablatures is lighted with ranges of painted windows, filling the nave with a kaleidoscope of colour, and the fourteen chapels which line the walls, each complete in itself—Condestable and Santiago, San Enrique and San Juan, each with carved *retablos*, a statue or a monument in the midst. That of Condestable, so named from Don Pedro de Velasco, Grand Constable of Spain, where he and his wife are extended on an alabaster tomb in the elaborate costume of the day, necklace, ruff, brocade, and head-dress; even to the tiny curls on the back of the little spaniel lying at the lady's feet, half hidden by the folds of her dress, in so natural a position one asks oneself what will the little creature do when he wakes and finds his mistress dead?

Outside, the gaily-tinted streets are variegated as in a patchwork of colour, and over against the dried-up banks of the river Arlanzon (where the tournament was held for the marriage of Don Pedro and Queen Blanche), the grand old gothic gateway of Santa Maria appears, from out of which the Cid rode to join the Moors when no one dared to give him a crust of bread in Burgos.

The time is morning, and an unclouded sun has just risen above the horizon. Already the idlest and the most eager are afoot, to secure a good position for the review to be held by King Juan I.

Before the clock has struck ten from the cathedral, the crowd has so increased that the whole plain is alive with horsemen and foot-passengers, *caballeros* splendidly mounted, *ricoshombres* in chariots and *portantini*, and peasants with sturdy stride: every one muffled up to the eyes, which is the fashion of Castilians, even when it is hot—all making their way, on the grass or by country roads and foot-paths, to the Cartuga de Miraflores seen from afar on the summit of a chalky down, sweet with the perfume of thyme and

rosemary, over which the summer clouds strike light shadows. Flourishes of trumpets announce the passage of knights with glistening helmets, and the glitter of gold-embroidered banners, masses of moving horsemen and squadrons of troops, mixed with crescent flags and turbans of many colours, the light Barbary horses caracoling here and there, covered with nets of coins and chains, catching the sunbeams; announcing the presence of an army and the evolutions of many troops, especially of a picked body habited like Berbers, who gallop forward in gallant style, brandishing their scimitars to the rattle of drums and fifes. Anon a mounted figure dashes out from the main body of troops, wearing a suit of light chain armour in which gold is the chief metal, a spiked crown mixing with the feathers of his casque, mounted on a heavy-flanked charger of the old gothic breed so loved by the sovereigns of Spain, which he fiercely urges forward with spur and heel in front of the rapidly riding Berbers, until the unwieldy animal, gored by the sharp rowels of steel, rears and turns aside, dashing the crowned rider onto the ground, where he lies motionless!

A cry of horror rises from the field. The king is wounded! The king is unhorsed; he is dead! Knights in their light panoply are arrested in their charge; courtiers in jewelled mantles on ambling jennets rein up; men-at-arms, young pages with nodding plumes on silken caps, all, all, in one dense mass, gathering around the fallen figure of the king, Juan I., son of Henry of Trastamare (1379), who came out to review some regiments just arrived from Africa habited to represent the Moors, and going through their graceful evolutions with lance and scimitar.

Unhappy king! There he lies, a corpse! He never moved, and is borne off from the field on a trestle hastily formed of gilded lances laid across, covered with the flag of Castile, a melancholy spectacle, his soldiers following with many a moistened eye, to be buried in the cathedral, beneath gorgeous gold panels in the *coro*.

The race of Trastamare, destined soon to end, brings short and troubled reigns, in which the superstitious may read an ever-present curse in the fratricide of Don Pedro.

The last words of Don Enrique el Caballero were a warning to his son Juan not to follow his footsteps, "but to cherish the followers of Don Pedro, who were faithful in adversity"—a curious glimpse into the idiosyncrasy of his mind at the moment when the crown for which he had sacrificed his honour as a knight and his fealty as a brother is fading from him as he approaches the misty confines of another world. "Verily his sin will find him out," says the Bible, and so it was with Henry of Trastamare. Juan I., his son, dies a miserable death at thirty-four (A.D. 1390) on a mimic battle-field.

He had none of the bloodthirsty instincts of his family. He fought with English and Portuguese because it was the duty of kings of that day to fight, but with no ferocity of temperament or greed of conquest. He had inherited the softer qualities of the winning Caballero whom all men loved, before the unnatural cruelty of his brother, and the sting of repeated reverses drove him to the commission of a crime which will ever cling to his name.

Juan is succeeded by his young son Enrique, known as *El Enfermo*, under a Council of Regency, presided over by the Archbishop of Toledo and the Marqués de Villena.

No wonder the child of eleven is sick and tired of life under the oppressive surroundings in which he lives.

The Marqués de Villena, a grandee with the privilege of wearing his hat in the royal presence, and irritable and sarcastic when he dares, turns the royal boy's blood cold when he rivets upon him his keen black eyes. Under the guise of devotion to his person he exercises over him every species of petty tyranny, and when, driven beyond his patience, the gentle Don Enrique pouts his lip and knits his young brow, he calls in the archbishop to help him, who, in his turn, exhorts the unhappy young king to conform in all things to the will of "the Regents" placed over him under God. Else—here the stately prelate pauses with a significant glance upwards, not to the sky, for these scenes generally take place within the palace, but all the same invoking the Divine wrath upon the disobedient child, who, well understanding what the archbishop means, is seized with such an access of unknown and mysterious terror as leaves him a helpless victim in their hands.

According to these two (there are other nobles in the Council of Regency, such as Don Pedro de Mendoza, the treasurer who disposes of the revenue, but the archbishop and Villena chiefly rule Castile) Enrique is to have no eyes, ears, or senses, but at their bidding. If he asks a question as to the matters of his kingdom, commands a largess to be disbursed, or expresses a wish for liberty to hunt or exercise himself in arms, or to entertain his friends, he is at once treated like a troublesome child and silenced.

Little by little, as time goes on, a sense of wrong and injustice rankles in his heart which neither the marquis nor the archbishop understands, but they continue assiduously to divide between them the power and the revenues of Castile.

Don Enrique is now sixteen; yet, as the years pass, the strength of his young life does not come to him in robustness of frame or sinew. Music is his passion—the old ballads which we hear as dance tunes in modern Spain, *gallardas* and *seguidillas* set to words—and the chase, a strange taste in one so weak. Between these pursuits his time is chiefly passed; nor are those who govern him at all displeased that such simple pleasures should occupy his thoughts and divert him from any possible interference in affairs of state.

One other comfort he has in life, the company of Don Garcia de Haro. He is a few years older than himself, and was placed with him as a companion by his father, almost from his birth, to cheer him in his many childish ailments, and share in the amusements of his solitary childhood. And now, in his dull life as king, with no one to sympathise with or love him, he clings to Garcia as to a kindred soul. With this intercourse the Regents dare not meddle, although Garcia, who is much more experienced than the king, may, in course of time, become dangerous to their interests. But a certain martinet warns them not to rouse by interference the latent passions of the young king, whose reserved and silent nature is as a sealed book to their understanding.

Now the two friends are riding side by side down the steep hill from the ancient castle of Sahagun, a

stronghold belted in by machicolated walls, situated to the north of Burgos, where the court has gone for the enjoyment of hunting in the abundant Vega watered by the river Cea. A capital place for snipe, partridge, and woodcock, with the chance of stags or even of wild boars driven down by cold or hunger from the adjacent mountains.

A slender retinue follows Don Enrique, for it is not in the policy of the Regents to indulge him in much state, "the revenues being needed for the necessities of the kingdom," he is told, and the court expenses, consequently, must be curtailed.

"But what matters!" is his thought, as he loosens the reins on the neck of the noble Andalusian barb on which he is mounted, with a coat as sleek as silk, as it bounds forward, swift as the wind, over the turf. Garcia is with him, and they are hastening at the top of their speed to spend a happy afternoon together with music and song in an old pavilion, built by the Moors as a garden house or *delicias*, at some miles distant from Sahagun.

"Now, Garcia, I do feel like a king," shouts Don Enrique, turning in his saddle, the wind catching his words and flinging them back to his companion, a little in the rear. "I am out of reach of the marquess. No, not even the awful archbishop can threaten me here."

"Ah! my lord," returns Garcia de Haro, speaking under the influence of the same rapid movement, his words barely reaching the ear for which they are intended, "may it ever be so!"

"It shall!" cries the king, turning carelessly on his saddle to cast a hurried glance, full of affection, at him. "IT SHALL, IT SHALL!"

Now they are passing on a true Spanish road, full of holes and overlaid with stones, on by the aqueduct into a cool avenue, all fluttering with elm leaves, past the *Cruz del Campo*—and what a campo, as flat as my hand—the sky glowing over them like an opal, to the murmur of many waters and a rush of streams, onto a high plateau, where the pleasant air cheerfully fills the lungs as with the flavour of new wine; through corn fields and olive grounds and fig gardens and vineyards, bordered by low banks; the pleasant songs of the farmers in their ears, as with a lazy team of fat oxen they plough the fertile earth. A scent as of blossoming beans is in the air; the berries of the ripening olives toss over their heads; folks pass and repass on donkeys, and rough men lead files of mules, all with a "*Vaya con Dios*," open-eyed at the young king, uncovering his head in silent courtesy, though the hoofs of his horse scatter pebbles in their faces.

Now they are passing a lonely village, the whole population sitting at their doors, a stool placed close by, with a white cloth and a plate for charity, round which gather the blind and the cripples, impelling themselves forward at the risk of their lives, but the cavalcade rushes by too quickly to stop to relieve them.

At last they have reached the Moorish *Quinta*, a low, flat-roofed building with a *tapia* border, flanked by towers, from one of which floats the flag of Spain, the front cut by long rows of *miradores* and shutterless casements staring upon them like unlidged eyes.

The drawbridge is down and the sculptured portal open. Not a creature is about to salute the king, but a posse of fierce dogs, the Penates of the place, break out from behind a wall and fly at the horses' heels, who highly resent the attack with many kicks and plunges, to the imminent danger of the riders, while terrified cows rush in from the woods to increase the confusion, then bolt into space, pursued by the dogs.

All this time not a soul has appeared. The page who has accompanied the king advances to



A VIEW IN GRANADA.

Engraved by James B. Allen from a drawing by D. Roberts.

assist him to dismount, as well as his old attendant, Martos, but, before they can reach him, he has sprung lightly from the saddle, and looks around.

"What! no one to receive me?" he says, with a light laugh, but a frown is on his face all the same. "Do the Regents hold me for a schoolboy, to be punished when I go abroad?"

"Such disrespect is not to be endured," returns Garcia, of a much more impetuous temperament than the king, which betrays itself by the impatience with which he paces up and down, searching every corner, then sounding a horn he wears across his shoulders; but the long-drawn notes bring no response save innumerable echoes and a dense flight of birds from the old building, frightened from their nests.

"It makes my blood boil to see your Grace so treated," cries Garcia, returning with heightened colour to the king's side. "How dare the Regents—"

"Tush! tush! Garcia, I am sure it is accidental."

"Impossible, my lord! I myself announced your intention of taking your midday meal here. You observe the flag is flying."

All this time the bevy of dogs keep up such a chorus of barking that they can hardly hear themselves speak, closing round them as if determined for an attack.

"Let them bark," says the king, carelessly, fronting one savage old hound with fiery eyes and tail erect, about to leap on him.

Martos and the page, seriously alarmed, rush to his rescue with sticks and stones.

"Better this noise than silence. The dogs after all are doing their duty, which my servants are *not*. Perhaps their barking will bring out some one to stable our horses. See how wet the flanks of the poor beasts are and how they tremble. Look to them well, Juanito," to the page, who, doffing his plumed cap, bows to the ground, "I would not have Zulema take any harm for half the kingdom I do NOT rule. We have ridden hard and long; let us hope that a good repast awaits us. I have a keen appetite."

"I do not see where it is to come from," answers Garcia, following the king over the drawbridge into the *patio*.

It was a lovely place, this Moorish *patio*, shut in by walls delicately embroidered and diapered in stone, supported by ranges of horseshoe arches, light as a dream, grouped on double pillars as white as snow, the central space traversed by walks paved with coloured tiles, followed by rustic arches cut in yew in fanciful devices of pyramids and crowns, from which hung coloured lanterns in the summer nights when the harem made holiday here long ago, a bubbling fountain in the midst, cutting tiny canals edged with flowers.

"Here I could live and die!" exclaims the young king, standing entranced in the centre, the sound of many waters flowing from jets and tunnels mingling with the songs of birds emboldened by the stillness and fluttering in the boughs. "Give me my zither and lute, I should never care to return to Burgos. Come, Garcia," turning to his companion, "let us explore the interior of this fair mansion."

But Garcia, not at all poetical by nature, and who is growing every moment more indignant at the absence of the *jefe* and the lack of every preparation, follows him in silence under a colonnade from which the various apartments open out through doors of cedar wood into an Arab hall—a blaze of gorgeous colour.

"This passes all belief!" cried Garcia, looking round, unable any longer to suppress his feelings. "It is high time that your Grace emancipates yourself. If this insult leads to the fall of the Regents (and you are already sixteen, and competent to reign), it will satisfy me better than the choicest meal ever served to mortal, though I confess I am as hungry as a wolf."

"But, our Lady defend us!" he cried, as he suddenly caught sight of the dismal face of Martos, "what brings you with such a woful countenance? Speak, man! Have the dogs bitten you?"

"No, no!" answered Martos, with a grim smile. "No, but the dinner!"

"Have the dogs eaten it, then, instead of you?" asked the king.

The major-domo shook his head sorrowfully. "Dinner, my lord and master, there is none."

"No dinner!" broke in Garcia. "Do you mean to say nothing is provided for the king?"

"Nothing! nothing!" cried Martos in despair, clasping his hands.

"I assure your Grace I told them you were coming," broke in Garcia. "I gave the Marqués de Villena due notice. I am not to blame."

"I am sure you are not, dear Garcia. Good Martos, do not vex yourself. Call such people together as you can find, and have the game we shot on the way fashioned into a *salmis*. It will make a delicious dish."

Then Martos and a page appeared, carrying a single dish, and placed it on the table.

"How is this?" cried the king, with more anger than he had yet shown. "Where are the servants I pay to serve this palace? Where is the *jefe* whose duty it is to receive his sovereign?"

"Gone, my lord and master, gone no one knows whither. Nothing left but a crippled scullion and those cursed dogs, who fly upon us every time we move."

"I must look to these matters more closely," said the young king, roused at last to a sense of his position. "As my tutors and governors are so careless of the charge conferred on them by my father, it is time that I should relieve them of their office."

A delighted look overspread Garcia's face, and a sardonic grin from Martos indicated that he had much more to say if he dared.

"Speak freely, my faithful Martos," said the king, "if you have anything to tell me."

Garcia eagerly listened.

"It is a great liberty, Altezza, for one so humble as I am to interfere in the affairs of those so much above me, but I have cause to know that your Highness's governors are not worthy of the confidence reposed in them."

"Did I not say so?" interposed Garcia. "They hated me too much to be honest."

"Proceed, Martos, I see you have not told me all."

"True, my lord. And there *is* something of which I would fain inform your Grace," continued he, speaking in a whisper, with a careful look round. "I know that there is to be a great *fiesta* given at the house of the Archbishop of Toledo to-night. All the *grandiose* are bidden, and all the cooks in Burgos will attend. There will be plenty of food *there*," with a sly glance at the solitary dish of game yet untouched lying on a huge table.

As the old man spoke, the king's face changed to a graver look than it seemed possible for those placid features to assume.

"I understand," he answered, "while the King of Castile is without a dinner, his Regents and nobles feast. Alas! I am often weak in health, which leads me to shrink from the duties of my office, but, *por Dios!* I am strong in spirit, and I will settle these *caballeros* as they deserve."

That same night the Casa del Cordon, in the great Plaza of Burgos, where the Regents lived, was blazed bright as day. Circles of light blazed in the heavily mullioned casements of the front, where the arms of Mendoza Velasco appear within a deep entablature, surrounded by carved figures, each line and detail of the building defined by low Moorish lamps softly glimmering, and armorial shields. Crowds of men-at-arms and alguazils stationed along the street bore torches of resin, casting fiery gleams upon the pavement, crowded as far as the eye could reach with Burgolese notables come out to see the show, wrapped in their everlasting *mantos*.

Passing through a lofty guard-room with raftered ceiling—the walls hung with tapestry—where casques and shields of antique pattern shone out, side by side with crescent banners and scimitars captured from the Moors, the guests arrive and are ushered into a Gothic hall of sculptured oak heavily carved, a richly wrought balustraded gallery breaking the lines high up under the cornice. All the great names of Burgos are present. The Villacruces, De Vaca, Peralta, Gomez, Laynes, descendants of the Cid Campeador, Lerma, De Bilbas, and Mendoza, making their way to tables ranged transversely across the dais at the upper end, bright with golden lamps, fed with delicately-scented oil, each place set with cups and sturdy flagons enriched with jewels, trophies of Arab filigree work, taken from the Moors, and gilded shields all wreathed with fruit and flowers to represent a garden of delight.

In the centre of the board, on two chairs more elevated than the rest, sit the Archbishop of Toledo, his pale face outlined against the panels of dark oak; and opposite to him the courtly figure of the Marqués de Villena, his handsome features greatly set off by the quaint half-ecclesiastical costume he wears of the Master of Calatrava, with belt and sword, the cross of Christ embroidered on his breast.

The days are past when the great nobles come to feasts in plumed casques and chain armour, as knights ready to mount and ride as the trumpet note sounds. Now more peaceful times have come, the land of castles has expelled the Moors—shut up in the east of Spain among the mountains of Granada where they are soon to be attacked—and the great chiefs can display their taste in abundance of costly jewels and apparel of brocade and velvet, samite and silk, crimson, purple, and yellow, close-fitting to display the person, with mantles trimmed with miniver or ermine; the long skirts worn to the ankle, embroidered with all the art the needle could attain, with the crests, cognisances, and initials of the wearer, pointed shoes and golden girdles thick with gems, holding glittering daggers, the head covered with graceful caps or furred bonnets adorned with circlets of jewels and plumes placed on flowing locks trimmed according to the fashion of the time.

Amid the bustle of attendants rushing to and fro with ponderous dishes, and skins of wine to replenish the flagons, and the joyous talk of the numerous guests echoing down the hall in which the deep sonorous voice of the archbishop is prominent by bursts of loud laughter and noisy jests as deep draughts of the finest vintages of Val de Peñas and Xeres mount into the brain, the feast proceeds, each guest pledging his neighbour, the Conde de Peralta drinking to Don Pedro de Mendoza, in his turn bowing to the Conde de Lerma, who, rising in his chair and bowing low, carries his full goblet towards the Marqués de Villena, who with lofty courtesy acknowledges the toast, and forthwith fills his golden cup to drink wassail to the archbishop.

“I will warrant your Grace of not dying of old age with this vintage,” cries Don Pedro de Mendoza, addressing the archbishop as he has risen in his place to return the compliment, eying the generous liquor with the loving eyes of a connoisseur. “It is enough to carry a man far into a hundred years.”

All at once the conversation is arrested by the soft notes of a Moorish zither; just the sweep of the cords and a tap or two on the sounding board, *galopando*, then the plaintive *cana* or cry rises, prelude the *cancionero* of the Cid—ever the popular hero of Burgos—sung with such exquisite sweetness that the entire company is hushed.

Si es Español  
Don Rodrigue  
Español fue el  
fuente andalla.

“What new constellation has your greatness procured us?” asks Don Silvela Velasco, turning to the Marqués de Villena—a known lover of music. “Who is he? Not the young king himself, with all his talent, can excel him.”

“He sings well,” is the answer of the marquess, listening attentively until the final *cadenza*, and giving his opinion with the decision of a master. “But I know nothing of him. Minstrels were commanded to be present, and he is come. His voice and the music please me. I am accounted, as you know, my lords, a judge in these matters. You are aware that if the king has any merit, he owes it entirely to my training.”

Again the sweet voice sounds, this time with more power in its tones.

“Who is he? Can no one tell us?” asked the archbishop, breaking off in a discussion of the value of certain jewels which he had purchased from a Jew.

“A wandering *estudiante* who is travelling through the north,” answered the chamberlain, advancing with doffed cap and bended knee; for the Regents exacted the same respect in addressing them as the kings of Castile; “recommended to me by a friend as skilled in his art.”

“That cannot be doubted,” said the archbishop. “Bring him round, that we may judge of his appearance.”

This command was promptly obeyed, and a youth stood forward on the edge of the dais, habited in a long dark mantle of coarse cloth, sandals on his bare feet, and a mass of thick fair hair combed down so straight under a pointed cap it was almost impossible to distinguish his features. Not that he appeared the least dismayed, but stood perfectly at his ease in front of the radiance of the scented lamps, his zither in his hand, minutely surveying the faces of those before him.



"Your looks proclaim you young," said the archbishop, struck for a moment with a fancied resemblance to some one he had seen. "Where do you come from? By our Lady of Saragossa, you have a pleasant voice."

"Grandeza," answered the minstrel, "I am an orphan, of good birth, reduced to the greatest want. To-day, upon my word, I have not eaten a meal."

"Poor boy! here you shall have your fill. How long have you been so reduced?"

"Since my father's death, your Grace. He died when I was a child, and the wicked governors



**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.**

he placed over me have despoiled me of my inheritance. You see me, mighty señors, reduced to sing for food."

"A right good youth, and worthy of largess," observed Don Pedro de Mendoza, ill-famed as the most ruthless squanderer of the royal treasure. (If Don Pedro could have scanned the expression of the face before him, he might have seen such a smile of scorn gathering about the thin lips as would have startled him.)

"The saints bless you!" was the reply, "and deal with you as you do to others. As for me," with a deep sigh, "I am not only starving, but at this present time I know that my sinful guardians are carousing at my expense."

"The Virgin protect us!" exclaimed the archbishop. "Did ever man hear of such infamy!"

"If the youth speaks truth," returned Villena, not to be behindhand in the expression of sympathy, "the matter should be submitted to the king's judges, and right done in ample restitution."

"Otherwise it were a disgrace to the government of the Regents," put in Don Pedro de Mendoza.

"Restitution is not sufficient," sententiously observed the archbishop in a pompous voice, intended to impress the company with his high sense of justice. "If the guilt of his guardians be proved, death is their proper due."

"Methinks your holiness is somewhat severe," put in the minstrel, making a low obeisance.

"Not at all, not at all! We rule Castile and Leon, not the king, who is disabled by bodily infirmities. It is *our* duty to have justice done."

"What noble sentiments!" exclaimed the singer, clasping his hands. "Happy is the king to possess such servants! I leave my appeal with you, my lords, confident that you will see me righted."

But what he said, though spoken low and in an altered voice, had such a familiar ring in it as to make the archbishop again look sharply at him; then, as if satisfied, he turned away.

Now the festival had continued far into the night, and, as the fumes of the generous wine mounted to their brains, the guests spoke more and more openly to each other.

Again had the voice of the minstrel been raised, during a momentary pause, as he intoned with extraordinary power and skill *The March of Bernardo del Carpio*:

With three thousand men of Leon, from the city Bernardo goes  
To preserve the name and glory of old Pelayo's woes.

And as his notes rang out in the great hall, the enthusiasm he excited so mastered the stately company that they rose *en masse* to drink to the health of Castile.

"And of the Regents!" cried Mendoza, "our capable leaders! Don Enrique must be put aside. He is sick and unfit to reign. What say you, Caballeros? Methinks the race of Trastamare is played out."

"Agreed! agreed!" came from all sides.

"And who can better replace him than the Regents?" cried the Conde de Lerma, who had good reason to tremble lest, when the young king came to reign, he should discover the villainies of which he had been guilty.

"And I! and I!" shouted Velasco and Peralta, tossing high their goblets.

Indeed, the whole company was in a state of violent excitement, to which not only the wine, but the patriotic ballads of the minstrel had much contributed.

"My lords! my lords!" cried the archbishop, rising from his seat, seriously alarmed at the imprudent vehemence of his partisans, "these are matters not to be lightly mentioned. Such words are treason if they get abroad. To-morrow is the *fiesta* of the young king. His Grace has invited us to a special *tertulia* in honour of the event. I drink to his health, and better capacity to fill the high place he inherits!"

A palpable sneer was in his voice as he added these words in a low tone.

"Yes, the *fiesta* of our king," added the Marqués de Villena, amid a general chorus of mocking laughter. He was no more loyal than the prelate, but less hypocritical, and, like him, fully aware of the dangerous consequences, should any premature knowledge of a conspiracy get abroad. "I pray you, Grandezas, to disperse quietly. Whatever be in your minds, this is no place to discuss it."

And so they parted, each one to his abode, attended by bands of armed followers with torches.

The singer was left alone, but he was met at the portal by a friend, attired like himself as an *estudiante*, and thus together they passed unheeded into the night.

Great curiosity was felt, especially by Don Pedro de Mendoza, the treasurer, as to how the king had obtained money to defray the expenses of the *tertulia* which had been announced. Mendoza knew that the coffers were empty. Had he borrowed money from the King of Aragon, or some powerful northern noble? Had he unearthed a treasure, or contracted with the Jews? If so, how could it happen that he was ignorant of it?

Again all the great nobles assembled, and many more, from south and north, who had not been present at the entertainment in the Casa del Cordon, composed especially of the supporters of the Regents.

Most of those who came from afar had never seen the king (so purposely was he secluded), and looked on him as a sickly youth, destined soon to follow his father to the tomb. It was this idea, indeed, sedulously spread abroad, which added so much to the prestige of the Regents. If the king died, who was to succeed him?

When the cedar doors are thrown open, a huge undecorated gallery is disclosed, devoid of any furniture except bare wooden tables and benches placed on either side.

At the head the young king is seated in a chair of state, surmounted by the arms of Spain. On one side the hereditary Constable of Castile (*Condestable*) supports him, clad in complete armour; on the other the chamberlain, Don Martinez de Velases, who introduces the company. As each feudatory advances, Don Enrique inclines his head. His manner is courteous but very cold, as he raises his hand to signify the special place assigned to each at the table, where a piece of bread and a cup of water are placed.

Not even the rigid rules of formal etiquette imposed on the Spanish Court can conceal the amazement of each grandee as he takes his place on the hard bench, but the presence of the young king checks all outward expression.

As the Regents enter and sit down with the rest (no special seat having been assigned them) a momentary flush passes over the king's face.

"I fear the food provided does not suit your palates," he says, at last, unable any longer to affect to misunderstand the astonished glances each one exchanges with the other, specially the Archbishop of Toledo, who, with a highly offended air, places himself before his portion of bread and water; "but I myself am frugally fed. I hope this may reconcile you to it."

"Is the young king mad?" is whispered round the room, as each guest endeavours to swallow the unpalatable food; "or is it the caprice of a silly boy, soon to be deposed?" Indeed, in this sense, the eccentricities of this so-called banquet are very agreeable to the greater number present, as plainly displaying his incapacity for reigning.

Meanwhile, Don Enrique, seated at the head of the board, has partaken of his portion of bread and water with apparent relish.

"If your Graces," he says, breaking an icy silence, "are not contented with the *first* course I have offered you, I hope the second will be more to your taste. Will you follow me, Grandezas?" rising from his chair.

"A second course!" There was, then, something prepared to eat, and a buzz of satisfaction passed round, as each *caballero* left his hard bench to follow the young king.

A vast hall lay beyond, of interminable extent, dimly lighted, and hung with black. A coffin, covered with a pall, lay beside an altar in the midst, surmounted with a crucifix. Shrouds lay beside it, with implements to dig a grave, and all the other ghastly paraphernalia of the dead.

"Close the doors, jefe," said the king, in a voice of command never heard from his lips before, as he placed himself like a young judge in front of the altar. "You see, my lords, the second course I serve to you. But before you partake of it, I would address some questions to those who have up to this time governed in my name. Stand forth, Archbishop of Toledo, joint Regent of the kingdom, and tell me how many kings you have known in Castile?"

"Excellency," answered the bewildered prelate, growing cold under the apprehension that not only the king was mad, but was about to murder him, "I have known three: your grandsire of glorious memory, your father, Don Juan, and yourself."

"For shame, your Grace!" exclaimed Enrique, in an austere tone. "What! A prelate lie? How dare you, at your age, assert that you have known only *three* kings, when *I*, who have barely reached man's estate, can reckon at least double the number? Yes, my assembled nobles, barons, princes, prelates, knights, and *ricosombres*, who know me so little as to think, because I am young and inexperienced, I can be deceived. Six sovereigns reign in Castile besides the lawful heir, carefully excluded from all power, to the damage of

the state. Now I call upon the usurpers of my rights, especially the most venerable archbishop," launching at him a look of bitter reproach, "his Grace the Marqués de Villena, Master of Santiago, also the treasurer, bearing the high name of Don Pedro de Mendoza, and the other 'kings' to lay their submission at my feet!"

Words cannot paint the consternation of the noble company at these words and at the commanding aspect of the young king as he stood forth, the awful emblems of death behind him.

What doom was he about to pronounce? What judgment would he pass on the guilty? And it need not be said how many of those present felt themselves to be such, and with the superstitious horror of the age at anything unusual, trembled lest by some occult knowledge he had read their treacherous thoughts.

Then came denials, vehement asseverations, protestations, and recriminations; loudest of all, because most in danger, sounded the sonorous voice of the archbishop and the mellifluous tones of Villena.

"If we have erred," cried the marquess, "it is only by excess of zeal to spare your Highness from the burden of public affairs."

But Don Enrique, far from being pacified by these protestations, grew more and more indignant as one after another of the Regents invoked every saint in the calendar in protest of their innocence.

"There is yet another pledge to be fulfilled," said the king, addressing the archbishop, who, bold as he was, literally trembled under the clear



THE PORT, QUAY, AND CATHEDRAL, MALAGA.

gaze fixed on him, as though he read his inmost thoughts. "At the banquet with which you regaled the court so lavishly, while I was kept without a *maravedi*, you remember a young singer, whose wrongs at the hands of his guardians you promised to redress. I am that unhappy youth, and by the wounds of Christ, I swear that you shall keep your word!"

A dead silence followed. No one dared to speak, lest he might hasten the catastrophe all felt was impending.

At a sign from the king, the curtains before the doors were withdrawn, and in a blaze of light the Alcaide of Burgos appeared in his furred cap and gown, on one side of him a priest arrayed as for a funeral mass, and on the other the headsman in a red robe, a gleaming axe resting on his shoulder.

"Nothing now remains, my lords," continued the king, "but to carry out the sentence you have passed on yourselves. Prepare for death, Regents of Castile; and you, executioner, stand forth! See that your instrument is in good order. We desire not to cause needless pain, nor that these guilty souls should go unshriven; therefore, holy father," turning to the priest, "such respite as is required for confession shall be granted."

No sooner had these awful words passed the king's lips, spoken with the air and bearing of a sovereign determined to be obeyed than the archbishop and the Marqués de Villena cast themselves before him on their knees.

"Grant us but life, son of the noble Trastamare," pleaded the archbishop, suddenly seizing the king's hand, as, gazing earnestly into his face, he became aware of a certain yielding in his bearing as he contemplated the humiliation of those two great statesmen, for so many years masters of Castile. "Give us life at least to repent of our misdeeds."

"I will," answered Don Enrique, "upon certain conditions," the sweet smile natural to him lighting up his face as he graciously raised them from their knees; "but it must be true repentance and no falling back into mortal sin. You are my witnesses, hidalgos," turning to the assembled nobles standing closely pressed together, in a common fear of some general accusation, "of their own sentence against themselves, and now of my generous pardon. Now listen, my Lord Archbishop," addressing the prelate who had so often tyrannised over his childhood, standing with his hands clasped in humble attitude before him, "and you, Villena, Master of Santiago, and Mendoza; on this day sixteen years ago I was born. Never, while I live, shall my birthday be darkened by deeds of blood, but you shall remain in strict imprisonment until a full restitution is made to the State of your shameful spoliation. Those of my guests whom I have summoned here as spectators to profit by the lesson may depart in peace, but those of the Regency, '*the Kings*,' as they are called, shall be conducted to prison by my faithful *balasterdos*, there to remain till justice is satisfied. Guards, remove the prisoners!"

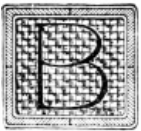
"It will all come out well," whispered Don Pedro de Mendoza, a gay and rollicking cavalier, not easily intimidated, to the Marqués de Villena, much more cast down at his fall, as they passed up the horrible

apartment out amid sheaves of glittering lances. "He has never found out we meant to depose him. Lucky for us, or our heads might really have been cut off!"

That the charming young king did not live to verify the promise of his youth (A.D. 1407) is one of the misfortunes of history. The delicate scabbard was not stout enough to hold the noble blade. In other words, his feeble health gave way under the cares of sovereignty. He died prematurely at the early age of twenty-eight, leaving an infant son, Don Juan II., to succeed him. Doña Catalina, his wife, or, as we know her, Catherine of Lancaster, daughter of Costanza (the daughter of Pedro the Cruel), married to John of Gaunt, was appointed regent for her son—a placid, good-tempered princess, by reason of her English blood, and a great favourite with the Castilians.

## CHAPTER XXI

### Juan II. and Doña Isabel of Portugal—Execution of the Conde de Luna



BURGOS and Valladolid never were capitals in the modern acceptation of the word, but they were at this time the centre of court life.

The short lives of the illegitimate branch of the House of Castile, and their personal insignificance, intensified rather than detracted from the dramatic vicissitudes of their reigns.

Juan, son of Enrique de Trastamare (1390), died young by a fall from his horse. His son, El Enfermo, who ended his life at twenty-eight, inaugurated the romantic episode of *the Regents*. The infancy of Juan II. called forth the powerful personality of the Conde de Luna, and the vice and folly of Enrique IV. brought forward his sister Isabel, wife of Ferdinand the Catholic, into extraordinary prominence in the politics of Europe.

At this time Queen Catalina holds her court at Burgos—a fat, foolish dowager, by no means inheriting the fierce passions of her grandparents—Don Pedro el Cruel and Maria de Padilla. In close alliance with the highly cultivated Moors, as had been her husband El Enfermo, Catalina also favours the fine arts, and educates her son to love those elegant *cancioneros* sung by her husband with such art, the metre of which will never be surpassed.

Hundreds of these romances, current in that day, were softened and refined into real poetry, and as such have come down to us as absolute gems. Long stories in prose too, such as *Amadis de Gaul*, began now to be written, to be followed by the *Romaunt of the Rose*, as also many learned treatises on government and science, taken from the Arabic; and, wonder of wonders, Don Pedro Ayala actually translated Livy into Spanish!

In this literary movement the good Queen Catalina took part, and inducted her little son into an amount of learning remarkable in that age. He was fond of books and could speak and versify fluently in Latin. Courage he had, and knowledge he acquired, growing up under his mother's care a gentle, indolent young prince like his father, but absolutely without will, which made him a prey to the first resolute spirit who gained his confidence.

Such a one was found in the person of Don Alvarez de Luna, Conde de Gormaz, the last representative of the ideal Knight of Spain. Bold, romantic, brave, his masterful individuality imposed itself on the artistic temperament of the young king much as an eagle might foster and protect a helpless dove.

As the descendant of a noble Biscayan family, whose ancestors had done good service to Enrique de Trastamare in his many sudden flights and rapid advances in the wild passes of the Pyrenees, Luna had claims on the young king. Ever the prominent figure in court and camp, Don Juan from his birth had been thrown into his companionship, whose handsome person and courtly manners charmed his boyish taste and resulted in an ascendancy so absolute as to absorb all the power of the state. Nor could remonstrance, conspiracy, or open acts of revolt for many years shake his position. Indeed, opposition only seemed to endear him to Don Juan, who rapidly advanced him to the high office of Constable of Castile and Leon and Grand Master of Santiago.

Possessed of the entire love and confidence of his master, the court was filled with his kindred and partisans; Don Juan saw with his eyes and regulated every action at his pleasure. Even in the matter of his marriage, instead of uniting himself to the French Princess Fredegonde, whom he preferred, at Luna's desire he espoused his cousin, Doña Isabel of Portugal.

Such an excess of favour naturally raised an immense animosity against him. Every noble and *ricohombre* in Castile hated him on his own account. The Infante of Aragon headed a party to dethrone him. All this at length coming to the knowledge of Don Juan, caused him throes of extreme doubt as to his conduct, overruled for a time by the masterful will of Luna, but to bear fruit at length as the consequence of the inherent weakness of his nature.

Young as he still was, Don Juan had been twice married. The new queen, his cousin, was a dark-complexioned beauty, with a skin like a ripe peach and the keen black eyes of a Zingara. No sooner had she arrived at Burgos than she came to understand that she owed her position solely to the favour of Luna, and that Don Juan would have preferred the French princess. Nothing could be more galling to her pride, and Isabel was very proud. At once she resolved upon his ruin, and steadily carried out her plan. If Juan was to be governed by a favourite, it should be herself.

All through his long reign she battled with his weakness, and was destined to suffer from a series of domestic mortifications caused by the helpless vacillation of his temper. In common with the kings his predecessors of the Trastamare line, he was too vacillating to be capable of much real feeling. But the young queen would tolerate no divided sway. Arrogant and ambitious by nature, she resolved to exercise an

absolute control over his conduct. Now the Conde de Luna formed an insuperable barrier to her scheme. He must be removed, but his fall should be brought about by no violent action, lest Don Juan's sensitive nature should take alarm. Her arms must be the wily weapons of her sex; she must work on the king's admiration for her—as a poetic embodiment of his fancy—and his amiable desire to gratify her in all things.

So well did she act her part that he gradually grew cold towards his favourite. His advice, formerly so anxiously sought, was not asked; many acts were performed without his knowledge. Even his company, up to this time indispensable as the air he breathed, was dispensed with for days at a time. Such a change could not but be noted by the keen eyes of Luna, but his belief in his ascendancy and the necessity of his counsels was too absolute to give him as yet any serious uneasiness.

Don Juan, newly married to a princess selected by himself, whose person pleased his fickle taste, was preoccupied and in love. These changes were but as passing clouds—the horizon beyond was clear. He would soon tire, as he did of every one else, and return to him as before. Such was the belief on which he acted, leaving the queen to mature her plans unopposed.

The king is seated alone with the queen in the castle of Burgos at a table of inlaid marble, spread with wine. Books, too, are placed near at hand, for he is never without his favourite author, John de Menu. The room is small and lofty, a species of closet such as is found so often in royal palaces of that date, and was invariably chosen as a royal retiring-room. The walls are panelled in oak, pencilled with gold, on which is stretched rare tapestry, representing in all the flush of silken thread the encounters of the Christians against the Moors—Pelazzo in the cave of Cavadonga, and the triumph of the Cid. Steel mirrors, in richly carved frames of those massive patterns peculiar to Spain, fling back the brilliant sunshine. It is a blaze of light and colour. Velvet hangings heavy with gold shroud the low doors and shade the narrow windows, which are open. Bright in the pure air stream in the branches of fragrant limes, long walnut leaves and sycamores—within an enclosed garden, shrouded by a quaint old tower which forms part of the city walls.

Isabel, in the first flush of her radiant youth, looks a perfect picture for a poet, in a long white robe, brocaded with gold, her pointed shoes just appearing from under the folds, a row of large pearls binds her head, setting off the ebony blackness of her hair. Her sparkling eyes bent on the king entrance him more than his favourite ballads. She might be Egilona, or Doña Teresa, or Angelica moving before him. The day, the soft air, the silence, create a mesmerism about her which fires his sentimental nature and makes her for the moment paramount to all else.

Nor is she at all indifferent to the attentions of the young sovereign, her lord, who sits smoking opposite her, so daintily apparelled in a velvet surcoat sown with pearls and bound with dark fur, open sleeves hanging from the shoulder displaying his delicate hands, in the mode of the day; a white bonnet, set with a large jewel, resting on his flowing locks. No wonder that this graceful refinement of his nature has gained her heart, that delicate symmetry of face and form he inherits from his father and grandfather, El Rey Caballero.

Turning his large, inexpressive eyes towards her as she speaks, he bows, and, raising her hand to his lips, pledges her in a cup of Val de Peñas.

"How sweet is this solitude in your company," he says, heaving a deep sigh of relief as he sinks back on the chair. "I would fain turn a few verses in honour of my beautiful consort, but the day is too hot." Here he tries to conceal a yawn but does not quite succeed; then, looking round, "It is astonishing that for once we are left alone; but the constable has not interrupted us with affairs of state."

"Why do you permit these unseemly liberties, my lord?" asks the queen sharply.

Don Juan does not reply, but kisses her jewelled hand, laying it caressingly on his own. What a solace to have to deal with this queenly creature instead of the imperious constable, always urging on him some imperative command, or to be plagued by those who call themselves "the friends of his dynasty," constantly insisting with equal persistency on the necessity of his banishment! Between the two his life has become a burden, to say nothing of the freaks of his young son, the Prince of the Asturias (the first to bear that title), who passes his whole time in a succession of rebellions.

"It is not for me, my *Reina*," he answers at last, "to abuse the constable, I leave that to my son Henry. But for Luna, I should never have possessed the treasure of this little hand." Again he passes his long white fingers over hers, turning the rings she wears to the light and examining them one by one, as though he would fain find a pretext for retaining them in his own.

A cloud passes over the glowing face of the queen. She suddenly remembers that she was imposed on him by the Conde de Luna as a reason of state.

This puts her in a rage whenever she thinks of it.

"Do you imagine, my lord, that that recommends him to me?" she answers, in a tone which betrays her feelings. "How do I know that you do not still prefer the French Princess Fredegonde to me?"

A blush and a faint denial is the reply, and a murmured assurance that such perfection as she possesses makes him the envy of all the sovereigns his neighbours. The timid Don Juan shrinks from any form of attack; he is so tormented that he scents trouble in the air.

The queen sees her advantage, and continues: "Believe me, I, at least, love you, if you care for that. Too much so, indeed, to bear to see you so overshadowed as you are. Your son, too, is drawing away your subjects from you. A great sacrifice must be made or you will never reign."

"A sacrifice?" answers Don Juan vaguely. He affects not to understand her, but reddens with annoyance at this false note in the harmony of their interview.

"Oh, Juan, how can you pretend to mistake me!" she cries, clasping her hands; "is it the first time I have told you that while the constable lives I shall never have a happy hour?" Her countenance saddens with real or pretended distress; a deep sigh heaves her bosom, upon which rests a collar of jewels and strings of Orient pearls. With her kerchief she wipes away imaginary tears. Don Juan, who is vaguely contemplating her as a

vision of beauty, is suddenly greatly distressed, and rises to comfort her. She puts him back with a pettish motion, and with a troubled air he resumes his seat.

"How do I know," she continues, in a lower voice, "that the magic arts Luna exercises over *you* may not be employed against *me*?"

"Magic arts!" faintly ejaculates the king.

"Yes, my lord, all Spain knows it, and is weary of the wickedness of this presumptuous man. It is by infernal arts that he sways you. He will bring the kingdom to destruction. Did he not, like a traitor, turn back from the walls of Granada when the Zegrins were with you, and he should have led your victorious army into the walls of the Alhambra? Does he not conspire with the Infante of Aragon against your life?"

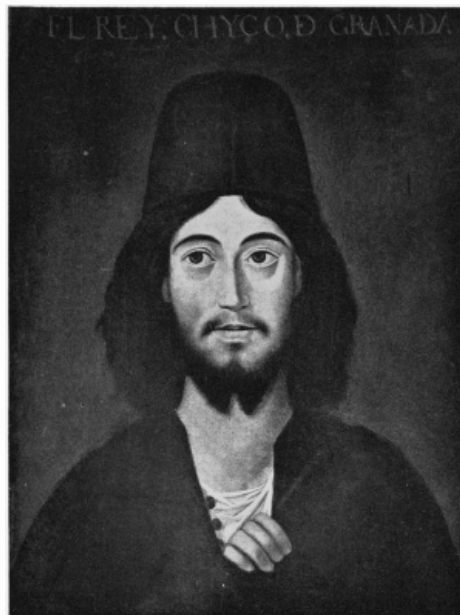
So vivid is the picture she calls up of the misdeeds of Luna, that real tears now course each other down her cheeks. She believes in what she says, and this gives conviction to her words. She believes him to be guilty of all of which he is accused, and she knows that he will cross her influence with Don Juan. Above all, she dreads the mysterious action of that occult power he is said to possess. Superstition and ignorance go together in her mind. A Portuguese princess of the fourteenth century is alive to all the prejudices of the time.

"What!" cries Don Juan, starting up from his chair in a burst of generous feeling, which he is quite incapable of sustaining, "can you, my queen, ask me seriously to dismiss from my councils and from my heart the hero who has so faithfully upheld the glory of Castile? The tales you accept as true are but the suggestions of envy. The constable has ever done his duty. What do I not owe him! Was it not he who rescued me as a boy from the strong fortress of Tordesillas, where a powerful league, headed by my treacherous cousin, the Infante of Aragon, would have shut me up for life? Who was it that, when the Moors, emboldened by the weakness of Castile, refused to pay the tribute, led on our armies against them and forced them to submission? And if he did not enter the city of Granada the fault was not in him, but in my seditious nobles, whose divided counsels forced him to retreat. Is this the man, the bulwark of my throne, who alone has stood by his king against the factious nobles, the conspiracies of his kindred, and the machinations of his own son? Would you have me deprive *him* of the honours he so well deserves? High Constable I have created him, and such, by the Holy Mother, he shall die."

So unexpected an outburst completely overset all the queen's calculations. Was her influence so small for the great task she had undertaken? she asked herself, as she gazed in wonder at the virile expression which sat on the king's chiselled features, and gave such unwonted energy to his words.

She smiled, however, as she replied: "Aye, my liege, all this may be true, but why has Don Alvarez de Luna shown this great zeal for his king? Because, while he defended his cause he was forwarding that ambition for which he has sold his soul. The interests of Don Juan de Castile are his own. Believe me in this, my dear and honoured lord, though I risk your displeasure in saying so."

"Such indeed are the accusations of his enemies," answered the king, already cooling down from his brief display of impetuosity; in fact, he was now turning over in a helpless confusion of ideas whether indeed the constable was in league with the devil, as Isabel represented, and if magic really gave him the extraordinary influence he exercised over him. "Surely you must allow, my queen,



**Portrait of Boabdil el Chico. The Generalife, Granada.**

that it is rather Luna's genius and courage which provoke the jealousy of my nobles?"

"Fatal have been those qualities to the kingdom!" cried the queen, at once seizing on the advantage his hesitation afforded her. "The whole nation is alarmed. No one more than I," she added, her voice deepening into a delicious whisper as a blush overspread her face. She paused, the colour spreading over throat and neck. "What am I, to resist this universal charmer," she added, "an untutored girl, when the queen, your Highness's first consort, is said to have yielded to his blandishments?"

"That is a base calumny!" answered Don Juan, again galvanised into a momentary show of feeling. "I do not believe it; I never did. I had the word of the queen. Alvarez himself denied it on the sacraments. I pray

you, Doña the Queen," turning somewhat haughtily upon Isabel, whose fingers were playing with the pearls upon her neck, her eyes modestly turned down, "do not revive so painful a suspicion. The honour of a Queen of Castile is impregnable. It is treason to doubt it."

"It is because I am true to you, Juan, that I tremble. The dread of this diabolical man haunts me. He may cast a spell on me also."

Though her look was determined, she spoke in a soft voice, flashing a look on the king out of those dark orbs of hers which seemed to catch the rays of the outer sunshine and strike straight into his heart. Then she extended her hand with a smile so sweet in its dignity as altogether to melt his sensitive nature, always realising in her the heroine of his poetic dreams.

"What rapture to be thus loved!" he murmured. "Can I deny this exquisite creature anything she desires?" No one, he told himself, had ever been so sweet as she. Ought he not to guard her from any chance of peril? Might not the accusation she had recalled be true? He had never dared to examine too closely the relations between the constable and the late Queen Maria de Aragon. How different was Isabel! Her thoughts were all for him. What ought he to do?

An abyss of unfathomable doubt engulfed him. Was Luna indeed an agent of the Evil One as she said, or was he his devoted servant and friend? And all the time these clashing thoughts were chasing each other through his weary brain, Isabel, by a caressing movement, was drawing closer and closer to him as he listened to the soft tones of her voice, so different to the authoritative accents of the constable.

"Fie, fie, my dear lord," she was saying, "is it meet that he make of you but a painted image? A phantom in the state? With sorrow and shame your nobles behold it. Can you wonder that the prince hates him? Resolve, by one bold act, to rid yourself of him for ever. Banish him, imprison him, execute him, so that you reign."

The sound of her words still lingered like music in the warm air, when a silver bell sounded in the ante-room, the tapestry before the door was withdrawn, and a page entered, making a profound obeisance.

"Don Juan the King," he said, "the most revered the Bishop of Avila waits without on urgent business of state. He comes as the messenger of the Conde de Luna; he has already conferred with the secretary, Don Diego de Bavena."

At this announcement, the queen hastily left her seat, bowed low to Don Juan, who kissed her hand with the utmost ceremony and led her to the door, where she again saluted him before joining her *dueñas*-in-waiting.

But the words had been spoken, the impression made, and, however Isabel might resent the intrusion of the bishop, she had almost persuaded the king that the days of the haughty favourite were numbered.

Whatever were the faults or the misdeeds of the House of Trastamare, the courtesy of their manners was beyond dispute.

Nothing could have been more inopportune than the entrance of the Bishop of Avila, but Don Juan received him in so royal a fashion he could not for a moment have imagined he was not welcome.

"To what happy chance do I owe your presence?" asked the king.

"Nothing auspicious brings me to your Highness," was the reply, "in place of the High Constable."

"Is he not coming?" asked the king quickly, a look of relief spreading over his face.

"He is not; a most base calumny prevents him. The Conde de Luna is accused of having caused the assassination of Don Alfonso de Vivars. Until his sovereign publicly justifies him, he prefers to retire to his castle of Portello."

"What! Vivars murdered!" cried Don Juan, evincing genuine emotion at the news. "How did this come about? I know he is a violent opponent of the constable, but what grounds are there for suspicion that he is concerned in his death?"

"None that I know of," answered the bishop, "except public report, which is alien to the Conde de Luna."

"But I can give your Grace reasons," cried a voice from within, "if you will listen to me, which you never do," and the Prince of the Asturias stormed into the room.

"Peace! Infante, or speak with more respect," said the king, the whole equilibrium of his gentle character upset by this turbulent onslaught.

Don Enrique was so violent and headstrong, that his father positively dreaded the sight of him when they met, which was not often. Not one jot, however, did this terrible son yield of his insolent bearing.

"Respect to whom respect is due, my lord," were his words, his young face crimson with rage and defiance. "I presume that this holy ecclesiastic (that is the word, though it is nought in this case) is imparting to you the news of the new crime of your favourite. He is ready at getting rid of his enemies; but this time it is done so boldly in the broad face of day the whole nation cries shame. Will your Grace create him to some new honour to reward him?"

As he spoke, the prince looked so furious as he advanced close to his father that the bishop interposed, but in vain.

"It is of no use," he continued, fronting the king almost with menace, "to give you proofs of the guilt of the constable in this atrocious vengeance on an enemy; you would not believe me if I did. But I do not intend to be silent. I shall address the nation, which has already judged him for what he is."

All this time the king had stood silent, contemplating his son with an expression of contempt. He was used to his violence.

"Whatever you say will be undutiful," he replied at last, "and unfitting for a father's ear to hear."

"Yes, if you call it so," cried the prince, not at all impressed by this reproof, spoken with more gentleness than seemed possible. "Until you send that arch-impostor, Luna, to the scaffold, we shall never be friends."

"Then let us remain enemies," replied the king with dignity; "I will do no man's bidding."

But this forbearance only angered the prince all the more.

"The traitor who sold victory over the Moors for a bribe in a basket of figs is then to be let off? Under the walls of Granada he did it, the villain!"

"Be silent, Infante!" cried the king; "you know that story is a lie!"

"By Santiago, I hold it for the truth," quickly replied the prince. "How comes he by such revenues if he takes no bribes? Not this alone, but many. What need has he of twenty thousand freedmen at his heels when he travels—more than your Highness requires? Has he told you, or have you, my lord bishop, his confidant, that the King of Navarre is advancing on Pamplona? By the living God, my father, if you do not banish this upstart I will join with him against you! Think well of it, my lord. I am brave in the field. I stay not at home, toying with a new wife, singing ballads and *romancers*, nor have I poets to amuse me, or Latin books to peruse. But the people will follow me. You and your favourite will be alone, and I shall reign over Navarre, Aragon, Leon, and Castile before you die! Ha! ha!"

With these wild words on his lips, the Prince of the Asturias retired as noisily as he had come, leaving the king, his father, in a state of the deepest dejection. No suffering to him was so great as anger and dispute. Almost rather would he have resigned the crown to his son than endure his sneers. But Luna had always combated this idea vigorously; and now he had married a new queen, and he would like to reign, if only to display her beauty by his side. A feeling of relief came over him that at least she and the prince were not joined together against him, although both were working for the same end—the fall of the constable.

With a deep sigh he sank upon a chair; such violence unhinged him. He could not at once collect his ideas sufficiently to resume his conversation. Then he remembered the murder and the invasion of Navarre.

"Is what the Infante says about Navarre true?" he asked the bishop, who stood respectfully aloof.

"Yes, my lord, they are in force before Pamplona."

"And he will join them," muttered the king; "he will disgrace me." Then aloud, "I pray you, reverend father, to furnish me with the details of this assassination. Am I to understand that the constable is still at Portello?"

"Yes, my lord, he is awaiting judgment."

"Now who will command my armies?" cried Don Juan, driven to despair by all this accumulation of trouble. "Little do they know what the constable is, who seek his destruction! I pray you, good bishop, to retire for to-day. I am indisposed. Go to Portello and take the constable's orders as to the disposal of the troops against the King of Navarre. Summon the constable to hasten to me at once."

"No, my lord, he cannot come before his trial."

"By the holy Santiago! was ever a man so tormented as I?" exclaimed Don Juan, wringing his hands. "I shall have to lead the troops against my own son, if he carries out his rebellious intention. Adieu, my lord bishop. Salute Luna for me. I never missed him so much as now."

Whether the Conde de Luna was really guilty of the crimes imputed to him will ever remain an historic problem. He offered no defence now or before. Either he was too conscious of his innocence, or too proud to justify himself.

At length, pressed on all sides, the half-imbecile king signed the order for his arrest, glad at any price to rid himself of importunity. A body of troops under Zuñiga were secretly despatched to surround the castle of Portello, where he had remained since his accusation.

All these preparations could not altogether escape the knowledge of Luna, but, with a fatality common to great ministers, he despised his enemies too much to take any measures against them.

Within a darkened chamber the constable sits in the castle of Portello; no other guards or alguazils man the walls but such as habitually attend on his person. The magnificence of his household has been greatly reduced, as if in deference to the accusations against him. Until lately the cynosure of all eyes, the dispenser of all honours at court and in the camp, he has come to lead a solitary life.

Lost in deep thought he rests his head upon his hand, sitting at a table covered with piles of parchments and papers, under which lies a naked sword.

The night is gathering around. All the noises of the little town have died out. The bells of the churches have long since been silent; the *couvre-feu* has tolled; the sharp click of the *sereno's* metal stick has ceased to strike on the pavement, and the voices of some late revellers have died away in the night wind.

Still the constable sits on. That the thoughts which so absorb him are painful the furrows upon his forehead show, and the deep sighs which occasionally escape him. At all times indifferent to the accessories of dress, now in the middle of life, the plainness of his attire presents a remarkable contrast to the splendour of the court. His mantle and vest are of black cloth of simplest fashion, and he wears none of those jewels which constitute the habitual insignia of rank.

The beauty of his countenance is remarkable. Long black hair, bright and glossy, curls back from his lofty brow, his features aquiline and pointed, of the true Spanish type, give great expression to his eyes, of a somewhat mystic expression, and the deep olive of his skin brings into prominence the rich jet of his pointed beard and moustache. The lightness of his figure and his slender make, not only impart to him height, but make him appear much younger than he really is.

Nor is there any indication about him as he sits so motionless at the table, under the light of a massive silver candelabra, of that supercilious arrogance which has so greatly incensed his enemies.

Altogether he looks born to command men and to fascinate women. Skilled in every accomplishment of the age, fabulously brave, a type of manly beauty, no wonder that Mary of Aragon succumbed to his power and beauty, in contrast to the feebleness of her husband; nor that Isabel, her successor, believing him to exercise magic arts, shrinks from his contact. But the magic of which they accuse him is in the man himself. Luna is the magician, and his commanding intellect, as of a Titan among minnows, has brought his name down from a remote period as one of the most remarkable characters recorded in history.

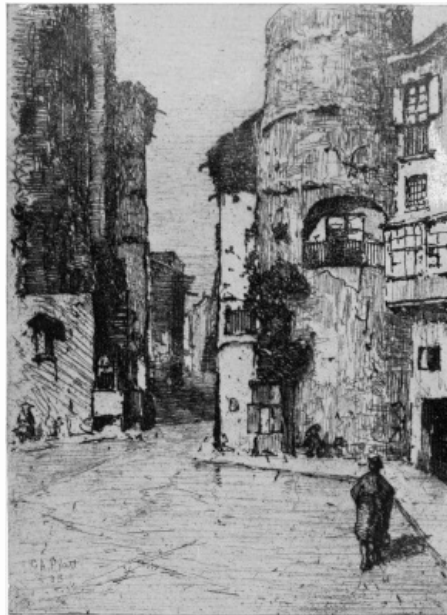


The low oaken door within the keep in which the chamber of the constable is situated opens suddenly, and an aged *jefe* stands before him; behind him is his page, Morales.

Resenting any intrusion on his solitude, he looks up sharply, and his eyes fix themselves on them with a menacing expression.

"How dare you enter uncalled for?" he asks in a stern voice, addressing his devoted servant, Gotor, whose white face and trembling limbs announce some extraordinary agitation. "Why are you shaking so, old man?"

"Oh, my lord! my lord! Listen! The royal



**THE GATE OF BARCELONA.**  
From an etching by Charles A. Platt.

troops have arrived after dark; they surround the town."

"Well! What of that?"

"You are in danger, my dear master!" cries Gotor, clasping his hands and approaching nearer to the table at which Luna is seated. "You must instantly conceal yourself until you can escape. I have a disguise ready without."

"Escape!" cries the constable, rising from his chair. "Never! I have lived in danger of my life for the last twenty years. I care not for the petty plots of traitors whom I will soon hang up as high as Haman."

"But the king, my lord! The king—he has forsaken you. He sends these troops. I know it," put in Morales, coming to the front in spite of the terror with which the constable inspires him. "Hearing the movement in the town, I have been down among the alguazils who accompany the troops. They say that their mission is to seize the High Constable and carry him to Valladolid a prisoner. Fly, my dear master! Let *us* die for you!" More eager than Gotor, the tears stream from Morales's eyes as he dares to advance and touch the Conde on the arm.

"No," answers Luna, shaking him off, and with a stately step turning to pace up and down the chamber. "It is false that Don Juan has himself sent for me. He may be foolish, weak, deceived; but he will never betray his faithful friend."

"For the love of God, believe me!" pleads Morales, again pressing on the Conde, no muscle of whose face had changed.

"That my enemies are below I do not doubt," he replies, "but that they are sent by the king, no voice but his own shall convince me."

"Then, my dear master, we must defend you. Call our slender garrison together, and man the walls with their crossbows."

No reply comes. Gotor hastily turns towards the door, but the impetuous Morales is before him. The heavy panels turn on their hinges, the lock closes loudly in the silence, and Luna is again alone.

What could those devoted servants do against the strong force under Conde de Zuniga? A few crossbows were discharged, some swords were drawn. Morales fell wounded, Gotor was taken prisoner, and the besieged were overpowered.

Zuniga, furious at the opposition, appeared on the platform in front of the castle gate clad in a complete suit of dark armour greaved with steel, wearing his visor down, preceded by a herald bearing the red and yellow flag of Spain.

"In the name of Don Juan, King of Castile and Leon," cries the herald. "Oh, hear, hear him. I, Don Alfonso de Zuniga, leading the armies of the king, command Don Alvarez de Luna, Constable of Castile and Leon, instantly to surrender his person for trial on the charge of foul murder, or the castle of Portello shall be consigned to the flames. Lord High Constable, I call on you, in the king's name, to answer."

"I am here to reply to the Conde de Zuniga," answers Luna, appearing under the arch of a Gothic window

over the gallery, with the same dignity of presence as if he were receiving him as a guest. A blind confidence in his power over the king still possesses him, and, besides, to his haughty spirit, the humiliation of submission to his enemies is bitterer than death.

"Answer me also. What mean you, Don Alfonso de Zuniga, by besieging my castle?"

A tone of offended dignity is in his voice, but he does not condescend to any other expression.

"I come on a warrant from the king," answers Zuniga, displaying a parchment which he hands to the herald, who holds it up extended on a lance.

"The king!" cries Luna, with more passion than he has yet shown. "It is a lie! This is some foul scheme to trap me into your hands."

"Look at that document," cries Zuniga, chafing under the insolent bearing of the constable, and as the sun, which has now risen, shines upon the rocky platform on which they stand before the castle, the brilliant colours of "the castle and the lion," are plainly displayed emblazoned on the sheet. "If you submit," continues Zuniga, advancing to where Luna stands at the casement, "such respect as your rank entitles you to is guaranteed; I swear it on the honour of a Castilian. My orders are to conduct you to Valladolid in honourable custody, and to demand your sword."

"Take my life with it, if you list!" cries Luna, in a voice of bitter anguish, "if my lord and master has in truth given me into your hands."

The one desire of Luna was to obtain an interview with the king. Well did he estimate his craven and helpless nature and that, if once admitted to his presence, the long supremacy he had exercised over him would at once return. The queen was equally determined that so dangerous an interview should not take place. It was the influence of the moment which always decided Don Juan, if any decision he ever had at all.

"I will not admit the Conde de Luna to my presence," was his answer to the messengers sent to Burgos.

"Nor has such a traitor the right to ask it," added the queen—who now habitually took part in the Council of State—standing behind him, her dark eyes flashing fire.

Three long days passed within the noble hall with the *artesonado* ceiling, where Luna was confined in the Casa de las Argollas (the iron links), still entire and standing in the Plaza Viega of Valladolid—three days of terrible suspense, yet with the absolute assurance that Don Juan would relent. He had been guilty of no crime; he deserved no punishment from the master he had so faithfully served. His arrogant nature was maddened under the delay, but he suppressed the expression of his indignation until he should stand face to face with the king.

The long hours passed, no message came. Then, yielding to the alarm of the friends who had gathered round him, he wrote that historic letter, each word of which has come down to us.

"Forty-five years of my life, King Don Juan, have been passed in your service; nor have I ever heard a word of complaint from your lips. The favours you have showered on me were greater than my deserts, and certainly more than my desire. To my prosperity one thing was wanting—*caution*. In the days when you loved me I should have retired from court and enjoyed in an honourable retreat the well-earned proofs of your munificence.

"But I was either too generous or presumptuous, and I continued to lead the state as long as I deemed my sovereign needed me. In this, O King of Castile, I was myself deceived."

So completely had Don Juan's heart at this time been hardened against him, that, resolute for once, instead of a reply, the trial of the High Constable was decided on. The crimes of which he was accused were many. First, the assassination of the Conde de Vivars; then vague charges of embezzlement of the royal revenues, of having possessed himself by magic of the will of the king and of his late queen; of being a tyrant, without specifying any act of tyranny, and of usurping the royal authority, without stating on what occasion.

So irregular and illegal were the conditions of the tribunal, composed of accusers and judges, that it went far toward proving not only his innocence, but a preconceived conclusion against him. He was condemned to death.

Still he could not be brought to believe in his danger. When the sentence was read to him, he bowed his grand head, covered with the glossy curls, and was silent. A defiant smile parted his lips, as, roused from his usual apathy, his eyes travelled slowly round from one to the other of his judges.

Had not a fortune-teller predicted he should die in *Cadahalso*, the name of one of his fiefs? And he was now in prison in Valladolid! But he forgot that, in Spanish, *Cadahalso* also means *scaffold*, and that on the scaffold he was condemned to die.

He was condemned, but the warrant of death had not yet been signed by the king; at any time he might revoke it. The queen knew this and watched him.

The fatal paper lay on a table in his retiring-room, untouched. Long Don Juan contemplated it in silence, absorbed in more gloomy reflections than he had ever felt before.

He imagined he was alone, but the queen, who never left him, was concealed behind the arras.

Poor helpless, foolish sovereign! the atrocity of the act bewildered him. A confusion of ideas troubled his spirit. As he gazed, the letters stood out as if in characters of blood before his eyes.

What! he told himself, as he cast sad glances upon the paper, and pang after pang of real sorrow shot from his inmost soul—the death of Luna, whom he had loved when yet a little child, and his firm hand upheld his tottering steps! The man in whom he had placed implicit trust and whose genius left to him only the luxury, not the cares, of sovereignty. Luna, the brave, the poetic knight, whose romantic career had fired his fancy with the enthusiasm of a second Cid! Luna, his favourite, friend, the support of his throne! The touch of his familiar hand seemed to grasp his own! The superb majesty of his presence became tangible to him as he

paced up and down the apartment, a prey to a waking vision, called up by the vivid image of his life. The constable! Always the constable! Where was he? Would he answer to his call, and make his life pleasant to him as heretofore? For a moment he forgot the existence of the queen. Her blandishments and pleadings faded away as a mist before the sun. His weak mind, unable to battle with such a tumult of ideas, recalled no reason why his great minister should not be before him. THERE, opposite, on the seat where he had sat so many years, and raised his sonorous voice to comfort him. Dead! Condemned! Impossible! It was an evil dream. His hand was already outstretched to rend the parchment, the sight of which had caused him such agitation, and by swift messengers to recall him to his side, when Queen Isabel stood before him.

"What! my dear lord!" she cried, in that melodious voice which she never allowed to reach his ears but as a harmony, laying her hand upon his as she spoke and drawing him from the table where the sentence lay, "can it be true that you hesitate, when my safety and that of the nation are at stake?"

In a confused silence he listened.

Attired in long robes of deepest mourning, which set off the luscious brilliance of her complexion, she looked the ideal embodiment of woe. Her large eyes were dull and veiled as she turned them imploringly on the king, her whole being expressed the most poignant grief. Isabel was perhaps the handsomest woman of her time, and, as such, bequeathed it to her great daughter, Isabella of Aragon. She was at least the most subtle. She knew that as long as Luna lived, the king might escape her at any moment.

Impulsively she grasped both his hands, she laid her cheeks next to his. Thus they stood for awhile; his arms clasped around her in a fervid embrace. What beauty, what devotion was hers! Could he pain this transcendent creature? These tears which lay on her eyelids like roseate dew he could kiss off, but no further cause must be given her to shed them.

"Oh, Juan!" she whispered, her words reaching his ears like ineffable sighs, "why will you spare the criminal whose death I desire? Why will you support a wretch whom every noble in your kingdom would see in his grave? Your very crown is in danger! Your son is in revolt! Your cousin, the Infante of Aragon, favours him; the King of Navarre——"

At the detested name of Navarre and his cousin of Aragon, who were both, in this troubled and odious reign, continually conspiring against him, the king gave a great start. Such energy as he possessed suddenly came back to him.

"If you could prove that, my *Reina!*" he cried, every feature in his face working with passion.

"I can! I can!" she answered; "the proofs are in my possession." Then, gently drawing him towards the table, on which lay the fatal document, she placed a pen in his hand. "Sign, Juan," she said, "*for the sake of my unborn child!*"

Even at that moment his hand trembled so violently that he could scarcely form the letters of his name.

The scaffold was erected in the Plaza Mayor, in the centre of the city of Valladolid, where so many *autos-da-fé* came afterwards to be celebrated under Philip II.

A large crucifix was placed in front of the stage, upon which was spread a carpet of black velvet. The block and axe were there, but partially concealed by the tall figure of the executioner, masked and robed in scarlet.

From the moment he had received the intimation of his doom, the fortitude and composure of the constable inspired respect even among his enemies. With an unmoved countenance he met the high officers of state at the door of the apartment he occupied in the Casa de las Argollas, and listened to the sentence of death and the enumeration of the crimes which were laid to his charge.

Not a word passed his lips. He might have been a statue of stone but for a sad, tranquil smile, and the grave courtesy of the salute with which he returned the reverences of the judges.

Now the trumpets sounded their shrill note, the clarion answered, and the procession marched forward. First the parti-coloured herald with his gay cap and tabard, rehearsing in a loud voice the reasons for which the High Constable was to suffer. A body of men-at-arms followed in two ranks, marching to the sound of muffled drums.

The constable himself next, mounted on a mule. He wore high-heeled shoes with diamond buckles and an ample Castilian mantle reaching to his chin. By his side rode his confessor.

The multitude which thronged the city to see this extraordinary sight was immense; not only Valladolid and Burgos, but from all the burghs and villages about for fifty miles.

As the people gazed open-eyed at the fall of the Master of Castile, much as he was detested in life, murmurs of compassion were heard on every side, as, with an air of dignified leisure, he dismounted, and slowly ascended the steps of the scaffold.

Arrived at the summit, he stood for a moment lost in thought as his eyes ranged over the sea of faces uplifted to his, surging like the troubled action of the waves. The stone colonnade which still surrounds the Plaza was crammed; in every window, terrace, *mirador*, and balcony, the eager countenances of massed-up spectators seemed to clothe the walls.

Raising his plumed hat for a moment from his head, he scanned the multitude come to see him die. In front of the scaffold stood his enemy, Don Enrique, Infante of Aragon, whose efforts to depose Don Juan he had for years successfully combated. Around him gathered a group of nobles of the queen's party.

"Tell my master and yours, Don Juan the the king," he said, speaking in a clear voice, addressing himself to the Infante, "that he may find the crown fit better on his brow now that I am gone, who made it too heavy for him." Then turning to his page Morales, convulsed with grief, who had followed him to the scaffold, bearing on his arm, neatly folded, a scarlet cloak to cover his body after decapitation, his lofty bearing softened and his voice trembled as he spoke: "Alas! my poor boy, you, who owe me nothing, weep for me; and my master the king, who owes me so much gratitude, desires nothing but my death!"

He then took off his hat, which he handed to Morales, together with a ring, placing it on his finger. His

face was perfectly serene and his clustering curls hung upon his broad shoulders, scented and tended as carefully as heretofore.

Standing in front of the platform, the crimson figure of the executioner backing him, the whole multitude was moved to pity, and notable sounds of lamentation rent the air.

That this public testimony of sympathy gratified him exceedingly, the smile that lighted up his face plainly showed. He placed his hand on his heart and again saluted the vast assembly. "No manner of death brings shame," he said, "if supported with courage. Nor can the end of life be deemed premature when it has been passed at the head of the state with probity and wisdom. I wish the King of Castile a happy life, and his people the same prosperity I brought to them."

He then examined the block on which his head was to be laid, loosened the lace ruff about his throat, smoothed back his hair from his neck, and took a black ribbon from his vest, which he handed to the executioner to bind his hands.

After praying very fervently before the crucifix, repeating the words of his confessor aloud, he stood up.

"I am ready," he said; "begin!" And with a movement full of grandeur, he knelt, rested his head on the block, and at one stroke it was severed from the body.



Photo by J. Laurent, Madrid.

QUEEN ISABELLA DICTATING HER WILL.

From the painting by E. Rosales in the National Museum, Madrid.

This took place early in June in the year 1453; nor have Spanish historians ever decided whether his condemnation was justified or not. Few instances occur which present an elevation and a fall so extraordinary and sudden. But it must be remembered that few ministers had up to that time displayed such high gifts for government, joined to an arrogance and ostentation that were in themselves a crime.

Twelve months after, 1454, Don Juan II. ended his long and feeble reign of forty-eight years. Politically, he was an odious king; the deed he had been brought to commit failed to tranquillise the kingdom and will ever be a blot upon his name.

Even in death, she for whose sake he did it—his beloved Isabel, the mother of his son Alfonso and of his daughter Isabel—is beside him. Within the Carthusian Cartuja de Miraflores they lie, two miles from Burgos, on the plain, in one of the most magnificent alabaster monuments of the ornate Gothic style. The variety and richness of the carving are unique; there are nothing like it in florid Spain. The recumbent figures are in robes of state, guarded by sixteen sculptured lions. Doña Isabel wears a high open-worked gown under a coif. In front are the royal arms on an escutcheon elaborately worked, and wonderful niches at the sides are filled with subjects from the Bible. Death more superbly guarded is nowhere else to be seen than in this record of a weak but artistic king.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Enrique IV. el Impotente



HE court is at Segovia, that ancient city perched among the romantic passes of the Guadarramas, north of Madrid, said to have been founded by Hercules. The famous Roman bridge, or aqueduct, one of the wonders of Spain, and borne as the city's shield, joining into the ancient walls at a length of 937 feet.

Although they agree in nothing else, Enrique el Quarto, like his father, loved this quaint Gothic town.

Undutiful and disorderly as a son, he made a bad king. Indolent, licentious, and ignorant, he despised learning and cultivation of all kinds, and was by far the worst of the illegitimate Trastamares, on whom, as has been said, a curse for the murder of Don Pedro really seemed to rest.

Nothing they undertook answered, and it might be said of them, "their names were written in water." Yet, not to be too hard on Enrique, it must be allowed he so far redeemed himself from the nullity of his father as to lead his armies bravely in the usual campaigns against Navarre and Aragon, besides undertaking a ten years' crusade against the Moors, authorised by Pope Calixtus III.; in all which, so long as he was assisted by the friends and advisers of his amiable father, his incapacity was concealed, but his later

campaigns were unfortunate because fought alone. Nor could his love of pomp and splendid attendance blind his subjects to the fact that his court was a very sink of debauchery.

It seems strange, too, that Don Enrique, who, as Prince of the Asturias, had for years stormed against favouritism, now fell into the same fault himself. Not with such a master of men as the Condestable de Luna, but with an obscure and needy adventurer, called Don Beltrano de las Cuevas, with no merit whatever but his skill in deceiving him.

The court is at Segovia. At this moment Don Beltrano is crossing the Sala de Ricebimento in the Alcazar, a Gothic Moresque apartment, with lofty raftered ceiling and cornices of dark oak, the sides splendidly gilt, setting off rows of royal shields and *bandieros*.

He is a striking-looking man of robust proportions, with a florid face of that full sensual type so little seen among the thin-featured Spaniards.

His love of display is apparent by the rich surcoat of satin and brocade he wears, cut in the latest mode and glittering with jewels, a plumed hat placed defiantly on one side of his head.

But you must not call him by his vulgar name of Beltrano, drunkard, dicer, and reveller, but Sua Grandeza el Conde de Ledesma, by favour of the King, or, more correctly speaking, of the Queen. You must also pay a certain attention to him, upstart and braggart as he is, because it was through his agency that the dynasty of Castile came to be merged in that of Aragon, in the person of Isabel the great Queen, wife of Ferdinand of Aragon, and by her marriage constituting the union of the future kingdom of Spain.

As he passes with a step full of importance across the motes of sunshine striking on the marble pavement from the historic window out of which the late king, Don Juan, was let fall, as a child, by a lady of the court, who lost her head for her carelessness, the vulgar showiness of his dress is in conspicuous contrast to the soberly habited grandees of the old school.

All the court, who are awaiting the arrival of the king, draw back respectfully to make way for him. The alguazils and *ballesteros* salute him with reverence, and pages doff their plumed caps as he pauses for a moment under the effigies of the early kings of Castile and Leon ranged on either side, life size, mounted on mimic horses, armed, like their masters, in plates of steel.

"*Ese, es el Conde de Ledesma,*" is buzzed about in whispers of approbation, the great man himself affecting not to notice the stir he makes, but fixing his eyes on a group near the door, who take no notice of him. That they are persons of distinction is evident from the badges they wear and the large attendance of pages and esquires and *jefes*.

As the count passes, he draws himself up and casts on them a supercilious glance of defiance, at once returned with smiles of scorn and derision.

"Here comes that wretch," the tallest of them is saying, no other than Don Pedro Giron, Grand Master of Calatrava.

"Vile parasite!" exclaims another.

"Hush! hush! my Lord of Benevente," says a third; "keep silence, I pray you, until the right moment comes."

"The unmannerly cur!" mutters the Lord of Benevente, as Ledesma disappears into the presence chamber. "He never saluted us. Are we, the greatest *ricosombres* of Spain, absolute in our freedom, and with the right of life and death, to be insulted by such an upstart? If the queen can spare him [at this there is a general laugh], he will doubtless take command in the crusade against the Moors, and be packed off with a bevy of mistresses and mummers to amuse the king. Castile has fallen under the rule of favourites with a vengeance! The Conde de Luna was a *hidalgo*, but this fellow is a low impostor."

"A vile shame!" exclaims another Marqués de Villena, who, with his uncle Carillo, Archbishop of Toledo, is again to be found conspiring in this court as in that of "El Enfermo."

"Presently it will be our turn," says the Conde de Palencia. "Don Enrique is unworthy, and the queen—well, I do not wish to use foul language, but there is only one word to designate *her*. We are all agreed as to the birth of the Beltraneja, your graces." The other two bow, and he continues: "A worn-out voluptuary and eight years of sterility require faith in a miracle in favour of our noble king which he does not inspire. She was christened by the public, as soon as she was born, 'Beltraneja,' after her real father. Don Enrique insists on her succession, to exclude his brother and sister. Why this imposture has been tolerated so long I cannot understand."

"Such vice is disgusting; the palace is nothing but a brothel!" exclaims the fiery Pimentel, Lord of Benevente, ever impatient and outspoken, one of the most powerful lords in the kingdom, with broad lands in the north and an ancient castle within the confines of Leon. "Where is our national honour? The king has forfeited our allegiance. For the sake of a miserable bastard he keeps his sister, Doña Isabel, shut up in the fortress here."

Now the Spaniard is of a silent nature, reserved and proud. His passions are violent and deep; but once aroused he stops at nothing and is capable of extraordinary cruelty and revenge. For one in the exalted position of Pimentel to speak thus of his sovereign, the scandal of his life must be outrageous.

"These are but words, my lord," is the stern answer of Juan Pacheco, Marqués de Villena, the crafty intriguer all through this reign as his namesake was in that of Enrique el Enfermo, and not a whit behind Pimentel in ancient descent, dating from the Moors. He was the man who fought the duel where, *asi cuenta la historia*, he defied three antagonists, as is still to be seen in marble on his tomb in the Parral at Segovia. His commanding presence and haughty bearing imposed even on the impetuous Pimentel. Old in intrigue and conspiracy, he passed by mere threats as empty sound profiting nothing. "You know your remedy," he continues; "all the disaffected are convened to meet at the palace of my uncle, the Archbishop of Toledo, come to Segovia for that purpose. Your graces will not fail?"

"We will not fail," is the answer.

The place appointed for the secret council-chamber was within the precincts of the Cathedral, in the cloisters, where life-like statues of prophets and kings quaintly sculptured stand beside the Gothic arches; Abraham and St. Jaime, and San Fernando holding a ring, and his consort, Doña Beatrix.

The night was dark, and the muffled figures enveloped in ample mantles passed unnoticed through the door with the beautiful triptych carved over it.

In a dark room, lined with a mosaic of wood, with gold pendants on the roof, and lit up with massive silver candelabra, stands the Archbishop of Toledo, dismissed from his office of Minister to make way for Ledesma. This enemy of El Impotente is a man in the prime of life, as turbulent, fierce, and haughty as any feudal baron, his dark eyes sunk deeply in his head, bright with the power of intellect, and unerring and piercing; his ecclesiastical robe hanging loosely about his figure—very different from the dignified churchman who headed the banquet at which the young King Enrique sang as a wandering minstrel.

Prominent among the nobles who arrive is the Conde de Santilana, in the prime of life, with that soldierly bearing so noticeable in Spain among all who hold military command; Giron, Master of Calatrava, bland and mild, but withal shrewd and acute, as behoves one in his prominent position; Pimentel, Lord of Benevente, with strongly cut features on which many a wrinkle has gathered, not from age, but from the headlong impetuosity of his character, which has aged him before his time; the Grand Admiral of Castile, with a weather-beaten face, showing that he has lived a life of exposure; the Condes de Haro, Palencia, and Alba, besides prelates and *ricosombres*, all men of commanding eminence in the kingdom.

But one of the number is yet wanting, the archconspirator, Villena, who, although bearing the name of one of the regents, is of quite a different form. He is in reality the leading spirit of them all, a man tormented by the love of power, to attain which he is willing to meet, unmoved, peril, or even death, with the silent constancy of a Spaniard.

No one hates Ledesma more than Villena, who, like the archbishop, was displaced for his sake; no one has more influence over those assembled here, not even the warlike archbishop, armed as for heaven and earth.

As Villena enters, the importance of his mission is impressed upon every movement as he hastens to salute the exalted company, who rise as he appears, with the utmost expression of formal courtesy, then reseate themselves as he takes his seat at the council table beside them.

"Lords of Castile and Leon," he says, in a full, clear voice, as he rises to speak under the deep shadow of a deep-chiselled altar at his back, "my words shall be short, but my purpose will be long. Let none imagine that private vengeance for the affront put on me by the king, as also on my kinsman, the archbishop, actuates my mind. The existence of the state is at stake. I have a proposal to make."

"Speak!" comes from all sides.

"I need not tell you, Grandezas, Prelates, and Ricosombres, that the infatuation of the king blinds him even to his personal dishonour. The only redress lies in two courses, the dismissal and exile of Don Beltrano, or his own dethronement. Since the birth of the child, not issued from the blood of the Trastamares, but the 'Beltraneja,' the spurious offspring of Ledesma and the Queen, measures must be taken to insure the rightful succession to his young brother. In her cradle this young offspring of adultery was proclaimed Princess of the Asturias and successor to the throne, and is already affianced to the Duc de Guienne, son of Louis XI. of France. No time is to be lost."

"And if Don Enrique will not agree to either of these proposals?" asks the quick-tongued Lord of Benevente.

"Then," replies Villena, with an icy smile, drawing himself up to his full height, "he must be dethroned, and the Infante Alfonso, whom he keeps under observation along with his sister, Doña Isabel, proclaimed king in his place."

Spite of the esteem in which Villena was held, this audacious proposal staggered the assembly. Many voices were heard in opposition, and amongst much confusion each illustrious noble spoke his mind.

"Peace, my lords!" cried Villena, his tall figure dominating the rest. "I speak in my own name and in that of the Archbishop of Toledo; we old ministers of the throne and councillors of state are agreed. Never was a nation sunk to so low an ebb. The rule of Don Alvarez de Luna was glory to it. The proclamation of the Beltraneja as heir has brought matters to a crisis. It is rumoured among those about him that Don Enrique was so anxious for the birth of a child, that, knowing his own incapacity, he has himself connived at this dishonour. Be that as it may, if the king is incapable of guarding his own honour, we will defend it for him."

The marquess spoke with passion. Loud acclamations followed his words. The position was so plain, the risk so degrading to a chivalrous people. Had this child, whom all knew to be a bastard, not been born, the insolence of the favourite might have been tolerated, the licentious life of the Queen Juana of Portugal passed unproved; but in the desperate effort to foist his daughter on the throne, Ledesma had, like a bad player, over-reached himself.

Of the two children of Juan II., by his second queen, the charming Isabel of Portugal, Don Alfonso and Doña Isabel, both were popular in Castile.

All the assembled nobles had not the courage to follow Villena in his bold course, which, if unsuccessful, might bring ruin to them and their families as rebels to their king. All could not reckon on the favour of Don Alfonso, if set at liberty and proclaimed Prince of the Asturias, on which the scheming brain of the marquess counted as the plot. But a sufficient number joined with him. The ardent spirit of the Lord of Benevente, that young warrior of the north, was gained before the archbishop had spoken, who, seeing the hesitation of many, now rose slowly from his chair.

"I, too," he said, and as his full voice made itself audible a religious silence reigned, "as metropolitan of Spain, must raise the standard of the church against this Ahab, who has soiled the sanctity of the cloister by imposing a second Jezebel, in the person of his unfaithful mistress, as Abbess of Santa Maria de las Damas, and banishing the reverend mother to make room for this harlot. Spite of the excommunication of the Church, the Condesa de Sandoval still rules in the chapter. What malediction does a prince not merit who thus traffics with the devil and leads his people into mortal sin? Anathema maranatha on Enrique de Trastamare!"

The archbishop's solemn imprecation carried many who had trembled at the impetuous proposal of Villena. A deputation was named to wait upon the king, at the head of which was the Archbishop of Toledo; but Villena himself remained in the background. As the principal conspirator, it behoved him to be cautious.

"What!" cried Don Enrique next day, when the prelate at the head of the deputation of nobles appeared before him in the Sala del Trono, when, surrounded by his attendant lancers, splendidly equipped, he sat under the *baldaquino* on the chair of state, the whole room glittering with gilded panels, *retablos*, and mirrors, doubling the array of hostile figures before him, "What! you dare dictate to me—your king? How long is it, my lord archbishop, that you, our metropolitan, set the example



FERNANDO THE CATHOLIC.

of disobedience? And you, my Lord of Benevente," as according to his vehement nature, Pimentel had thrust himself more forward than the rest, "who come of such ancient stock, are you not ashamed to appear as a rebel? And you," addressing the rest, "go back to your homes and learn obedience. What! I am to depose my daughter Juana at your bidding?"

A loud murmur here interrupted him for a moment, and the name of Beltrano was distinctly heard.

The colour mounted furiously to the face of the king, who, like all of his family, was a fair and comely prince; his eyes grew dangerously bright, and he laid his hand on the hilt of the dagger at his side.

"My lords! my lords! you try my patience too much!" he cried. "Why am I not to have a child like any one of you? Answer! Especially after—" here his voice dropped. They all knew what he meant, but no one believed it. Like every member of his family, Don Enrique was unable to sustain his passions. The awe inspired by his presence had passed. Every eye was fixed menacingly upon him. Each noble recalled the scandal of his life and the treason of which he was guilty in acknowledging the Beltraneja as his heir. Face to face with the king, the indignation they felt blazed out. No words were spoken, but the menace was clear. Don Enrique quailed before it. He stood before the chief nobles of Castile as his accusers. He was judged and found guilty. The expression of their conviction was instantaneous.

Then the archbishop, with dignified calm, became the spokesman.

"Your Highness, we are here to declare that we will never acknowledge Doña Juana as your successor. Civil war will be the result of your insistence. Be advised, my good lord, not to drive your subjects to extremities. Banish that vile adventurer Beltrano de las Cuevas. Call your brother Don Alfonso, and your sister Doña Isabel to adorn the court, and trust to your faithful subjects for the rest."

The king maintained a stony silence. He had become ashy pale. The hostile bearing of his nobles, the fearless words of the archbishop showed him his danger. Like all weak natures, he was obstinate. Never would he renounce the succession of Doña Juana; never would he dismiss Beltrano. He must temporise, but how? As his eye passed slowly down the ranks of those gathered before him, and he remembered that the most powerful chief among them was not there, a feeling of defeat came over him.

At this moment the Master of Calatrava intervened. The evident distress of the king touched him. Attacked in his life, in his consort, the old feudal feeling came to his rescue as to his chief.

"Cannot some accommodation be found," were his words, "without imposing too severe conditions on the king? Don Alfonso, his brother, can marry the Infante Juana. This would content all parties."

The relief this proposal gave to Don Enrique was very plain. His whole aspect changed. Again he was the reckless prince who lived in the midst of revellers, flatterers, and buffoons, and, dissolute by nature, tolerated the licentious conduct of the queen. Here was the opening he longed for, but dared not propose. An accommodation such as this would give him time to defy this outrageous insolence with arms in his hands and an army behind him.

A grateful smile lighted up his face; like all of his family, with large, prominent eyes under sharply curved eyebrows, long, pointed nose and irresolute lips which gave a shifting character to his face.

"I am ready," he said, "to listen graciously to the desires of my subjects. The House of Trastamare owes much to its supporters. Foremost among them you are, my lord archbishop, and your nephew, the Marqués de Villena, though at the present time one would not say so."

This shaft, levelled at the archbishop, was met with a severe reprimand.

"Your ancestors, my lord, revered the Church. You have defiled it."

"Let us not fall into recriminations," cried the Grand Master Giron, "but rather seek how our conditions can meet the king's desires, and rebellion be avoided."

Then Don Enrique passed his royal word, standing before the throne, his hand in that of the archbishop, that his brother, Don Alfonso, should, with his sister Doña Isabel, be received at court with the honours which were their due; that Don Alfonso, under the guardianship of the Marqués de Villena, should be affianced to Doña Juana, and the Conde de Ledesma be banished to his estates.

Time passed; but, excepting the liberty of his brother and sister, Don Alfonso and Doña Isabel, who were, however, closely watched by the queen and Ledesma, none of these conditions were fulfilled.

Every abuse continued. The Conde de Ledesma lorded it as before in a court where vice and disorder reigned paramount. Don Alfonso was not affianced to the little Juana, and the queen continued to scandalise all Castile. Then the Marqués de Villena decided upon action. This time he would make his presence felt. Don Enrique, fourth of that name, must be dethroned, (1464). His brother Alfonso proclaimed king in his place. On the plains of Avila the nation was summoned to ratify the act.

Avila stands on the summit of a wild mountain gorge, grey, colourless, and arid. Below are piled up heaps of huge granite boulders, as if washed by the water of the deluge. Then, beyond, line upon line of rough and scattered rocks lead the eye to the far-distant horizon.

At first sight the town seems to be but a dolomite crown fixed on the cliffs themselves, until the eye discerns a circle of granite walls, broken at regular intervals by machicolated towers, to this day in perfect preservation.

All is severe, wind-bound, arid. A mountain fortress looking towards the fastnesses over the Escorial. War trumpets, arrows, and catapults seem in the air; lances rattle and blood-stained banners wave. Beneath, the eye ranges over a vast region bounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Guadarrama. A prospect such as is seen nowhere but in Spain, where the plains take the semblance of an earthy sea, in the large lines of alternate sun and shade and streaks of vivid colour that undulate as on the perpetual agitation of the waves.

And now a strange sight presents itself. On a level *vega*, a sheet of green, illumined by the full rays of the mid-day sun, filling all nature with a glorious light, a huge platform rises, on which stands a throne. On it is seated a gigantic semblance of the king, wearing the pointed crown of the Goths, the sceptre in one hand and the sword of justice at his side. No detail is wanting to render it more real. Jewelled collar and chain sparkle around his neck, pearls, emeralds, and rubies glow at the girdle, confining a sumptuous robe under a royal mantle lined and faced with miniver.

In front is planted the banner of Castile, and a whole army of men-at-arms, crossbowmen, and lancers, guard the mimic sovereign as in life.

All those dignitaries and prelates who took part in the conference at the archbishop's are there also, to a man, gathered round the platform, to judge the king.

Beyond, a vast multitude spreads over the plain. The nation has been summoned and it has come, and great disappointment is expressed not to find also figures of the queen and Don Beltrano exposed for judgment, as well as of the king.

Each craft and profession is arrayed in the costume of its order, distinctive at that time. Monks and mendicant friars, Moorish sheikhs from Granada and belted knights stand shoulder to shoulder with ecclesiastics and learned professors, the military orders of Santiago and Calatrava in half-clerical costume, and *estudiantes* from Salamanca, the cockle-shell on their large hats.

Nor are the picturesque peasants wanting from the northern provinces with cloak and staff. Aragonese with hempen sandals, the heavy-mantled Castilian who dreads the cold, and the men of Leon who till the fields.

At the roll of the drum the troops march forward, the colours are lowered, and a solemn Mass is celebrated by the Archbishop of Toledo before the sham king, while martial bands thrill the souls of men.

Then to the blare of trumpets the young Infante Don Alfonso (only eleven years of age) is borne in—a tall, slender boy of the delicate type of his family, brother of Doña Isabel, who declines to appear.

His appearance is announced with deafening shouts, and countless voices welcome him as king.

The archbishop then advances in the midst of his tonsured chapter, the censers around him filling the air with a fragrance more intense than the wild thyme and lavender of the Huerta, and mounts the steps of the platform, the other nobles standing with drawn swords.

A loud trumpet-call sounds a long and melancholy note, prolonged into infinite echoes to command attention. Every voice is hushed, every eye directed to the platform, where a herald in his parti-coloured dress appears, and standing between two alguazils, proceeds to read the sentence of dethronement.

"Ye Castilians, Grandees, Ricoshombres, Prelates, Hidalgos, Esquires, and Citizens, hear, oh! hear! The King Don Enrique the Fourth, being unworthy of the crown, which he disgraces by many crimes, it now pleases God, by the agency of his confederated nobles, to punish him by a well-merited dethronement for the following reasons:

"*He is unworthy* of a crown he cannot hold, for it is the pernicious Don Beltrano de las Cuevas, known as the Conde de Ledesma, who rules Castile.

"*He is unworthy* of the sword of justice, because he administers none among his subjects.



"*He is unworthy* of the throne, because he is a traitor in naming a bastard child of the queen and Beltrano de las Cuevas as his successor, instead of his brother, his rightful heir. Let Henry the Fourth of Castile be therefore hurled from the throne he disgraces."

As the herald retires, the fierce-eyed metropolitan again comes to the front, and, with great solemnity unlooses the glittering crown from the brow of the figure and hurls it into space.

Next the Conde de Palencia mounts the platform and, less calm and collected than the churchman, with a furious gesture tears the sword of justice from its side.

Now it is the turn of the fiery Lord of Benevente, who presses forward, and, with words of passion on his lips, rends the sceptre from the hand of the image.

No sooner is this done than Don Diego Lopez de Zuniga seizes the figure and flings it headlong from the throne to be torn and burned by the common people, who think it a fine thing to fall upon even the semblance of a king.

At the same moment the confederate nobles lift the Infante Don Alfonso on their shoulders and place him on the vacant throne.

To the crafty statesman and intriguer, the Marqués de Villena, falls the honour of investing him with the insignia of royalty. The archbishop does



**View of the Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada, from the Church of San Nicholas, on the Albaicin.**

homage and kisses his hand, followed by each noble in his turn, advancing towards the blushing prince, who had been with difficulty prevailed on to act this part during the life of his brother.

The new king then mounts on a milk-white charger, covered with gold trappings, nets, feathers, and ribbons, and attended by all the confederates (or conspirators, as they might be called), and the vast multitude, passes up the hill to Avila, amid universal acclamations, to the Cathedral, where the apse forms a strong bastion in the city wall. And here he is blessed under the gloom of deeply stained windows, while bishops pronounce warlike orations in his honour to the boom of cannon and the firing of arquebuses.

But an unforeseen misfortune befell the confederate nobles. The young Alfonso died. Nothing daunted, however, they at once named his sister, the Infanta Isabel, Princess of the Asturias, heiress to the crown.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Ferdinand and Isabel



They are again in the great room in the palace of Valladolid, with its low roof and deep embowered casement, looking on the richly carved front of San Pablo, in which Don Fadique dared to avow his ill-omened passion to poor Blanche of Navarre.

As then, it is evening, and a warm atmosphere of tempered light plays about the statues and foliage, tracery and shields of the Gothic façade that rises with so much majesty in front, and flocks of grey pigeons circle round the towers to perch upon the gargoyles and escutcheons of the deeply arched portal, a noble specimen of the flamboyant style.

Now another princess sits in the same place, under the glow of the coloured glass of the casement, glinting in upon the dusky panels of the room, so dim and low and long that the farther end has already melted into shadow.

She is young too, this princess, barely sixteen, and fair-complexioned, with blue eyes and well-marked features, altogether a noble head, set off by the abundant coils of auburn hair, arranged under a jewelled coif; but there the resemblance ends.

Instead of the curly head of poor yielding Blanche, with her Gallic vivacity and childlike eyes full of tenderness to all she loves, this one has a natural dignity about her which at once imposes respect. She is calm and reserved in manners and has a measured speech.

A missal is in her hand, for she is very devout, following the offices of the church religiously, and the Ave Maria has sounded; then she crosses herself and turns to her companion, Doña Beatriz Bobadilla, who rises and kneels at her feet.

Now taken together they are a serious pair. Beatriz, a little older than the Infanta, is already a strong-

minded woman, destined to support her mistress throughout her long career; and the Infanta, carefully trained by her mother, the beloved Isabel, in the retirement of Arevalo, not far from Avila, is possessed of that power of inspiring others with the enthusiasm she herself feels for the noble mission which she is called on to perform.

"It is a great risk. Infanta," Doña Beatrix is saying, "and you are so quiet about it. I am so agitated, I cannot sit still."

Isabel blushes deeply. "How do you know, Beatrix, what I feel? A calm exterior does not always mean a quiet heart. Do you think I can be unmoved the first time I meet the prince I intend to marry, at night, in secret, at the risk of my freedom? Should my brother discover his presence in Castile——"

"As to that, my princess," says Beatrix, "the Archbishop of Toledo who brings him, is answerable. Every possible precaution has been taken in passing the frontier. He travels at night, disguised as a servant, tends the mules, and waits on his companions at table. Better Ferdinand of Aragon than those strangers of Portugal and Navarre, whom the king favours, to get you out of the way of the Beltraneja."

"Yes, Ferdinand," says Isabel, and she closes her missal and leans back in her chair; "that has been my dream. I will never wed with a stranger. Castile and Aragon must be one. No longer the unnatural strife between these two states of the same blood, and God has chosen me as the means." She raises her blue eyes, and a radiant look spreads over her fair face, on which the open forehead and brows are as finely moulded as on her mother's. Already she has all the command of a sovereign about her, spite of her youthful looks.

"But, Infanta, what will that villain Don Beltrano incite the king to do when he hears of this interview? They are in arms in the south, and troops throng the frontier. It is plain that they are alarmed at some news they have received. There is nothing in the world which could so much enrage the king as your affiancing with the Infante of Aragon."

"I cannot help it," answers Isabel. "No duty to my brother stands in the way. When the confederate lords, at Alfonso's death, after his dethronement at Avila, offered me the throne, you know, Beatrix, that I refused it. While he lives, he is my king and my brother. Afterwards, the succession is mine, and I shall defend it to the death. Even if the Infante does not please me, if he agrees to my conditions I will marry him all the same. It is not for love I call him."

"Not please your highness!" said Beatrix, not altogether so high-minded as her mistress, and looking at the matter in a more mundane light as she vividly recalls the image of the man she loves and is soon to marry, one of the stoutest partisans of Isabel. "I can understand hating such a fellow as the Master of Calatrava. I myself gave your Highness a dagger, rather than you should wed him; and would have seen you use it, too, with joy. But, Holy Virgin! Why not Ferdinand? He brings Aragon with him, and is reputed as a handsome prince, prudent and brave; then coming like a knight-errant to rescue his princess at midnight, disguised, a fugitive, in danger of his life."

Isabel's blue eyes fixed themselves on Beatrix, with a curious expression.

"The marriages of princes are not for love, *amiga*. It is possible that the Infante of Aragon may not consent to my conditions."

"Oh! you will forget all that when you meet," cries Beatrix, provoked by her coldness, so different to her own feelings. "You will have a greater power over him than protocols or decrees."

As she spoke, the evening bells rang out sweetly from the towers of San Pablo. Already the grey pigeons had left their perch on the window-sill, and the twilight had darkened the ancient tapestry on the walls, leaving the outline of the two youthful figures defined against the light.

"He cannot be far from Valladolid now," said Beatrix, listening to the bells, "if he left Dueñas as was agreed." Isabel turned pale and sighed. There was a languid action of her hands that told of some internal struggle ill repressed, as the long fingers fell helplessly upon her brocaded robe. After all she was but sixteen. She was playing the part of a royal heroine, but she could not altogether silence the workings of her young heart. Spite of the great soul within her, what she was about to do came over her with dread. Not even her high resolve could reconcile her to that risk of marrying a man repugnant to her. Besides, her serious nature was wanting in that romantic element which, with another girl, would invest the unknown prince with every charm, because he was to appear in an *auréole* of mystery.

The strange phases of her life, which had formed her character to a tone of masculine decision, had not yet developed the softer qualities she possessed. Born in the midst of conspiracy, she had been the toy of each party in turn; now with her mother leading almost a cloistered life, then dragged into the fierce magnificence of an abandoned court. Forcibly affianced to any prince who suited the king's politics, even refusing food and sleep to escape from these toils. Passionately urged by the archbishop to assume the crown on the death of her brother Alfonso, and firmly resisting a proposal she looked on as treason, she had already passed through the vicissitudes of a long and chequered career ere her own life had begun. Yet her innate purity had not suffered from contact with the vileness of others. The secrets of life were open to her. She knew all that should be hid from the mind of an innocent woman, but this only served to form her character to the most rigid virtue and to make of her the great sovereign she became. Isabel's noble qualities had been developed under two stormy reigns—the feeble, humiliating government of her father Juan II., and the vicious violence and treachery of her brother Enrique. Since the death of her father she had never known what it was to be free. Secluded after the dethronement she had been summoned to Burgos as a pledge of the good faith of the king; but what she had seen there had so deeply disgusted her, that she entreated the Archbishop of Toledo, who had charge of her, to make her a home apart with her little court at Valladolid.

And now the moment has come which will decide her life.

All human lights are extinguished. The moon rides high in the heaven in fields of azure light over the sleeping town of Valladolid. The stars have come out one by one, doubling themselves on the shallow waters of the Pisuerga that flows by the walls through woods of light-branched aspen and elm. Not a breath stirs outside the old palace, so quaint in its homely outlines, except when the *sereno* passes and rouses the ire of some whelping cur to bay at the full moon. Looking at that quiet front, who could guess that a drama is to be

enacted within between two young princes, the issue of which will permanently alter the politics, religion, and government, not only of the Old World but of the New, shortly to be discovered by Columbus?

As midnight strikes at San Pablo, the tapestry is withdrawn, and, under the sudden glare of torches and candles, the Archbishop of Toledo appears, leading in the upright figure of the Infante of Aragon concealed in a cloak. With him enters Don Gutierrez de Cardeñas, and, too impatient to wait for the more formal presentation of the archbishop, he presses on Ferdinand in front of the Infanta.

"Look at him!" he cries, "*Ese es*" (this is he), in memory of which the Cardeñas' shield still bears the letters S.S.

The more formal introduction of the archbishop follows.

"Doña Isabel of Castile," says the prelate who has seen so many deaths, births, and espousals in the House of Trastamare, putting aside the too zealous Don Gutierrez, "I bring you your affianced lord. May God and Santiago ratify your choice!"

Face to face they stood—the spouses. He is eighteen, she sixteen; both auburn-complexioned with the old Gothic colouring; she, marble-throated, serene, with the shoulders of a goddess and the gesture of a queen; he, bronzed by exposure, bright-eyed, manly, and portly; already incipient lines gather about his mouth, to harden later into an expression of severity and almost of cruelty; but he is gentle and smiling now, and his soldier-like bearing suits him well.

For a moment he stands confused before Isabel, then casting from him the hooded mantle in which he is enveloped, he kneels before her and kisses her hand.

"Oh! my Infanta, what condescension!" he murmurs, in a low voice, a little sharp in its tone from the habit of command. "I trembled lest I had been too bold. But for the danger to your Highness from the opposition of the king, I should not have dared to approach you thus."

"You are welcome, Infante of Aragon," says Isabel, raising him to her side. "The archbishop has been the agent of my warmest desire in bringing you. It is time, an armed force is about to secure me. That you have happily passed the frontier, I thank God." A lovely colour has overspread her cheeks as she speaks. Her eyes are fixed on Ferdinand in an earnest gaze, which softens into a glance of exquisite sweetness. For the first time in her life she feels the thrill of that love which is to last her all her life, one love, entire and single, which comes down to us in history as the fairest example of wedded bliss. The effect she makes on Ferdinand, bold as he is in act and nature, and knowing that he comes as an accepted suitor for her hand, is altogether overwhelming. Night, darkness, the mystery of their meeting—so unlike a royal wooing—the youthful dignity of her presence, her beauty, far exceeding report, come over him in a passionate longing to carry her away and never let her go.

Nor does the subtle flattery of this hesitation on his part displease her.

Softer and sweeter grows the mild fire of her eyes as she leads him apart and seats herself beside him within the golden *estrada* under the rich velvet curtains, heavy with gold embroideries, of the royal canopy at the upper end of the apartment, out of sight and hearing of the archbishop, Beatrix, and the rest.

At length Ferdinand finds voice and tongue to speak. The landmarks of court restraint, of tyrannous etiquette have vanished in the mystery of this midnight meeting. He forgets that she is a great princess, that their enemies are many and powerful, fighting for a crown. He forgets all, save that she is there before him, a dazzling presence, sprung as it were out of the gloom, and that if she so will it she is to be his wife. Wild words of passion are on his lips, vague, inarticulated, his hands clasp hers, his arm steals about the slender roundness of her form.

Nor, for a time, can Isabel rouse herself from the gentle violence of his touch to say plainly what is in her mind. But, putting him from her, she speaks at last in serious tones.

"That you have won my heart, fair Infante," she says, "I will not deny; but had my love and my duty not been agreed, I would have called you to me all the same."

A shade of displeasure comes over Ferdinand's glowing face as he flashes a look at her of pain and mortification. So young, yet so determined!

"Aye, but you must hear me!" she adds, rising to a sudden sense of her duty. "As future Queen of Castile, not as Isabel of Trastamare, I wed you. To me my country is more than life; its privileges, customs, laws, all must rest as they are; no foreign intrusion will be tolerated. As you will be in Aragon sole ruler, in which I shall in no way interfere, but with all my soul maintain you, so must I in Castile; and Castile, as the most powerful state, must be your country and your abode. Our cordial union will be the strength of Spain, but must be that of two independent states, each ruled by its own Cortes."

"Surely, my princess," urges Ferdinand, who has listened to her with evident embarrassment, "such serious discussions are premature. The Church and custom teach that the husband must be superior to the wife. Even if seated on the throne, a union begun in division may end ill."

"Not in my case," answers Isabel, with decision, "for it would be no union at all. We are met to discuss the terms on which we wed. I have seen too much confusion and anarchy not to speak plain. The union of Aragon and Castile would form the unity of Spain. So would I have it between us two. But cost me what it may (and that your loss would cost me much after seeing you, I confess), I can consent to no division of power; I ask none, I give none. The government of the two lands must lie in the Cortes and the *fueros*, not in our will." Then, noting the dark look which has come creeping like a cloud over his handsome face, she rises. "It is not too late, my lord, to withdraw from our engagement, should the terms I offer you appear to you unjust."

"What!" cries Ferdinand, starting up, "you have brought me to heaven's gate, and now you would turn me out? No! royal princess, not after we have met. Let Spain live in us, and generations of kings to come hail our name."

"Yes, for Spain!" cries Isabel, an inspired look lighting up her face. "For union and for Spain!" Then, as the tears come gathering in her eyes, she trembles with emotion, and her soft voice but ill expresses the

courage of her words. "For myself let me speak. A wife more loving or more humble you shall not find. Husband, father, all, you shall be to me," and she clasps his hand and raises it to her lips, spite of his protest. She is about to kneel to him, but he withholds her in his arms. "But for any ill to my people I will not obey; this must be clear. Too much have they suffered from ill government, extortion, and neglect; now it must be peace."

"What ill could I desire to Castile?" asks Ferdinand, provoked at the insisting of the beautiful girl, who speaks like a legislator, which, if maintained, will cross many projects of his own to the advantage of his kingdom.

"I know not," she answers. "I have seen many strange things happen upon the throne."

"That you have, indeed, my princess," he replies, won back by her gentleness. "Ah! how my heart has bled for you! Nor is the succession yet settled as it should be. The king, your brother will never give up the hope of placing the Beltraneja on the throne. For that reason I desire to carry you straight into Aragon, where I can defend your rights. In that desire we are one."

"Oh! blessed thought!" cries Isabel, clinging to him, as she speaks, with a sense of protection and love she has never known before. "Give me but your royal word, Infante, for the liberty of Castile, and I am yours while this poor heart beats."

"Enchantress!" cries Ferdinand, clasping her in his arms. "Who can withstand you? By Santiago! you have conquered me quite, even against my judgment. I give you my royal word that you shall reign in Castile even as in my heart, *alone*."

"Then with this kiss do I seal it," she answers, breaking out all over into a great joy, and with a cry of rapture she kisses him on the lips.

Then, hand in hand, they left the *estrada* and came down to where the archbishop and Don Gutierrez, and Doña Beatrix waited.

"I am ready, my lord, to wed the prince," said Isabel, with a proud smile. "Give me your blessing. Before you all, I declare that I accept for my consort the Infante of Aragon, whose nobility of soul exceeds all my desires" (1467).

And here it may be noted that the princes were so poor that the archbishop paid the expenses of the marriage and of their journey into Aragon.

At Segovia, Isabel was proclaimed Queen of Castile, December 14, 1474, by her devoted subject the governor, Don Andreas de Cabrera, then husband of her friend, Beatrix de Bobadilla. A noble company of ricoshombres, priests, and alcades, in their robes of office, waited on her in the Alcazar in the Sala del Trono, and escorted her, under a purple *baldaquino*, through the city, mounted on a Spanish jennet, preceded by an hidalgo on horseback bearing a naked sword.

"Castile, Castile, for the king and his consort, Doña Isabel!" cried the herald.

But it was Isabel alone that received homage as



**PORTRAIT OF QUEEN ISABEL THE CATHOLIC.**

queen and proceeded to the cathedral to return thanks. How far this omission pleased Don Ferdinand does not appear, but at least he had espoused the fairest woman in Spain—after her mother—and he possessed her entire love.

Of Don Ferdinand, Shakespeare says, "The wisest monarch that ever ruled in Spain"; but the question is, how much of this "wisdom" was due to the far-seeing policy of his adoring wife and to the illustrious servants who so loyally carried out his will?

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Los Reyes Catolicos



HE union of Ferdinand and Isabel (*Los Reyes Catolicos*) knits mediæval with modern times.

The whole round of royal actors in the dramatic epoch move before us as living characters on the stage of life. Their daughter Juana, *la Folle*, her handsome husband Philippe le Bel, Duke of Burgundy, the parents of Charles V., Katharine, her younger sister, married to King Henry VIII., Philip II., his son Don Carlos, and Elizabeth of Spain, bring us on to modern wars with Alva and Orange, the Armada, and our own Queen Elizabeth.

At once the royal spouses were involved in anarchy and war.

Alfonso, King of Portugal, brother to the bad queen, actually espoused his niece, Juana la Beltraneja, then thirteen, to gain the throne. But he was defeated by Ferdinand, and the standard of Portugal—borne by the gallant De Almeyda first with his right hand, then with his left, when, losing both arms, he held it in his teeth—was torn to shreds. Alfonso retreated, and the Beltraneja, the innocent cause of so much strife and bloodshed, disgusted with a world in which she had found nothing but sorrow, took the black veil at the convent of Santa Chiara at Coimbra.

Ferdinand was, before everything, a soldier. He lived on the battle-field, and the queen, who followed him in all things with devoted love, rode with him in his campaigns, mounted on a war-horse, encased in mail, at the head of her Castilians.

When not engaged in war, she went to and fro in her own kingdom, reforming abuses, founding convents and churches, and enforcing the laws, fallen into much disuse during the riotous reign of her brother; in all assisted by her great minister, Cardinal Ximenes, her friend and secretary, Peter Martyr, Cardinal Mendoza, Garcilaso de la Vega, and, alas! be it added, by her fanatic confessor, Cardinal Torquemada, whose influence brought about the creation of the tribunal of the Inquisition, "To unite more firmly," it was said, "Church and State, and to discover and extirpate all heresies, Jews, and unbelievers from the kingdom" (1480).

Two such sovereigns could not long leave the Moors in undisturbed possession of the third of Spain. The north of Africa (Barbary) was theirs, with Sicily and, afterwards, Naples. Ferdinand loved conquest for itself, and, to the pious mind of Isabel, the conversion of the Moslem was a duty direct from God. But as they, with a dogmatism equal to her own, despised the Castilians as unlettered boors, and ridiculed their religion, nothing could solve the difficulty but a cruel war.

Nor was a pretext wanting. The tribute of twelve thousand golden ducats, paid by the Moors from the time of San Fernando for permission to inhabit the land of Spain, was refused; and the brave knight, Don Juan de Vega, was despatched from Cordoba to demand the cause (1478).

And this leads us to the poetic city of Granada, successor in learning and civilisation to Cordoba of the Almoravides, vermilion-walled and rich in running waters, snowy *patios*, domes, peristyles, and filigree porticoes glowing with rainbow tints, where Moslem knights waylaid pearl-crowned sultanas, and turbaned sheikhs clasped jewelled fingers.

Granada, a name of infinite suggestion in all ages. The Moslem capital and the heart of Moorish Spain. The fastness of the Alhambra rearing its ruddy buttresses aloft over the land. The plaza of the Bivarrambla, the centre of tilt and tourney, the pillared bazar of the Alcayceria, gay with eastern wares, the narrow Zacatin strewn with the ducats of Oriental wealth, the walled-in fortress of the Albaycin commanding the frowning gorge of the Darro, the two gardens of the Alamedas, each with its dashing rivers, backed by the eternal snows of the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

What a world of beauty! The Vega, emerald green, with orange groves and pasture, *huertas* and *carmens*, showing between, where cool airs waft from woods and gardens; the Xenil, like a blue ribbon, wandering to the sea by precipices and defiles, eloquent with song under the heavy tread of hostile hosts; the pale line of the Elvira mountains to the west, and arid sepia-tinted range opposite, to be called in our own day "the last sigh of the Moor," and the airy palace of the Generalife perched on high among dark cypress groves, backed by the naked outline of a brown hill, "The Seat of the Moor," under which Boabdil still is said to sit.

By the gate of Elvira Don Juan de Vega entered Granada with a small but well-chosen band, the great banner of Los Reyes borne before him by a herald. And so stern did he and his Castilians look, and so haughty was their carriage, that the Moors, though they hated them, let them pass unchallenged.

As they traversed the narrow streets of Los Gomeles, they passed by the great mosque, now the cathedral, and many palaces, the sound of water ever in their ears, so abundantly is the city supplied.

Nor did Don Juan fail to notice, in his passage, that the city was in a complete state of defence; the walls, of tremendous strength, manned and furnished with the heavy artillery of the day, the outposts guarded by deep ditches, and the Moorish soldiers many and well equipped with steel morions, chain armour, and stout scimitars at their side.

They enter the Alhambra by the three great arches of the Gate of Justice, one within the other, bearing the talismanic signs of the hand and the key, which no one has ever explained, and pass by the rude stone where the Moorish kings administer justice. Challenged by the Moorish guard, a parley ensues as to the errand on which they come.

"To deliver the Catholic sovereigns' message to the King of Granada," replies Don Juan, proudly. Upon which the black-bearded Moslems open the massive doors onto a narrow road, with sharp angles to baffle an enemy, a road only for horses and litters, the walls orange-coloured and glowing. And so they follow on to the broad platform where the *alcazada* (keep) rears its majestic front with quatrefoil arches, bright with gaudy

tiles, in the centre of a wondrous group of vermilion towers, each with its tradition of battle and carnage, to the *patio* of the Alberca, a marble-lined court, bordered by canals and fragrant hedges of myrtle and orange, an arcaded frontispiece at one end, and at the other the sun-dyed walls of the ancient tower of Comares.

And here it must be noted that the Alhambra is a fortress following on round the crown of a broad hill rising over Granada, and is entirely formed of fortified walls and innumerable Moorish towers of extraordinary solidity and various sizes, covering a vast platform divided into arcaded courts of exquisite beauty, and that there is no solid building at all, but lovely suites of halls following on, formed to the taste of an Oriental people living in the open air.

Don Juan is received with much formal courtesy in the court of the Alberca—where the water cisterns are guarded by low hedges of sweet shrubs—by the sheikhs and emirs attending on the king, a glittering band of dark-visaged eunuchs. By them Don Juan *alone* is led to the tower of Comares, through marvellously worked arches dropping with golden stalactites, a vista of vestibules of scarcely earthly beauty, panelled and embroidered in patterns of roses, bosses, emblems, borders, and arabesques all in pale Oriental shades of red, green, and blue; a scene of enchantment utterly bewildering to the simple mind of the Castilian knight. Then under more snowy arches, set with filigree edges, as of gems, into the Hall of the Ambassadors, glowing with gold and deep azure, with open-pillared balconies overhanging the precipitous banks of the Darro, giving a glimpse of outer splendour to the sombre walls, to prepare the mind of the stranger for the awful presence of Muley Hassan, seated upon a golden throne, inclosed by screens and hangings of jewelled embroideries fringed with pearls. Gold and silver tissues lie at his feet, and at his back a divan of dark heads, dazzling white turbans, and plumed casques with trembling gems; a vaulted *artesonado* dome over his head radiant with stars scintillating in a ground of crystal and tortoise-shell.

As the good knight, nothing daunted, stands forth in glittering armour, before the old king, under a battery of hostile eyes, he speaks his message in a loud, clear voice:

"I come, O Caliph of Granada! from the sovereigns of Castile and Aragon, to demand the tribute due, for the permission to occupy the land of Spain, conquered from your ancestors by San Fernando of Castile!"

As he listens, a bitter smile curls Muley's bearded lips, and his hand seeks the handle of a jewelled dagger at his side.

"Tell the Spanish rulers," he says, in a voice tremulous with passion, "that the sovereigns of Granada who paid tribute are all dead. My mint coins nothing but dagger-blades and lances!"

War—bitter war—spoke in these words. Nor did the haughty bearing of the turbaned court belie the sign.

So Don Juan accepted it, but he was too discreet a knight to permit this impression to influence the lofty courtesy of his departure, as, with fitting salutations, he returned, filled with amazement at all the wonders he had seen.

Nor was the impression lessened as he passed through the Court of Lions, followed by a band of swarthy attendants, black-skinned Ethiopians and Nubians, naked but for a white cloth about their loins, and noted the giant forms of the marble lions filled with leaden pipes, which support the double basins, to the verge of which the fountain rises; the Arab porticoes and pavilions around the court, light as air, and range upon range of snowy arches, worked with the fineness of a chiselled cup.

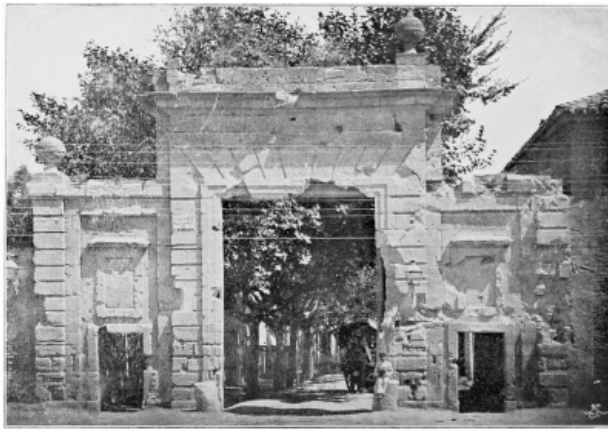
If architecture at all, an Oriental fantasia, utterly unreal! the splendour of the Hall of Justice, of the Abencerrages, which follows on either side, with long vistas of many-domed halls opening into other *patios*, where violets, roses, and orange-trees blaze in the light, entered by portals glowing with brilliant mosaics, a low arch, specially pointed out to him by a noble Moor, more courteous than the rest, in the Hall of Justice, as leading to the place of execution. Whether intended as a hint to him of his danger, or of the swift course of justice towards the condemned, did not appear. At any rate, Don Juan remained perfectly unmoved; he had confessed before he started, and his life belonged to his sovereign—but when he was joined by a flippant emir, oiled and combed, who ventured to enter into an argument against the Christian faith, and especially the folly of believing in the immaculate conception of the Virgin, forgetting all the prescribed bearing of an envoy, he dealt him a sounding blow on the head with his sheathed sword.

In an instant a noise like thunder swept through the court, and the long lines of white arcades, at the back of the pavilion, were darkened by masses of Africans, black as night, stolid, passionless, their silver breastplates and long earrings shining on their dark skins, carrying immense clubs, studded with brazen nails. In advance the captain, the fatal bowstring hanging on his arm, and his eyes turned to obey the gesture of command to torture or to slay.

But Muley Hassan, better instructed in the usages of courts, instantly sent orders to respect the person and freedom of an ambassador while in his court; and so Don Juan departed safely by the way that he had come.

The night attack on Jaén followed the defiance borne by Don Juan—a cruel onslaught on a defenceless town, the fierce old Muley Hassan turning a deaf ear to all remonstrance.

This was succeeded by the no less cruel assault of the sovereigns on the castle of Alhama near Granada (described in the ballad *Ay de mi Alhama*), by Ponce de Leon, Marqués de Cadiz, one of Ferdinand's most valiant captains; and the long Moorish war, destined to last ten years, began in earnest.



THE TOWN GATE OF THE CARMEN AT ZARAGOZA.  
(Left as a permanent memorial of the siege.)

## CHAPTER XXV

### The Siege of Granada



FERDINAND, to whom war was a pastime, had taken the field with all the pomp and circumstance of a tournament.

But the heroic defence of the Moors had given a much more serious aspect to their conquest than he had anticipated.

Nature, too, was on their side. Save towards the sea, at the eastern extremity of Spain, the whole kingdom of Granada is fenced in by almost inaccessible mountains, rugged and barren, broken by dolomite cliffs and dangerous precipices, descending sheer into rocky gorges and dimly lighted valleys—the sentinels of the impenetrable fastnesses which shut in the Moor.

Few were the tracks upon the mountains, and difficult to find. Narrow the gaps which cleave these tremendous ranges towards the plain. So narrow indeed, and walled in by such natural defences, that any army could be shut out by a small force, and as the Moors were accomplished warriors, and fought with a courage never surpassed, each inlet into the land was defended at the sword's point.

Great had been the vicissitudes of the war of extermination on one side, and of enthusiastic defence of nation, faith, and existence on the other. Years have passed, but the vermilion tower of the Alhambra stands firm, and the Moors come and go in their city with the liberty of free men.

Spite of the fall of Malaga, that great city by the sea, where summer ever reigns, where the *Reyes Catolicos* were very nearly assassinated by a Moor—Loya, Antequerra, and last of all, Baza, besides many castles and fortresses—each with romantic traditions of bloodshed and warfare—Ferdinand is still encamped on the Vega. For thirty days it has been overrun by his forces, and a region once so exquisite in beauty, and fruitful in corn, olives, orchards, and gardens, has become a scene of desolation and ruin.

Now he has just passed the bridge of Peñas, only two leagues from Granada, after a fierce contest—a famous deed in this bloody war.

By this route the Christians have hitherto made raids into Granada, the bridge being capable of strong resistance on either side, from the long, narrow passage raised high on slender arches, and the ruggedness of the surrounding banks.

Now Ferdinand has called a council of war within his sumptuous tent, literally blazing with purple and gold. A plain man in himself, accused even of a parsimony unfitting in a king, he lives in an age of warlike splendour, and politic in all things and wary of the opinion of those around him, he loves the display of magnificence in the battle-field, to strike awe into the enemy, and raise his own authority among his troops.

With a gravity which suits him well, he is seated at the head of a table scattered with maps and papers. Nor is he in countenance or bearing inferior to the famous chiefs and captains around him. His long hair, falling in locks upon his shoulders, is still auburn, though thin, and streaked with grey, his blue eyes are inscrutable, his features set and stern; altogether a countenance which offers an unsolved problem to posterity, as did his character, varying so greatly at different periods of his life.

He is plainly dressed in a cloth mantle, clasped around his neck by a single jewel; on his breast shines a silver cross, as for one engaged in a crusade against the infidels, and his body is encased in steel.

The Infante Juan is at his side. Isabel has borne him several children, but this is the only son, a delicate-complexioned boy, with thin, aquiline features like his mother's, altogether too frail for the rough campaigns in which he accompanies his father, and singularly out of place among the hidalgos, who are ranged according to their military rank around the table.

At the king's right hand is Ponce de Leon, Marqués de Cadiz, a great southern noble, almost as powerful as himself; on the left is the Duque de Medina Sidonia, equal almost in townships, castles, and fortresses to a sovereign, hailing from the south also. Both have performed prodigies of valour in the war. The reckless giant called Hernado de Pulgar sits lower—he who rode into the city of Granada at dead of night, and fixed on the door of the great mosque a tablet with the letters, *Ave Maria*, then departed as he had come before the Moors had time to seize him; the famous Gonsalvo de Cordoba, to become El Gran Capitan, and Viceroy of Naples, in this war flashing his maiden sword, already marked by nature in features and bearing as a master of men; the Conde de Tendilla, hero of Alcala; El Rey and Cabra, and many others as illustrious as the chiefs of Troy, but

with no Homer to celebrate their deeds.

Now the king speaks, first rising and uncovering to salute the Council, then reseating himself, and replacing his velvet bonnet upon his head, in all of which formalities the Council follow him in profound silence.

"My lords," are his words, "we are met here to decide as to the course of the campaign. Spite of individual acts of courage, Granada is unconquered. The walls are strong, and Boabdil's general, Mousa, a leader of prudence and renown, vaunts that he will drive us out by avoiding fixed battles, and harassing our armies by perpetual skirmishes in the mountains, and ambushes on the plain. Noble captains and companions, this cannot thus continue; it is a blot on our arms."

Loud sounds of assent come from all round the table. Several of the great soldiers rise to reply, but, seeing that Ferdinand is prepared to continue, sit down and listen with reverential attention.

"The important post of the bridge of Peñas is ours, gallantly gained" (again voices rise in subdued acclamation, and again die away), "and by the complete desolation of the Vega, we may in time starve the city. But, alas! my lords, this is a work of years. Too long already for our fame have we lingered here. The obscure city of Granada is not the only place where the flag of Spain should be unfurled. But," and as he proceeds, his brows knit, and the subtle look of an unscrupulous intriguer comes into his clear blue eyes, "there are other means beside the sword by which the prudent general conquers. As the lion in the fable disdains not the assistance of the fox, so do I, for my use, keep myself informed of all that passes in the Alhambra. Treason, my lords, will open the gates of Granada to us better than combat."

The king's voice drops. He waits to mark the impression of his words among these heroic leaders who, new to the usages of modern warfare, disdain all means but that of the sword. Murmurs of dissent are indeed heard from the Knights of Pulgar and Aguilar, but subdued as towards their commander.

Ponce de Leon rises. "Don Ferdinand, the King," he says, "I have no more doubt that under your guidance we shall stand within the courts of the fortress rising so defiantly before us, than that the sun will rise to-morrow, and autumn succeed summer on the plain. Stratagem is good in warfare, though some among us think otherwise. But beware of deception, your Highness; the Moor is like the Jew in cunning and deceit. Why not call the queen again into the field? Her gracious presence is ever the signal of success, and animates the soldiers. Let the saintly Isabel exorcise the infidels by the power of her faith. At the siege of Baza it was so. Why not now?"

"Bravely spoken, Ponce de Leon," cries De Pulgar, swaying his huge body to and fro with excitement.

"Let the queen appear on the Vega," cries the Conde de Cabra and Lord Rivers, who became so loud in his acclaim, he had to be silenced by those who sat near.

"God is my witness," cries Ferdinand, moved to some show of emotion by this enthusiasm, "that I would willingly ever be accompanied by my beloved consort; but this is a matter which neither her Highness nor any one else can influence. I promise you, my lords, the queen shall join us, and that shortly; but I repeat that her presence touches not the matter in hand."

But the warlike councillors had become so possessed with the idea of the queen's arrival, that for some minutes nothing could be heard.

"It is not for us to judge of your Highness's actions," said, speaking last of all, the young Gonsalvo de Cordoba, whose after career showed that he acted on the same system as his master; "your wisdom is our best safeguard. All means are good to conquer the enemy: to plot while we fight, to undermine while we destroy."

"You speak well, Gonsalvo," answered Ferdinand, smiling, as conscious of the sympathy of a kindred spirit who can appreciate his rare qualities of intrigue.

"I will disclose so much to my assembled chiefs as to say that I am possessed of the sure knowledge that the powerful tribe of the Abencerrages are about to leave the city, in secret, to join our standard."

At these words the whole council rose as one man, loudly to acclaim the king; all save Gonsalvo, who, indeed, stood up like the rest, but had already been informed by Ferdinand of this event.

"The Moorish king," continued Ferdinand, "listening to the suggestions of the treacherous Zigris (always art variance with the rival tribes), believed that his queen was found in dalliance with an Abencerrage in the garden of the Generalife, called the entire tribe together in the Court of Lions, and barbarously butchered thirty-six of their number. Indeed, but for a boy, a *niño*, who gave the alarm, all would have perished. So exasperated are they, that one and all have determined to join our camp. Already after night falls, they will steal across the Vega; the sentries are warned, and Mousa and his master, Boabdil will be deprived of their bravest fighters. What say you to this, my valiant captains?"

"Sir King, we say that we are led not only by the bravest general who ever drew sword" (it was the Duque de Medina Sidonia who spoke, and his armed fist fell heavily on the table), "but by the wisest monarch who has reigned since Solomon. Our confidence in your Highness is complete. Lead on, my Lord, and we follow, even to the gates of hell."

"God willing, I will not go there myself," answered Ferdinand, smiling at his impetuosity, which, indeed, was reflected in all around, "therefore you are safe from such a danger. *Hell*, indeed! Into *heaven*, rather, that we hope to gain in this crusade against the infidels!" and Ferdinand crossed himself devoutly, for, sagacious as he was, and cunning, he was capable of the utmost depths of superstition. "But," he continued, "spite of this important adherence, we must still fight. To-morrow I command a strong detachment to lay waste to the Vega, even to the city walls. Let all come to me who will join it. My lords, the council is ended."

Upon this the knights rose and withdrew with all that grave and stately ceremonial which Ferdinand exacted from his followers. Only the young prince remained.

"Juan," said Ferdinand, casting on him a look of inexpressible affection (deep down in his heart he was a tender man, and this only son was an object to him of almost adoration), "early and late the Infantes of Spain should learn the lesson of policy. It is a new science come in with modern times. Formerly, kings and princes could only fight. Now they use stratagem, which means the knowledge of the balance of power—state against



state, noble against noble, Church against State, all of which would have been formerly despised, but in future will rule the world. You see, my son, these notables of Spain? They are the brightest jewels of my crown, but it is for me, their king, that they should unite their brilliancy. The queen, your honoured mother, and I, have by our entire union formed a mighty monarchy which will descend to you, Infante. But it must be maintained, not by brute force, but by knowledge. Santiago! by knowledge!" and as he spoke he seized Don Juan's delicate fingers and pressed them in his own hard palm. "You look annoyed. Am I too fierce in my words? But by the blessed Virgin! I love you well, Juan. See, I will conquer Granada for you. But not a lizard runs on the painted walls of the Alhambra, but I know it. So in Spain. All is unfolded to me within our joint kingdom. I balance the great nobles as the player does his dice. I am called wise, my son, this is my wisdom." Here he again crossed himself devoutly. "Ave Maria," he said, "the blessed Virgin knows the hearts of men."

Juan listened with a weary attention to his wise father, little consonant with the statecraft to which these lessons tended. He was a soldier who loved to march with the army and cared not for tortuous policy.

"But I love my mother's ways best," said the gentle prince, suppressing a yawn, as he sank back into his chair, "with her Grace all is truthful and open."

"May Heaven bless her!" cried Ferdinand. "She is a noble wife. But it is our *union* which makes the strength of Spain."

In the early summer Queen Isabel sets out from Cordoba to join the army, accompanied by her eldest daughter, Isabel, to become Queen of Portugal, attended by prelates, cardinals, and friars. Her younger children, Juana and Catalina, remain behind.

With her, also, are Beatrix de Bobadilla, now Marquesa de Moya, her loving friend, her secretary, Peter Martyr, the Boswell of her life, her Almoner, the Bishop of Talavera, who, when offered the See of Salamanca, replies he will accept nothing but the See of Granada!!! Garcilaso de la Vega, and her court of dueñas and ladies.

The lovely Infanta has now become a stately matron, exceedingly fair, and somewhat inclined to stoutness, spite of the constant activity of her life. All feel the majesty of her presence, and the sway of the enlightened mind that dictates all her actions. Mistress she remains of herself and of her kingdom, spite of Ferdinand's continual interference. But her love for him is unchanged, although he is far from being the faithful husband she deserves, and she is much tormented by jealousy.

As Queen of Castile she has assisted him in the war to the utmost of her power. The united Cortes of Castile and Aragon have been invoked by their own sovereigns, and each has made independent provision for the Moorish war "*to be pursued to the end,*" as necessary to the well-being of the nation.

It is a lovely valley she traverses on her way from Cordoba to Granada, now followed by the rail. Here is Montilla, famous for its white wines; old towers and castles succeed each other on the hills, and the sunny slopes are lined by vineyards and pomegranate woods. Olive-trees, big as ancestral oaks, make avenues as far as the eye can reach, and the damp wind sounds like music among the reeds at the Puerte del Xenil. At the town of Bobadilla, now a station, the huge mountains of Granada shut in all the plain, impregnable barriers between the Christian and the Moor.

The queen travels mounted on a mule, seated on a golden saddle—a rich kirtle of velvet with hanging sleeves forms her robe, cut square on the neck, and a long mantle and a black hat complete her attire.

As she advances through the defile, the Rock of the Lovers (*Pina de los Enamorados*) opens to the sight, so called because a Christian knight, who loved a Moorish maid, flung himself from the summit to die with her in his arms.

Higher up in the mountains the queen is met by a splendid train of knights, headed by the elegant Ponce de Leon, courtly as he is brave—indeed, from his actions in this war he has been named the second Cid—and Lord Rivers, the English volunteer, mounted *a la guisa* (meaning with long stirrups), wearing over his armour a velvet cloak and a French hat and feather, attended by pages in silk, and foot soldiers.

The earl, as eccentric as he is brave, bare-headed makes a reverence to the queen, which she returns, at the same time graciously condescending to compliment him on his valour in the siege of Loja, further condoling with him on the loss of his two front teeth, knocked out by the hilt of a Moorish scimitar.

"But Earl Rivers might," continues Isabel, in her soft voice, bending on him the calm lustre of her blue eyes, recorded as such a beauty in her faultless face, "have lost the teeth by natural decay, whereas now their lack will be esteemed a glory rather than a shame."

To which the earl, bowing to his saddle-bow, replies that he returns thanks to God for the honour her Highness has done him in allowing him to meet her; that he is contented, nay, even *happy*



THE HARBOUR OF CADIZ.

in the loss of his teeth seeing that it was for the service of God and of her Highness; for God having given him all the teeth he possesses, in depriving him of *two* has but opened a window in the house of his body, the more readily to observe the soul within.

As the royal cavalcade approaches the great gonfalon of Spain, the queen makes a low reverence and passes to the right hand, awaiting Ferdinand, who appears in state, armed *cap-à-pie* in mail so wrought with gold it seems all of that metal—a snowy plume waving over a diadem on his neck, a massive chain, the links inwrought with gems of the rough workmanship of Gothic times when everything was ponderous, mounted on a chestnut charger, and attended by the Christian knights. But as they approach each other, these royal spouses, in the presence of the army and in a hostile land, it is not in the guise of mutual lovers, but as allied sovereigns that they meet. Three formal reverences are their salutation, the queen taking off her hat as Ferdinand approaches and formally kisses her on the cheek. He also kisses his daughter and blesses her, and so they pass into the camp to the lofty tent prepared for Isabel. In the centre of the camp, not, indeed, a tent, but a pavilion in the Oriental taste, formed of sheets of cloth of gold, divided into compartments of painted linen lined with silk, each compartment separated from the other by costly arras. Lances make its columns, brocade and velvet its walls, and it covers such an extent of ground as might have been occupied by a real palace.

All lay in profound repose, the gorgeous pageant was over, the shades of evening deepened, the stars came out serene in that large firmament, and lighted up the streets of tents, gay with banners and devices, where the camp-fires burned.

Alone, the queen had not retired to rest, and was offering up her fervent prayers for the success of the war and the safety of Ferdinand. In an instant a vivid and startling blaze burst forth beside her. The tent was in flames. The light materials fed the fire. She had barely time to escape from the burning embers falling about her, and to rush to her husband's tent. Into his arms she cast herself—the valiant queen for a moment all the woman—in her alarm.

"The Moors have done this!" cried Ferdinand, as he listened to her confused account. "They will be on us. Let the trumpets sound to charge," and hastily wrapping himself in his *manto* he made his way through the blazing camp to command his forces.

But no Moors were there. The towers of Granada rose white and placid in the night. The only light, the beacon fire in the high outpost of the Vega. No sound came from the city. For a moment the thought of magic floated through Ferdinand's mind. He was superstitious, and the Moors dealt much in necromancy, but it was evident that in its course the fire was associated with the queen (whether by purpose or accident), and he was resolved to take advantage of this to rouse his indignant army to action.

"Heaven," said he, as his knights came rushing round him, "has saved the queen. Let this danger to her life break up the camp and lead us to the solid walls of Granada. Let us lodge her safely within the walls of the Alhambra. Woe to the Moslem and his wiles!"

At these words lances rattled and swords leaped from the scabbard.

"Woe to the Moslem!" echoed from every side.

With the morning light a vigorous assault was made, and a fierce battle fought among the charred wrecks of the smouldering camp. But Ferdinand's cold and sober policy was principally bent on restraining the fiery spirits he commanded. Mostly he contented himself with skirmishes and closing all the issues through which provisions could reach Granada.

It was the accident of the fire which led to the building of Santa Fé (the city of Sacred Faith) in the Vega, as a permanent refuge, to convince the Moors that nothing would turn the Christians from the conquest.

The ruins of Santa Fé still remain on the slope of a line of low hills opposite Granada, close by the castle of Rum or Roma, granted by Ferdinand VII. to the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War.

At Santa Fé Isabel appeared in complete armour at the head of the Castilians. She inspected every tent, reviewed her troops, consoled, exhorted, encouraged, a very Christian Bellona, who carried victory in her hand.

At Santa Fé she met Columbus, and after refusing him what he needed for his enterprise, sent after him, when he had crossed the bridge of Peñas on his return, and consented to find funds for his departure to the New World.

Now nothing in the siege was so fatal to the Moors as the building of Santa Fé.

While their enemies were revelling in the plenty of the land the supplies of the city were cut off. Autumn brought them no crops, the Christians spoiled them; all their sheep and cattle were lifted, and famine began to be felt.

Then Boabdil, who had succeeded his father, Muley Hassan, called together the heads of the city—the alcaides, dervishes, alfaquis, and imams of the faith, within the great Hall of the Ambassadors, where his father had sat. By his side his mother, Ayxa la Horra, just middle-aged, of commanding stature, in long, ample robes, worked with jewels, her dark hair shaded by a turban diademed with gold—and asked them, “What is to be done?” At the momentous question every face grew white, and they who had fought so many years so manfully, hung their heads and wept.

For a time no voice answered until an aged alcaide rose and with a faltering voice uttered the word “*Surrender!*”

As with one voice all joined in: “*Surrender!*” echoes up to the domed roof, glittering with crystal damasked in deep-coloured wood—the arabesques and the fantastic devices echo it, the fairy-like arcades bordered with orange and lemon-trees carry it on to the women’s quarter beyond the Court of the Alberca, where wails and shrieks repeat it.

“*Surrender!*” sounds from the towers upon the cliff down to the deep valley of the Darro where the bubbling waters foam.

“*Surrender!*” is carried by the winds into the narrow streets of Granada, where want and famine stalk, tangible to the eye in sunken faces of famished men.

“*Surrender! Yes!*” cries the aged alcaide, taking up the word. “Alas! we have no food. None can reach us since the armed walls of Santa Fé command the place. We are 200,000 young and old. We are all starving. Of what avail are the Alhambra walls? The Christians are at home, well defended. Allah has willed it. Kismet! It is done. We must surrender.”

They know it, these hard-visaged Moslems sitting round on ancient seats, hiding their eyes under their vast turbans, swarthy warriors grizzled with toil, and silken, effeminate courtiers, and the imperious queen standing erect, her arms folded on her breast, yet resolute to the last.

Meanwhile, Boabdil, calm but ashen, eagerly scans each face, but speaks not. Then the fierce Mousa, the most valiant of all the Moorish knights and they are many, starts to his feet.

“*Surrender!*” he shouts, in a voice like a clarion. “Who dares say that word is a traitor. *Surrender* to whom? To Ferdinand, the Christian king? to Isabel, his slave? They are liars, invaders, gjaours! Death is the least evil we have to fear from them. *Surrender* means plunder, sacking, the profanation of our mosques, the violation of our women, whips, chains, dungeons, the fagot, and the stake. This is *surrender!* Let him that has a man’s heart follow me to the Christian camp. There let us die!”

But the words of Mousa brought no response. Boabdil el Chico yielded to the general voice, and the venerable dervish, Aval-Cazem, was sent out to Santa Fé to treat for terms with the Catholic sovereigns.

Alas! Then came a night of mourning and of wailing, as the sun went down over the Alhambra in clouds of blood.

Within the walls where they had been born and lived, there they would linger! Among those enchanting courts, beside gushing fountains, the song of birds, the scent of flowers. The soft shadows of pale groves, and those painted halls, the very picture books of history and of song.

Now, all is to be abandoned. The royal treasure packed, the inlaid walls stripped of their hangings, the gold vessels set with pearls, the carved platters for perfumed water, the turbaned crown and royal robes and garments woven in Persian looms, the accumulated treasures of centuries, unknown to the outer world, unspeakable, garnered in the lace-walled recesses of the harem.

At break of day all must depart into a cold and arid world—the stately Sultana, La Horra, and Boabdil’s large-eyed queen, in robes of death and mourning, bearing ashes on their heads, followed by all the pomp of an Eastern court. Guards, slaves, mutes, and eunuchs, passed out of the gate of the Siete Suelos, the conquered city sleeping at their feet, while on the opposite side, by the Gate of Justice with the mystic hand, rode in a dazzling company of Christian knights, lighted up by the rising sun—Aragonese and Castilian horsemen with round casques, knights in chain-armour rattling their spears, gold-tabarded trumpeters, men-at-arms and arquebusiers with hedges of lances and bucklers, led by the primate of Spain, bearing in his hand the silver cross to be planted on the signal tower of the Vega.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### The End of the Moors



T the end of the Alameda, outside Granada, there is a bridge over the Xenil, opening from a broad and lofty avenue of elms. How gay it is! The murmur of the green-tinged river! The soft, warm wind among the trees, the borders of old-fashioned flowers! How majestic the infinite whiteness of the range of the Sierra Nevada backing all, a smooth, pure world lost in a firmament of blue!

Beyond is a road along which carts and coaches roll, a dirty, muddy country road, leading to Motril, and from that to the sea, passing through barriers of mountains.

A mile or so on, a little chapel, dedicated to San Sebastian, lies to the right, close on the road. You might pass it a thousand times without notice, it is so dark and small. Yet, homely as it looks, there is no place in all the range of history more sacred than this spot.

It is the 2d of January, 1492, when Boabdil el Chico, King of Granada, mounted on a powerful war-horse, rides slowly forth from the Alhambra by the gate of the Siete Suelos. We know his face, from a portrait in the

palace of the Generalife—a sad-expressed visage, as of one born to ill-luck, swarthy-complexioned, with coal-black hair under his turban; and we know too, that at his special request, the gate of the Siete Suelos has been walled up from that day, and so remains, encumbered by huge masses of masonry, over which time has cast a softening hand in trails of vine leaves and low shrubbery.

Slowly he descends the hill by a winding path still existing, cleaving the steep ravine, very stony now, and difficult to traverse, and passing by high walls (to be called henceforth the *Cuesta de los Matires*), crosses the bridge over the Xenil, gallops down the road, and draws rein before the chapel of San Sebastian, then a mosque.

His very dress is recorded. A dark mantle over an Eastern tunic of embroidered silk, a regal crown attached to his turban, and in his hand two keys. (Thus he is represented on a stone carving in the Capilla Real in the cathedral.)

Before the little mosque, *Los Reyes Catolicos* await him. They are also on horseback: Isabel rides a white jennet, richly caparisoned. Her grand head bound by a jewelled coif, forming a regal coronet, her face radiant, her queenly form erect.

Ferdinand is beside her, with a sparkle in his cunning eye, which the rigid canons of courtly reserve cannot master, so triumphant does he feel.

Beside them is their young daughter, Catalina, to become wife of Henry the Eighth, and her gallant brother, the delicate Infante, lately knighted by his father upon the battle-field, and around, a brilliant group of valiant knights: Ponce de Leon, browned by the long war, the faultless-featured; Gonsalvo de Cordoba, that king of men, who, young as he is, has been entrusted with the negotiations with Boabdil; Medina Sidonia, of the noble race of Guzman; the Marqués de Villena, Fernandez, Cifuentes Cabra, Tendila, and Monte Mayor.

Behind press in three hundred Christian captives released at the signing of the treaty, besides bishops, monks, cardinals, statesmen, veterans, grown grey in war, Asturian arquebusiers, Aragonese sharpshooters, lances, banners, battle-axes, croziers, crosses, and blood-stained trophies, all backed by the red walls of the Alhambra towering on the hills.

Hurriedly dismounting from his horse, the unhappy Boabdil would kneel and kiss Ferdinand's hand, but he generously forbids it. Then the poor humbled monarch offers the same homage to Isabel, who also graciously declines it, a wan smile breaking over his haggard face, for in her hand she holds that of his little son—detained as a hostage at Sante Fé—whom he seizes and embraces.

And now the moment has come when he must deliver up the insignia of royalty, and, with the natural dignity which so rarely forsakes an Oriental he tenders the keys of the Alhambra.

"Take them," he says, "you have conquered. Thus, O King and Queen! receive our kingdom and our person! Allah is great! Use us with the clemency you have promised. Be merciful as you are strong!"

At these words, uttered as by a dying man, Isabel's great heart melts, and her eyes fill with tears.

Not so the astute Ferdinand. With difficulty he can suppress his joy; he knows too well the crafty part he meant to play with Boabdil and his kingdom, and his appealing words grate on his ears.

But, suppressing these feelings, "Doubt not, O King!" is his reply, "the sanctity of our promise, nor that by a timely submission you should suffer. I give you our royal word that our Moslem subjects shall find equal justice with our own."

Ferdinand then hands the keys to Isabel, who passes them on to her son, Prince Juan, who in his turn gives them to the Conde de Tendila the new Alcaide of Granada.

Then, in breathless silence, the glittering group await the signal which is to make the Alhambra theirs. Isabel, her hands clasped in silent prayer, Ferdinand, casting anxious glances to the fortress-crowned hill. Behold! in the clear morning light, the silver cross borne by the Bishop of Salamanca blazes from the citadel, the red and yellow flag of Spain beside it, fluttering over the crescent banner, which is slowly withdrawn. One great shout of triumph rises to the skies; trumpets sound, artillery booms, and to the voice of the shrill clarions comes the cry: "Santiago! Santiago! for God and for Spain!" and the pious queen, hastily dismounting, enters the little chapel beside the road (that morning become a Christian church), to celebrate a solemn *Te Deum* to the warlike music of fifes, flutes, and joy-bells.

Such is the chapel of San Salvador on the road to Motril, the Arab walls untouched, the altar, a rude Mithrab, under a Saracenic arch, still standing, an incrustated dome overhead, edged with a coloured border, the whole a little circular interior of fit proportion, and honeycombed niches at its sides. On the outer wall an inscription, in old Spanish letters, sets forth that:

"On this spot King Boabdil met *Los Reyes Catolicos*, and delivered to them the keys of Granada; who, in memory of their gratitude to God for overcoming the Moors, converted this mosque into a chapel, in honour of San Sebastian."

The sovereigns enter the city towards nightfall (dreary in that season of January, for Granada is a mountain place), the shadow of tossing plumes and glancing armour falling on fields of snow, which deaden the tramp of the war-horses and the passing of arquebusiers. But the bells ring out



Photo by Valentine.

TOWER AND HOTEL OF SIETE SUELOS, THE ALHAMBRA, GRANADA.

triumphant in the dark air, and penetrate into the deepest recesses of the Moorish *patios*, where every Moslem has shut himself up in black despair.

“There was a crying in Granada  
 When the sun was going down;  
 Some calling on the Trinity,  
 Some calling on Mahomet.  
 Thus cried the Moslem while his hands  
 His own beard did tear:  
 ‘Farewell! farewell, Granada!  
 Thou city without peer!  
 Woe! woe! thou pride of Heathendom,  
 Seven hundred years and more  
 Have gone, since first the faithful  
 Thy royal sceptre bore.’ ”

At the door of the great mosque, the same on which the harebrained knight of Pulgar with his fifteen companions as wild as himself had fixed the tablet with the words *Ave Maria*, they halted. Like the chapel, it had been hastily consecrated. Here the sovereigns offered up prayer and thanksgiving.

In what part of the present cathedral did this occur? At what is now the high altar, or within the Capilla Real?

Did any wandering spirit whisper into the ear of the still beautiful queen, in the swell of the triumphant anthems which rise to celebrate her fame, that there she would lie entombed with Ferdinand by her side?

The first interview of Columbus with the queen took place in the middle of the Moorish war, when all available revenues were absorbed.

It was the Andalusian Fray Perez de Marchena, who sent him to Santa Fé, recommending him to the Bishop of Talavera, a learned prelate, at that time confessor to the queen and shortly to become Archbishop of Granada.

It was Talavera who presided at the council of Salamanca, before which Columbus exhibited his charts and detailed his projects.

Like Galileo, he was rejected as a vain dreamer, not altogether free from suspicion of magic.

A second time he came to Santa Fé, and boldly expostulated with Isabel on her backwardness.

“Her refusal,” said Columbus, “was not in consonance with the magnanimous spirit of her reign.”

The great queen was touched at the rough sincerity of his words.

“I will assume the undertaking,” was her reply, “for my own kingdom of Castile. I will pawn my jewels if the money you raise is not sufficient.”

The box or casket, with a gold pattern, which she gave him, is still preserved in the sacristy of the cathedral at Granada. He returned it to her filled with virgin gold, “As admiral, viceroy, and captain-general of all islands and continents in the western ocean,” titles which descended to his son.

The memory of Columbus (or *Colon*, as he is called in Spain, a name continued in his present descendants, the Duques de Veragua) is perpetuated at Seville by a large flagstone let into the marble floor in the centre of the cathedral.

*A Castilia y a Leon  
 Nuovo Mundo dio Colon,*

is the motto. On either side the rude outlines of two small caravels are cut, models of the vessels in which he started from Palos in Andalusia in search of the new world.

In shape they resemble Grecian triremes without the bank of oars. A raised stern bears a square metal lantern as a night signal, and floating at the prow flies the flag of Spain.

On the deck appears the outline of a giant mariner wearing a broad sombrero, which *may* represent Columbus, in a thick coat, and with a telescope to his eye.

Within the Capitular Library are his books of reference, neatly annotated in his own clear hand, and a chart drawn by himself on parchment—a rude sketch of the American seaboard and the surrounding ocean, with soundings for sunken rocks; the course of winds, tides, and currents specially noted, the parchment partly blurred, as if by marks of sea-water.

Gazing at these relics, so neatly precise, and finished with the care of a man who knows how to wait with the patience of genius, a tall form rises before the eye, fair-complexioned, thin-faced, blue-eyed, and grey at thirty, such as Queen Isabel saw him, sitting at the poop of his little vessel, his eyes fixed on the chart, issuing orders to his helmsman to steer into unknown seas, while around him a mutinous crew gathers, calling on him to turn the rudder and sail home.

Time after time this happened. The sailors mutinied and threatened to throw him overboard. Time after time his dignity and eloquence mastered them, until that wild cry of "*Tierra! Tierra!*" broke from the masthead, as the advancing waves gathered on the shore of San Salvador.

On his return from his fourth voyage, his constant friend and protectress, Isabel, was dead!

This was the last drop in the cup of suffering to a broken-hearted man. His robust constitution broke down, and he sank into a premature old age.

At Segovia, where the court was, he presented himself to Ferdinand, but obtained nothing but empty words. He actually lived on borrowed money until his death.

His son and heir commuted his claims, which were enormous and unreasonable, into a large grant of land and the title of Grandee of Spain.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### Death of Isabel



THE country between Salamanca and Valladolid is very flat, the finest corn-growing region in all Spain. Now a railway passes through it, and when the summer sun blazes on the thick shocks of wheat, they glisten as with living flames, while the crisp, hot wind passes fluttering by. As the sun sinks, a dazzling ball of fire, into banks of intense crimson, the shadows of the after-glow fall long and dark. Nothing but the horizon between earth and sky; a land, boundless, monotonous, reflecting the stubborn will of the nation. The only kingdom in Europe which has retained its mediæval character for good and bad, simple, grand, immutable as its great plains!

Passing the small station of Vento de Baños, the ruins of an ancient castle rise to the sight. It is built of small red bricks, tempered to a pale hue by time and sunshine, and the lofty walls broken by solid towers and bastions. From its low position the height seems great, and for this same reason the walls are of enormous strength.

This is the Castello de la Mota, built for Juan II. in 1444, and here his daughter, the great Isabel, has come to die.

It is not age which is killing her, for she is only fifty-four, but sorrow has done its work upon her tender heart.

Child after child has been taken from her. First, her only son Juan, barely twenty, always delicate, dying of a fever in the midst of rejoicings for his marriage with a princess of France. Vainly did Ferdinand, who had rushed to his side at the first symptoms of danger, break the news to her gently by letter, describing his gradual decline after he was really dead; but the shaft struck home.

"Never," says Peter Martyr, "could the bereaved parents speak of him."

They laid him in a sumptuous tomb in the Dominican church at Avila.

Even after the lapse of so many centuries their love appears in the minute care with which each detail of his marble monument is wrought. The calm, pure, upturned face of the boy, so delicate and young, the light regal circlet on the rich curls of hair, the simple folds of drapery, the small shapely feet, and thin, long hands; the iron gauntlets, placed on one side to show that he was knighted by his father in the field.

The mere artistic beauty of the work is forgotten in the anguish of the parents, who used to sit for hours in two stalls opposite, where they could gaze down on the effigy of their son. A picture of lonely



Photo by J. Laurent, Madrid.  
A GENERAL VIEW OF RONDA.

grief sweeping the chords of passionate sorrow to all time.

Then her daughter Isabel, Queen of Portugal, whom she loved with all her heart, died; her other daughter Juana, married to Philippe le Bel of Burgundy, is mad, and now a mortal illness has seized herself.

The queen is reclining on a couch, for she cannot sit up, in a vaulted hall divided into various rooms by thick screens of tapestry. Not far from her is an altar, on which the sacrament and various relics are exposed. The glare from the lighted tapers falls on that once lovely countenance with a cruel glare. She is greatly changed. The soft blue eyes have become too prominent, the face has lost its delicacy of outline, the skin its clearness, and the grey locks which have replaced the abundant meshes of her auburn hair are gathered under a thick coil.

Nothing but her inherent majesty remains, and that unalterable expression of calm which has distinguished her all her life, as one ready to meet good or bad fortune with an unmoved mind.

As she lies, the great pendants of the gilded roof falling above her head, and escutcheons and badges bordering the walls round—everything bears the token of the joint names, Ferdinand and Isabel, entwined and interlaced. In every detail of the furniture it appears. The heavy carved chairs bear it, the table before her, on which stands a crucifix, her illuminated missal, and the finely wrought silver *casserole* with strong essences to revive her.

Her eyes have closed in a light slumber, for she is very weak. Now she opens them with a smile, and fixes them vaguely on the setting sun, streaming in through the narrow Gothic casements which open into the great court. Then a sudden look of anxiety comes into her face.

"Hiya Marquesa," she says, addressing her friend Beatrix, who has never left her since her illness, "what news of the king? Have despatches arrived from Don Gonsalvo de Cordoba at Naples? Where is Peter Martyr?"

"Here, your Highness," answers her secretary, entering at that moment with a bundle of papers in his hand. "A great victory has been gained by Gonsalvo on the Garigliano. The French are driven out of Naples."

"Ah! Is it so? I have ever esteemed him a hero. But the king! Where is he? When will he return?"

A silence follows. The queen's countenance falls.

"His Highness was last heard of at Gerona," answers Martyr, "with the army."

"War, always war!" says the queen with a deep sigh. "Once we rode out together in the field—I wonder if he misses me!" Here she paused. "Beatrix," she continues, seizing her hand and wringing it in her own, "I see by your face that something is amiss; the king's absence, what does it mean? My body is indeed weak, but my heart is strong. Conceal nothing from me."

"His Grace," answered Beatrix, making a sign to Martyr not to speak, "is safe with the army at Perpignan."

"And where is the Princess Juana?"

At the mention of her daughter's name anxiety and distress are plainly visible on her face.

"She has left the castle" (at these words Isabel grows deadly pale), "and she refuses to return unless she can leave at once to join the archduke in Flanders."

"Who attends her?" asks Isabel, speaking quickly.

"No one. She escaped alone. But her suite has been sent from the castle."

"Now Heaven protect us!" cries the queen, greatly agitated. "Martyr, call to me here the Archbishop of Granada."

"My dearest mistress," says Beatrix, kneeling beside her and tenderly encircling her with her arms, "these fancies of the Infanta will pass. She is madly in love with the archduke when she is with him."

"Alas! It is not returned," interrupts the queen. "He only cares for the succession, not for her."

The arras was now raised, and the dignified figure of Talavera, Archbishop of Granada, stood before the queen.

For years he had been her confessor, and to her death remained her devoted friend. Raising herself on her couch with difficulty, Isabel kissed the jewel which he wore in his episcopal ring, then sank back exhausted on the embroidered pillows at her back.

"I pray you, my Lord Archbishop," she says in a low voice, "by the love you bear me and the king, to bring home to the castle the Infanta Juana, who has escaped. Tell her from me—to whom she will not listen in person—that it is her health that alone prevents her from joining her husband. As soon as she has recovered from her confinement she shall start, should the archduke still refuse to join her in Spain."

Talavera stood before the queen, his eyes cast on the ground. He knew that she was sending him on a fruitless errand to Juana, who, short of main force, would obey no one. He knew how near her extravagance bordered on madness, and that this knowledge was breaking the queen's heart, but the weakness in which he found her forbade his reminding her of it.

"What I can do I will; your Highness may rely on me," was his answer.

"Go—go at once!" cried the queen, trembling all over, and almost rising to her feet. "Would I had strength to do it, but—but," and she sank back, almost fainting, into the arms of the Marquesa de Moya.

"Now we are alone," she says, in a voice perfectly composed, having swallowed some strong medicine given to her by Beatrix. "Believe me, Hiya, I am deluded by no false hopes. The end is near. Fain would I see the end of these troubles. Oh, that Ferdinand were here!"

"Shall an express be sent to his Highness?" asks the marquesa, endeavouring to master her grief.

"No, no!" cries Isabel, in a full voice, rousing to a momentary excitement. "The king is commanding the army in France. Let me not trouble him. He knows that I am ill. He might,"—she stops—a deep sigh escapes her, a look of inexpressible longing comes into her eyes, fixed on vacancy, as if, by the spell of her great love, she would draw him to her. Even to Beatrix she would not own the anguish she feels at his prolonged absence.

"Before I die," she continues, "I must see the succession settled, and the king named Regent. All the documents are prepared. I should have liked to tell him so face to face. I will not command his presence, but I

would that he had come to me as he was wont."

Something in the pathetic insistence with which she spoke of him told an ill-assured mind. She dared not look at the marquesa, for she felt she would read her thoughts.

Had Ferdinand changed? There was agony in the thought, but it was there. That strange prescience, which so often accompanies the passing of life into death, had come to her with a revelation more bitter than the grave.

Worn with a life of constant hardship (in peace or war she was ever by his side) and broken by the loss of her children, although of the same age, she had become old while he was still comely enough to wed another wife. She knew it. Martial, erect, the fire of youth still gleaming in his eye, and his masterful spirit still unsubdued.

That others had pleased his fickle fancy she knew to her cost, and had suffered from pangs of silent jealousy. But that he would be absent from her dying bed did not seem possible.

So united had they been, the thought that he might survive her had never troubled her. Now it was a phantom she could not banish—Ferdinand alone!

Would another sit beside him in her place?

"We wait sorrowfully in the palace all day long," writes the faithful chronicler of her life, Peter Martyr, "tremblingly waiting the hour when she will quit the earth. Let us pray that we may be permitted to follow hereafter where she will go. She so far transcends all human excellence that there is scarcely anything mortal about her. She can hardly be said to die, but to pass into a nobler existence. She leaves the world filled with her renown, and she goes to enjoy life eternal with God in heaven. I write this," he says, "between hope and fear, while the breath is still fluttering within her."

But the faithful pen of the secretary does not record the presence of Ferdinand at her side.

She was mercifully spared the knowledge of his inconstancy.

Already, during his campaigns, he had seen the young princess of eighteen, Germaine de Foix, cousin of the King of France, whom he married in such indecent haste, a volatile beauty, brought up at the dissipated Court of Louis XII. For her sake (had she borne him children) he would have severed the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, a greater insult, if possible, to the memory of the queen than his marriage.

Indirectly, this marriage was the cause of his death. It is the busy pen of Peter Martyr which records it.

In order to invigorate his constitution, he placed himself in the hands of quacks. A violent fever ensued, and (in 1515) he died at Granada.

The body of Isabel had already been brought there from the Castle de la Mota and interred within the Capilla Real.

Side by side they lie, the royal spouses united at least in death; the truant Ferdinand yearning for the presence of his first love, and at his own request laid beside her.

There they rest on two alabaster tombs, a marvel of exquisite workmanship, erected to their memory by their grandson, Charles V.

A frigid smile yet lingers on the queen's marble lips as she turns her head lovingly towards Ferdinand, who, as in life, looks straight out, determined and warlike as he ever was. Both wear their crowns.

Beside them, on another monument, is their daughter Juana *la loca* (mad), her fickle Burgundian at her side. Their countenances are averted, their position as uneasy as was their life. Troubled lines wander over Juana's form, and the comely head of Philip sinks on a marble pillow in selfish rest.

The four coffins lie in a narrow cell beneath; "a small place," said their grandson, Charles V., "for so much greatness."

A lofty Gothic portal separates the Capilla Real from the cathedral by a *reja*, or iron gates, elaborately worked.

No gilded canopy obscures the figures from the light, so royal is their simplicity, and when the radiance of the eastern sun lights up the vaulted ceiling, knitted into broad bands into bosses, leaves, and borders, and pictures, golden *retablos* and sculptured saints stand out on the subdued splendour of the walls, the effect is as a scene of actual history, enacted in what was once the great mosque of the Moors, conquered by the arms of these dead sovereigns (*Los Reyes Catolicos*) and converted into this Christian sepulchre, as a triumph to last as long as the world stands.

THE END

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#### FOOTNOTES:

[A] The Balax of the Red King was given by Don Pedro after the battle of Navarrete. This is the same "fair ruby, great as a racket ball," which Queen Elizabeth showed to Melville, the ambassador of Mary Queen of Scots, and which he asked her to bestow on his mistress, which she refused, and it is the identical gem which adorned the centre of the royal crown of Queen Victoria.

[B] "To the memory of the greatest sinner who ever lived, Don Juan de Mañara."

#### Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:

with an angry scrowl=> with an angry scowl {pg 43}

stiuated to the north of Burgos=> situated to the north of Burgos {pg 210}

misundertand the astonished glances=> misunderstand the astonished glances {pg 227}

so daintly apparelled=> so daintily apparelled {pg 239}

Ese, ess el Conde de Ledesma=> Ese, es el Conde de Ledesma {pg 270}

the seige of Baza=> the siege of Baza {pg 316}

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