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GRANADA



After-glow: the Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada from the Albaycín

From a water-colour by A. M. Foweraker, R.B.A.

GRANADA

MEMORIES, ADVENTURES, STUDIES
AND IMPRESSIONS : BY LEONARD
WILLIAMS : CORRESPONDING MEMBER
OF THE ROYAL SPANISH ACADEMY : AUTHOR
OF "THE LAND OF THE DONS;" "TOLEDO
AND MADRID; THEIR RECORDS AND RO-
MANCES," ETC.

WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTO-
GRAPHS AND A FRONTISPIECE IN
COLOUR BY A. M. FOWERAKER, R.B.A.

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
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MCMVI

What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within this little span of life by him who interests his heart in everything, and who, having eyes to see what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can fairly lay his hands on.—STERNE

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In a Garden of Granada

I

A Journey South

THE Catalan poet and satirist Bartrina has declared that the substance (as distinguished from the vehicle) of a man's talk is self-sufficient to disclose his nationality. Let me suggest that another index is the way a man performs his travelling. The French traveller giggles, the Spanish traveller jabbbers, and the English traveller growls. Precisely on the evening which took me southwards to Granada I snatched a golden opportunity of putting this observation to the test, for all three nationalities were represented in my own compartment of the railway carriage, tenanted by growling English, giggling French, and jabbering Spaniards. But since I had listened to one of Maura's speeches

the day before, and had no sympathy with growling, jabbering, or giggling at that moment, I tipped the guard to find me a solitary seat and bundled off elsewhere.

Night in La Mancha. Night in all quarters of the world is desolate, but in La Mancha! A sultry night in August. The passage of the train creates a current of hot air: even the moon shines fire. A lonely land; a land of vacancy or units, this La Mancha. One vast, unbounded blot upon the ample breast of Spain. No map denotes the limits of La Mancha. You may begin or end it where you please. One chalky desert, extending anywhere and everywhere. At infinite distances a single cornfield, a single vineyard, a single mound, a single stream, a single sheepfold, looking, with its huddled, amalgamated inmates, like a creamy and gigantic mushroom; a single tree, upsprouting from the sunburnt, wind-swept, mirthless prairie to prick the torrid heaven; a solitary windmill by the way; a solitary cottage, one-doored, one-windowed, with possibly a solitary tenant slumbering in the open, up against the wall. Even the scanty stations are isolated from the villages or towns whose name they bear, seeming to have strayed as far as possible from these, and squatted beside the rails in order, as it were, to take a peep at passing civilisation.

You remember Yorick's definition of a traveller? "The man who either disdains or fears to walk up a dark entry may be an excellent good man, and fit for a hundred things; but he will not do to make a good sentimental traveller." "Well but," you ob-

ject, "this definition is only partial. We see things nowadays with the brain, or with both brain and eyes, or merely with the eyes; but very seldom with the heart. Have you no definition of a traveller generally—of a modern, matter-of-fact traveller, now that sentimentalism is sadly on the wane?" I think I have.

The man who, when he travels by night, remembers to wind up his watch, knows how to travel: he merits, without reserve, the name of traveller. I drew my timepiece forth and found it ticking feebly, hastened to ply the key, and saved my reputation as a traveller by perhaps a quarter of an hour. Then I went off to sleep and dreamed that old Don Quixote was "holding-up" the train. When I awoke, the summit of Despeñaperros was sailing overhead, tipped with pale yellow against a paling sky. Night and La Mancha might have never been. Yonder, suffused with sunlight, lay the olive-groves of Andalusia. The olive is an ugly tree; its shape is mean; its colour, as Rusiñol would say, is that of a faded Venetian blind. Who could aspire to counterfeit the mournful elegance of the weeping willow, the hauteur of the elm, or the rugged majesty of the mountain pine? But the olive! Twist a shred of dingy green paper about an inch or two of black wire—say a straightened hair-pin—and *factum est*. Your hands have proved to all intents and purposes as cunning as those of Mother Nature.*

* Since writing this I find that Arthur Young was just of my opinion. "Descend mountains terraced for olives, which grow well in rocks but add nothing to their beauty; insomuch that cloathing a naked country with this most ugly of all trees, adds nothing to the pleasure of the eye."—*Tour in Catalonia*.

Whatever bards may twitter to the contrary, no olive has ever beautified a land, except symbolically. Yet I was glad to see these olives now. Their presence betokens Andalusia; their history is older than the Flood. Tradition says their parallel or diagonal files and uniform, fluffy aspect suggested first the *madroñera* of the *maja*—that singular, graceful overskirt whose use, unhappily, decreases day by day. Soon other signs revealed “the Land of Holy Mary”—sunburnt fields, with galaxies of scarlet poppy; sunburnt sierras, brown and yellow, melting into blue; dry river channels fringed with prickly pear; snowy *cortijos*; a ruined castle on a hill. A land of peace, though not, alas, of plenty, scarred by innumerable wars, plundered by crafty priests and conscienceless *caciques*,* gnawed by centuries of mal-

* The Andalusian millionaire and potentate, a sordid, gross, unschooled, ill-spoken type, whether he ostentates a title or not, has nearly always made his wealth by usury, or, as he calls it, *banking*. A prominent *beato*, at some time or other he spares enough from his thievings to present a gewgaw to the local “Virgin.” For this his fellow townsmen almost canonize him, while gaping rustics grow doubly eager to confide their scrapings to his pious charge, or pay him twenty per cent. per month for an advance upon their crops. Of course he bends his knees to the Viaticum, kisses the bishop’s ring, subscribes to the clerical newspaper, and frequents mass. “When a man of business,” said Ganivet, “conceals himself in the cloak of piety, he is more to be feared than a Krupp gun.” Indeed, the villainy of any Spaniard may normally be estimated by the fervour of his churchmanship. Perhaps in this respect Spain and Great Britain do not differ very vastly. Reverting to our Andalusian millionaire, he has no energy except for sucking blood, and storms in pretty language against the British, German, French, or Belgian capital and enterprise which fortify the land whose entrails he himself is seeking to devour.

administration. A land whose occupants, through mingled indolence and ignorance, are ever falling backward in the feverish, inevitable race; nonchalant suicides whose best ambition is *gazpacho* and a cigarette—bad aliment and worse tobacco; whose only merriment the twang of the lugubrious guitar. Whenever I visit Andalusia, the same question repeats itself to me. How can a people live upon so little, and live so long?

Yet still the Andalusian peasant smiles and sings. I could hear them from the train—those semi-nasal, semi-guttural *coplas*, thrown to the wind as we throw promises or prayers. And then the colour of the scene—red, and green, and yellow saddlebags and nosebands, flowers by the wayside, flowers in the women's hair. Or what of this? Before the white-washed wall of a cottage a sheet of golden maize spread out upon the road; seated beside the maize a couple of tortoiseshell cats; in the doorway a little old woman with bright silver hair and a pink jacket; and, over all, the sky of Andalusia. Just as the cottage dwindled we overtook a tall mule with two riders, a lad of some fourteen years and a smaller brother clinging round his middle. The latter urchin was nearly naked, and his brown legs shone a perfect *terra di Siena* in the rising light. He might have started out of a picture by Raphael.

The resignation of these Andalusians passes all belief. At one point on our journey a countrified fellow mounts the footboard, but fails to turn the handle, which is stiff. "*Que gracia!*" he exclaims, grinning in upon the passengers, "*what a joke!*"

The spirit of his remark is deeply wise, after the local manner of philosophy. He may or may not lose the train; but at least the sticking of the door-handle is worth a chuckle. According to this standard, nothing is wholly tragic. Unluckily, the converse must be true as well; "their enjoyment is attended even with a sigh;" and hence it is that Andalusian laughter never seems unmingled with tears.

At one of the stations three beggars were labouring along the platform. *Labouring* in two senses. In the first sense they were exercising the labour which belongs to their profession. Whether that labour is better or worse, or worse or better paid, or harder or softer than other of its kinds and ramifications, is not our business at this moment to inquire. And then (*labour* number two) they were, to use the dictionary term, "moving slowly, as against opposition, or under a burden." All the three had seen extended service in contriving income from decay (a feat notoriously beyond the means of many a moneyed potentate), and now were fired with all the art and inspiration of decrepitude. This is a sober truth. The only occupation we exercise with better zest and strength, and larger honorariums as time inclines our bodies and numbs our intellect, is that of mendicancy; some falling back upon the stranger public, others upon their friends, or sons, or daughters. So that in this good world that feeds and shelters all, even senility is marketable; and imbecility, whether in youth or age, conspicuously so.

Returning to the academic as distinguished from the virtual beggars, I say that all these three were far advanced in years. Two were old. The third, almost beyond the range of any adjective, was infinitely older. His face, in *Figaro's* expressive metaphor, might just have been the Wandering Jew's, if that blasphemer had survived from Christ till now. Besides being senior to his fellows, he also was the raggedest and most authoritative; for tatters in a mendicant are positively modish, and only consequential beggars can afford to ostentate them. This beggar wore, undoubtedly, an air of chieftainship, though all the gang were full of varied interest. A statistician would compute for us the quantity of dirty copper which had passed between those thirty thumbs and fingers in the course of, say, a hundred years, showing us in a deft, comparative picture on the column plan, the beggar in the middle, the copper upon one side of him, and the dirt (allowing something extra for the superadded grime of travelled money) upon the other. I wonder which of the piles would reach the highest.

But I am not a statistician; and what amused me most was watching the co-operative system of the veteran three. I found their propaganda admirably planned and admirably executed. Muttering a suitable supplicatory phrase, they crawled before the carriages in solemn single file. If you were looking out of the window, the first would pass you by almost ignored. But then the second came along and called your vagrant notice back, and when the third arrived your hand obeyed the summons automatically. I

watched the case with eager speculation. At every turn they took, the third and last received the fixed attention and the tangible reward.

Three men, I thought (remembering Horatius and his helpers), can surely make a better stand against the universe than merely one; so these associated indigents parade in shrewd alliance their tatters and antiquity as every train goes past. *L'Union fait la force.* Turning to another foreign language; "When you have a good thing," said one of our American cousins, "push it." In this example the iteration of the propaganda proves itself. Debility and dirt compose the goodness. Your young and lusty beggars are at best probationers. What do they earn compared with master-craftsmen? *New* rags are unconvincing and theatrical, nor is the dirt of ages gathered in an hour. You have seen Gringoire on the stage? Did he look dirty? He seems to me a gentleman who has just come out of a motor accident. To *these*, upon the contrary, the dirt accumulated and matured across innumerable lustrums is worth its weight in glory and in gold.

I repeat that the line between beggardom and non-beggardom becomes in many places quite imaginary. Who shall lay down, even to the splitting of a hair, the just and proper definition of a mendicant? Not (speaking of what I know) the historic codes of Spain. True, the *Siete Partidas*, the *Ordenamiento de los Menestrales* of Pedro the Cruel (1351), the *Ordenamiento de Toro* (1369), the Cortes of Burgos of 1379, and the *Ordenamiento* of Briviesca of 1387 — all these provide ferocious

lines or torments for lame-bodied beggars of the kingdom. The city of Toledo even decreed their death.* But how about the soldier and the priest, who positively gutted Spain throughout the Middle Ages? The priest, "founding his temporal estate upon the spiritual estate of the faithful," spends money but does not produce it. Exactly the same remark applies to the soldier. Why should not these be *mendicantes validi*, or, as the old Castilian has it, *balúos*?

It is preposterous to take for granted that the only kind of mendicant is a frowsy wretch who pesters or pleads upon the pavement for a copper coin. How easy it is to show that mendicancy, like death, *exquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres*; infects and exercises in all walks of life, well-nigh without discrimination. The other day a young and beautiful lady of title came to my house to solicit a contribution towards some jewels for a (wooden) "Virgin." I can recall no other instance where beauty in a woman has disgusted and repelled me. What business had this begging dame to set a sensual snare for a spiritual purpose? What did she come to my house to beg for? Money? Not only money. When I asked the maid what kind of a stranger-visitor was waiting in my anteroom, "*young*," I was told, "*and very handsome*." This, then, was what the Countess of — came to beg for.

* "*Por la primera vez darán á cada uno dellos cincuenta azotes publicamente por esta cibdad, é demas que los echarán á azotes fuera de la cibdad: é por la segunda vez que les cortarán las orejas: é por la tercera vez que los mandarán matar por ello.*"—Informe de la Imperial ciudad de Toledo sobre pesos y medidas: 1400, p. 103.

Again, not long ago I asked a Spanish *comandante* to lunch with me at Lhardy's, in Madrid. He came, and brought three friends of his, all officers of the army, like himself, who all sat down and gorged at my expense. Close to the doorway of the same establishment lingers an old blind pauper, who whines at intervals for an *ochavo*. Am I to call this old blind man a mendicant, but not this officer? I will distinguish here. The blind old man, by merely muttering his question more or less into my private ear, left me a loophole of escape. Not so the *comandante*. "I beg," he said, "to introduce my friends, Fulano, Pérez, and Mengano. *Perhaps you will not mind their joining us?*" So in this case the soldier was—the soldier; but only the old blind pauper was the gentleman.

A similar confusion has prevailed at every period of this nation's history. Her former laws attempted vainly enough to point a difference from the moneyed to the pauper mendicant. The shrewd, observant Ganivet remarks, as closely coexistent and connected, a plebeian and an aristocratic beggardon, sketching, in master terms, the *mendicity of the noble*—"the *hidalgo* who gloats over the admirable temper of his sword, and over his imaginary estates, who dreams of grandeur and supports himself upon the crusts collected by his servant." Late in the seventeenth century, a report presented to the Spanish Government declared that it was a matter of the utmost nicety to winnow the indigent from the well-to-do; adding that swarms of beggars were wont to game away their earnings in vaults and taverns, "meddling

with meat and drink, and every other form of vice." Obviously a pauper who leads this kind of life is nothing of a pauper. The same report goes on to say that many of the women mendicants were known to possess "excellent houses, jewels, fowlyards, and money in abundance." A royal *cedula* of August 24, 1540, affirms that the beggars "have their concubines, and lead an evil and dishonest life, with grave excess in eating, drinking, *and other vices.*" The Ordinances of Madrid for the year 1439 provide that no able-bodied beggar is to remain in the city for longer than three days, on pains of a hundred lashes if he go afoot: but *if he be on horseback he is to lose his beast.* Salazar declared mendicity to be "the only trade in which a Spaniard of the seventeenth century would deign to follow in the footsteps of his father and his ancestors, considering it to be the usefulest, easiest, and most unfettered of all occupations." In no country is it so common to be asked for alms by perfectly well-dressed, well-fed people as in Spain. Late in the eighteenth century the Economic Society of Madrid described the same abuse; and assuredly Philip the Fourth grew no less popular when he hung up a bag in the churches of Madrid, enabling his subjects to boast that "they had given an alms to the King of Spain."

Partly from indolence, partly from ignorance, partly from a false appreciation of the principles of human rather than Roman Catholic charity, Spain has at all times viewed the beggar's trade in various of its forms with scarcely veiled complaisance. A proof of this is in the number of her mendicants,

and in the quantity of relief provided for them. Campomanes estimated their total in his day at thirty thousand *true* paupers, and one hundred and forty thousand *idle* paupers. In 1782, Madrid alone distributed in alms two hundred and twenty-five thousand *reales*, and in 1783, including the King's contribution, half a million; all this in a poor, thinly populated, and exhausted capital. Furthermore, a papal brief of March 14th, 1780, empowered Charles the Third to devote a third part of the entire revenues of the Church to almsgiving. Campomanes had previously computed the amount of money lost to the nation by the collective idleness of her mendicants at one hundred and eighty-two millions of *reales* per annum; and Rodrigo Caro and Ortiz de Zúñiga assure us that early in the seventeenth century, when Spain was in her most impoverished condition, the charities of Seville exceeded seven millions of *reales* yearly. Over and over again the prisons of the realm were choked with mendicants; but the State lacked funds to support them, and since they could not be allowed to starve outright, vomited them forth once more upon society.

Accepting for a moment the trite and vulgar definition of a mendicant, it were "a harder alchemy than Lullius ever knew" to point the difference of a moral millimetre between this creature and the Spanish priest; or between the same creature, the Spanish thief or bandit, and the Spanish common soldier at least throughout the Middle Ages and even later. All of those types subsisted on pillage obtained by force or fraud. The Royal Letter of 1540 from

which I have already quoted, complains in bitter language of the hordes of mendicants who roamed about the land "under the guise of pilgrims and of hermits." Indeed, the monks and clergy (mendicants themselves) encouraged the beggar as their most productive agent. The picaresque literature of Spain divides its scope, without the slightest preference, between the beggar and the bandit; and truly the difference is little more than fanciful between the pauper who harries you along the street as he demands your money, and the pauper who claps a pistol to your head and makes the same demand upon the highroad: or again, between the bandit and the soldier-gaolbird, whose only *regular* pay consists in plunder. Such were the Spanish armies in the Netherlands, and the forces sent against the Moriscos of the Alpujarra. These latter would melt mysteriously away between the night and morning, and when their leaders came to look for them were found to be engaged in looting innocent people's property.

Certainly the beggar has proved as serviceable a go-between to the criminal as to the priest. "They pass with ease," says an old account, "from begging to every kind of wickedness." How near mendicancy is to theft or murder is shown by the *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, and similar masterpieces of the picaresque. Nor has the office of the mendicant in Spain been always even nominally prohibited. Spanish towns and cities have frequently provided licences for beggars in return for hire, pretending by this means to limit the privilege of

alms-asking to the strictly incapacitated and necessitous. But here, as ever, roguery contrived to triumph. The licence was exhibited in the form of "bronze insignias," or tablets with "the wearer's name and quality," suspended round the necks of the approved practitioners. In 1671 these tablets bore a picture of the Virgin. But, of course, the beggars made no scruple of selling, or lending, or stealing one another's licences; and very soon the tablets and "insignias" had to be suppressed.

In one of the raciest of his "custom articles," the brilliant Larra describes a number of "livelihoods which do not afford a livelihood"; in plainer words, those petty occupations that lurk perforce upon the border-line of beggary. How often have I seen a Madrid street-porter supplicate relief, although with his coil of rope upon his shoulder. A similar remark is applicable to the flower-girls, who offer divers wares for sale; to the gatherers of cigarette ends; and even to the newsboys: but, on the other hand, the *candeleros* who used to hawk about a light for smokers have disappeared from this capital. Formerly the law prescribed the trades and occupations which it held to constitute mendicity; such as (in 1745, *Ordenanzas de Vagos*, ch. 5), gamblers, drunkards, "those who maltreat their wives without a visible cause," tumblers, ball-throwers, bagpipe-players, exhibitors of magic-lanterns or performing dogs and other animals, and sellers of sugarcane, or of the sweetstuff known as *turrón*.

So, taking one thing with another, the con-

fraternity of Spanish mendicants intrudes on every epoch of Spain's history, engrosses or affects all classes of her citizens. On this account their haughtiness has grown proverbial. Seized with pity for an aged mendicant who used to crawl about Madrid, I once permitted him to come to my house and receive daily a plate of soup and a penny. Not many days had passed before he quarrelled with my servants, complained of the soup (the same which was set upon my table), and demanded, not only an increase of *salary*, but a glass of wine and a beefsteak and potatoes.

While I was busied with these reflections, some stations slipped away. I did not take much notice of them; firstly, because I was absorbed with the preceding observations; and secondly, because no railway-station in Spain deserves a more than casual curiosity. All are identical in barrenness of architecture. Hear how Ganivet describes them. "The railway-station is the symbol of our political and administrative incapacity, although we may console ourselves with the thought that they are not likely to remain long standing; their term of life is marked out for them by their builders; and when a mistake creeps in, we become by so much more the gainers."

Nevertheless, at one of these stations near to Granada—though whether the nearest or the nearest but one or two, I cannot for the life of me recall—a small girl, probably the station-master's daughter, hardly old enough to walk alone, was nursing a toy lamb on the platform. Even an infant's mind is sensitive to metaphor: more so, it

may be, than our own. Gazing from her toy towards the cirro-cumulus of the early morning, "the *borreguitos*," she cried, "O look at the *borreguitos*"; and truly those oval, fleecy cloudlets were not unlike innumerable flocks at pasturage upon an azure plain.


Yet presently, as if the hand of God had taken an invisible sponge and wiped the face of heaven clean, the *borreguitos* vanished.



A Moorish Well near the Sacro-Monte

II

The Sacred Mountain

N a cloudless October morning—one of the finest I recall in any land—I started to walk to the church and college of the Sacro-Monte of Granada. It was a Sunday, too, and the streets were thronged with mass-goers, water-sellers, strollers, pedlars, and every other class of passenger. At the end of the Plaza Nueva, just where the road bends off beside the graceful Mudejar tower of the Church of Santa Ana, a woman was frying at a stall the circular cakelets with a hole in the middle vulgarly denominated *tejeringos* or, more politely and less locally, *churros*. Even in so radiant a landscape this patch of brightness stood out ablaze with colour :

the yellow discs immersed in bubbling oil: the pearly smoke, the bunch of fresh-cut reeds—on which to thread the merchandise—hanging beside the stove. But the woman was (as women surely have the essential right to be) the brightest note of all. A Manila kerchief decked her shoulders; her cheeks and fingers were ruddy with the fire, and I noticed with pleasure and surprise that even the lustre of her jetty hair reflected the azure of the sky.

The way to the Sacro-Monte lies first of all along the Carrera del Darro, where once stood forty Moorish palaces within the health-restoring quarter of the Haxariz. Nowadays some few of the houses wear yet an ancient look, and even many of the modern ones possess a subtle picturesqueness all their own. Sometimes their walls are rose, or tawny, or vermilion; or strings of flaming capsicums are hanging from the window. Upon this morning a girl leant over the railing of a balcony, tapping a tiny foot on Seville tiles embosomed in a multitude of flowers. Her cheeks, caressed by large and flashing earrings reminiscent of the Moor, were flushed with vigour and fresh air. Her glossy hair, as yet undressed, was loosely held by a claret-coloured ribbon; and overhead a canary, whose breakfast she had just provided, shrilled forth her praises from an emerald cage. Before I took my eyes from her a blind man came along, tapping the pavement with his stick. Never in all my life had I so pitied blindness.

Traversing the outskirts of the town I climbed the steeply rising road, and found myself upon the terrace of the Sacro-Monte.

The building itself, erected in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, is hardly worth attention. A chilly church, a chilly college, a chilly courtyard, bordered by a basement and a single storey of chilly corridors. Along these corridors are eight and twenty arches, over which are carved the founder's arms and "the cabalistic star of Solomon, the emblem of the house." Yet though the fabric is so cheerless in itself, it has a southerly aspect and overlooks the lovely valley of the Darro onto the historic caves of "Father Piquinote," and the equally historic *carmen* of the Genoese Pascasio. The canons' residence, between the college and the church, has room for twenty prebendaries and six chaplains. The seminary, which is at the eastern end, harbours a hundred and fifty scholars, clerical and lay. The church, a simply-vaulted structure, contains some paintings worth examination—five by Risueño, and an *Immaculate Conception* attributed to Niño de Guevara, a pupil of Alonso Cano; but the altar, dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, is hideous. At one side is a passage containing a *Birth of Christ*, by Carducho, typical of that artist both in colour and in stiffness; a *Conception*, by Peter Raxis; a *Martyrdom of Santiago*, by Bocanegra; and a *Saint Martin*, by Risueño.*

* A native of Granada, equally distinguished in painting and in sculpture. He stands high up in the second class of Spanish painters; and this, in the land of Velazquez, Alonso Cano, and Goya, is not a little. Risueño was born about the middle of the seventeenth century, and died, according to Cean, in 1721. Raxis was not a Granadino, although he passed a great part of his life here. Bocanegra, a pupil of Alonso Cano, and, like his master, a native of this city, was a fairly fashionable painter of the seventeenth century. The manner of his death was curious.

From this recess we enter the Sacred Caverns of the Sacred Mountain—gloomy and constricted subterranean passages, opening out at intervals into a small, well-lighted chapel. The unusual effect of this suggested to Jimenez-Serrano a pretty and a prettily expressed conceit. He says: “On passing through these galleries dug out between the bowels of the mountain, and issuing therefrom into the pleasant clearness of the chapels, we seem to witness a combat of our inmost thoughts and roam through dismal paths of ignorance and doubt, until we fix our eyes on God, the light of all creation.”*

Now let me tell the story of these caves—a longish story, though full of interest, social, national and psychological—the story of the most astonishing, amusing, and protracted swindle that the world has ever heard of.

In 1588 an ancient tower was standing in the very centre of the city of Granada, close to where we now observe the Sagrario of the cathedral. About this tower old writers, and even comparatively recent ones, have echoed or invented sundry legends, maintaining it to be of prehistoric or Phœnician origin. Echeverría has much to say about a full-length statue of a Roman soldier, discovered somewhere round

A younger rival, Teodoro Ardemans, irritated by Bocanegra's intolerable vanity, challenged him to a match at painting each the other's portrait. The challenge was accepted by Bocanegra, and Ardemans, hitting off his likeness to perfection, proved himself the better of the two, besides completing the picture within an hour's work. The duel, notwithstanding its pacific nature, had a fatal consequence: for Bocanegra, stung by his defeat, took to his bed and died a few days after.

* *Manual del Artista y del Viajero en Granada*, p. 362.

about Granada, and bearing this inscription at the base, *Caius Antistius Turpioni*. "Here," he comments, "we have a famous man called Caius Antistius Turpion, who may have given his name to the Torre Turpiana (such was the usual title of this tower, though it was also called 'the ancient' and 'the uninhabitable') either from having mended it or else from having dwelt in it, or taken it by force of arms." He adds that it was ancient even in the time of Nero.* Another of these silly scribes is Pedraza, who assures us that "erected by the Gentiles," it resembled several other towers standing in his day. But since Echeverría admits that it was also similar to the Puerta Nueva, which still exists, we may be sure that it was merely a Moorish fabric, probably of a defensive kind, and dating from an early period of the Moorish occupation.

On Friday then, March 18th, 1588, the tower was being thrown down to make way for part of the Christian temple. A day later, while carting away the *débris*, the workmen came upon a leaden box, caked over with mud, and which, being opened by the overseer, was found to contain a piece of parchment, a scrap of linen in the shape of an obtuse-angled triangle, and a bone. The parchment was covered with Arabic writing, headed by five small crosses disposed so as to form a single large one. The substance of the writing claimed to be a prophecy of Saint John the Evangelist, presented by Saint Dionysius to Saint Cecil, patron of Granada, upon the latter's visiting Athens. The signature appeared to

* *Paseos por Granada*, vol. i. p. 256.

be autographic, and read as follows: "*Cecil, Bishop of Granada.*"

Pedraza and Echeverría explain that the writing on the parchment formed a kind of cryptogram, chequered with sundry letters in black, and others in red; and that, when the black letters were joined and the red letters were joined, each batch of them was found to form "a clear and current Spanish, as polished as we speak it at this day"; the entire legend constituting a prediction of the end of the world. A transient difficulty was presented by the fact that the Arabic and the Spanish were precisely those of the time of the discovery; until a learned doctor, Lopez Madera, took upon himself to show that the Spanish spoken in the first century and that of the sixteenth were identical—truly a *tour de force* of scholarship. The parchment itself was examined by experts, who pronounced it to be the skin of something, but neither ram, nor ewe, nor goat, "nor any other beast of those that are familiar to us." The relics, says Echeverría, were genuine beyond all doubt. The bone was of the proto-martyr Stephen. The cloth was half of that where-with the Virgin dried her tears at the Passion of Our Lord; and for this reason the Virgen de las Angustias was named *patrona* of Granada—a proud position which she still enjoys. Strange to say, the corresponding half was found, of all places in the world, in America—at the town of Puebla de los Angeles, formerly Tlascalala. Here, once again, the unbiased erudition of Echeverría shall be of use to us. "Possibly," he suggests, "long years ago

America was joined to Palestine by stretches of land where now are straits of water."

The discovery in the Torre Turpiana was rare enough; but rarer finds were yet to come. When the excitement created by the prior event had almost died away; when Vaca de Castro had succeeded Mendez de Salvatierra as archbishop of Granada;* and when the process instituted to classify and confirm the holy rag, and bone, and parchment had dragged its slow length along for several years, a further series of discoveries burst forth upon the pious people of Granada. Just then a favourite entertainment of the poorer citizens consisted in searching the hollows and the hills for buried treasure, not of a spiritual but of a practical description; for times were bad and the Christian Granadinos were terribly put to it to keep alive without the need of work. Upon a certain day in 1594 a common fellow by name Sebastian Lopez, accompanied by one Francisco Garcia, went forth to look for treasure on

* Ramos Lopez awards a tender tribute to the memory of Vaca de Castro's predecessors for their stern destruction of the baths of the Moriscos—"asylums of voluptuousness," as Señor Ramos picturesquely calls them (*El Sacro-Monte de Granada*, p. 18). Years after the Moriscos were expelled, the laws of Spain provided that the scanty remnant of this tortured people were "not to possess an artificial bath in the said kingdom of Granada, or bathe therein, on pain of fifty days imprisonment, two years banishment, and a fine of a thousand maravedis." If the offence (*i.e.*, the bathing) were repeated, the criminal was to be fined double. If he proved to be incorrigibly addicted to ablution, and washed himself yet a third time, he must go to the galleys for five years and forfeit the half of his property.—Francisco de la Pradilla, *Suma de Todas las Leyes Penales, Canonicas, Civiles, y destos Reynos*. Madrid, 1628.

the outskirts of the town, bearing in his pocket a written "recipe" in which he greatly trusted. These were its directions :

"When Spain was lost, a mine of gold that used to lie between Encesa and Cabrera, upon a naked ridge that hath blue stones, was closed within the kingdom of Granada. Within the mine are nine and forty chambers. Its mouth is to the western side ; and in those days they used to draw from it two ounces and a half of gold for every five ounces of soil. This mine belonged to the king Don Roderick ; and when Spain was lost, the miners perished beneath a projecting mass of earth, thrown down at the mouth of the mine in order that the Moors might not avail themselves thereof."

So much for the "recipe." Sebastian, proceeding for a while along the Guadix road, at length drew near to what is now the Sacro-Monte. After scrutinizing the ridge, he came to the conclusion that it well might be the spot referred to in his paper : moreover, some stones on it were slightly bluish. So getting to work he discovered, after digging for a little while, what seemed to be a rabbit-hole. Down this he thrust a stick, but moving the stick from side to side and not encountering a limit to the cavity, he marked the spot and returned to Granada, conveying with him a fragment of cupriferous stone, which a silversmith pronounced to contain a quarter part of copper. Roused by this analysis, which seemed to tally not a little with his "recipe," our man marched back upon the morrow, and resumed his operations with redoubled vigour. Widening the orifice, he

found beyond it a cave with a levelled floor of softish earth, and, digging out a part of this, a large stone, too heavy for a single person to stir, covering the entrance to a second cavern, also made level by a human hand. Two months were taken up with these investigations, until, upon February 21st, one of Sebastian's helpers, by name Francisco Hernandez, unearthed a strip of rotten lead, three fingers broad by some two feet in length, inscribed at one extremity with three lines of clumsily executed Latin letters of cuneiform design, which only with unusual pains could be construed into the following:

CORPVS VSTVM DIVI MESYTONIS
MARTYRIS PASVS EST SVB NERO
NIS IMPERATORIS POTENTATV

On March 15th, 1595, and after its interpretation by two Jesuits, notice of the strip of lead was given to the archbishop, who promptly ordered the searches and researches to continue at his own expense. Pedro de Castro y Quiñones, tenth archbishop of Granada, was the son of Cristobal Vaca de Castro, a prominent Spaniard who had enriched himself as governor-general of Peru, leaving at his demise a handsome fortune. His son, on being appointed to the see of Granada, is stated to have said that he accepted the post with extreme reluctance, admitting of the dignity merely to gratify the king; but, he added, God was sending him to Granada *for some great event*. This *great event* is naturally thought to mean the finding of the famous relics of the Sacred Mountain. However, in fairness

to the prelate's memory it must be owned that although his intellect was all too small, and his credulity all too large, Pedro de Castro was an earnest, charitable, and well-meaning man. He went through life revered and hoodwinked simultaneously. In personal appearance he was, Pedraza tells us, "small of body but great of head." His labours, though often injudicious, were at least untiring. His almsdeeds knew no limit. In the thirty-three years of his prelacy—twenty in Granada and thirteen in Seville—his income amounted to a total of two and a half millions of ducats, of which, observes the same historian, he did not keep one single *real*. He also inherited a large amount of money through the death of his two brothers; but all of this vast fortune went in charity and unselfish works. Even his shirts and robes were mended, so that he might have more to give away. One day his servant ventured to order him a new cassock. When it was brought, "how's this?" exclaimed the archbishop, refusing to put it on; "why hast thou brought me this without my asking for it? Take it away and give it to the poor. Those that I have are good enough for me."*

It is impossible, therefore, to lay upon this generous-hearted man the blame of the disgraceful swindles of the Sacred Mountain. He was, in fact, a victim of his own too trusting nature, as well as of the cruel roguery of others.

This brings us back to the "discoveries." Isidro García, one of the two Jesuits who had declared the

* Pedraza, *Historia de Granada*, p. 266.

meaning of the marvellous strip of lead, visited the cave and exclaimed sententiously, "Here we shall find a mine of saints." His prophecy proved absolutely true. On March 20th, a portion of the earth fell in beneath the workmen's feet, and another cave was disclosed. Next, on different dates and at varying intervals, appeared the whole notorious series of the leaden plates and books. The first plate turned up by the picks was three and twenty inches long by five in breadth, being doubled four times over so as to conceal the writing. The legend, in faulty Latin, as upon the strip discovered previously, averred that in the second year of Nero's empire, and on March 1st, Saint Hiscius, together with his pupils, Turilus, Panuncius, Maronius, and Centulius, had earned the palm of martyrdom upon this holy site, being put to death by burning. The inscription, too long and too ridiculous to quote in full, concludes: "*ut lapules in calcem conversi fuerunt quorum pulveres in huius sacri montis cavernis iacent qui, ut ratio postulat,* in eorum memoriam veneretur.*"

The next plate recorded the similar martyrdom, also upon the Sacro-Monte, of Saint Ctesiphon, called, before Saint James converted him, Aben-Athar, and in the same inscription declared Ctesiphon to be the author of a book called *The Foundation of the Church*, which book, it said, was also in these caves, together with the ashes of the saint and martyr. At this the city grew wild with expectation, and public prayers were offered for the discovery of the precious

† Of course, among a sane society, these three words, "*ut ratio postulat,*" would have sufficed to damn the whole collection.

volume; though everybody, *including the archbishop*, believed that the work would resemble an ordinary bound volume of the sixteenth century. However, when finally exhumed, it proved to consist of five thin, circular, leaden sheets, about the size of the Host, with a cordlike strip of lead thrust through to keep them joined, the whole being enclosed in a leaden case inscribed, "*Liber fundamenti eclesie Salomonis characteribus scriptus.*" Immense rejoicings followed; liberal *pourboires* to the diggers; * and discharge of

* The sum awarded to the treasure-seekers for stumbling first upon the forgeries is not stated. We know that there was a lawsuit between Sebastian Lopez on the one hand, and Juan de Leja, Juan Martinez de Paredes, and Pedro Hernandez on the other. The judgment was in favour of the three companion-litigants, Sebastian being condemned to keep perpetual silence as to the quantity of the reward. Pedraza, *Hist. de Granada*, p. 270.

The archbishop, wealthy, charitable, and zealous to excess about the welfare of the "relics," gave every reason to the treasure-hunters to put their best foot foremost. Pedro Jimenez, who extracted a leaden book on April 22nd, 1595, was rewarded from the prelate's purse with a hundred ducats, and his fellow workmen with fifty bushels of corn, because the book contained "the most essential portions of our holy Catholic faith." A month before this Castro had presented a woman named Catalina de la Cueva with thirty thousand maravedis for bringing him a triangular cover enclosing three circular leaden plates inscribed with Arabic characters.—Echeverría, *Paseos por Granada*, pp. 295-297. (Note to the edition of 1814.)

As time advanced the archbishop seems to have grown less open-handed. Late in 1606 a "book," containing fifty-one leaves, written by Saint Cecil and *annotated by Saint James*, was found in possession of a dying man who had unearthed it eight years earlier on the Sacro-Monte, but had preferred to lay the secret by, expecting prices to improve. How strong was avarice in this instance is shown by the fact that the man upon his deathbed sent the book to the king, in order that "if he regained his health he might be given something."—*Ibid.* pp. 326, 327 (*Note*).

cannon from the ramparts of the Alhambra. Presently another "book" was found, as well as a plate declaring that on February 1st, in the second year of Nero's reign, Saint Cecil, disciple of Saint James, had also suffered martyrdom upon that holy spot.

Herewith, Saint Cecil being the legendary proto-bishop of Granada, the populace went wholly off their heads. Night and day the road to the Sacred Mountain was like an ant-heap for the multitudes who plodded up and down, counting their beads in pious silence; myriads of the townsfolk, the stern authorities of the Holy Office, the President of Chancery, and dames and cavaliers of high degree. Six hundred and eighty crosses, forwarded from every part of Spain, were planted along the wayside,* "looking like an invention of Almighty God."† Those of the rich and noble were "corpulent and well-wrought," while even the poor contributed their humbler ones of wood; until, within not many months, "there was not a handbreadth of soil the mountain over but was covered with a cross."‡

At length were found the plate referring to Saint Ctesiphon, and the oven (similar enough to

* Three are still standing on the summit of the hill, and were dedicated, two by the silkmen and market vendors, and the other by the stonemasons and the soldiery of the Alhambra.—Gómez Moreno, *Guía de Granada*, p. 471.

† Lopez Madra, *Discursos de la Certidumbre de las Reliquias descubiertas en Granada*, p. 27. Granada, 1601. This was one of a shoal of tomes produced with the object of demonstrating the genuineness of the "relics," and crammed with undigestible and undigested scholarship. Indeed, these books are quite as leaden in their way as those of the Sacro-Monte. The title-page bears imaginary portraits of *Don Cecilius*, *Don Hiscius*, and so forth.

‡ Echeverría, *Paseos por Granada*, vol. i. p. 219.

an everyday cooking stove) which had served for burning San Cecilio. The Latin of the plates was remarked to be not only modern, but bad Latin at that, "with a good many solecisms." No matter. "Was it necessary," demands Echeverría with scorn, "that the plates should have been inscribed by a Christian person thoroughly versed in the Latin language?" As for the ashes of the martyrs, hardened by now into a chalky mass (excepting the body of Saint Mesiton, which was only half consumed), they were submitted to the soap-makers and silversmiths, and stated to be human remains, mixed up with earth.

From now until the winter of 1597, a mighty quantity of bones, and leaden books, and plates was dragged to light; sometimes by the navvies, sometimes by amateur relic-hunters, sometimes even by children at their play. Several of the plates and book-covers were found to contain, besides inscriptions in bad Arabic or worse Latin, fanciful designs, chiefly of interlacing triangles, professing to be "the seal of Solomon." Hence the star of Solomon engraved upon the columns of the courtyard of the Sacro-Monte.

From long before this date the Sacred Mountain had borne a name for prodigies and portents. Its grass and thyme were said to fatten flocks above all other pasture. The ancients spoke of its surroundings as the *Ravine of Glory*, from mystic fires or lights which hung about it after dark; and from its foot issued the *Stream of Health*, which banished all diseases.* These marvels now revived and multi-

* Pedraza, *Hist. de Granada*, p. 270.

plied apace. The *beata* Ana de Jesus deposed to having felt "a suave and fragrant tide," wafted from the caves towards her house top, while she knelt there praying; and "all," says Ramos Lopez, writing in 1883, "who know this venerable mother's reputation, will recognise the value of her testimony." Even the archbishop remembered to have seen "processions of lights and balls of fire suspended above the Holy Mountain." The bones and books wrought numberless cures, the mere examination of which kept Castro busy for three years. Nor had the relics of the Torre Turpiana grown inactive. The scrap of kerchief, or, as Pedraza calls it, the *toca* (head-dress) of the Virgin, applied to the leg of a divine obliterated three unsavoury sores rebellious to all previous treatment. Stranger still, a cloth which had merely been in contact with the *toca* relieved the Marquis of Mondejar, governor of the Alhambra, of a painful fluxion, and cured a case of cataract. One day, when Philip the Second had fallen sick, he called for the original rag, and wrapping it about his person recovered upon the spot; so prior to sending back the relic to Granada, he snipped a fragment off one corner and placed it in a costly reliquary in the Escorial, where it was still adored in Echeverría's time, and probably is so at this hour. "But," remarks Pedraza, with unconscious irony, "strangest of all is this; that the ashes of the martyrs should have been preserved for sixteen hundred years enclosed in earth without becoming one with it, against the rules of all philosophy."

Now let me state the titles of the leaden books, whose total reached nineteen :

(1) *Concerning the Foundations of the Faith*, by Ctesiphon Ebnathar, disciple of Saint James the Apostle.

(2) *Concerning the Venerable Essence*, by the same author.

(3) *The Mass Ritual of Saint James the Apostle*, by his disciple Ctesiphon. The directions for the service provide that after the appointed prayer the minister is to wash his hands and face.

(4) *The Oration and Apology of Saint James the Apostle, son of Xamech Zebedee, against all manner of adversity, wherewith he made his prayer to God, and which was taught him by his master, Jesus, the Son of Mary.*

(5) *The Book of the Preaching of the Apostle Saint James, written at his command by his disciple and amanuensis Ctesiphon Ebnathar, an Arab; for general use and preaching to the people of the land of Spain.*

(6) *The Weeping of Peter the Apostle and Vicar, after his denial of Our Lord Jesus.* This weeping lasted seven years, after which time Peter heard a voice proclaiming his pardon.

(7) *The Book of Glorious Deeds of Our Lord Jesus and of Mary the Virgin, his Mother, by Ctesiphon Ebnathar, Disciple of the Apostle Saint James.* This work (to give it too flattering a name) is just a conglomeration of mediæval tales and excerpts from the Koran and the gospels. Godoy Alcántara (on whose relation of the forgeries and their discovery I partly

base my own) observes that the fifth chapter, describing "the beauty and person of Jesus and his Mother Mary," is eminently oriental. Jesus, it tells us, was the handsomest of men, and Mary the loveliest of women; the colour of their hair being that of the ripe date.

(8) *The Guerdon of Believers in the certainty of the Gospel, containing eight questions asked of Holy Mary by Saint James the Apostle, standard-bearer of the Faith: written, at his command, by his disciple and amanuensis, Ctesiphon Ebuathar, the Arab.*

(9) *Concerning the great Mysteries witnessed by Saint James the Apostle on the Sacred Mountain: written, at his command, by Cecil his disciple.*

(10) *The Book of the Enigmas and Mysteries seen by the Virgin Holy Mary, through the grace of God, on the night of her spiritual conversation, as she declared them to Saint James the Apostle; written, at his command, by his amanuensis and disciple, Cecil Ebnelradí.*

(11) *The Book of Sentences concerning the Faith, manifested by Holy Mary, the stainless Virgin, to Saint James the Apostle, translated into Arabic, at Holy Mary's command, by Cecil Ebnelradí.* These sentences are stated to have been written by the Virgin in person upon a piece of parchment: but she bade Cecil, "take them and translate them into Arabic, and place them upon lead in order that they may guide the servants of the Lord in the last times."

(12) *The History of the Scul of Solomon, the son of David, prophet of the Lord, according to Holy Mary, by Cecil Ebnelradí.*

(13) *Of the comprehensibility of the Divine power, clemency, and justice towards creation, by Cecil Ebnelradí, disciple of Saint James the Apostle, defender of the Evangelic law.*

(14) The second part of the preceding work.

(15) *Of the nature of the Angel, and of his power ; by Cecil Ebnelradí, disciple of the Apostle Saint James.*

(16) *The Relation of the House of Peace, and of the House of Vengeance, and of Torments ; by Cecil Ebnelradí.*

(17) *Of the illustrious deeds of the Apostle Saint James and of his miracles ; by Cecil Ebnelradí, his disciple and amanuensis. Contains a " physical and moral portrait of the Apostle."*

(18) The second part of the preceding.

(19) *History of the Certainty of the Holy Gospel.* Here is one of those *prognostics* which used to be extremely popular with the Moriscos. In order to grasp its whole significance, says Godoy Alcántara, we must think of it as pointing to one of the leaden books inscribed with unintelligible characters, and therefore called the " illegible " or " dumb " book. This latter professed to be a gospel presented by the Virgin to Saint James, and the circumstances of its preparation were as follows. " One day, when the apostles were gathered together in Mary's house, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, she told them that by God's command, conveyed to her by Gabriel the archangel, she purposed to reveal to them the certainty of the glorious gospel sent down to her by the Almighty, after her conversation with Him.

Thereupon she exhibited the gospel in question, written by a powerful hand with radiant light on circular tables of precious stones, whose value God alone has knowledge of; and also a copy made by herself on leaden plates, sealed with the seal of Solomon. Peter said to her, 'What dost thou bid us do with this *Certainty*?' She replied, 'It hath been ordered me that thou do with it as was done with the tables of Moses; James will bear this copy to an uttermost quarter of the earth, and there he will conceal it in a holy spot where God shall guard it till the appointed time.' Peter inquired how God would make this revelation. Mary replied that the gospel would remain under Gabriel's protection until the heresies and offences of the world should need the application of the remedy; that those offences and heresies would be disclosed by the hand of a holy priest (the Archbishop Vaca de Castro): and that God would thereupon avenge His law by means of the fairest people among His creatures. Then said Peter, 'What people be they?' 'Arabs and their language,' replied the Virgin: 'I tell thee that these Arabs shall be among the fairest of all people, and their language of the most melodious. They shall be chosen by God to save His law in the last times, after having been its bitterest enemies; and God shall endow them with might and wisdom to this end. 'Tis not the sons of Israel, but the Arabs and their tongue that shall assist the Almighty and His law, together with His holy gospel and His holy church upon the latest day.' Peter exclaimed, 'Our Lady, tell us how shall that befall, that our hearts

may be quieted.' She replied, ' Know ye that in the extreme west is a region called Spain, in the uttermost part whereof God shall preserve the copy of this *Certainty*, and when the appointed time draw nigh shall make it manifest, as also the books that are together with it; and its defender shall be the servant of the hidden servants of the Lord; nor shall there be any other person in the world so potent to this purpose.' Then Peter said, ' O Lady, who shall be this defender of the glorious gospel?' She replied, ' When the time approaches, God shall raise up a king among the kings of the east, together with people hungering after victory, and shall award to him a vast and mighty empire; and terror shall invade all hearts, even to lands in the remotest west; and he, though not an Arab, shall yet be king of all the Arabs. God shall cause all men to readily obey him, and reconcile all mortals; and doctors, expounders, and interpreters shall meet in council; and this shall be the first council in which the Arabs shall be gathered together, and the last council of the world. They shall assemble there by reason of the book in their own Arabic tongue, which then shall be the common one. When they are met together they shall dispute greatly, and their intelligence shall be confounded, till God raise up a lowly creature in that place, who shall explain the *Certainty* of the gospel in the light of the Holy Ghost. When all are satisfied, their law shall become a single law, and error and impiety shall be banished from the world. And yet these days of quiet shall be few, for after they are past corrup-

tion shall return, and only the Antichrist shall be awaited. The council shall be held in the island of Cyprus, which the king of the kings of the Arabs shall wrest from the Venetians at the coming of those latest times.' With this the Virgin took the tablets, and the apostles bore her company, and all together in the darkness of the night went out unto the Mount of Olives. There they prayed to God : whereat the mountain burst asunder with a mighty flash of heavenly flame, received the tablets into its entrails, and closed once more. When they had all returned to Mary's house, she said to Saint James, ' Go with this copy of the tablets of the *Certainty*, and with this book, unto the seashore. God shall provide thee with a little boat, whose pilot shall be the angel Gabriel. When ye arrive in Spain, make entry by the eastern side, and hide both book and tablets where a dead man comes to life. Thereafter preach to the inhabitants, and slacken not until a servant of the servants of the Lord believes thee, thus making good thy patience in thy preaching, since it is known that God loveth the patient. That mortal only shall believe thee ; but thy disciples shall win that nation to the faith, and divers shall suffer martyrdom upon that holy spot.' "

These instructions were strictly carried out. The apostle found the little boat, and guided by the archangel reached the shores of Spain. As soon as he had landed and laid the book and tablets down, the earth began to gape, and from it came a man who said, " Why hast thou raised me from my tomb, wherein I rested since the time of Moses ? My soul

is with the blessed." Saint James replied, "It was not I who raised thee, but the power of God, and the copy of the *Certainty of the Glorious Gospel*. What is thy name?" The man replied, "Alachius," and asked in turn, "and thine?" "James, the apostle of the apostles of Jesus, son of Mary, Spirit of the Lord." Then the other said, "Salvation be with thee; my soul is happy with Him: glad am I of thy coming, and crave that thou restore me to my couch." This Santiago did, and remained with his disciples in that spot for forty days, writing this history and concealing it in the caves, together with the copy of the *Certainty*, and the book; and on his departure enjoined his disciples to visit the place after his death, and hold it duly sacred.



A Gipsy Lodging on the Way to the Sacro-Monte

III

The Sacred Mountain—*continued*

HE discoveries of the Sacro-Monte transpired with winged quickness throughout the Catholic world. Castro himself conveyed the tidings to the King of Spain and to the Pope. Philip, than whom a better subject for such jugglery could hardly have been hoped for, replied in flattering terms, and offered to defray the cost of the translation. The papal answer was more circumspect, for while the pontiff also applauded the zeal and fortune of the prelate, he reserved to Rome the ultimate decision upon the doctrine embodied in the leaden books. Decidedly this reservation was a prudent one. The archbishop himself had set to work to

study Arabic (though first of all, perhaps, he might have studied common sense); while a local council of eighteen eminent theologians, assembling at his palace, had voted with one accord that the books were stored with "holy, Catholic, and apostolic doctrine; lofty, positive, and scholastic theology; gravity and compression; Christian piety; a majestic style; and natural and revealed teaching exceeding the power and light of human understanding, that seem to be dictated by the Holy Ghost."

Yet on the other hand the archbishop was authorized by a papal brief, dated by Clement the Eighth from Ferrara, July 1st, 1598, to finally decide upon the authenticity of the ashes, plates, and such like rubbish forming part of the collection. With this intent the prelate called together a special synod of five-and-forty members (nearly all of whom were of the clergy) to sit in judgment on the nature and the value of the precious stuff. The proceedings were conducted in his own palace; and at their termination, after only half a dozen sittings, a verdict was pronounced unanimously favourable to the "relics," then deposited upon a bureau in the middle of the room, while all the company went down upon their knees to do them reverence. This verdict was publicly proclaimed in the cathedral, after the *misu mayor* on April 30th, 1600; and once again the infatuated people of Granada rushed out of their heads with rapture and rejoicing.

In the meantime two translators were appointed to declare the meaning of the leaden books. These men were both of Moorish stock, educated, possessing

the degree of licentiates, and both of them interpreters, by royal warrant, to the Crown. Their names, of which I beg my readers to take especial notice, were Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo.

Once translated and made public, however, the substance of the leaden books was not received with unadulterated confidence. Indeed, from the grossness of the blunders, blasphemies, and contradictions they contained, such universal credence would have been impossible, even in that century and in Spain. One or two persons began to murmur that they smelt a hoax. They pointed out that the groundwork of several of the books was patently Moham- medan; and quoted infidel expressions such as this, cleanly transplanted from the Koran; "If one of the maidens of Paradise were to spit a single time into the sea, the sweetness of her saliva would suffice to sweeten all the waters of the vast abyss." Nevertheless, the books were well defended; notably by the partisans of the Immaculate Conception and of Santiago's personal mission among the Spaniards. Their chief opponents were the powerful Order of Santo Domingo, supported, as time went on, by a small though troublesome number of individuals.

Pending the final judgment of the holy see, the Pope had forbidden all discussion on the matter. But the few though indefatigable private censors were not to be kept silent. One of them, by name Gurmendi, took lessons in Arabic with a Turk, and aided by a Jesuit priest prepared an independent version of his own, accompanied by a quantity of opportune and adverse criticism. Copies of this

attack were forwarded to the Royal Council, the Supreme Council, the Inquisition, and even to the Pope. In November of 1607 Pedro de Valencia, a pupil of the learned Arias Montano, presented an *Informe* to the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, in which he said, "For the love of God I beseech your reverence that as the primate of Spain, pious, learned, and generous, you arm yourself with holy valour and intention, and hinder this from going forward. The jest is now become too heavy to be borne. Well I know that the Church at large, including its High Pontiff, runs no risk of being deceived. The peril is for the good report of Spain, since, when these books are seen at Rome they must perforce appear to be what they are, and people will wonder greatly at their having caused us such emotion."

The cause of the defenders of the forgeries grew more and more discouraging. Archbishop Castro was translated to Seville, and died in 1623. The Marquis of Estepa wrote a ridiculous defence of the books, which did a great deal more to damn them than even the acrid comments of Gurmendi; and had the mortification of seeing his darling labour confiscated by the Holy Office. The papal nuncio began to thunder at the door of the palace, demanding that the books should be despatched to Rome. At length the king commanded their removal to Madrid; but the canons of Granada who had charge of them refused compliance, and the padlock of the chest which stored away the unlucky fictions had to be filed through upon the warrant of a justice. Once in Madrid they were exposed to the quips and epi-

grams of Quevedo, and other irreverent and free-thinking humorists, until, in 1641, a strongly worded papal brief enjoined their prompt translation to the holy city; and thither they were borne, attended by two faithful fathers of the Sacro-Monte.*

This "battle of the books" dragged on for forty-one years more; by which time nearly all the combatants had died a natural death. The books would probably have done the same; for at this date the general curiosity seemed quite extinguished. Even the Spanish Ambassador at Rome was heard to remark with a contemptuous shrug that they were good enough for making bullets of. However, the indiscretions of a Spanish priest and "plumbist" nominated to the Italian see of Trini, precipitated the solemn and irrevocable papal sentence, pronounced on

* Bertaut de Rouen did not omit to visit the holy mountain of Granada; but speaks contemptuously of the relics and the caves, or, as he bluntly calls them, "*toute cette histoire de fausseté.*" This was in 1659. "*Nous prîmes des chevaux pour aller plus commodement voir les cavernes de la Montagne qu'ils appellent sacrée, qui est dans ce Valon agreable du Darro que j'ay décrit, & qu'ils disent estre si saint par la vertu des Reliques de Saint Ctesyphon & d'autres Martyrs qui y ont esté trouvez, à ce que tous les Espagnols croyent & soustiennent.*" He then relates, in a similar tone of scepticism, the finding of the plates, and books, and bones, and adds: "*On trouva encores beaucoup d'autres Lames de plomb, qui portoient que Saint Cecile Disciple de Saint Jacques avoit souffert le martyre en ce lieu: mais la plupart du monde croit qu'il y a eu de la fraude, & que cela n'a servy que pour ayder à prouver la venue de Saint Jacques en Espagne: ce que tous les Espagnols croyent comme un article de foy.*"

Bertaut was unaware that the decision upon the authenticity of the "relics," in distinction from the "books," had been conceded by a papal warrant to Granada, for he adds: "*Aussi on n'a point encore approuvé à Rome l'invention de ces Reliques ny la verité de ces livres.*"

September 28th, 1682, and promulgated, a few days later, from every pulpit throughout Spain. The so-called books were declared to contain "nothing but fabrications, devised to the destruction of the Catholic faith." They were furthermore declared to be tainted with Mohammedan doctrine, and condemned, in consequence, to perpetual ignominy. On penalty of excommunication no preacher, reader, or professor of divinity was even to mention them or their contents, unless it were to confute, reject, and reprobate the false teaching and false revelations in which these forgeries abounded.

A little while before, I begged my readers to take particular notice of the names of Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo, the two Moriscos officially appointed to reduce the leaden books to the Castilian vernacular. Castillo had done some service to Philip the Second by collecting Arabic volumes for the library of the Escorial: and also by performing for that sovereign certain correspondence with the Moorish kings of Africa. He was a scholarly man, possessing both the erudite and the popular forms of Arabic, as well as Spanish, Greek, and Latin. Luna was less equipped with scholarship, but active and quick-witted, and with a genuine sense of humour—using the latter word perhaps a trifle disparagingly. We must suppose that a rogue appears to other rogues a virtuous fellow; for Echeverría calls Luna "an honest Morisco, reconciled with the Church." In view of this assertion, we will see what kind of man was "honest" Luna; and after that, what kind of man was his votary and disciple, Father Echeverría.

Miguel de Luna was the author of the false chronicle professing to be a literal rendering from the Arabic, known as "*The True History of the King Don Roderick, wherein is treated the principal cause of the perdition of Spain, and the conquest of that country carried out by Mirumamolín Almançor, formerly King of Africa and the Arabians. Also contains the Life of the King Jacob Almançor.* Written by the wise Alcaide Abulcacim Tarif, the Arab. Newly translated from the Arabic by Miguel de Luna, inhabitant of Granada, and interpreter to our lord the King." This singular and mendacious work,* indited, as Luna tells us (p. 438, *note*), at the city of Bokhara in the year one hundred and forty-two of the Hijra, or seven hundred and sixty-three of the Christian era, is just a concoction of legends prevalent in Luna's time, adorned with colouring and garnish of his own make, and numerous fragments of Roman and Greek mythology. To quote an instance of this latter, in chapter ix. of part ii. (pp. 349-353), headed "*Concerning a Memorable Occurrence which befell the Mohammedan general Abdelaziz, while he was hunting in a Mountain,*" we find the venerable story of Androcles and the lion dished up anew: save that Androcles is Abdalaziz, and the lion has become a bear.

Such was "honest" Michael, considered upon this count alone. But worse remains behind: for Luna by

* The copy in my library is of the seventh edition, and is dated 1676. The first edition appeared in 1592. This alone would prove that the "chronicle" was everywhere accepted as genuine, as well as that it was extremely popular.

no means limited his powers to forging a secular history of Spain. There is now no room for doubt that he and Castillo between them—sometimes one, sometimes the other, sometimes the two collaborating—contrived and hid away the forgeries of the Sacred Mountain of Granada. Truly they played their comedy with exquisite art. A grateful nation paid them to decipher their own fabrications; so entering into the spirit of the joke, they drew up and matured their renderings with ostentatious slowness, feigning to squabble with each other over a reading here and there, or professing themselves exhausted by the difficulty of unwonted or archaic words and phrases. Of course the hugest jest of all was the “dumb book”—which nobody (even its authors) could faintly understand—professing to relate the “*Certainty of the Holy Gospel*” handed by the Virgin to Saint James, to bear away to Spain. This masterpiece of impudence was gravely submitted to Athanasius Kircher, one of the leading archæologists of his day, who finally protested that, although he had worked hard at it for more than two years, and was thoroughly versed in twenty-one “exotic languages,” he could make neither head nor tail of its contents. His only discovery, he confessed, was that it was written in an alphabet containing forty-two distinct characters.

Seldom, therefore, has a more incongruous or ludicrous situation been created. But what was the motive of the forgers? Did they, as Godoy Alcántara suggests, expect to fuse, by a species of religious reform, the Catholic and the Mohammedan creeds, so as perhaps to rescue the Moriscos from

ejection by their subjugators; or was their purpose merely to enjoy a joke; or was it a vindictive one?

I incline to believe that their principal or only aim was to avenge their persecuted brethren. The forgeries were executed not long before the final expulsion of the Moriscos, who hated, very justly, the cruel and indolent Spanish swashbucklers who had settled in Granada, and were rapidly inducing the moral and material ruin of that most venerable city. Luna and Castillo, themselves protected by "a thin varnish of Christianity," would thus endeavour to instil a quantity of heretical venom into the faith of their oppressors, and so confound at once the church and commonwealth of Spain.

Considered in this light, their entertaining if Satanic effort was almost totally successful. The Spaniards, even to their prelates and their king, were far too ignorant, fanatical and credulous to save themselves. Just at the nick of time the Pope stepped in and saved them. But for this, as Godoy has summarized in a sentence of tremendous import—
 if Rome had kept aloof, and Spain in the sixteenth century had been allowed by Providence to carry out her project of an independent national church, THE SPANISH PEOPLE WOULD HAVE EMBODIED INTO THE SPIRIT AND THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THE LEADEN FORGERIES OF THE SACRED MOUNTAIN.

The substance of the forgeries was carefully contrived to meet the national desire. In them we find those idle tales so dear to narrow Spanish intellects—the coming of Santiago, and the martyrdom of many

saints whose merest names are nothing more than "rumours of a doubt." The fable of Saint James' visit to the shores of Spain originated in a wild tradition and the Vote of Santiago—this last a formidable tax imposed upon the poorer classes of the nation. Echeverría, who on these matters should only be consulted to excite a smile, affirms that when Saint James was visiting Granada he was made a prisoner by the heathen, who bound him, and were on the point of putting him to death, when the Virgin, who yet was living in this world, appeared upon the scene and set him free. We are further told that this took place precisely on the Sacro-Monte, in whose notorious caves Saint James had fixed his habitation by divine command.

According to a couple of ancient and obscure writers, quoted by the editor of the second edition of Echeverría's *Paseos*, Saint James was in Granada about 36 or 37 A.D., this being the first of the Spanish cities to imbibe his cheerful tidings. Certainly his visit was sensational; for one day, walking up the Sacred Mountain, he resuscitated a man who had been dead and in his grave six hundred years. The wretch restored in this uncharitable fashion to the miseries of life was christened and confirmed forthwith, and then appointed to the see of Braga, thus becoming the first bishop of that town. "This miracle," concludes our editor, "is related by Fray Prudencio de Sandoval, Bishop of Tuy; by Don Rodrigo de Acuña, Archbishop of Lisbon; and by many other persons distinguished for their virtue, knowledge and veracity."

All this nonsense has a clerical origin, and is absolutely valueless. As for the lesser saints and martyrs—Hiscius, Ctesiphon, and the rest of Cecil's six companions—the Gothic Breviary is unconvincing, while the Codex of Albelda (883 A.D.) is too late. Yet notwithstanding this, Cecil himself is made the subject (or, more properly, the victim) of three uncritical and fulsome articles by that most intolerant of Catholics, Francisco Simonet.* This author begins by recognising that all we know about the shadowy seven is practically nothing. At the same time, without adducing any reason, he thinks it "probable that they were Spaniards," † and pupils of Saint James. Then, waxing bolder, he finds that Cecil (whom he takes for granted to have been the founder of the see of Iliberris or Granada) "preached the faith with marvellous eloquence and fervour, kindling in many hearts the flames of holy love which were inspiring (*sic*) his own, lightening the darkness of the native population, and gaining many souls to Jesus Christ." A moment later the panegyrist declares his preference for "the authority of the Church of Granada, widely admitted throughout the Catholic world, and based on *very probable conjectures*" (the discoveries of the Sacro-Monte!), over "the silence of antiquity."

Now the mischief done to Spain by the discoveries upon the so-called Sacred Mountain lies in the fact

* *Cuadros Historicos y Descriptivos de Granada*, pp. 37-63.

† Florez says they came to Spain about 62 A.D., first journeying to Guadix; and then dispersing through the country. But how is it possible to fill in a biography where even the outline of the personage is wanting?

that although the leaden books were branded as a forgery, the remainder of the "relics" are even to this day accounted genuine. Of course, when Rome condemned the books, Spain should have followed suit and hastened to reverse her own decision on the bones, and ashes, and plates, and ovens of the Sacro-Monte. But no. The relics, guarded in Echeverría's time in two great boxes half imbedded in the wall, are still adored: and still the wonder-working caves are shown with indiscriminating zeal to every class of visitor.

Many of the saints who lie piecemeal about the land, if every limb of theirs were brought together, would prove to have more legs than any myriapod; yet still the Spaniards fly to their defence. Ramos Lopez, principal of the Sacro-Monte church some years ago, protests against "the foreign historians who endeavour to eclipse our glories, denying the visit of Saint James to Spain, as well as his preaching in this kingdom." Of course, the foreign historians might object that it is not for themselves to deny Saint James' landing on the Spanish shores so much as for Ramos Lopez and his co-religionists to prove it. But Ramos is incorrigible in the firmness of his faith. "Although," he says, "certain authors are averse to making the confession, it must be owned that the finding of the leaden tables inscribed in Latin, and also of the relics, served to illustrate the Christian antiquities of our region, particularly in what relates to the preaching of Saint James and his disciples." *

So much for these enlightened days. Writing in

* *El Sacro-Monte de Granada*, p. 117. Madrid, 1883.

the middle of the eighteenth century, Echeverría recalled that one or two unrighteous persons had ventured to cast a doubt upon the relics. "Heaven," he observed, "has not been slow to castigate their obstinacy. The principal Antiplumbists have met with a disastrous end."* "How could Luna," he asks elsewhere, "have hidden the relics in these caves in sight of all the city?" This argument sounds plausible. Our neatest refutation of it is to turn to the Letters of the Sacristan of Pinos de la Puente.† The author of these dissertations, written in the unpleasant, semi-jocose, semi-cantankerous and disputative style also adopted by Echeverría, is Doctor Cristobal Conde, described in his own words as "theologian, antiquary, and interpreter in the excavations of the Alcazaba of Granada." Godoy Alcántara shall tell us something more of Conde. The son of an obscure foundling, and educated at the college of the Sacred Mountain, Conde became fast friends with another ex-pupil of the same seminary, Juan de Echeverría, author of the *Paseos por Granada* so often quoted in these chapters. Echeverría was uncomely in his personal appearance, "after the manner of Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*," and in his character "a crafty, knavish cheat." This pair of rascals, together with one Flores (not to be confounded with the learned writer on ecclesiastical antiquities), despite their holy orders and professed respectability and scholarship.

* *Paseos por Granada*.

† Lerida and Granada, 1761, 1762. 4 vols. Complete copies are very rare. Excepting mine, I have never seen an unbroken set.

agreed to forge as many "monuments" as Spain could swallow, and then "discover" them in the Albaycin of Granada, round about the site of the ancient Alcazaba. Conde accordingly wrote his *Letters* to prove the genuineness of his own and Echeverría's fabrications. One of the arguments he uses is the following. "Let those," he says, "who visit the Alcazaba observe the depth of the caverns where the monuments have been discovered, and the bulk of several of these, requiring ten yoke of oxen for their removal, as well as their dilapidated look; and then decide if any fraud were possible." We have just seen Echeverría employ a similar argument in defending the relics of the Sacro-Monte. "How," we have seen him indignantly demand, "could Luna conceal the monuments in the caves, and fill these in or dig these monuments out in sight of all the city, in a spot where so much operation could never be concluded without the notice of the neighbours?" Yet this was precisely what Conde and Echeverría themselves effected in the Albaycin a century and a half later. Capitals, cornices, inscribed slabs, leaden tablets—nothing withstood their priestly ingenuity; and it was only after a considerable while that one of the workmen employed by the syndicate of swindlers declared or hinted that he and his fellows buried secretly by night the very "monuments" they openly extracted on the following morning. This breach of confidence was unendurable; so Flores, who was an influential member of the Inquisition, resorted to the suave correction of that high and holy court, and drove the man demented.

In view of the satisfactory results obtained by forging sacred and profane "relics" of general interest,* our trio of rogues, protected by Luis Francisco de Viana,† abbot of the Sacro-Monte and virtually a coadjutor of the other three, decided to extend their industry to the preparation of documents of a private character. Taking the paper stamped by government, they filled it in with titles of nobility, genealogies, writs, wills, *royal decrees*, and so forth; inserted the sheets so filled among the archives of the law courts, and then demanded to inspect and utilize them. "The existence of this bureau of falsification was no secret in Spain. Every one who required a sham document took the road to Granada."‡ At the same time, Conde, who had no name to truly call his own, "discovered" himself to be illustriously born, and making himself a document, assumed, upon the powers which it granted him, the second surname of *Medina*.

* I am sorry to say that one of our countrymen was taken in by Conde; or so the forger asseverates in his Pinos Puente Letters (vol. i. p. 143). "Don Juan Branfurd (the surname appears to be misspelt), of English nationality, colonel commanding the 13th Regiment of His Britannic Majesty in the fortress of Gibraltar, came hither, instructed by the Royal Society of London, in order to inspect these discoveries. He examined them one by one with all deliberation, and liked them so much that he attempted with wheedling words to purchase some literary stones and leads, offering any price for them."

† "That great Spaniard," as Echeverría calls him. Echeverría's good opinion is really most embarrassing. To receive his praise is to assume *per se* the stamp of infamy; and we feel that when he calls Mohammed an impostor he is paying him a distinct compliment.

‡ Godoy, *Los Falsos Cronicones*, p. 322.

Presently a craze sprang up for everything connected with the visit of Saint James to the Peninsula. Our friends were not behind the time, and put upon the market a handsome quantity of bishop's rings ascribed to the tenth century, decorated with a horseman bearing a banner and a sword, and the words *Jacobus Victor*. These were accompanied by another forgery, to wit, "a letter from Mohamad Benzay, a Moor who was *trodden underfoot by Saint James' horse at the battle of Clavijo*, and made a prisoner: directed to his brother, Abencholen Ibrahim."

The national movement which provoked these fictions depended from the "Vote of Santiago," already mentioned in this chapter. The vote itself consisted of a tax in kind, payable to the Cathedral of Santiago in Galicia, and weighing with oppressive heaviness upon the agricultural classes; but just about this time the "privilege" was menaced by the attitude of certain of the nobles, determined to make an effort to combat such imposture. This was why Echeverría and his colleagues, acting as local agents for the Chapter of the great Cantabrian temple, hastened to afford new testimony of Saint James' mythical appearance in the mythical affray; and of the validness of the grant alleged to emanate from the Spanish Crown.

My library contains a copy of this "Vote of Santiago," telling us all that we can want to know. The work, drawn up before a notary public at Granada in 1685, is printed on stamped paper, and bears a curious title depicting Santiago at the

battle of Clavijo, gravely carving at the clouds ; as well as other scenes relating to his residence in Spain. The tax, it seems, is payable to "the stewards or servants" of the church of Santiago, and is required to consist of "heavy measures of the choicest wheat, barley, and other grain," not omitting "wine for the sustenance of the canons residentiary of the said church of Santiago." Although the language is archaic in form, its phraseology is manifestly modern. Should any descendant of King Ramiro "or anybody else seek to violate this our Testament, or hinder its fulfilment, whatever be his condition, whether clerical or secular, may he for ever be damned in Hell, together with Judas the traitor. Also, may his children become orphans and his wife a widow ; and may another possess his temporal estate. Also, he shall be deprived of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and therefore of the eternal kingdom, for ever and for ever. Moreover he shall pay unto the king and the church of Santiago, equally between the two, six thousand pounds of silver." A few lines further on, this malediction is repeated with increase of virulence. "Whoso should seek to break this document and donation of the church of Santiago, or should refuse to pay the same, whatever his station, whether king, prince, labourer, layman, or cleric, we curse and excommunicate him, and sentence him to the pains of Hell, that there he be tormented everlastingly, together with Judas the traitor."

The detailed account of the battle which goes before these truly Christian phrases is carefully

drawn up *ad hoc*, and makes delightful reading. “While I was meditating many matters and turning over in my mind the peril of the Christians, I, King Ramiro, fell asleep. So, as I slumbered, the blessed apostle Santiago, defender of the Spains, was pleased to show himself before me in the flesh. And when, astonished at this sight, I asked him who he was, the apostle of God made answer, ‘I am Santiago.’ Therewith I wondered greatly, and he proceeded; ‘Perchance thou knewest not that Jesus Christ, what time he distributed the other portions of the world among the rest of the apostles, my brethren, gave unto me the whole of Spain to guard, placing her beneath my shelter and protection?’ Then, squeezing my hand, he said, ‘Be strong and confident, for verily I shall assist thee; and on the morrow, through the might of God, thou shalt defeat the countless army of the Moors that now beset thee. Yet many of thy warriors (for whom eternal rest already is prepared) shall win the crown of martyrdom in this affray. And that of this there be no doubt, ye and the Moors shall plainly see me riding a white horse of marvellous and dazzling beauty, and I shall carry a white standard of great size.’” Of course upon the morrow the saint fulfilled his promise, and sixty thousand Moors were slain. The title of this spurious document is thus translated, and forms almost a chronicle in itself: “*The Privilege of King Ramiro, confirmed by the Apostolic See, relating to the vote he made to the glorious apostle Santiago, in company with the archbishops, bishops, clergy, princes, ricos hombres, army, and peoples of*

Spain ; in memory and recognition of the deliverance obtained from the Tribute of the Hundred Virgins— which tribute they were wont to pay unto the Moors— by reason of the victory of Clavijo, wherein the apostle appeared before the King (defeated the day preceding at Albelda) and either army, and fought against the Moors and overcame them, repairing the peril and the risk of ruin which threatened Spain ; a special privilege vouchsafed by God unto no other nation in the world : wherefore from that day forth we call in battle upon the name of Santiago as the patron and deliverer of Spain."

Let us return to Flores and his gang. In course of time the scandal became so serious and the complaints against the trio of forgers so unceasing, that the Government, obliged for decency's sake to interfere, laid hands on all the three, and put them on their trial. After much amusing evidence, delivered by each one against the others* with astounding imperturbability, they were found guilty and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment ; but luckily for Spain the trash they had invented was piled into a heap and publicly burnt.

* Flores, when under examination, admitted that " the very workmen took pains to keep the monuments from being extracted until a large concourse should assemble ; for pious persons, stimulated by religious zeal, rewarded them with money for the finds they made ; and such did their greed become that they used to introduce among the ruins the splintered bones of animals, and sprinkling them with water perfumed with sweet-smelling herbs, roses, or jasmine, sold them as relics. The credulous folk never suspected the deceit ; but he who was declaring (Flores) used to reprove the workmen for this wickedness." —*Los Falsos Cronicones*, p. 321, note.

This was about the time of Swinburne's visit to Granada. Touching the forgers and their trial, he wrote: "Medina Conti, author of the *Paseos de Granada*, pretends to have found an Arabic manuscript of this period, corroborating the testimony of Peres (de Hita): but these writers are such notorious impostors that little credit can be given to anything they may advance: however, there must undoubtedly be some foundation for these anecdotes, and a previous knowledge of them is rather necessary for the perfect understanding of the Alhambra." The statement that Conde wrote the *Paseos de Granada* is erroneous. The English traveller evidently meant Echeverría, while the "Arabic manuscript" would be that of which a rendering is inserted in the second volume of the *Paseos*, pp. 71-75. Swinburne adds in a footnote: "Conti (Conde), in order to favour the pretensions of the church in a great lawsuit, forged deeds and inscriptions which he buried in the ground where he knew they would shortly be dug up again. Upon their being unearthed, he published engravings of them, and gave explanations of their unknown characters, making them out to be so many authentic proofs and evidences of the assertions of the clergy. His imposture was detected, and he now lies in prison without much hope of recovering his liberty. I am told he is a most learned, ingenious man, profoundly skilled in the antiquities of his country. The Morocco ambassador, in his way through Granada, purchased of this man a copper bracelet of Fatima, which Medina proved, by the Arabic inscription, and many certifi-

ates, to be genuine, and found among the ruins of part of the Alhambra, with other treasures of the last king, who had hid them in hopes of better days. This famous bracelet turned out afterwards to be the work of Medina's own hands, and made out of an old brass candlestick." (*Travels in Spain*, p. 185.) It might have even bettered Swinburne's opinion of the ingenuity of these gentlemen had he known that Echeverría was in the habit of publishing anonymous attacks upon his own treatises, in order to render them more lively and convincing, "sustaining in this manner a kind of controversy with himself."



In the Albaycin

IV

The Sacred Mountain—*concluded*

THE regimen of the church and college of the Sacro-Monte from inside deserves a brief description. As soon as it was known that Castro proposed to found a temple and a seminary upon this hallowed spot, and liberally endow them from his private means, letters poured in on him from numerous of the religious orders distributed throughout the Peninsula, asking to be awarded the custody of the new establishments. These applications were carefully considered by the prelate, whose choice had begun to incline towards the Order of Saint Benedict, when it occurred to him (plucking a leaf from the book of Dionysius Alexandrinus) to visit the Sacred

Mountain and solve his doubts by prayer. Accordingly he penetrated, quite alone, into "the oven of Saint Hiseius," and passed in this seclusion three mysterious hours. On coming out he refused to sign the grant he had intended for the Benedictines, curtly observing that "it was not the will of God." "The fact is," says Ramos Lopez, echoing the words of the archbishop's confessor, "that while he was praying in the oven the Virgin appeared to him and bade him provide his church with non-monastical officials, mapping out for him the whole of the particulars wherewith the building was erected a twelvemonth later."

The seminary was titled after Saint Dionysius the Areopagite. In 1609 a bull from Paul the Fifth approved its rules and constitution, and eleven years later a royal warrant granted by Philip the Fourth placed both the college and the church beneath the tutelage of the Crown. Among the forgeries discovered in 1595 had been a stone inscribed with the words "*Mary was not touched by the original sin.*" The credulous archbishop had paid a singular veneration to this stone, and fervently enjoined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception on the pupils of the Saero-Monte. The college regulations were numerous and irksome. As in other lands, the students were divided into "Ancients" and "Moderns." The day began with the "oration," from five to six, half-past five to half-past six, or six to seven, according to the season. Three-quarters of this weary hour were passed afoot. After this the Seminarists were allowed to breakfast (except on Saturdays and other

days of abstinence, when neither bite nor sup was permitted), but not with "fried things, such as breadcrumbs, or anything else which might prevent their studying." The interval from one to other of their morning studies was passed in "conference" in the cloisters; but no group was to consist of more than four scholars, and the rector was to be present whenever possible—a nice way, one may think, of developing the youthful intellect. The Ancients were allowed a black cap and a cloak in winter, but no gloves. The Moderns must go bare-headed. If one of the latter should cover his mouth with a fold of his *capa* (making what is known as the *embozo**), he must unroll it every time that the rector or any of the prebendaries passed him by. The midday meal was awful in the icy frigidness of its routine. At the clanging of a bell each scholar went to his room and fetched his knife and fork, his napkin and his spoon, and waited in the cloisters until the rector gave three knocks upon the door of the refectory. Hereinto the company now trooped "in total silence," and stood in a double row while grace was said. Two of the Moderns then conveyed into the middle of the hall a bare bench, occupied forthwith by half a dozen wretches told off to deliver a lesson in law. Besides the bench the dining-hall contained a small pulpit, and occasionally, by way of varying the digestive, the lesson was a chapter of holy writ, followed by extracts from a volume designated by the rector.

After the due preliminaries the kitchen hatch was

* See *The Land of the Dons*, p. 48.

opened, and the servants (I need hardly state that these were male) proceeded to distribute the bread and the water-bottles. Nobody was to choose his bread, but had to take it as it came to him. The way to call the servants was by "rapping once or twice upon the table, not with the hands, but with the knife, or spoon, or fork." Otherwise "the silence shall be strait enough for this to seem the eating-chamber of some staid community, and not of puerile and orderless people." Even the scholar who discovered a pressing need to quit the room must make his exit "underneath the table"*

When the scanty meal was at an end, the kitchen window was shut, the lesson-readers filed away, and their bench was removed. The servants then collected the water-bottles and the broken bread, and each student, taking his leavings to the end of the table and depositing them there, inclined his head to signify that he freely made them over to "the poor servants." Lastly, the congregation repeated a *Tu autem Domine miserere nobis* (which seems, under the circumstances, to have been a very logical petition), and left the hall.

Yet even in so rigorous a community the eminently Spanish institution of the *siesta* was loyally maintained; so while their empty stomachs were making believe to digest the banquet I have outlined, the scholars, after a spell of conversation in the Sala de Quiete, retired to the doors of their respective

* *Praxis de las Ceremonias que deben observarse por los Colegiales del Insigne Colegio de Theologos, y Juristas del Señor S. Dionisio Areopagita, sito en el Sacro Ilipulitano Monte, extra-Muros de la Ciudad de Granada* (printed about 1785), *Instruccion* vi.

rooms to take their modicum of oil from the Superior, and shutting out the sunlight, went compulsorily to bed. Later in the day, and when the afternoon classes were concluded, they were permitted for half an hour before the spiritual exercise of the Rosario to indulge in physical exercise upon the small *placeta* adjacent to the college, but they were not to retire towards the sacred caves, or purchase honey or chestnuts, "which do more harm than benefit"; and the sellers of these dainties are warned to keep their distance from the holy building. Supper was as wearisome as luncheon, philosophy, not law, being now the mental sauce served up with every plate. Then there was a spell for digestive purposes in the Sala de Quiete, and at a quarter to ten Litany in the chapel, with sometimes a Rosario added, and always "a scrutiny of consciences."

On going to rest the students were provided with a dingy, flickering *velón*, to light them into bed, from when till after morning service of the day succeeding no pupil was to breathe a syllable to his schoolmates. But as they reached their bedrooms, all made ready in the doorway to receive a dose of holy water. Each scholar, both the Ancient and the Modern, must at this instant have his collar on and "stand at ceremony"—that is, pressing his cap against his breast with both hands—until the rector, attended by a servant carrying the holy water, passed to administer the precious fluid to every member of the company. Then, after a paragraph or two of dog-Latin palaver on either side, the doors were closed and bolted, and all (one hopes) was sanctity and slumber.

So much for the daily routine of the collegians. The rest of their book of rules and regulations is absorbed with detail, quaint from its very triviality. The admission of a candidate to the Sacro-Monte was held to be a grave affair. The period of probation was a month, and a whole *Instruction* is devoted to the ceremonies connected with the taking of the hood. This, together with the cap and with the gospel on which the candidate was to take the oath, was deposited on a silver platter. Towards the close of the proceedings, and when the neophyte was already invested with his hood and cap, and had embraced the rector and numerous other persons of the plainer sex, an article was read to him enjoining him on pain of prompt expulsion not to carry any kind of firearm or other offensive or defensive weapon, and exacting his consent that in prevention of this heinous misdemeanour the rector should search his clothing at any hour of the day or night. (The reason for this stringent clause will be discovered presently.) At length, when these formalities were through, the victim signed the register and the public ceremony terminated. Privately, the new collegian was prohibited from "standing" celebrations at his own expense—iced water, sweets, or any other substance. He might, however, bestow an alms upon the Chapel of Saint Dionysius, and "gratify" the "poor *mozos*," namely, the larderer, cook, porter, *caniculario* or beadle,* the barber, and the barber's assistant.

* *Caniculario*—"Beadle, he who beats dogs out of the church." So says the venerable Spanish and English Dictionary of Fathers Higgins and Connelly. In this case, more properly the *bedel*.

Twice a year, in September and March, the student paid his board and lodging. Otherwise his wants were few, consisting merely of the indispensable articles of clothing, a "little book of Saint Peter of Alcántara," another of Father Kempis, the Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, and "some *disciplinas*," described in my old Spanish dictionary as "a discipline, an instrument for whipping; a cat o' nine tails."

This *Praxis* is so stocked with prohibitions that the student hardly seems to be permitted anything but prayer. "Nothing fashionable" may form a part of his attire. Neither externally nor inwardly may he indulge in "coloured clothing, or silk, or anything resembling it," or go "profanely ornamented, whether indoors or out." We further learn that his ordinary college costume is to be "a tawny cloak, a black baize cap, more than four fingers high," and for outdoor wear, "a hood of rose-coloured cloth, or clerical habit with a white collar above, but no collar or anything else new-fangled to the habit itself. The vest should have no flaps, or ribbons, or strings, or buttons about the upper part, but must be absolutely plain. No reticles, not even black ones, must confine the hair; nor must the shoes have heels. These, furthermore, must fasten, not with buckles but with buttons, even where a habit is worn. Neither within the college nor without shall gloves be used. The cloak is to be decent, and of such a length as to reach the heel behind and the instep before. The students must have no knife except a penknife; and this (like most of the

prohibitions we are reading) “without a point to it.” Weapons, both firearms and others, are prohibited on pain of instant banishment. He shall also be expelled who secretly breaks college of a night, or introduces women, *even if they be his mother or sisters*. Playing at cards is vetoed; likewise, under special penalties, “the taking of tobacco smoke; since, if this custom be endured, our community will see itself invaded by a habit which induces the students to forsake their studies, and congregate in parties detrimental to their good behaviour.” Nor are they to drink wine, *aguardiente*, “sundew” (*ros solis*), or similar strong liquors. Neither Ancient nor Modern is permitted the use of a *braseiro* or a fire, “nor must they play on any instrument, as being improper to the reverence of this sanctuary.”*

Hair-cutting day was passed as follows. The scholars were summoned in groups of four, the Moderns in the morning and the Ancients in the afternoon; each scholar having to provide his towel. Next, the crown of the head was shaved or “opened”; in other words, the clerical tonsure was performed, obedient to “the common right and special privilege conceded to our college. Some moderate and decent locks above the ears are suffered to remain, but no whiskers; and the cue is cut so as not to fall below the white collar in the Moderns, or the collar of the cloak in the Ancients. No bushy hair will be allowed.” In this way, four times yearly at the least, was carried out the *rasure* of the Sacro-Monte; “for if it be omitted, the students in their youth allow

* *Praxis, Instr.* xxi.

their hair to grow, and fill themselves with vanity, transgressing the honesty, and modesty, and good behaviour that are proper to our institution.”*

Such are a selected few of the regulations, or prohibitions (for in this case the words are practically synonyms). Whether they were faithfully observed I cannot say. I only know, from intimate experience, that a Spaniard is never happier than when he is making a law, except when he is breaking one. My readers will therefore draw their own conclusion.

The students reached the climax of their miseries during the period of the Lenten exercises; and also when the “discipline or cat o’ nine tails” was called into employment. Grim and gloomy are the precepts for this latter function. Once a week, all through the year, except in May, June, and July, the entire college took their places in the church, each penitent at a sufficient distance from his neighbours. Then the lights were put out; and to solemn words and music, and the solemn swishing of the cruel little thongs, the company (excepting, we suppose, the rector) performed “a fervid act of contrition”; at the close of which a light was brought in and the rector stood by the door to see if any member of his flock had accidentally forgotten his cat o’ nine tails.†

The Lenten exercises, though not, perhaps, so painful in a literal and fleshly sense, were also fraught with much discomfort. For days together the “ex-ceritants” might neither walk, nor talk, nor break their fast. Even their bedrooms were debarred from them, although they were appointed a brief interval of

* *Praxis, Instr. xx.*

† *Id., Instr. xxvii.*

repose in the "exercise room"—apparently a kind of eighteenth century torture-chamber. Here, if their bodies sank beneath them, they must "arrange themselves upon the floor as well as they are able; but without taking off their cloaks, and without making their books into a pillow."

In these authentic illustrations we therefore find an accurate and first-hand account of Spanish academic life a hundred years ago. To-day we should expect so rigorous if impractical a course to turn out little but dunces, prigs, or hypocrites. Pedraza, notwithstanding, dwells in terms of high complacency upon the virtue and the erudition of the Sacro-Monte scholars; * while Ramos Lopez, president in our own time, assures us that they emerge from these secluded and severe cloisters "advanced in virtue and letters, courtesy and culture, all of which is useful to them everywhere."

This may be so; and certainly the learned gentleman devotes the whole of a lengthy chapter to the pupils or professors of the Sacred Mountain whom he instances as having reached celebrity. The list is slightly disappointing. For my part, I can only recollect three men connected with this college whom the world has cared, or could have greatly cared, to hear about. These are the dramatist, poet, and antiquarian, Aureliano Fernandez Guerra y Orbe; the novelist Juan Valera; and Father Andrés Manjón. Thanks to *Pepita Jiménez*, Don Juan Valera needs no introduction of mine among an English-speaking people; on several occasions I have availed myself of Fernandez Guerra's studies and

* *Hist. de Gran.* p. 275.

researches on old Granada; and to Father Manjón, philosopher and philanthropist, I shall devote a chapter of this volume very shortly.

On the other hand, one is rather shocked to find among the Sacro-Monte worthies quoted by Señor Ramos, the name of the former abbot and canon, Luis Francisco de Viana, whom we have seen abetting Echeverría and his gang of rogues. At this rate the biographer might just as well have included Echeverría himself, together with (Medina) Conde, and the student who, on October 5, 1726, bestowed "a violent and instantaneous death" upon a comrade; or, in our less benevolent though more veracious Saxon term, assassinated him.*

But these are only details. Speaking in a broad, uncritical, catholic spirit, who would deny that the Sacred Mountain of Granada has played a prominent part in Spanish history, both sacred and profane; and bears a venerated name among all genuine believers? Do not her legends flourish to this hour? Every Sunday, at the evening hour of eight, the chapter and the inmates of the college, headed by a priest bearing an image of the Virgin, visit in devout procession the last of the chapels constructed among the holy caves, for it is known that this is the precise spot whereon the saints "were accustomed to celebrate the mysteries of their religion, and preach the divine word unto the new-converted. This truth

* *Praxis*, p. 151. This was why the student, upon admission to the college, was stringently forbidden to carry arms. It is a pity that our amiable friends the Spaniards are not more generally prudent in this matter, instead of continuing to stick and shoot one another as freely as they do at present.

was proved by the discovery of a cup and leaden vessels."

What a thing is faith—or obstinacy! Señor Ramos' tenaciousness deserves the closing word, and I shall grant it him. "As the procession advances through these holy grottos, the image of the Virgin visits, week by week, the martyrs' tombs—spots which the Lord has looked upon with special predilection. The shades of Cecil, Ctesiphon, Hiscius, and their followers seem to come forth to welcome the Virgin Mother, and mingling with the company unite their voices with our own to greet in her the *Star of the Seas*, the *City of God*, the *ever-Virgin*, and the *Happy Gate of Heaven*."

"These dulcet accents find an echo in the empyrean, where angels, to the music of their golden harps, repeat the very verses that expire beneath the bosom of the catacombs."



The Cortijo of San Jeronimo

V

A Cortijo in the Sierra

THE Granadinos are essentially fine-weather folks, coddled and spoiled by the perennial sunshine of their *carmenes* and Vega; and so, about the end of October, as soon as I announced my intention of climbing the Peak of the Veleta, thickly streaked with snow, they laughed into my face. However, my resolve was taken. In autumn I had reached Granada; in autumn the venture must be made, for probably it was a case of now or never. Consoling myself, therefore, with the reflection that there was plenty of method in my madness, and confounding my Spanish friends and enemies with

their own proverb insisting that a madman understands his business better than a sane outsider understands it,* I looked about for a *práctico*, and fixed the fatal hour of departure.

I found this *práctico* or guide in one José Fernandez—as we might say, an Andalusian John Jones—nicknamed, for sake of readier identification, *Pincho*, a native of the neighbouring village of Huetor. “Please call me *Pincho*,” he exclaimed, upon the striking of our bargain: “my real name is of no use to me, for nobody knows me by it;” so taken with the novelty of his request I gave my promise on the spot, and *Pincho* he shall remain till the end of my narrative. A small, spare, sinewy, vivacious, swarthy young man of seven or eight and twenty, a veritable son of the Sierra, trained from early boyhood to ransack the crannies, and caves, and glaciers of Mulhacen for *manzanilla*, or stalk the mountain-goat upon the slippery and jagged sides of the Trevenque. He was, besides, the undisputed owner of a brace of gaunt and sorry-looking female Rocinantes, reported, notwithstanding their conspicuous lack of comeliness, to be among the sturdiest and surest-footed of their kind, and as familiar as their master with each path and precipice of the mighty Mountains of the Sun and Air. We thus agreed that for two and thirty *reales*, or about five shillings day by day, *Pincho* and his steeds should take me up to the Peak of the Veleta and down again to the hotel; the keep of the cattle to be at *Pincho*’s charge; the maintenance of *Pincho* to be at mine. This was the

* “*Sabe más el loco en su casa, que el cuerdo en la ajena.*”

substance of our covenant; and grasping hands across a ha'porth of adulterated as well as watered wine, we testified to the honourable word, respectively, of Wales and Andalusia.

Our line of march and commissariat were soon determined, for Pincho, though a Spaniard, was a lover of despatch. In Spanish phraseology, we carried the matter "at the lance's point." I also had the luck to bear "a letter of presentation" from the owner of a farm in the Sierra to his *guarda* or superintendent, instructing him to open wide the door to the intrepid expeditionists, and put them up in hospitable fashion. This referred to bed alone: our board, composed as follows, must travel with us:

A tin of cocoa.

A half-bottle of brandy.

A kilo and a half of cooked veal.

A quarter of a kilo of Spanish sausage.

Three kilos of bread.

A pound of sugar.

A packet of salt.

A tin of stewed peaches.

The rest of the impedimenta consisted of

Two boxes of matches.

A spirit lamp, spirit, and saucepan.

An iron mug.

Cigarettes.

Two blankets.

Field glasses.

Three photographic cameras, loaded.

A spare box of plates for changing on the journey.

(On reaching the Cortijo, Pincho, with the most

benevolent intentions in the world, mistook this box for that of the stewed peaches, and with a sweep of his *navaja* laid it dexterously open on the supper-table.)

A cake of cocoa-butter for anointing chafed faces — and elsewhere.

That admirable Hispano-Oriental institution, the leathern *bota*. I purchased a new one, holding nearly three litres, and filled it at the Venta Alegre with strong red wine. One dollar, wine included.

At half-past eleven of a showery morning our cavalcade was ready for the road; the *capachos** packed, the nags bestridden, Pincho leading on the white, I following on the brown. The starting-point was the hotel door. My friends, marshalled on the step, already envied, I suppose, our safe return. At any rate they sought with scoffs and evil auguries to intimidate the pair of madmen bound for the treacherous Sierra of the Snows, though strangers glanced at us with sympathy, and wished us *buen viaje*. Then, giving a grin to all alike, we moved away at a majestic stride, down the Alameda, over the Genil, and out of a long lane, fringed with vines and gardens, onto the open hillside.

The approach to the Sierra Nevada is over a series of steep acclivities and descents, chiefly unwooded, swelling by fairly regular stages from a hundred feet or so to four or five thousand. Each of these swellings has its name, usually derived from some-

* Big round baskets, slung on either side of the saddle. Properly employed for carrying grapes in harvest-time, they are roomier and handier for a mountain expedition than the ordinary *alforja*.

thing of small importance on, or in, or round about it; the Cerro de la Ventana overtopping the Cerro de la Campanuela; el Puche* overtopping the Ventana; the Cerro de Monachil overtopping the Puche; and, further on, the Cerro de la Teja and Cerro del Nogal overtopping the Cerro de Monachil. After this the heights grow formidable, and the Cerro del Tesoro, Cerro del Trevenque, and Cerro de Matas Verdes are second only to the snow-clad slopes and steeps of the Sierra.

As soon as we began to mount Sierra-wards the weather grew wet and nasty, with a touch of chilliness, although beneath the rain-clouds the sun continued shining. By reason of this the prospect was a double one, both grave and gay at once, smiling to right and left upon the Vega and the lovely valley of the Genil, and frowning before us into the vapour-laden summits of the higher *cerros*. From end to end the Vega and the valley displayed their specks and rows of gleaming whitewashed villages, from the Sierra de Padul on the one hand to the Sierra de Alfacar on the other. Prominent among these villages were Huctor, Cenes, and Pinos Puente. I have seen many uncommon landscapes, but never a one more strange than this, more melancholy, or more beautiful.

On we plodded, silently and slowly. Pincho, impervious to scenery, but not to rain, pulled his *sombrero* down upon his ears and wrapped his

* Puche or Purche = *Puig*, *Puy*, Provençal *puoch*, Catalan *putx*, Italian *poggio*; all from Latin *pogium*, *pugium*, a hill, ridge, mound.—Simonet, *Glosario de Voces Ibéricas y Latinas usadas entre los Mozárabes*, p. 451.

shoulders in his blanket. What he could spare of this he threw on the *capachos*, looming like kettledrums across the downpour. Now and then we met a muleteer from some *cortijo*, tramping beside his nodding, jangling, potato-laden beasts, and sped him citywards with a short "*con Dios*," grudging him at heart his sunny haven in the valley. And yet, at least to me, the cold, repellent scenery was wonderfully wild and wonderfully fascinating. The mantle of the storm becomes this desolate region better than blue skies. Unfathomable *tajos*, topless cliffs, immure the writhing roadway; and our mountain nags, obedient to the awkward custom of their kind, kept picking the very border of the precipice. One of my feet was treading cloud; and several times I grasped the girth and tested the stirrupless saddle with a shudder.

Meanwhile the soil had changed in colour from tawny to vermilion; and, washing the soil away, the pelting rain brought down innumerable streamlets, so that the road seemed running blood. Once, as we turned a corner, I stole a backward glance; and lo! the dwindling towers of the Alhambra were reddened also—the selfsame colour of the streamlets of the road.

Four hours from Granada—four hours nearer heaven—we struck to the left and floundered through half-frozen mire across the level summit of the Puche. Here we encountered a family of labourers going down to pass the winter. The man was dragging an ass, heaped high with maize, potatoes, and a stick or two of furniture; the woman

piloted a porker, Irish fashion, by the leg; and a couple of lagging brats brought up the rear.

Beyond the Puche is a gully imprisoning the Cortijo de las Mimbres, bedded in an acre or two of loamy arable; and over the crest of the opposite *cerro* is the Cortijo of San Jerónimo, to which we were consigned. This last ascent is almost perpendicular. In general, when we speak of a horse as climbing a hill, the term is simply hyperbolic; but in this instance there is no exaggeration, for the hoof seemed not to tread the ground so much as to be trying to catch hold of it.

It was now so dark that very shortly only masses and outlines were distinguishable. The contour of the *cerro* was too fantastic for description. A mountain, no matter how jagged and abrupt, looks always orthodox so long as it retains the shape its Maker gave to it; but, once enveloped in a mist, becomes a fearful, unfamiliar, spectral form; the more so when a stiffish wind disturbs, and shifts, and splits, and shrinks it from one moment to another. As to the silence, *immense* describes it less inadequately than *intense*. The stillness was as vast and eerie, if not as changeful, as the mountain; though once I heard a horse's neigh at the Cortijo underfoot, and once or twice the echo of the blasting in the river Monachil—strains that were carried up to us as faint and sad as the sound of a convent-bell, borne from far off upon the darkness of a winter morning.

At last (and never, I maintain, can two short words have meant so much before), a long, faint patch of white and the barking of dogs dis-

closed the near Cortijo of San Jerónimo. Nobody, except the dogs, seemed much concerned at our arrival. However, the door was open, so springing from the saddle we stepped within. The room in which we found ourselves was long and low, lacking all conscious art or symmetry, and just designed to shelter man and beast—especially the latter. At one end an enormous fireplace, with a conical top that touched the raftered ceiling, vomited mingled smoke and flame; and at the other a prehistorically rude stone staircase wound above into the only storey. In one of the sides was the “street” door,* and in the other, the entrance to the yard and stables. The kitchen was an oblong bench of stone, with a lilliputian *hornillo* for the cooking, and a hole for the clay water-bottle—this latter of a markedly oriental shape. Close to the bottle was a roughly glazed *barreño*, or earthen tub for scouring dishes. Before being spoiled by years of wear, it might have cost a shilling; and the pale sea-green of this enamel is just the pigment used by the Andalusian Muslims seven hundred years ago. Above the kitchen was a small shelf, built into a niche in the wall and holding two glasses and two plates. A dingy rack with a handful of pewter spoons hung near the shelf; and close to the rack a bunch of horseshoes, a gun, and a powder-flask. Upon the floor were a chair or two, a bench, and a heap of heads of maize. Such is the eating, sleeping, and working-room of any farm in the Sierra Nevada.

* *La calle*, “the street.” Such is the name the people of the *cortijo* bestow upon the barren ledge on which their tenement is constructed.

I knew thé *guarda* at a glance, not by the cut of his clothes, which were pastoral enough, but by his domineering air; and, pulling out the damp and ruffled letter from my corduroy jacket, presented my credentials. Taking an iron *candil* and hanging it from a string, he sat beneath, and, raising the missive to the light, nodded towards a chair. I sat. At the end of every sentence he looked me over from head to heel, and saw, reflected in my steadfast pupils, a broad, athletic, gamekeeper-looking frame, not much above the middle height, and small, suspicious, grey-green eyes set in a shaven face all cut and crimsoned by polar snow and African sun. In spite of the chilly evening, he wore no jacket; but round his head was twisted a speckled kerchief, revealing, above the neck and ear, a few dark, bristly hairs beginning to tinge with dirty silver.

When he had reached his master's *rubrica*—the fanciful device with which the law of Spain compels all citizens to end their autograph—he folded the letter, secreted it, as though it had possessed the virtues of a banknote, in an inner pocket of his waistcoat, and gave me his hand. This was on Monday, October 26th, 1903. After a moment's pause, he asked me if the Boer war were ended.

I said it was.

"That war cost England a pretty penny," he remarked deliberately and (as it seemed) contentedly.

"Yes," I blandly assented; "and there are more and prettier pennies where that penny came from."

He first described a downward jerk with his head—equivalent to semi-acquiescence—and then cocked it

on one side, meaning to say, "Who knows? Even the damned *ingleses* may some day have to work in a *cortijo*."

Presently his family and the farm-hands all came trooping in to supper; the *guarda*'s wife and daughters three, besides about a dozen men and boys, miserably clad, miserably cold, miserably resigned. The *puchero* was dragged from the fire into the middle of the floor, and clutching each a pewter spoon, the party crouched around. The same dish served them all, and for many minutes there was no movement but the rhythmical plunging of the spoons, no sound but the rhythmical *slop, slop*, as the semi-solid mass was thrust into the eaters' mouths. A taciturn lot they were, doubtless from necessity rather than from inclination, for what have they to talk about? Even the women were silent. The *guarda* with an air of rude authority sat at the head of the floor (of course I was about to say table, when I remembered that there was none); and soon, standing before the fire to dry my steaming clothes, I put him some questions respecting the life and business of the farm. The former is truly patriarchal. Here there is health because there is no doctor; innocence, because there is no priest. But work and weather are severe. The produce of their toil is corn, potatoes, haricot-beans, *garbanzos*, and maize. All this goes down to be sold in the city, excepting the maize, the husk of which makes fodder for the cows, while the grain is mashed and given to the pigs. These are the highest-prized and best attended-to of all the live stock, since the Sierra

Nevada is famous for its breed of them, and the hams of Trevez, on the Alpujarra side, are noted throughout the whole of Andalusia.

After the modest meal was ended, the ladies withdrew to scour the dishes and spoons, and the men, instead of telling ribald stories—so inveterate a use with civilized and Christian gentlemen who live on lower elevations—began to peel the maize, tossing the cobs in one heap, and the grain in another. This was the signal for a microscopic, bandy-legged table to be fished out somewhere from upstairs and thrust into a corner of the hearth; my guide appeared from feeding the horses and unloading the *capachos*, loaded the microscopic table, and down we sat. And while the good things disappeared apace, the well-cooked veal and sausage, the brandy and the wine, the *cortijeros* went on working, ever working, tossing the cobs in one heap, and the grain in another; and stealing from time to time (though always without desisting from their task) a sidelong, horrible, painful, patient glance at the tempting table of the *señorico*.

My bedroom, to which my host conducted me, was in the granary. The floor was piled with grain above the level of a tall man's head: but in the corner next the door a hole was scooped, and in the hole I found my couch made ready, two sacks of maize, a small straw palliase, a pillow, and a blanket. I sank to rest, or rather, with the intention of resting. Not so the fleas, and hopeless of driving off those desperate and clearly anti-vegetarian battalions, I lifted my weary limbs, or what was left of them, and dozed in a sitting position on the grain. Rats,

too, kept brushing against my legs, or chattered and squabbled in my very ear. At length, when quite three hours must have dragged away, I saw a light and heard a step outside the door. One of the herdsmen was going downstairs to feed the cattle, and wrapping my blanket round my frozen shoulders I followed him. The hour was only one. There, in the faint light of the embers, and each of them enveloped in his *manta*, the slaves were fast asleep; for the master and his wife and daughters slept upstairs. There, too, a-sprawl among the rest, his head artistically wrapped in a scarlet handkerchief, was Pincho. I asked the herdsman who preceded me downstairs how long he had reposed. "Two hours," he said; "I go to bed at eleven." Then, noticing amazement on my face, he added, "O *señorito*, it's a hard life: even the beasts fare better."

The *guarda*, to do him justice, was also up betimes, and swearing at the slugabeds for slumbering after three. As for myself, I drew the bolt of the *cortijo* door and looked into the night. The lesser summits, crowned with leaden cloud, shot up their angry crests on every side save one. Upon this side alone the sky was stormless and serene. Just in the middle of the infinitely pale yet infinitely luminous ether, a single star was burning; and lit by the lamplike glitter of the star, and pillowed in new-shaken snow, rested the ageless features of imperial Xolair.



The Sun Rising on the Peak of the Veleta

VI

The Summit of Xolair



LITTLE before the break of day we saddled and set out on our aerial voyage, for overnight our goal had been a human habitation; but now our quest was undeniably towards the sun and stars. At first the path itself was indistinguishable, though Pincho knew it to ascend between two files of cyclopean boulders protruding violet-black against the Nile-green sky; so that the landmarks guided us, and not the road. An hour of zigzag clambering brought us perpendicularly over the *cortijo*, now visible enough. Nobody was yet astir. The roof was like an open book, back upwards, bound in dingy, salmon-coloured cloth; the threshing-floor beside it like a finger-ring. Browning recurred to me at once; but round about both book and ring was cast a rosary of trees.

The heavens grew lighter and shed their light upon the earth. I now was able to contrast the Alps of Switzerland with these of Spain. We entered upon a region sparsely overgrown with pigmy oaks, unpleasant to the eye, at once decrepit and impuberal. Despite, or possibly by reason of, their presence, nakedness and wildness were the prevalent features of the scene. The peaks of Switzerland have commonly a certain trimness. Villages reside beneath their precipices or in their interjacent valleys. Sometimes a great hotel is perched within a stone's throw of their top. The pines, too, have an orderly, Noah's-arky look. Upon the other hand, the mountain oak is sinister, unkempt, disreputable. Besides, the Spanish range conveys a wider sense of atmosphere, due partly to the vaster intervals from peak to peak, and partly to the exquisite clearness of the Andalusian air. Other, though slighter, causes are the lack of vegetation and the nearness of the sea. When Dr. Von Drasch examined the Sierra to prepare his geological report upon this region, its overwhelming barrenness impressed him very forcibly. "It would seem," he said, "as though Phœnicians, Romans, Visigoths, and Moors had here concerted to uproot all vegetable life." Dark indeed is the history attaching to these mountains. From the earliest time the shadow, not of the goatherd's staff, but of the sword, projects across their boundary. Historians have recorded that the ancient dwellers in this *Mons Solorius* * of the Romans were ever a

* According to Saint Isidore (*Etymologies*, Book xiv. ch. 8) *Solorius* is from *sol oriens*, corrupted by the Granadinos into *sol y*

troublesome and warlike race, partaking of the spirit and complexion of these angry fastnesses. The same state of things continued beneath the Muslim rule. According to the Arab Ben-Ketib-Alsalami, there rose a certain desperado, Suar-Hamboun el Kaisi, who styled himself "the King of the Mountains of Xolair," and built innumerable castles in the Alpujarra, until a body of the Caliph's troops surrounded and decapitated him. Law-abiding persons, whether Mussulman or Christian, spoke of the grim Sierra with alarm. A thirteenth-century geographer, who calls it "the mighty Mountain of Siler" (*Chelir-el-Tedj*), observed that "it is never free from snow the whole year through. Therein the snow is heaped for ten years at a time, looking like black stones, and when they break it the white snow lies beneath.* On top of the mountain no herb may thrive or animal exist, by reason of the cold; but further down are many fertile villages. Five and twenty rivers have their source upon this mountain, nine of which join current with the Guadalquivir. Nobody

aire, i.e. the Mountains of the Sun and Air: Arabic Xolair, Xuleyy, or Chôel Ats-salech. Edrisi said of this range that "it has many castles on its slopes, and one is Hisn-Farira, from which the nuts are named." Farira, if Conde may be credited, was latterly Ferrera, in the jurisdiction of Guadix.

* The contrary is really what occurs. "A deep hollow surrounded by high ridges is called in the Sierra Nevada a *corral*. Owing to the shape of the Sierra these *corrales* are numerous. In them the snow accumulates and grows as hard as marble, so that it is difficult to scratch it even slightly with the toughest, sharpest tool. It forms a series of layers varying in shade, according to the time that it has lain, from black beneath to white upon the surface."—Rubio, *Del Mar al Cielo*, p. 354.

may climb to the peak unless at midsummer, and there are found a great variety of virtuous herbs; but the ascent can only be made from three spots. 'Those who reach the top descry to a vast distance, even to Tlemcen, albeit they abide in peril of the cold.'

Thus have the height and steepness of the Sierra, its uninhabited character, and the horrid deeds committed in the war with the Moriscos, combined to give it a strange and sinister report at every period of the past. "*Cette grande montagne,*" wrote Bertaut de Rouen, two hundred and fifty years ago, "*qui est couverte de neige en tout temps, et qui l'estoit alors qu'il faisoit encore un fort grand chaud, est à cinq lieues de la Ville de Grenade; et ainsi on peut dire qu'elle en a plus de cinq ou six de haut: car depuis la Ville on monte toujours pour y aller.*" Truly a novel system for measuring the heights of mountains!

Wondrous and weird tales, then, have gone abroad concerning the lakes and caverns, the peaks and precipices of Xolair. Its loftiest summit bears the title of Boabdil's sire, precipitator of the downfall of Granada, the warlike and ill-fated Muley Hacén, whose spirit is rumoured by the villagers of the Alpujarra to hover nightly round his gelid and enormous cenotaph. Next to the ominous crest of Mulhacén, and on the southern side of it, upsoars the vast Picacho del Veleta, not, as Ford declared, a cone, but perpendicular at one extremity, in token of some appalling landslip infinitely long ago. Millions upon millions of tons of slate and granite must have whirled through space onto the crags below; millions

upon millions of years since then have covered up the giant debris with millions upon millions of tons of snow.

Viewed from Granada, the precipice of the Veleta seems measurable by inches. Viewed from a moderate distance, such as six or seven miles, it gives to the Picacho the aspect of a coffin large enough to hold the bones of all humanity from the Deluge onward. In the colossal cleft between Mulbacen and the Veleta nestles a lake, that of Vacares, in which, if fame says true, an old-time hamlet rots entombed for all eternity, plunged by an avalanche beneath the fathomless, unnaturally noiseless water, and overshadowed by the monster spires. Bertaut de Rouen had also heard of this *laguna*. "*Au plus haut de cette montagne, il y a un fort grand Lac dont on conte mesme des prodiges; car on dit qu'on n'y scauroit trouver de foud, et apparemment c'est de là et de la quantité de neiges fonduës qui s'y ramassent, qui viennent les deux rivières du Darro et du Xenil, quoy que l'eau en soit d'une nature fort différente; car on n'avoit dit à Madrid que l'eau du Xenil estoit mortelle. Je trouway là seulement qu'elle donnoit des flux et des maux d'estomac à ceux qui n'y estoient pas accoutumez. Et ce n'est pas merveille, car c'est de l'eau de neige toute pure.*"

Over these mountains, therefore, legend and superstition hold a potent sway. Now we are told of buried treasure, heavier and richer than all the *hort* of all the Nibelungs; or now of a troop of phantom soldiery; now of a hermit, frozen in his sterile cell; now of the "soul in sorrow" of a

monarch, or a miser, or a murderer. "A shepherd was tending his flock by the side of the lake, and there came two men in strange dress, one holding an open book, and the other a fishing-net. And the man read from his book, and said, 'Cast the net.' And he cast it, and drew up a black horse. And he with the book said, 'This is not it; cast again.' And he cast and drew up a pied horse. And he with the book said, 'This is not it; cast again.' And he cast and drew up a white horse. And he with the book said, 'This is it.' And they both mounted on the white horse and rode away, and the shepherd saw them no more."

"These shepherds believe that some day the lake will burst through the mountain and destroy Granada. One night a shepherd standing by the lake heard a voice say—

' Shall I strike and break the dike?
Shall I drown Granada town? '

And another voice answered, 'Not yet.'"

This tale is taken from *Gazpacho*, one of the extremely few sensible non-Spanish books on Spain written about the middle of last century. Fifteen or twenty years before, the anonymous author of *A Summer in Andalusia* repeated an absurd belief that Mulhacen was inaccessible; and earlier still, in 1799, the Spanish Government defrayed the expenses of a costly expedition to recover a Morisco treasure rumoured to be buried in the Barranco de Guarnon. Lawyers and labourers and clerks were all despatched to this ravine, a lonesome spot, secluded from the usual track of passengers; and the story of the

methodical though silly search reads nowadays like some romance of the West Indian main.

In course of time we crossed the Prados del Aire, or "Meadows of the Air." I need not add that "meadows" is here a term completely fanciful. Before us were mighty wastes ascending ever, covered for miles with those decrepit oaks or scanty shrubs, spinose and tempest-broken. But I was compensated from another quarter. The day was dawning fast. A singular effect of broadness grew into the sky. The eyes of Nature seemed to open and her breast to throb. In these high parts the clearest heaven, as daybreak blushes forth in maiden promise of approach, assumes an ugly ashen tone, a crude, inert distemper, priming the skyey dome as though to make it ready for the myriad shades of morning. Then, as these last appear, the Nile-green of the waning night, and afterwards that lifeless and preparatory grey, are superseded, first by pearly white, then gold, then rose, and lastly blue. Each of these colours, advancing through innumerable gradations from pallor to obscurity, occasions, as it overlaps its predecessor, another multitude of confluent and complementary hues, namelessly beautiful, alluring rather to the soul than to the senses. From patient watching I have learned by heart, though not by memory, the order of their rotation. I can even image them as I write: but I cannot describe them. I console myself with thinking that nobody could describe them.

The Sierra soon became as marvellous as the sky. Valleys and chines grew more and more distin-

guishable; at first about their silhouetted edges only: then troops of riant sunbeams peered into their tenebrose recesses until the cold earth, meeting their mild regard, seemed to be smiling back at them. Hard-featured juts, and pinnacles, and crags, as old as night herself, grew flushed with exquisite and tender sanguine, displaying their golden necklaces of lichen or brooches of rare saxifrage, with as it were the guileless vanity of girlhood. Even the oak-holes seemed to expand their crooked arms, and deck their wrinkles in a younger and more lustrous foliage.

Now and again thin wreaths of mist, like whiffs from a giant's pipe, scurried across our faces, until we left that mist behind us and below. Near the Peñón de San Francisco, a ridge of gaunt black cliffs, we came upon the earliest snows, resembling lumps of cuckoo-spit, capping the scrubby herbage. As we advanced, the lumps grew more profuse, until the landscape mimicked with astonishing truth the aspect of a gale at sea—of grey-green waters flecked with streaks of foam; and finally, a couple of miles beyond, all was white except where peaks or boulders broke the surface.

The air grew steadily colder, the snow deeper, the Picacho larger. Between the mountain and ourselves extended an immense *barranco*, so that our course was not direct but semicircular. Black and white, to right and left, above us and beneath, the fields of the Sierra, searred or dimpled here and there with hollows and ravines. Fringing the eastern sky a jagged range of spiring summits, haloed with blazing

The Summit of Fetair

sun, suffused with saffron splendour. Away into the west the Vega of Granada, her whelky lands not all unsmuffed from the brume: her motelike cottages



The Lake of the Mares

and houses; her ruddy walls and towers; her files of feathery cypress; her sugar factory with its creamy smoke etherealized by distance into creamier vapour.

Deeper and deeper grew the snow. Our animals, pastern-deep, began to flag and sometimes floundered on the border of a drift; but there was the Picacho, loftier and larger by degrees. Another hour should bring me to his footstool. While this eternity elapsed, I marked the spiky barrier that confronted us; for by this time we had described the sweeping semicircle. Our road lay right ahead, over a score or so of steep and large inclines, with dangerous pits between: but Pincho knew these well. The Picacho now was on

the left, the barrier stretching many a mile upon his right and capped with many a lofty and fantastic pinnacle. The most remarkable and human-shaped of these is called, ingeniously enough, the Friar of Capileira.

A little further on, beneath the actual shadow of the barrier, a lake lies bosomed in a snowy, silent cavity of the mountains. This is the "Mare's Lake," or Laguna de las Yeguas, about a hundred yards in length by thirty broad. Its edge was frozen at this time of year, but Pincho, dropping on his knees beside the ice, contrived to drink extravagantly. Spaniards are mighty quaffers and connoisseurs of water: in fact, comparing the two nations, I have noticed that on discovering a stream or pond the tendency of the Englishman is to get inside *it*; the tendency of the Spaniard, to get inside *him*. Where one laves, the other laps. "In the matter of water-drinking," said Ganivet, "we know no rivals on the globe"; and again, "with my compatriots thirst becomes an appetite. Some, imbibing water, imagine themselves to be eating food." On this account Pincho related to me with a wry face how several months before two English army officers whom he was guiding had stripped and plunged into this lake head foremost. Did they not drink it also, I inquired. "No, Señorito," was the disgusted return; "you see they brought a dozen bottles of a whitish kind of brandy."

We lunched beside the lake—some slices of cold sausage, bread, and snow-water. The air, though sharp, was not uncomfortably cold, and stimulated

hunger rarely. We wished our pockets had contained more fare; but then we quite expected to be back at the Cortijo before nightfall. Even our store of cigarettes had stayed behind. Therefore, as soon as our scanty meal was swallowed, even to the crumbs, we left the patient horses without tethering them, and set upon the final stretch of the Veleta, whose prodigious mass shoots heavenward from close beside the border of the mere. Towards its top the mountain is shaken together of loose and slippery laminas of slate; and the snow, new-fallen though thawing rapidly beneath the noonday sun, would reach my hip at least one step in every three. Our going, in fact, was mainly guesswork, aggravated by the portage of my cameras. In this way, with distracting slowness, we covered a thousand or fifteen hundred feet, until the horses dwindled into specks against the dazzling snow, and even the lake looked insignificant and puny. Beneath us now I spied the Friar of Capileira, silent, white-hooded, like a good Carthusian, slanting his head upon the platelike surface of the water, as though to mumble grace before a meal.

Suddenly the angle grew less steep. The last component slabs of the Picacho projected definitely into space. A wind of terrific violence and impact, piercingly cold besides, issuing from a thousand places simultaneously, was whirling round and round and beating up and down. Luckily the sky was clear, save for some glittering clouds above the flexuous horizon of Alhama. I fancied them to be the spirits of departed mountains, returning from

another universe to commune with this new Sierra. Not Spain alone, but all the world seemed at my feet. I saw a dozen maps at once, life-size as Nature's pulse designed and coloured them. Yonder, exactly on a level with ourselves, was Mulhacen; yonder the Alcazaba; yonder, upon the seaward side, the Cerro del Caballo and the Tajo de los Machos. And then the sea! Smoothness and fluency in one, its larger part was pale-cobalt, its lesser part a lucid mazarine. Two mains join here about a strip of azure water famed in history and song—

*“ quella fece stretta,
Ov' Ercole segnò li suoi riguardi,
Acchiochè l'uom più oltre non si metta.”*

This was enveloping Gibraltar, and enveloped in its turn by African mountains warping south and south. Right underneath the wastage of the great Picacho the billowy Alpujarra ran or roamed with warworn slopes, more truly sealike in suggestiveness of strife and storm than ever the hushed and tranquil Mediterranean. On every side except this last a century of variform Sierras, some with gold or ruddy whins upon their ample flank; others with red, or grey, or tawny stone; others, as ours, with deep, unsullied snow; the ranges of Iznalloz and Parapanda; the Sierras of Baza and Segura, Ronda and Tejada, Gata, Sagra, Lujar, Cazorla, Gador, Huétor, Alfacar, Almjara, Jarana, Grazalema, and Filabres; the Sierra Morena severing Andalusia from La Mancha, the vineyards and the corn from groves and orchards in whose neighbourhood the indolent Guadalquivir absorbs the luscious scent of orange-bloom and

The Summit of Folair

almond; the Pico del Lucero; the Cerro of San Cristobal; the Mountains of Extremadura, Portugal, Alhama, Loja, and Algarinejo; the "throats"



Mulbacen and the Alcazaba from the Summit of the Veleta

or passes of El Lobo and La Ragua, leading, the former from the Alpujarra to Guadix, the latter to the villages included in the Marquisate of the Zenete.

Why does distance please? Hazlitt, whose essay I found myself recalling now, has failed to state his argument convincingly, or even clearly. "Distant objects please, because in the first place they imply an act of space and magnitude, and because, not being obtruded too close upon the eye, we clothe them with the indistinct and airy colours of fancy. In looking at the misty mountain-tops that bound the horizon, the mind is, as it were, conscious of all

the conceivable objects and interests that lie between. We imagine all sorts of adventures in the interim : strain our hopes and wishes to reach the air-drawn circle, or to 'descry new lands, rivers, and mountains,' stretching far beyond it : our feelings, carried out of themselves, lose their grossness and their husk, are rarefied, expanded, melt into softness and brighten into beauty, turning to ethereal mould, sky-tinctured. We drink the air before us and borrow a more refined existence from objects that hover on the brink of nothing. Where the landscape fades from the dull sight we fill the thin, viewless space with shapes of unknown good, and tinge the hazy prospect with hopes and wishes and more charming fears."

This theory is trite and superficial. The truth is deeper down. Our love of distance is engendered in our only age of absolute optimism, that is, childhood. Distant objects please us now because they bring with them a reminiscence of our infancy, when all that seemed far off seemed also inoffensive. Nay, what seems farther off than infancy itself; and yet it soothes and pleases us to contemplate its recollection? Childhood, delicate, poetic, unsuspecting, is far more sensitive to space and magnitude than mere maturity. The hedge of the next field looks to a little child the confine of another universe. What will he think of the hills upon the far horizon?

Another of Hazlitt's errors is the following. He preconceives that every distant object must be hazy. But here, upon the Sierra Nevada, the farther off an object is the more intensely clear it looks; and a traveller has observed, with perfect truth, that

“nothing, however small, seems capable of being hidden from our view.”

Distance in landscape is almost always more or less connected with a mountain or with mountains. Mountains, indeed, involve a double distance, perpendicular and horizontal—twin distances that interact unquestionably to increase the grandeur of the general mass. Then height, of course, is irremediably linked with heaven—a pretty though futile fiction, born with our birth and diligently fostered by the Church.

On a fine day in the Sierra Nevada the landscape never fades from the dull sight by reason of simple distance. It disappears from very smallness, as though we looked at it beneath a microscope (and so we virtually do); but even the farthest detail has as vigorous an outline as the stone on which I rest my pocket-book to make this memorandum.

Just as I had jotted down the words, a great brown eagle left his cranny in the cliff, beat the air into obedience, and rested motionless between the earth and heaven. His head was turned towards us, and he seemed to scrutinize me through and through. I felt a pang of shame. He filled the vastness which overwhelmed my guide and me. His look was that of superhuman greatness; for the eagle sees further than we do, and soars higher.

Two reasons why I would consider him superior to ourselves.



A Snowstorm Coming up the Mountains

VII

The Snowstorm

“**I**f it’s all the same to you,” said Pincho, looking intently down into the west, “we’ll begin to get back.” I picked up my cameras, but asked him why.

“Because the weather up here is very strange. It’s not what you’re accustomed to below. Sometimes upon these heights it’s very crazy.”

While he spoke he still kept looking westwards. I followed the direction of his eyes. Beside the spiky top of the Trevenque, and over the valley of the Monachil, was a diminutive round white cloud, no bigger than a puff of cannon-smoke. The under part of it was slightly grey. Unlike the cumulus resting

delicately on the far horizon of Alhama, this cloudlet seemed incapable of change, hanging with heavy insignificance above the snow-fields and the river. Pincho was right. Its very stagnancy inspired alarm.

We began the descent, springing from jut to jut adown the slaty steeps, and covered two thousand feet of breakneck climbing in rather over half an hour. When we had gone some distance I called to mind the *première*, in Madrid, of a comedy by one of my familiar friends. This was to be the night appointed; and so, tearing a leaf from my sketch-book, I wrote him a telegraphic message of goodwill, to be transmitted on our arrival at Granada, and dated in jocular language from the summit of these mountains.

Then we continued. Underneath our toes the pin's-head lakelet grew to a blue-black bead, next to the bigness of a hand-mirror, and so by regular degrees until we caught the glimmer of the fretted ripples, and the mere was once again life-size. There were our scraggy steeds, nosing patiently and fruitlessly amid the snow, a dozen yards from where we had abandoned them. As Pincho hastily adjusted the *capachos*, muttering a kind of mingled curse and prayer, I realized that the storm-cloud had swollen to an alarming bulk. By some illusory effect, which doubtless has a simple scientific cause, it seemed to race upon, yet never to come up with, us, though all around was falling in its subtle grasp. It rested on the water at the further end of the lake; it poked enormous fingers into the bowels and the fissures of the mountain; but where we stood was free for quite a while. At length a fine mist blew about our faces,

seeming to sprinkle us, not with drops, but dew. It might have been the fair sercin of any summer's eve. But this did not occur in summer, nor was it the time of twilight; and the mist, for all its mildness, was the herald and precursor of the snowstorm.

We pushed away, I mounted, Pincho, the better to inspect our trail, afoot. So far, our prints had undergone no change. No earthly wayfarer had redisturbed those virgin fields except a single fowl, the frail concatenation of whose tread ran crosswise from our own. At first we travelled very fairly, until the mist began to gather substance and snap asunder the last shafts of the sun. Then, just for a moment, I caught a farewell glimpse of the Picacho, infinitely overhead, not motionless but seeming to upbreak above the elements, undiademmed atop, only his massy neck torquated with the storm. Swiftly and majesty in one he soared away. The prospect grew more awful and unearthly every instant. Boulders that proved to be within a stone's throw assumed a filmy and fantastic form behind the dim, diaphanous veil that hung and scoured at once across their jagged edges. Deeper and darker, swifter and colder and moister grew the fog. A horrible pain invaded all my limbs, then numbness, more appalling still. Montaigne declares that "even to fear, courage is required." If this be so, I was as brave as anybody under heaven, for my panic knew no bounds. Nor was I alone in these emotions. Pincho, leading the way, was outwardly composed; but the horses, scrambling frantically forward with distended eyes and nostrils, exhibited a pitiful dismay.

I thought it better to tumble from the saddle and essay to walk. Apart from other adverse circumstances, each step required at least the toil of three. First there was the extraction of the foot from the snow, then the depth of snow to be surmounted, and finally the onward step. Our track, until it merged into the mist, was still distinguishable, but this was not for long. Enemies were advancing upon us, as multitudinous as all the sands of all the seas, stealthy and skilful in attack, themselves invulnerable, though ruthless to the vanquished. A dozen snowflakes fell upon my sleeve. I brushed them off, yet before I could raise my hand again, a dozen more had fallen on the back of it.

The caresses of a well-loved woman practised in deceit are not more subtle, more insistent, more insinuating. Oddly enough, a similar thought occurred to Pincho. Half turning round, he said, "*Está amorosa la nieve.*" ("The snow is amorous.") An epithet of more than academic nicety, uttered by a peasant who can neither read nor write. Such is Andalusia. How truly he had drawn the character of those feline flakes. Of course he meant to say that the snow was soft, and treacherous, and tender; not the vigorous snow of winter, that makes an adamant pavement or pipes an honest warning; but the snow that kisses and ensnares in crafty silence, the builder of false bridges, the fell contriver of the avalanche, the amorous snow; snow the woman!

The sky was like a great grey sieve held up against white paper. Largeness and confinement united in

appalling comradeship, the one to smother us, the other to mislead. The less we could espy ahead, the bigger grew the vastness, the more I felt to be obliterated from my view; in spite of which one strip of narrowness drew out into another, and their series seemed to have no end in number and monotony. The waste by now had grown unpathed. Pincho, I take it, smelt our whereabouts with the instinct of a born *serrano*; but twice or thrice we plunged into a drift; at other times the snow was only to our knee.

The next state or stage into which I fell is better illustrated by another's words than by my own. "Nature, having discovered me on one side, had covered me on the other. Having disarmed me of strength, she armed me with insensibility, and a regular or soft apprehension." Presently the "soft apprehension" yielded to none at all. My mind was less exhausted than my muscles. I thought my end was both inevitable and immediate; and yet I had no fear of death, and only very little curiosity. My musing was chiefly retrospective, and commonplace at that. My scruples of a future state were interested and ignoble. All of us as Death appears in the doorway are more or less of attitudinarians. I have attended numberless deathbeds, and always found the same misgiving; *what will the bystanders observe, and what will they report of us?* Pluck has something to do with this, but vanity a great deal more. We step into our cerements with histrionic self-conceit. Let me confess, then, with an almost anti-Christian candour, that I both exonerate and

extol the deathbed attitudinarian, the more especially if he succeeds in demonstrating that (judiciously employed) the final moment of our lives is equal in importance to the sum of all the rest. Alonso Cano withdrew his wrinkled lips from the crucifix because it was too ugly. Byron, that protean votary of *la pose*—social, moral, literary and linguistic—thought fit to die in Greek; as if a man could ever speak a foreign language as sincerely as his own. Each of these artists posed in what he knew. But the arch-*poseur* of all was that illustrious rogue of whom it is related that nothing in this world became him like his leaving of it. This is indeed to pose imperishably.

I thought of writing something valedictory, but naturally enough I could not bend my fingers. This shows that my intelligence was partly paralysed, for it only dawned upon me very gradually that in my pocket was the telegraphic message to my friend. It proceeded to dawn upon me, furthermore, that here was a perfect, providential pose. Night and death were joining hands to overwhelm me. I smiled at them. A search-party, or if not this, the earliest visitors together with the following spring, would drag my unhouseled bones to light, and in the pocket of my corduroy coat—my telegraphic message to my friend. What would they say? Why, what an admirable cynicism in the very grasp of death—to scribble a facetious telegram and make no mention of that sinister embrace. I felt a kind of monstrous satisfaction. After all, an idle chance contributed to my renown. With this my mind grew quite at rest. I

sank into the snow with absolute contentment. "Leave me" (I think I cried). "Give me my blanket and leave me. To-morrow I will follow you; *mañana, mañana.*" My utterance seemed thick and inarticulate, as though I were anesthetized. Pincho was at my side. "Señorito," he shouted, "get up; for God's sake get up."

I felt that to rise was the easiest task in all the world, yet not a limb would stir. So Pincho dragged me up and beat me brutally about the head and face. One of his blows hurt. It struck me on the temple, where I suppose a fragment of existence still remained. The pain, as hot as scalding water, appeared to trickle down me; and as I tried to step, once more my boots went forward. So that my legs were hitherto my own. My will, together with all its furniture and gimcracks, was evidently Pincho's. Where now was all my Latin and Greek, my history, my Christianity, and so forth?

There is no word in the English language to indicate my manner of making progress. I did not tramp or plod, for tramping and plodding imply a definite fatigue; but here all sense of feeling had worn itself away. Of course my strength was ebbing, and yet I knew no strain. There may have been exertion in the snow which bound my limbs, or in the cold which petrified them; but in myself I was aware of none.

The rest of what befell was subsequently told me by my guide. It seems that after several hours of this unequal combat the dangerous zone was over-

passed, the cold grew bearable, and sheets of snow gave place to sheets of water. Pincho and the horses were nearly dead; I was completely so. I have a notion, infinitely slight, of walking, rolling, or being pushed or carried down a sticky bank, and then being thrust towards a shadowy mound, which proved to be a goatherd's hut, deserted, the highest in the whole Sierra. Although I thought myself upon the other side of death, this spurred me to a last galvanic effort and I stood. An instant afterwards nature surrendered me for good and all, body and brain and soul, a chattel propped on end, without volition to conceive or strength to execute; until, deposited by Pincho or by chance before the cavelike entrance to the hovel, I dropped, as lifeless as a log, across that unexpected threshold.



A Wild Scene in the Sierra Nevada

VIII

Revival

WHEN I awoke, or came again to life, I found myself upon a sodden, earthen floor, with water trickling from above into my nostrils, eyes, and mouth (for I was gasping hard). The horses, fellow inmates of our shelter, were munching some mysterious fodder (it proved to be the cabin roof), and I could hear their hoofs gyrate within some inches of my head. Finding my voice forthwith, I called to Pincho, who dejectedly returned my salutation and struck a match. Before it burnt away I sat up and volunteered to help, ashamed of all my past inaction. What could I help in? I was told, in making a light and warmth that should endure. The roof of the cabin, I repeat, was thatched inside with

straw, and Pincho's box of matches was nearly full ; so pulling part of the roof to pieces, while the horses gobbled the remainder, we kindled simultaneously a fire and a lamp, feeding the blaze by turns, about ten minutes at a time.

The hours wore on, yet failed to stay the deluge. What a rain ! I do believe it tumbled down in thick, unbroken cords, not strings of drops, or drops. As for the tediousness, all the nights of the year, or many years, seemed to have joined together, like the rain, in one interminable cable ; and when I looked back upon the snowstorm, I almost fancied it some faint adventure of my childhood, desiered imperfectly along the avenues of time. Hunger, and weariness, and weakness, all were here ; terrible antagonists for two exanimate men. One comforting discovery we made, but only one. The day before Pincho had stuck a cigarette behind his ear, and there forgotten it. We halved the sweet, small cylinder with exquisite impartiality. Then only did I comprehend the virtues of tobacco, that *nobilis herba*, as a picturesque old Oxford poet justly titles it ; and as I puffed bent forward to inhale the smoke anew.

Yet even this finding of the cigarette was counter-balanced by a fresh disaster. Near the top of the hovel projected a large stone horizontal slab, crowning a vent in the wall designed to carry off the smoke. On one occasion Pincho, rising mechanically, more than half asleep, to feed the fire, dashed his oblivious brow full tilt against the border of the slab, causing a wound which bled alarmingly, until I dried my handkerchief and bound it up as well as I was

able. So we existed till the dawn. When day began to show it was no longer raining. The heavens had wept themselves dry; though still occasional drops fell down in sullen protest at their impotence. Our cabin was surrounded by a kind of bog, probably at ordinary seasons a piece of cultivable land, but now submerged through all its surface. Our feet came up from it encased in kilos of thick mire. Then we dragged forth the beasts and set our cavalcade in marching order. Yet, when we prepared to move, a further trial was awaiting me. Of course I had unshod myself the night before: but now, on picking up my boots, I could no more get them on than if they had been an infant's; nor were they merely shrunk and wrinkled, but, since the fire had dried them, of a bricklike hardness. Luckily Pincho had brought in his pocket a pair of military *alpargatas*—a couple of slabs of rope with black cloth strips to bind them round the ankle. Not Mercury himself could wish for lighter sandals; so on they went and off we started.

After a spell of wretched ambulation, we struck some rising ground, and shortly afterwards a mountain path without the surface water of the level land, and only about shin-deep in mire. Along this path we plodded. We were in the heart of the Sierra; yet no Sierra was visible. The mountains from top to toe seemed wrapped in lead-coloured cotton-wool. The air was saturated; so were we; and the horses, poor creatures, kept vomiting both from skin and nostril as thick a vapour as the steam-cock of a locomotive.

Presently a dirty urchin crooning a lugubrious *copla* sprang up, as well as I could see, from nowhere. We took our bearings from him, and since he proved to be going our way to some remote *cortijo*, set him before to serve as cicerone. That part of our peregrination is completely indescribable, save by the one word *wetness*. We saw wetness, felt wetness, smelt wetness, swallowed wetness. We even heard wetness; for the stunted bushes, as we brushed them by, discharged their pattering load of moisture. The whole of that spongy landscape, with ourselves into the bargain, might just have fallen into a monster pail, and been pulled out a dripping sop.

After three hours of this misery we reached the farm. Its occupants were glad to see us, or said they were. They also said they were surprised; and of the truth of this there could be no doubt, for we saw it written far beneath the level of their faces. I think at first they took us for spectres, until we called for the precious provisions we had recklessly left behind on the preceding day—coffee and cocoa, biscuits, and bread, and brandy, cold beef and Alpujarra ham, Bologna sausage and tinned salmon. Surely there are definable and definite occasions (and this, I plead, was one of them) when gluttony is not only excusable but praiseworthy.

When at a single sitting we had breakfasted and lunched, and “overtaken”—in Pincho’s phrase—our supper of the night before, our limbs unstiffened enough for us to mount the horses, and on we moved. Providence had blown us out with self-importance, and besides, our stomachs were refreshed. No further

effort was demanded of us; all the rest was glory. Therefore our talk for several hours was in the key of mutual admiration. Had we not "planted a pike in Flanders" by scaling the Picacho nearly in November? We spoke, in consequence, of the vulgar herd of August or September alpinists with lordly pity coupled with disdain. Yet though we stretched our exploit to the utmost, the danger out of sight proved verily a danger out of mind. I always found it so. The times when I have stood upon the very verge of death must number quite a score, and yet they cause me, as I turn the backward pages of my life, no more emotion than a barking dog. Does this, I wonder, betray in me a somewhat strange resiliency, or do I share it with my fellow men? At any rate, I find it at once a source of weakness and of power. Of weakness, because it cuts me off from the sedate vocabulary maintained to be inalienable from those so-called solemn moments; of power, because it seems to show me that the groundwork of our being originates, if once we elbow off the parson with his cant, not in pathos but in humour.

Throughout this cogitation I felt a growing desire to contemplate again the great Picacho del Veleta. But no. The weather by now had mended, and the sun, like a scolded child with traces of recent tears across his face, crept timidly forth once more. The mist rolled off the bases of the mountains. Here, parallel to our path, was the Trevenque, and yonder the Tesoro; yet still the emperor-peak remained enveloped in invisibility.

A dreary time ensued, although the sky kept

brightening. While we were plodding up and down the stony steeps, I tried to amuse myself by examining Pincho as to his occupations, accomplishments, and so forth. Once upon my sneezing he took me up with a pious ejaculation, as is usual in this country. I set the question to him from Montaigne, "Can you tell me whence the custom ariseth, to blesse and say God helpe to those that sneese?" But Pincho on this point was not an oracle. The humbler classes of this as of all lands possess their superstitions, but know not why. Properly considered, is not this what constitutes a superstition?

Then it occurred to me to ask him if he could read and write.

"No, Señorito," was the quick reply. "I went to school for seven years; but the fact is, my school-master was a dreadful fool."

The retort *discourteous* was evident, but I set my lips to hide a smile, and said nothing.

When we began to descend the *cuesta* winding in an almost endless spiral towards Granada, a violent surprise awaited me. Up to this point I had imagined my faithful Pincho to be the lowliest of the lowly. But now he expanded into nothing less than a landed proprietor. A small boy working in a field of potatoes adjacent to the roadway, ran up to Pincho's side, and solicited employment as his gardener and his goatherd; for it seems that my guide was owner of the following effects, enumerated to me in this order:

The two nags.

Five goats.

A wife.

Two children.

A cottage.

A plot of ground.

Pincho pulled up forthwith, and regarding the candidate with an air of Sabine austerity, delivered a pithy sermon on the characteristics of the domestic goat.

“The goat,” he said, “is a delicate creature, whose milk is easily turned bad by heating and *disgustos*.”

The boy assented.

“There are lads who ill-treat their goats and spoil their milk.”

The boy shook his head, to indicate that though such criminals are not unknown, he for his part repudiated all association with them.

“You will not lay the stick upon my goats?”

“Not I.”

“Nor frighten them with shouting?”

“No.”

“Nor pelt them with stones?”

“May I see myself blind if I do.”

This closed the examination. “You may come to my house at Huector,” observed the potentate, “on Thursday morning.” He then handed the infant a cigarette, which the latter lighted with precocious care, and shook his rein, while the other sprang blithely back to his labours in the glebe.

The time had now arrived to settle our accounts. A pretty pair we must have looked: Pincho, with his bandaged, blood-stained head, I with my stirrup-

less, naked, swollen feet protruding through the grimy sandals. Luckily nobody was by to raise a laugh, and so for us the moment was intensely solemn—as solemn as the signing of a treaty, or the editor's replies to correspondents in the *Saturday Review*. First we brought our jaded animals together and shook hands in imposing silence, like Wellington and Blücher on the field of Waterloo. Then I pulled out and told the money—twenty-four *pesetas* and a gratification of another twenty. Pincho took them and took his hat off. “Don Leonardo,” he said, with a distinct tremble in his voice, “I am a poor man, though honest.” (I recalled Cervantes' nasty cynical phrase to the effect that honesty and poverty are incompatible, but charitably kept the recollection to myself). “I like,” my guide went on, “to serve a gentleman; and you, Don Leonardo, *are* a gentleman.” I murmured my thanks and did my best to dispel the accusation; for it is not thought decent in ceremonious Spain to accept a compliment without rejecting its conclusions, at once besmirching your own fair fame and taxing your panegyrist with untruthfulness. “I am a poor man, Don Leonardo; but if ever your circumstances should become—as we often find them in this world” (I caught a decided delicacy in the pause), “Pincho, *alias* José Fernández, has always a dollar in his pocket to share with you.”

After these moving words we grasped the *bota*, and sealing our friendly sentiments in the approved fashion began to thread the lanes of cottages upon the outskirts of the town, when suddenly, in turning

a corner, Pincho glanced across his shoulder, called to me, and pointed. There, it seemed innumerable leagues away, towered the great Picacho, smothered in spotless snow. And even while we looked, the rosy radiance of the setting sun drew over that majestic mass from crown to pedestal.



A Good Head for a height, on the Summit of the Trevenque

IX

How I Did Not Climb the Trevenque

“**HOW** very strange,” exclaimed my friend and fellow expeditionist, the lieutenant—“a baker who does not know the price of bread.” He raised his eyeglass with coquettish curiosity.

“If only my son were here,” sighed the old woman, “I could inform you in a moment.”

The loaves were in a little cupboard in the passage: not many loaves all told—perhaps a score. I picked out one and prodded it with pseudo-connoisseurship. It seemed to me the very best of bread, this clean, and close, and snowy bread of Spain. I dug my thumbs into it, and then I weighed it on my palm, and then I sniffed at it. The fact is, I was hungry.

and the smell of bread, just like the smell of earth, is one of nature's perfumes.

I said: "It does not seem to weigh the *kilo*."

"No doubt," returned the beldam, with a stealthy snigger; "it is only a half-*kilo* loaf."

"Well, well," put in my friend to cover my confusion, "ask us all you please. But I warn you," he added, "that if you overcharge I shall report you to the Governor of Granada. You know the law relating to articles of prime necessity?"

"*Quía*," replied the old woman, without the least dismay, "the Governor of Granada has other things to busy him."

My friend drew out some coppers. "How much?" he asked again, this time a trifle snappishly.

A man of middle age stepped into the passage from the street and cast a quick, suspicious glance at both of us. "Thirty *centimos*," he said, as brusquely as the officer before him, "that bread costs thirty *centimos*."

And yet the crone had suffered—or had taken—no offence. "I told you so," she croaked with quick contentment; "he bakes and sells the bread. I only keep his home in order." A look of motherly pride went with the words: but (like a woman) *she* it was who held her hand out for the money.

The scene of this ado was Cajar, about one hour's walking from the city of the Alhambra and the Alahmares. Cajar is one of those villages, common enough in this Peninsula, which seem, no doubt fallaciously, to have more houses than inhabitants. Even (a *non plus ultra* token of depopulation in this

land), there is no bull-ring and the church can boast no beggar on its doorstep. Yet Cajar is clean, and old, and well-to-do, and eminently decent. Before we bade its cottages good-bye, we turned into the only tavern of the place, a two-roomed, unpretentious shanty with a morsel of a counter, and summoning a mediæval matron from her needle, drank down a glass of thin white wine, and afterwards a quantity of water. Our floor was simple brick, our table simple pine, our walls the simplest whitewash, outraged by sundry chromos of the German grade of hideousness; those chromos which become gamboge throughout as years roll over them—the Kaiser's "yellow peril" with a vengeance. Between the chromos a broken bracket contained a broken plaster image of Saint Michael stamping Satan underfoot. In spite of the arch-angel's kicks and of his thrustings with a kind of pickle-fork, only the image of the Tempter stayed unbroken. Amid these natural and artistic charms we sat, the officer, his servant, and myself on three straw-seated chairs: and this was all the chamber.

Our limited provisions had been packed into an empty camera case. We pulled them out and made a rapid meal, breaking, together with a chunk of cheese and hard-boiled egg, the bread we had just purchased. Unluckily we cannot, like the camel, store up a drink against the actual hour of our thirst, and draw on such reserve as requisite. I quaffed a glass, and then another glass; and yet I was not thirsty. Prevention in this instance proved a great deal worse than cure, and later on I paid a

heavy price for such dipsetic folly. However, since thirst and hunger must be positively felt before we take their meaning even in a faint degree, I suffered for the moment no uneasiness. So quitting the empty tavern for the empty street, and empty Cajar for the empty ways beyond, we lit our cigarette, and strode, contentedly enough, towards the high Sierra.

The taller crests of this, as every lofty range, are hidden at their base by humbler foothills, but in its general consistency and form the Sierra Nevada of Spain suggests a pigmy Himalaya rather than the Alps or Pyrenees of Europe. Chiefly composed of mica shale, with little granite or cohesive stone, the principal elevations tend to break away with marked abruptness on a single side; and hence the prospect from the crown of the Veleta must be strangely like the mammoth Gaurisankar and his neighbours viewed from the forests of Sikkim. Between the arms or *divisorias* that go up towards each peak are deep *barrancos* or ravines conveying streams of melted snow. Often these latter have their source in crystal lakes that lurk quite near the summits of the chain; often their course is placid and the music of their march melodious and suave; often, a foaming, roaring mass, they overleap a thousand feet of precipice; often their silver passage may be traced for hours at a time; often for hours at a time they creep concealed within the very bowels of the mountain. Animal life is not diversified. Eagles and wolves are fairly numerous, but scarce and growing scarcer every season is the beautiful *cabra montes*, a kind of

ibex, wary and keen-scented as the chamois. Forests of chestnut, oak, and pine invest the lower zones: and here and there a scanty patch of wheat or maize adjoins the white *cortijo* sheltered in some hollow of the rocky ridges. Above the wheat and maize are stretches of thin pasture, where shepherds keep their cabins and their flocks from spring till early autumn.

When I was small I used to think the Alps and Himalayas rose up as perpendicular as any wall, from absolute sea-level to the clouds. Reader, have you not thought the same? That misbelief, so typically and pathetically infantile, originated in our atlas, where Everest and his brother giants rise like the steepest sugar loaf against their scale of altitude. So, too, misguided by our natural history, did we not think in childhood that the hottest climates are *per se* the best; that livers, like a compensation-balance, accommodate themselves to every temperature; that tropical America's unsullied skies, year in, year out are rather warmer than an English June; and that a lion is the bravest of all beasts, scarcely excluding man? And yet upon such misconceptions hangs no little of our latter-day philosophy. A pretty world we live in if no child should know the truth about it till increasing years and waning innocence oblige him! However this may be, our present process is akin to barbarism. Parents, governesses, and the authors of school-literature conspire to keep the child awhile in fairy-land. Then nature, hustling fantasy aside, thrusts up her bigger and more brutal book, and rubs the childish nose upon its pages.

Of course it is impossible to plant the foot at any certain spot and say, "Here begins the Sierra Nevada." The first approach by where we moved this morning, is up and over a softly shelving and apparently interminable slope, with rounded rocks, like elbows, here and there projecting through a miserable, threadbare, stony soil. Only at distant intervals you spy a tall *arrête* clad with unbroken snow. After a league or so of this insensible incline we found, on looking back, the tower of Cajar church beneath our feet. Beyond and lower still, the maplike Vega of Granada swept broadly round towards Alhama and the west, dotted all over its expanse with picturesque demure hamlets interspersed with green and golden cultivation. The atmosphere through which we viewed that fair and far champaign was silent with the silence of the mountains, where vision ripens at the cost of sound. Fine-weather clouds half glided, half gyrated overhead in delicate yet massy driftage; a falcon transpierced the deepest azure; and once we passed a goatherd propped dead-weight upon his staff. He and the rock on which he stood seemed, like a statue and its base, equally contrived from stone. We called to him. He did not hear, or did not answer if he heard; and so, to no regret of mine, we strengthened our illusion.

About midday the slope, mounting to several thousand feet and stopping at a shoulder, disclosed, beyond the border of a desert table-land embosomed in the cyclopean mountain walls, a splendid sweep of precipice and peak; of shaly ridges first, speckled

and streaked with foam, and after these the glittering snow-fields of the great Sierra. Our goal was the Trevenque. Yonder it lay, five miles ahead and slightly to our left, a crest of Matterhorn steepness rising from a group of lesser peaklets ranged about their lord.

By this time I was dead athirst. The part of the Sierra through which we now advanced is very nearly destitute of water. Only at several miles apart the regular path of mule and mountaineer runs through or round a limpid, microscopic pool; and each of these the aborigines grandiloquently term a "fountain." To make my woeful situation worse, a stream was purling in the valley far beneath. So did the siren's song provoke Ulysses, save that, unlike Ulysses, I was free to follow. However, I glued my eyes upon that arid peak ahead, and manfully maintained our bearings. Presently, by great good luck we struck one orange at the bottom of the camera-case, and, not much further on, one of the celebrated "fountains." Plump in the middle of our track a small depression contained a quart or two of water. However, unless disturbed, the priceless liquid was ethereally clear, and overflowing very slightly showed that it oozed and issued from a constant source. Making a cup out of my half of the orange, I filled and quaffed at will. In artificial craftsmanship a silver cup is lined with gold. Here (and it appetized me all the more) nature, proceeding on another plan, had lined my golden goblet with fine silver. My friend, contemptuous of such luxuries, fell flat along the soil

and thrust his lips into the nimic patch of moisture. Each of these methods served its primal purpose ; yet our discussion as to their respective value sustained our chatter for the whole remainder of our outward journey.

The sun was evidently stooping to the west when we drew really near to our destination. Unlike his brother mountains of this range, the conical Trevenque, an insinuating crest that steepens by impalpable degrees, is chiefly sand and rock. From autumn to early spring the snow, wherever it can find a place to lie, affords some kind of foothold ; but even in the best conditions the climb is what the euphemistic Spanish terms *comprometido*. The topmost hundred yards are dangerous, and the final few completely sheer. In this ascent I did not join my comrade. A long stagnation in the town had disinured me to such violent exercise. Already my feet were sore and swollen, and worst of all (so great was my fatigue) a nail projecting from my boot was piercing deep into my heel, without my recognising that the pain of this was purely local.

Accordingly I took my seat upon a modest crag and gazed at the Trevenque and my friend's receding form. I found that on the south the mountain overhangs a *rambla* or dry river bed, looking from this my perch just like a broad, white carriage-road. The *rambla* winds away into a velvety abyss fringed with grey pinnacles and juts of Scandinavian weirdness. Sometimes these points of rock converge until they almost meet, forming a kind of arch that only lacks a keystone. What is the end of the abyss I do

not know. Some day I shall explore it to the depth, but from above it seems unfathomable.

A long while afterwards my friend returned, together with his *asistente*. "Of course you photographed us at the top?" he asked, as I rejoined him on the path below the crag. He spoke huskily, limped, and looked a sorry sight all over.

I had not photographed him. With prudent inactivity I had passed a couple of hours, partly in staring at the scenery and partly in a doze. My camera had lain beside me, but the index of the changing-box had not advanced one single number.

The lieutenant was annoyed. "It's too bad," he gasped; "you promised to photograph us. I believe you've been asleep."

I said I had.

"You English," he resumed, "are always railing at the Spaniards for their indolence; but I can't see much of the British energy in *you*."

I said, "I am not English. I am Welsh; and the Welsh are rumoured to proceed from an ancient Spanish stock. My indolence is atavic."

"Why, then," my friend retorted, "you Welsh are just degenerate Spaniards, that is all."

This time it was I who felt obliged to answer, since foot-sore folks permit themselves a touchy sense of self-esteem. Changing the current of the conversation, I pointed out that from the top of the Trevenque to the spot where I had lingered was at least two miles. "My lens," I argued, "does not distinguish persons at that distance—not even a Spanish officer. You might as well expect me to photograph a fly on the Veleta."

They had not reached the apex of our peak. They climbed upon a rocky ledge protruding out and sheer eight metres from the crest; had brushed the summit with their finger-tips, but had not set their toes on it. Once they had thought themselves about the very brink, but crawling several inches further espied the actual crown still fretted overhead, and underneath, four thousand feet described as perpendicular as with a plumb, a threadlike cataract. The stolid servant, who had been a shoemaker before he took to (or was made to take to) soldiering, turned green from dizziness, yet sought with rustic shame to mask his true emotion. "O what a view," he blurted; but overcome before the words were at an end, concealed his face upon the scrap of stone which barely held him from eternity. Perils of other kinds had aggravated the attempt. The scanty shrubs they clutched at broke away, or filled their palms with prickles. In parts the snow was glaciated, and once an eagle flapped its disconcerting wing across their faces. Altogether it had been a bad adventure; a very bad adventure.

Not without a selfish exultation at my heart, I wagged my head and proffered my condolences. Mine, after all, had been the true philosophy. *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis*. A pretty *negotium* had been theirs; and so, extending to my worsted rivals an ostentatious magnanimity begotten of glutted vengeance, I granted, nay, I forced upon them, another hour of unconditional repose.

Then we set out for home. Ushered by evanescent colours in the sky, night drew her pageantry before

us on these large and lofty places. The distant snow-fields, smitten by the dusk, assumed a sad, strange, olive tone, then ash, and, last beneath the failing day, a sheeny hue, half-nacreous, half-dia-phanous, pencilled at every cliff and curve with dark yet delicate shading. Out of the sanguine, chrome, and orange west projected neighbouring summits, indigo and violet, madder, mauve and purple. Venus and a strip of moon sprang forth abreast; then either Mary, with Orion at a corner of the three. So did the stars appear, until, to one who strained his eyes across that vapourless expanse, they seemed inviting him to oversoar the realms of space, and, as a new and nearer essence to themselves, to be admitted to the perfect knowledge of their paths, to be initiated into *every* secret of their superterrene splendour.

Beneath us we had light enough to keep from falling flat, but often not enough to guard ourselves from stumbling. Thus rocks or stones of biggish size could be detected; but pebbles, round as well as sharp, menaced our balance and assailed the tender portions of the foot. Our road was fairly plain, but sometimes crossed another one, or several others at a time. The servant led the way; next came the officer, and then myself. The lieutenant was singing snatches of Italian opera—tenor, soprano, contralto, baritone, or basso, just as the fancy took him—his rendering of all five being equally and indiscriminately execrable. He told me at a later stage that he was singing “to drown the aching of his feet,” making (at least for me) one painful action to eclipse another. Once or twice he paused

to point a name or other circumstance related to some star. Suddenly I felt a hatred for those stars that just a little before had magnetized me. Not often does the mimic or untrue affect us more profoundly than the real, yet so it was on this abrupt occasion. Far above, the star-lamps glittered grandly. Far ahead and far below, uncovered at some corner of our way, the lamplets of Granada twinkled in the blackness. Here was my sudden cynosure, and this is why. Upon a time I courted a girl in the old country. She lived in a great seaport, I in a small suburban village on the coast; and every night I walked both in and out, around the bay, to see and speak with her. Now, as I fixed my gaze upon Granada, the city lamps resolved themselves into those lamps of old. Again I welcomed every step that brought me closer to those lamps and *her*; lamented every step that parted me from *her* and them. Eyes that would fathom mine no more; hands that my own would hold no longer—I saw and I caressed them once anew. Just as we sever or undo the silken ribbon that binds up a bundle of old love-letters, I set my life asunder from a dozen years; and fresh with even the perfume of the past, the memory of those hours came very mournfully and very sweetly back to me.

Proceeding downwards for about two hours we halted to confer. Our line of march by now was thin and indistinct, but yonder lay Granada. The city lights were glittering, apparently not far ahead, and rather to our right. We should be nearing Cajar. Presently, to be sure, we struck the outskirts

of our village. Trees were about us, and the air was pitchy. I drew ahead, but though I stepped with care I nearly thrust my foot into a water-channel. Strange! I had seen no water-channel on that morning. Was Cajar, like so many of our lady friends, one thing by night and something else by day?

Suddenly I heard an exclamation from my colleague. "*Welleams*" (the nearest approach a Spanish palate ever makes in the direction of my surname), "*Welleams*, we are in La Zubia."

I thought it was a savage joke, or else that he was off his head, like the survivors of the *Medusa*, and other wights who have endured the unendurable. "Don't be a fool," I angrily retorted. Nevertheless, I felt some new misgiving. My feet were two great bags of pain. I set them down; that is to say, I stopped. The officer shuffled up, attended closely by our faithful shoemaker. "It's quite true," he repeated in a tone of dull, monotonous despair; "I asked a cottager. We are in La Zubia."

We stared aghast towards each other's faces. I make this declaration at a venture. We could not see each other's faces, but I am positive that horror was inscribed on them. My proof is purely circumstantial. Man is so poor at husbanding his feelings that we even make the same grimaces in the dark as in the daylight. As if we might not spare ourselves the trouble.

"How about your lights of Granada?" asked the lieutenant with a sneer, "*hanging a couple of hundred yards away like pearls upon a string?*"

“Yes,” I retorted, “and how about your *science of the stars*? I don’t believe you know Orion from the moon.”

But then, instead of trying to come to blows, we laughed outright.

I said, “We must have missed our way.” The mean grotesqueness of the words exceeds derision; yet who, in similar straits, would not have uttered them?

The damned village of La Zubia is distant from Granada nearly seven kilometres. We could have flown sooner than reach the town afoot. We dragged our carcasses to somewhere with a smell of wine and sank upon two shaky chairs, burying our heads and arms upon a table. Our shoemaker was bundled off to make inquiries with a view to our return. After a while he shook us up to say that both the telephone wires were broken, but that a native of the place possessed a carriage and its corresponding team. Presently the native came, and somebody shook us up again. Between the pair we stammered out some syllables, and asked the price of passage.

“Seven *pesetas*.”

Were we awake, or were we in a dream?

“Seven *pesetas*.” The noble words restored to us a measure of vitality. That man—so high a worth he set on charity—was nothing of a Christian dealer. His veins were filled with Jewish, Moorish, or Morisco blood, unspilled, unspotted and unspoiled by Ferdinand and Isabella. “Seven *pesetas*!” We would have paid ten pounds apiece, even if we had had to sign a document for their discharge before arrival.

“Seven *pesetas!*” It could not be: this paltry, this infinitesimal reward. It could not be: yet so it was, together with another marvel. Incredible to state, the native took our stupefaction for a protest. “Well,” he conceded, “six *pesetas*, to say the very least.” I think that after all he was a Christian—and a fool.

The carriage came—a covered wagonette. We tottered to its door. The shoemaker, I take it, climbed upon the box. Some one was doubtless also there to drive.

We *señoritos* clambered on the step, then from the step upon the floor, and from the floor upon the parallel and ample cushions. Darkness and sleep again took charge of us herewith, until, extended prone as in an ambulance, we drove into Granada.



The Ave María Colony

X

The Ave María Colony

UPON the road to the Sacro-Monte, just where it makes a couple of rapid bends about the Darro, the passer-by looks down on half a dozen sunny villas nestling in luxuriant foliage. If he looks down with some attentiveness, these villas will impress themselves upon him as mysteriously associated one with another, constituting, for all their separate garden-plots and boundaries, a single large estate, disposed by the same intelligence, ruled by the same administrator. And he will hear, distinguishable from the murmur of a neighbouring brook, the babble and ring of many youthful voices; far more than ever a single family might muster. Here, in

fact, is the Colony of the Ave María; where waifs and strays, and pauper boys and girls are educated both in body and in brain, and—best of all—educated from the love of God, and not the lust of Mammon; schoolrooms converted into *carmenes*, *carmenes* into schoolrooms; sunshine into study, and study into sunshine; where “recreations and jolly pastimes fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream”; a pedagogic paradise in the open air; the best, and brightest, and blithest institution in the whole of modern Andalusia.

As I shall presently tell, a dozen years ago this noble work had only just begun. To-day the colony consists of these six *carmenes*, with beautiful and ample grounds attached, classes for five hundred boys and girls, and workshops for such as are old enough to learn a trade. Besides this, the colony has branches, also with several hundred pupils apiece—the *Triunfo*, at the northern apex of the city, and the *Quinta Alegre*, at the southern, upon the road to Huétor. The cost of keeping up the whole amounts to more than fifty thousand *pesetas* annually; a stiff amount for Spanish purses, and to which the State, which only thinks of soldiering and sailing and such tomfoolery, contributes not one single *céntimo*.

Of course, as soon as I was told of the wonders of the Ave María, I burned to inspect them for myself; and so one day, accompanied and guided by a friend who knows the Colony well, I stepped aside into those gardens on the Sacro-Monte road. Threading a

maze of shrubs we came upon a terrace covered at one extremity with a trellised vine, shading a class of *parvulos*, or tiny children. These were the brats who once upon a time had spent the day in stoning and molesting peaceful wayfarers; yet now, as soon as they caught sight of us, they sprang to their feet, pulled off their caps, and shouted "*Ave Maria*"; which is, I was informed, the colonists' indispensable salute. A gentle featured lad was their preceptor. Him we asked for Don Andrés—that is, Father Andrés Manjón, to whom Granada owes this admirable labour. We learned that "the father" (how appropriate the title sounded) would not appear until midday, for, being a canon of the Sacro-Monte, his duties there detain him till this hour. However, the second in command was summoned to entertain us prior to his chief's arrival, and show us all the *carmenes* and all their occupants.

While this lieutenant was being sent for from another garden, I marked the spot itself. Here and there a piece of the whitewashed wall of one or other of the villas projected its brilliant surface from between the foliage. Flowers and trees and bushes were on every side, pleasant lawns and shady paths, and birds and water-courses in full song. Upon my left, beyond a rustic bridge that spans a miniature ravine, I faintly caught the hivelike murmur of a multitude of lips. Beneath, the Darro twined in graceful coils, partly concealed by velvety leafage. Amidst this latter is the Fountain of the Hazel Tree, the favourite haunt of Chateaubriand, who used to liken it to Vaucluse. Above, the huge

Alhambra overshadowed all, between the Tower of Comares at the western end, and, at the other, the slender, delicately-pencilled cypresses of the Generalife.

The second in command of Don Andrés is a comfortable looking, rather short and rather stout ecclesiastic, with a highish colour and a small and cheerful eye—the kind of eye which might arouse misgivings in a layman, but which is always pardoned in a priest. In any case Don Juan (to quote his name), despite a rather gruff and sudden voice which I suspect to be somewhat affected, is quite in favour with the youngsters, who stroke his hand and tweak his robe with absolute impunity, although they venerate as well as love him. The smallest child who asks or answers him a question, or runs his message, must doff his cap and utter the semi-talismanic "*Ave María*." "*En gracia concebida*," is the prompt reply; and only then the message or the question is proceeded with.

Don Juan conducted us across the rustic bridge into a kind of playground. I say a kind of playground, because, in point of fact, it proved to be a schoolroom, with stone benches raised along one side, and on the benches some fifty or sixty little people learning to count by means of ninepins and blocks of wood. The teacher of this class was a girl from the Albaycin, herself an ex-disciple of the colony.

I noticed that the middle of the space before the benches was not level, but raised into irregular little heaps and sunk into irregular little hollows. "Here," explained the *padre*, "we have a map of Spain, with all its mountains and all its valleys." So saying, he

approached the seated rows upon the benches, and called "Antonio Torres."

Up darted an eager-looking little boy, and pulled off his cap.

"*Ave María.*"

"*En gracia concebida.*"

Another summons from the *padre*. This time Alberto Vega. Another eager-looking little boy: again the countersign.

"You, Antonio, go to Barcelona."

Antonio, who, as far as I could gather, was somewhere in the Mountains of León, darted across country, planted his foot upon the haughty city of the Berenguers, and beamed at us.

"Antonio, where are you now?"

"In Barcelona."

"Where is Barcelona?"

"In Cataluña."

"What is there at Barcelona?"

"A university, a bishop, and half a million inhabitants."

"What else?"

"It is a seaport, and sends out woollens and olives."

"Now go to Madrid."

The scampering was repeated.

"Where are you now?"

"In New Castile, in the capital of the kingdom."

"What does it produce?"

"Nothing." (A sharp if not unmerited rebuke for the court of the Hapsburgs and Bourbons.)

"Now, both of you, go to Portugal."

Off went the bold excursionists, hand in hand.

“ You have gone too far : you are standing in the sea ; ” and the *padre*, with a pat upon their shoulders, good-naturedly redeemed the drowning manikins from the angry ocean.

Next on our programme was a spelling-lesson, conducted something in the fashion of a game of living chess. For this the scholars utilize a kind of bib, extending both before and behind their bodies, with a hole for the head, a letter on the chest, and a numeral in the small of the back. Thus (unlike, alas, those leaden, legless pieces which interpret me), sentences and words arrange and disarrange and rearrange themselves with winged alacrity ; each letter and each number wears a smiling and expectant face ; spelling becomes gymnastics, and literature a veritable pastime.

Then we passed on to other scenes. In one of the upstairs rooms a pretty, soft-voiced, brown-eyed girl, in the whitest of white print dresses, was teaching geography to a group of loving little maids, who lavished caresses on her as fondly as though she had been their elder sister. As we entered they broke into a simple jingle relative to the provinces of Spain, a map of the Peninsula was hanging on the wall, and the learners, taking a wand by turns, pointed to the regions being enumerated in their artless little canticle. Their happy voices were so insinuating that I asked to be presented with a copy of the verse : and the pretty teacher, opening her desk, handed me one with a blush and a smile.

I believe that there are more blackboards (of a

certain kind) in the Ave Maria Colony than in the whole of Europe. On the wall of every *carmen*, on every pillar and post about the gardens, are myriads of patches painted black, in case an inspiration should seize the pupils in their playtime, or the master or mistress, as they stroll about at intervals, suggest some problem to them. On this occasion a tiny girl of six, catching up a piece of chalk or chalky stone from the avenue where she was playing hide-and-seeek with her schoolmates, delivered a blackboard lesson in subtraction which my friend and I digested with no small particular profit: after which, seizing a comrade somewhat smaller than herself, she showed us with illustrative pullings, pushings, and pinchings, the limbs and subdivisions of the human figure.

Elsewhere about the Colony I spied the solar system, cunningly contrived with wooden balls revolving on a set of wires beneath a canopy of vine; also, in lines and symbols fixed into the soil, the tropics and the signs of the Zodiac. Indeed, at every point I saw fulfilled the precept of Montaigne: "he shall not so much repeat, as act his lesson. In his actions shall he make repetition of the same." Here are some infants round a figured skeleton, filling in the bones with pebbles. Yonder, an older and a larger group describe, in cheerful strains of song, each local Spanish character. One youngster takes the part of Aragonese: "I am the *butirro* of Aragón, an honest man but obstinate, and say no, and no, and no,"—another that of the Sevillian—"Soy Sevillano, de la tierra de María Santísima. Viva la gente torera." The national

religion and the national sport for ever arm-in-arm ! So even bull-fighting, I notice with a mild astonishment, is not discouraged in this model Colony.

We reach another group—sharp little faces for the most, inwritten with all the latent *picardia* of Murillo's beggarlings ; though these are better mannered. They are, in fact, the kings of Spain, who play at leapfrog as they tell their stories to posterity. Each rattles off his reign in turn ; but he who trips must "make a back" for his successor. Many a Gothic monarch with a sonorous mouth-filling name, steps forward, not inopportunately, to remind me of his birth, and exploits, and demise. Between the leaping and the recitation each minute swallows up at least a century, so very soon we find ourselves contemporary with Velazquez. "I," shouts the mimic patron of that mighty painter, looking all over as if he meant the words, "I am Philip the Fourth, governed by the Count-Duke of Olivares. In my reign the Catalans rebelled against me." Thus, as the merry round continues, the past declines insensibly into the present. The last to leap conveys, of course, the latest message. His frame is slighter than the rest, his voice weaker, his face paler. Poor child. He seems to feel the weightiness of his kingship in this age of anarchy, democracy, and socialism. "I am Alfonso the Thirteenth, son of Maria Christina. I began to rule in— in—. Then, faltering at the date, he thrusts, in token of abdication, his tongue into his cheek, and bending to a Carthaginian antecessor, sets back the march of history by a trifle of two thousand years.

I was so interested with all this life, and gladness,

and spontaneous, novel, outdoor scholarship, that I had almost forgotten my principal ambition—that of seeing and speaking with its author. Suddenly, however, while I was intent upon the lesson in genealogy, “here he is,” exclaimed my friend; and looking up I found that Father Manjón was contemplating me.

I had expected a mild, paternal face and manners. Naturally I was disappointed. Father Manjón is above all else an organizer, innovator, and reformer; and such a character does not dispense ductility, but on the contrary demands it; the more so in a land like this, where all is prejudice, ignorance, and routine. The face of Father Manjón is the strongest and the deepest I have ever seen, except Sagasta's. The lines are square—square chin, square cheeks, square forehead. The mouth is equally firm and forceful. The eyes of Father Manjón were fixed upon and into me. Their colour was just a moderate brown. Let me upset, with this, the novelist's hallucination that a penetrating eye is always black. Not necessarily. It is not the colour of the eye that penetrates, but the colour of the brain behind it.

As soon as I recovered my composure, I stated to the *padre* my eager wish that he would tell me at first hand the story of his Colony. At once and with unostentatious kindness he complied; and this, so far as I remember, is the substance of his narrative. For many years Father Manjón had been a canon of the Sacred Mountain, and also a professor at Granada University. Now the distance between the two seminaries is not a short one; and even many

years ago Father Manjón's legs can hardly have retained the vigour and the elasticity of boyhood. Consequently, following an approved and ancient custom among the rural clergymen of Spain, he bought himself a donkey—a white donkey, a bland and blameless-looking donkey, just as sacerdotal donkeys should be. Haltered beneath a staircase in the university, this donkey matches very creditably with the snowy marble steps, as though he, too, were treated to a matutinal scrubbing. Upon the highroad all Granada recognizes and respects the privileged bearer of the good and gifted *padre*. Such is life. Our wages are augmented or diminished according to the company we keep, the service we perform; and the faithful ministers of the famous also collect their little sheaves of fame; ears, as it were, spilled over from their chieftain's superfluity.

One afternoon, then, nearly twenty years ago, Father Manjón was riding down the corkscrew *cuesta* of the Sacro-Monte, when suddenly, from somewhere underground, he heard a number of youthful voices musically chanting their Christian doctrine. Leaving his donkey by the wayside, he set himself to search the adjacent paths among the hot and dusty terraces of prickly pear, until he found the cave from which the harmony proceeded. Within the cave was a small, emaciated, miserably clad woman surrounded by her pupils, ten little girls, ragged and shoeless, some of them gipsies. On questioning "Mother Crumbs," as she was nicknamed by her charges, Father Manjón was told that she had three children of her own, and no regular means of subsistence;

that she held these humble classes because she believed it to be her duty; and that she paid, as renter of her cave, four *pesetas* and fifty *céntimos* per month.

Such was the origin of the Ave Maria Colony. The poor cave-dweller was examined by a board of charitable ladies and pronounced, for all her method and philanthropy, a lunatic. Would that we all employed our lucid moments to as sane a purpose! In course of time she disappeared from Granada, and has never since been heard of. Was she perhaps some angel, and do the acts of angels seem insanity to humans? In any case, her bright example had fallen upon a "towardly and pregnant soil." Half-animated, half-rebuked by her discovery, Father Manjón purchased a *carmen* near the very cave where she had laboured, engaged a qualified schoolmistress, and placed a class of little girls beneath her charge. This was in the autumn of 1889. Before long, a class of little boys was handed over to the female teacher's husband. "God and the little ones," observes the noble author of this noble effort, "have done the rest between them. At this day we possess sixteen schools and eight houses, together with their gardens and orchards, where the children may be educated in the open air."

The gigantic success of the scheme is due, as far as I can see, to a profound knowledge of the needs of modern Spain, combined with heroic sacrifice of self, unflagging vigilance, disinterested zeal, and a faultless and matured appreciation of the national character. In one of his printed pamphlets on the Colony,

Father Manjón explains his method and ideal. Unlike the generality of Latins he lays particular stress upon the paramount need of physical side by side with intellectual tuition. The body and the brain must grow together : hence the orchards and the gardens of the Ave María ; for it is easy to remove the schoolroom into the open air, but not the open air into the schoolroom. "I seek," he says, "to train my charges into thorough men and thorough women, sturdy of frame and spirit, prepared to utilize their physical and moral strength to benefit themselves and benefit their neighbours." These were old truths in Germany and England, but what do they imply in this Peninsula? A revolutionary through and through. I dare affirm that no such other has been known in Spain.

"One hears it said" (I continue quoting from the *padre*) "that Granada is the fairest corner of the earth, and that her *carmenes* are so many pieces of heaven. Very well. In the fairest corner of Granada, that is, the Valley of Paradise, close to the city gates upon the Sacro-Monte road, beside the right bank of the Darro, are situated our own scholastic *carmenes*."

"The six are separate, for the sake of greater order ; and yet they are conterminous, in order that a single mind may rule them all. Everything about them is ample, cheerful, and wholesome ; plenty of open country both for work and play ; beautiful gardens to view and smell ; clear and copious streams for irrigation, drink, and personal ablutions ; canopies of vine and honeysuckle, rose and passion flower to

part the sunbeams ; massy trees to furnish fruit and shade. The air is pure and perfumed ; one growth of flowers succeeds another ; the birds compete in song ; the little ones gambol as they will ; and all is health, and liveliness, and motion."

In every matter that concerns the Colony a rare solicitude is shown. At midsummer and Christmas a suit of clothes is given to all the children. They have a drawing-school, where four professors make a present of their services, and a theatre with seating-room for fifteen hundred spectators. Every Saturday they march in procession round the gardens, displaying their scarlet and white banners, singing sacred songs, and headed by a band of drums and cornets. They have a volunteer corps, perfectly drilled and perfectly uniformed. Three or four picnics are arranged annually for all the scholars, but among the poorest bread and meat are distributed daily. Father Manjón has no sympathy with that stupidest and commonest of boasts in Spain, that the Spaniards require less nourishment than other mortals. "The Spaniards are a people who do not eat. They are frugal from necessity, and saving to the pitch of stinginess. They make their meals on bread and water, and practically fast the whole year through." And again, "the best fed nation is that which works the best, and that which works the best is that which feeds the best. The two events are interacting."

Such is the story of the Ave Maria schools as it is told me by their author. While he is telling it, those happy little creatures gambol at our side and round about us. Troops and festoons of

tiny girls trip in and out among the fountains. Vibrating to their harmony, the water in each marble basin reflects the ripple of their laughter; roses and jasmine lie beneath their twinkling feet; tendrils of vine, convolvulus, and honeysuckle caress their faces and their hair; and gold and silver sunbeams peep upon them from between the branches. Above, around, the air is odorous with almond, orange, and acacia; pure blossoms these, as white as innocence, as innocent as childhood. A good man delved the garden years ago, and God rewarded him with flowers and with sunshine. I glance towards my friend, and he returns the glance. Either of us is touched to tears; as though divining, within this little world of candour and delight, the all-pervading, all-approving presence of the Master.



The Fountain of the Hazel Tree

XI

A Tractate on the Gipsies of Granada



IT is possible to regard the Andalusian gipsy (as everything upon this earth above it, or beneath may be regarded) in either of two ways—the serious and the sentimental, or the humorous. For instance, it is possible to regard him in a spirit of lachrymose lamentation at the superiority of our particular morals over his, or, on the contrary, to regard him as a sprightly kind of creature, who often swindles and deceives, and sometimes, as a variation, even introduces a knife or bullet into us; but always gives us exquisite amusement in exchange. Of course, to realize this kind accommodation on the gipsy's part demands at least some sense of humour on our own.

The sour, contentious tourist who pokes, requesting and requiring, into places where he is not wanted, carries a reclamation ready in his pocket, and pesters consular officials for redress, is not a proper person to be murdered by a gipsy. Both should be able to coöperate in cheerfulness, and set about their business with a mutual, reciprocal, and trustful fellow-feeling. Upon this score I would suggest how little pains we take to sympathize with those whose moral standard is affirmed (although by interested sections of society) to be less elevated than our own. Here is, initially, a want of charitableness, and subsequently a morbid aggravation of our self-esteem. Goodness, as preached and practised nowadays, is just a question of a show of hands. Might is not only right, but righteousness as well. Ages of this hypocrisy have made it rare and difficult indeed to analyze from within, the acts and the emotions of anybody whom society (again that hateful word) succeeds by brutal violence in branding as a bad or dubious character. Most of us are so preposterously, preternaturally virtuous that we do not even care to try. Even an author, who normally should find the generous endeavour worth his while, is seldom able to sympathize with a rogue (I say once more, conventionally so-called) by putting himself into the other's skin and sentiments, though either of these transmutations is essential to the cause of common justice. Thackeray, to be sure, bequeathed to us in *Barry Lyndon* the story of a novelized rogue delineated with a certain intimacy, and many of the incidents and reflections suspended from that hero are

probable and reasonable enough : but it is undeniably superior to prevail upon a rogue of flesh and blood to set his bashfulness aside and tell us his experiences himself. One of these days, in a volume of *Essays on Spain and the Spaniards*, I hope to present the doctor Charles García, author of *The Ancientness and Nobleness of Thieving*,* a work unbeaten in the fields of innocent literature for humour, ethics, and philosophy agreeably intermingled. But only very rarely has the unblamed member of society the sense of fairness to transform himself into a temporary rascal, or the permanent and regular rascal the requisite courage to assume the privileges and publicity of blatant virtue.

The poet of the much bequoted verses,

“ O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as ithers see us,”

got hold (presumably on prosody's account) of the wrong end of the stick. He should have said,

“ O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ithers as they see themselves—” †

a task which is a deal more difficult, and, when achieved, a deal more interesting, humanizing and instructive. In either case, I claim commiseration for the Andalusian gipsies. Their virtues and their vices do not tally with our own. Their hands are possibly quite as clean as ours, but not so numerous,

* *La Desordenada Codicia de los Bienes Ajenos. Obra apazible y curiosa, en la qual se descubren los enredos y marañas de los que no se contentan con su parte.* Paris, 1619; reprinted, 1877.

† I can make no rhyme here; but this is not my business. Nor, apparently, could Burns, whose business it was.

and therefore wickeder! Setting aside this foolish, barbarous prejudice we find the naked fact start forth as follows. The gipsy race believe that they are doing right in doing wrong. If the rest of the world conformed to their example, our present legislation would decamp to the Antipodes, and *tutti* would be, or ought to be, *contenti*. Even as matters are, in clinging to their doctrine the gipsies do a positive service to ourselves. Where would be the harm in wickedness if every one were wicked? Upon the other hand, where would be the merit in goodness if every one were good? These words are hardly mine—the classics bear me out. “All opinions,” says the *Areopagitica*, “yea errors, known, read and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest.” This very juxtaposition of vice and virtue is vice’s best apology. “*Quod bono vicinum bonum, quod a bono remotum, malum.*” Again, “If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years were to be under pittance and prescription and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy to be sober, just or continent?” Thus error, by causing, procreating, and fomenting virtue, establishes her title to a place among the virtues, unless we abrogate all notion of fair play, and speak of her as *guilty* of good actions.

Father Manjón’s most thorny problem is the gipsies. This brings me to the gipsies of Granada. When they visited the city first is not precisely known; but Gómez Moreno has unearthed a quaint old notice relating to them in the reign of Charles

the Fifth.* On the appeal of the archbishop of the diocese, who complained in bitter language of "the many Egyptians who mix with the Moriscos, teaching them matters of witchcraft and superstition, and stealing the clothes from their houses and their cattle from their lands," the emperor re-established a decree of Ferdinand and Isabella, dated Madrid, March 4th, 1499, and beginning with these phrases: "To you Egyptians who play the vagabond about our kingdoms and our seigniories, together with your wives, your children, and your houses, health and grace. Know that a report was made to us, how that of old you move from place to place, having no trade or means of livelihood except by begging, stealing, bartering, deceiving, and the exercise of sorcery, divination, and other neither righteous crafts nor honest; whereas most of you are fitted to do work and be of service." The edict says that they must choose some spot to settle in and follow a decent calling, or else in sixty days they are to quit the kingdom on pain of losing their ears or even their liberty, being held to bondage for the rest of their existence.

This was four hundred years ago; yet still the Spanish gipsy thrives and thieves as heretofore. At most he settles in the poorest quarter of the town, or even, as at Granada, in a cavern by the wayside: but as for industry, respectability, and such like trash, the centuries slip over him in vain. "*Omnes horae feriunt*," observed the poet (doubtless before the days of the "Egyptians"); yet which of the hours has been known to inflict the slightest scratch upon

* *Guía de Granada*, pp. 469, 470.

the moral epidermis of the gipsy? He has his code and sticks to it in spite of parliaments and princes, establishing, single-handed, so to speak, against all comers, his claim to two of *our* much-bethumbed and much-belauded virtues—constancy and valour. Apart from this he entertains (as he would probably declare, on moral grounds) a permanent and perfect horror of morality.

Father Manjón is prejudiced against the gipsy. Why? Because he tries to make him not a gipsy. This may be well enough for the Utopian, but *his* is not the only standpoint. Writers on Spain, especially the impecunious, have cause to thank the gipsies from the bottom of their heart. Will any one attempt to gainsay that the gipsies have contributed to Andalusia about three-quarters of her picturesqueness, indolence, disorder, dirt, and other tourist-drawing, literature-creating qualities? Of course not. Viewed in this light the gipsy is the creditor of art and letters. On this account, when entering his company we should abstain from carrying the debt upon our person, or he may possibly repay himself upon the spot, not from improper or felonious motives, but with the rustic, correspondence-saving courtesy of his race. If I owe to the *gitano* a tolerable portion of this chapter, should I be justified in denying him, say, a five-pound note? Legally, perhaps, but not on moral grounds. Appreciative of this fact, on visiting a gipsy tenement for "copy" I never court the smallest friction or unpleasantness, but make a point of buttoning up my watch beforehand, so *that* at least is safe. What else

have I to lose? My gipsy cannot do me harm upon the score of money, for the same reason which impeded the munificent, or rather *munivolent*, Sterne from giving to *all* the beggars who crowded round his chaise—because I have it not to steal. Consequently, is it not true that, as I hinted further back, the pauper writer is even more beholden to the gipsy than the well to do, for, in the former of these instances, the gipsy's toil is patently disinterested? Yet, whether this be so or not, I would impress the following lesson at first hand upon my readers. "Suit your manners to your company" is practical enough for stay-at-homes; but when you voyage, "suit your purse to your company" is still more practical.

And then the manners of the gipsy are so easy and so suave. He seems to laugh and smile by instinct, and, as Macaulay noted, always removes his hat (or somebody else's) in passing by a church or shrine. His doings and declarations are illuminated with the sunshine of good humour as with a halo. Whether he robs you or only lies to you, he never utters a graceless word or executes a graceless act ungracefully; and even when he murders is able, I am told by those who know, to conjure up a corresponding smile upon the agonizing features of his victim, who recognizes with his latest look the truth of the adage, "*un homme qui rit ne sera jamais dangereux.*"

The base of this is stern solicitude for detail. We see the same in all careers. An eminent physician charges quite a guinea extra for the way he pulls out his watch or unscrews his thermometer; an eminent dentist for the way he hides (as well as plies)

the fatal tweezers. I know of barber-dentists in Madrid who actually clean the instrument before the patient's eye, denoting thus the spanless interval between the artist and the second-rate practitioner. Dumas, in stating that Africa begins about the Pyrenees, had probably these barbarian-barbers in his mind. But the Andalusian brigand (now, alas, believed to be extinct), whom we may classify upon a level with the doctor and the dentist I have instanced, always began his business in a jocular fashion, recreating his victim with master quips and cranks, while he was tying him to the coach-wheel. He would infuse, too, a pleasurable mystery into the whole proceeding. Will he pull forth his snicker-snee or only utilize his blunderbuss? Ha! he dips his hand into his sash. How prettily the sunlight gleams upon the blade! "*The rest is silence.*"

Such an artist was José María, the gipsy and the great highwayman of a hundred years ago. I use the adjective *great* with absolute premeditation. Firstly, the best of Spanish brigands always came from Andalusia. Guichot and other erudite authorities on brigandism will bear me out in stating that no bungler can be found to have existed here. The Andalusian climate and geography united with hereditary pride of craftsmanship, piously bequeathed from fathers to their children, to render local brigandage *hors concours*. And, secondly, I speak of the *great* José María upon the cumbersome though potent warrant of the penal code of Spain, which calls, or used to call, all national brigands "famous," whether from Andalusia or any other region of this country; and what is *famous* but

a synonym for *great*? * The great José María, therefore, at his death (unlike those less exalted characters referred to by Mark Antony) bequeathed the best of him, that is, the memory and the *modus operandi* of his choicest crimes, to future generations. Unluckily, the lapses of posterity have thrown his venerable precepts out of joint: for even great men have to build their fame in harmony with their surroundings. Railways and Civil Guards have spread corruption over Andalusia. To-day an honest brigand cannot venture armed upon the high road without being waylaid and assaulted. So is it that many a fine profession has been spoiled by progress. One of such is brigandage; and, thanks to Nicholas and other manifest peacemakers, warfare, a legalized, though possibly inferior form of brigandage, is promising (or menacing) to follow very shortly.

Everybody who visits the Alhambra is fated to encounter, loitering as a rule between the Tower of Justice and the Palace of Charles the Fifth, the "prince of the gipsies" (as his visiting card informs us), and therefore a direct descendant of the "great" José María. Baptismally, this personage's name is Mariano Fernández: but he prefers to be known by the title of *Chorro é Jumo*. His age is not much less than seventy, but he carries an erect figure and hangs upon it, true to a scruple, the classical habili-

* "Este delito cometen, los que de proposito estan en los caminos para robar, que se llaman salteadores, ó en el mar con navíos, á que llaman cosarios, y los unos y los otros llama el derecho, ladrones famosos, por lo qual, y porque tal hurto se comete de ordinario con muerte de los ofendidos, ó se da causa para ello, tienen pena de muerte."—Francisco de la Pradilla, *Suma de Todas las Leyes Penales*, p. 27.

ments of his glorious ancestor. The hat is of the sugar loaf pattern, with what looks like a powder puff on top. The jacket is embroidered in the middle of the back, and narrow breeches enveloping the shrunk shanks of the wearer, decline with these into a pair of leather gaiters, fringed upon the outside, extending from the knee. In such a dress—perhaps the very same—José María lived and laboured. *Did he design it to amuse his victims?* If so, he has an added claim on our regard, and De Quincey's so-called murderers are miserable amateurs and pignies by the side of him.

The visiting card of *Chorro é Jumo* also informs us that he used to serve as a model to Fortuny. "We did this" or "we did that," he says with condescending satisfaction; and at the end of their conjoint manœuvres, "Don Mariano handed me a dollar. He was a gentleman, Don Mariano was." Accent this declaration where you please. "*He* was a gentleman"; he *was* a gentleman"; or, "he was a *gentleman*." In either case you must infer that if you do the same by *Chorro é Jumo* as *Chorro é Jumo* says Fortuny used to do by *him*, you also will attain a patent of gentility. Perhaps the purchase at a dollar is almost worth the making.

So *Chorro é Jumo* is a patron of the arts. Now surely there is something truly splendid in the thought (and infinitely more so in the fact) of a royal person sitting, at a liberally hyporegal fee, not for his portrait only, but for every kind of genre, historical, bucolical, and so forth. What would Tolstoï say if his Czar dispensed one-dollar sittings to all the

painters of his empire? Would not so wholesome and so vast an affability entirely revolutionize the veteran agitator's views on art? I am convinced it would.

Nevertheless, the history of *Chorro é Jumo* is a sad one. Boabdil used to tell his sorrows to Hernando de Baeza. In such a spirit has *Chorro é Jumo* told his own to me. His subjects are degenerate and unsatisfactory. Besides, he does not even dwell among them. Paradox must be treated nicely nowadays, and doubtless for this reason Daudet omitted *Chorro* from his elegant romance; yet, though the term may sound a trifle overstrained and venturesome, this gipsy king is just a *roi en exil* who has never stepped outside the borders of his own dominion. No one disputes his moral right to the Alhambra; yet round about him are a people alien from his own, who bend the knee unblushingly before a non-*gitano* monarch. Some years ago he had his private palace—a sandy cave beneath the shadow of the mountain, till on a day the roof fell in and very nearly squashed him. Thenceforward Mariano hangs dejectedly about the moated grange, houseless, hopeless, homeless, like the waifs and strays we read of at the end of Whitaker. “*Vaya,*” he sometimes makes lament, with sad though sure philosophy, “when a man's own house falls in upon him, what in the world is left to fall?”

I have a lively sympathy for throneless *Chorro*, especially when I fix my eyes upon his sugar loaf. My Welsh compatriots used to wear a similar one, till tyrannous England tore it off and

stamped it underfoot—England, that in return for stripping me of problematical estates and dignities (which might have come my way had I and Wales been somebody and something else), has thrown to me and mine the paltry crumbs of education, order, and prosperity. So, in a sense, I am a sharer of the fate of *Chorro é Jumo*, and should inscribe my visiting card accordingly. When, years ago, the (then) Prince of Wales passed through Granada (if I may breathe the question with befitting reverence), did not the sight of Mariano's sugar loaf revive an echo of contrition in that royal breast?

Father Manjón, as we have seen, considers the gipsies of Granada very seriously. "They are," he says, "an ignorant, degenerate, idle, homeless, tradeless people, lavish of tongue and loose of life. Their understanding, faulty as to any spiritual or abstract idea, quickens surprisingly in dealing with the animal or instinctive part of life, and lends itself to lying and deceit, which seem innate in them. Their will power is as weak and wavering as a child's; and since it lacks all basis of a creed, as well as the habit of welldoing, their actions are decided by a momentary passion or caprice. All that requires effort, sacrifice, apprenticeship, subordination, is repugnant to their character. Their one endeavour is to pass their time as free as birds, as lean as stalks of asparagus, as careless as a castanet."

On the other hand, the painter-poet Rusiñol prefers to take the gipsies as cheerfully as they take themselves, and even when they swindle him, describes the incident with great good humour.

Once, while on a sketching expedition somewhere near the town, weary of dragging about his colour-box and easel, he determined, together with some of his friends, to buy a donkey. The gipsy fair was in full swing not far away: so thither the party turned their steps. Arriving at the spot they found it choked with donkeys of all colours, shapes, and sizes, in every stage of mournfulness, misanthropy, and boredom. However, they picked a female out, and asked her price.

"Twelve dollars," replied a gipsy lass, "but give me six, and she is yours."

Eventually the beast changed hands for three: yet when the bargain was concluded lay down in loglike stagnancy. The end of the unlucky transaction was that Rusiñol and his comrades had to take the docile creature in their arms and carry her home with them, besides the easel and the colour-box as heretofore.

Nor is the shrewdness of this much vituperated people employed exclusively or even preferentially upon the Christian. Whenever an opportunity occurs, they just as readily devote their ingenuity to "besting" one another, as the following tale will show. A couple of gipsy pedlars were hawking brooms about the streets and *plazas* of Granada, when one of them called the other to his side. "Speaking," he said, "with perfect frankness, I make my brooms myself, and steal my rushes, my handles, and my cord for binding. Nothing proceeds from me except the time employed in manufacture. With these economies my lowest possible price is

fifteen *céntimos*, and yet you sell for twelve. How can you do it for the money?"

"Why," replied the other, unabashed, "you see I steal *my* brooms ready-made."

Nevertheless, by reason of long and intimate experience of his weaker points, the Civil Guards are sometimes able to outwit the gipsy. Not long ago, in a country district near Granada, two members of that excellent police arrested two *gitanos* on the charge (backed by something stronger than suspicion) of having stolen a valuable horse; and as they led them in towards the capital, applied all manner of promises and threats to make them, first confess, and subsequently furnish details of, the theft. All was in vain. The gipsies, loyal to their tribal law and custom, vowed and whined with melting oaths and supplications that nothing had they done, or seen, or even heard of in the matter of the missing steed. At length the Civil Guards resorted to an artifice they had concerted overnight, in case all other means should prove of no avail. A signal passed between the two, and then they halted. "Ride on," said one of them to his mate, in tones of ominous severity, "and let us treat these criminals as we decided." The other, leading his prisoner by the cord which bound his elbows, drew ahead, over the brow of a hill some little distance off, and out of sight upon the further side.

Then the one who had remained behind dismounted from his saddle and bade *his* captive kneel. Trembling now with apprehension, the wretch fell forward on his knees. The *guardia* next unslung

his rifle. Just at that moment the report of a Mauser rang out across the hilltop.

"There," observed the *guardia*, "I am sorry for it, but I am obliged to do to you what my mate has just done to yours." He raised his rifle to his shoulder. "If you wish to make a short prayer," he added, measuring a convenient distance from the bosom of his victim, "I give you half a minute. Or if, instead of praying, you choose to tell me all the truth, of course I still possess the power to save your skin."

That skin had never seemed so precious to our gipsy; and gazing at the shining barrel just before his nose, he left no detail unexplained: the hour, the circumstances of the theft, and the secret whereabouts of the stolen animal.

The *guardia* put up his rifle and charitably helped the shivering culprit to his feet.

"And now," he said, with a grim smile, "let us rejoin our comrades, who are waiting for us."



The Inn of the Little Mill, from the Hill-side

XII

The Old Road to Guadix

UNLESS you care to tramp, there is only one way of getting to Guadix by the old road; and that is in a gondola. But there are gondolas and gondolas. There is the gondola which glides, as I am told, along the still lagoon; and then there is the gondola of Spain, and more especially of Andalusia, drawn by two, three, four, six, eight, or any available number of horses, and which toils and tumbles up and down the Andalusian hills and mountains.* My gondola was of this latter class, and as it swept beside

* "*Gondola.* A kind of carriage in which many persons can ride together, built in the likeness of the boat so named."
—Dominguez. *Dictionary of the Spanish Language.*

the door of the hotel at rather after seven, the strings of bells upon the harness made a merry tintinnabulation in the clear November morning. Even the driver's swear-words seemed mellifluous—almost Arabic.

We crossed the city at a long, soul-stirring canter, down the Calle Mesones, past the university, past the bull ring, and up the slope that borders San Miguel el Alto. Beyond the crest the older coach road to Guadix lay far ahead and far behind; our wheels were bruising it apace; my charioteer was tickling up the leader's ears in sjambok fashion with a lash as endless as the road; and points of foam befecked the glittering *carretera*.

I looked at it with curiosity, almost with awe—this old *Camino de Guadix*, renowned in stories of the past, when diligences scoured between the cities day by day, and wayside tavern-keepers handled golden ounces as though they were so many peas. But now, with a train from Moreda to Guadix, and another train from Moreda to Granada, this highroad has become a desert, and the diligence is numbered with the dead. *The Old Road to Guadix*. Is there not something weird and uncommon in the name? So many things die out of use, but surely not a road. Is there another in this overcrowded world, that people traverse less and less with multiplying generations?

Old, too, are scenes that add their fascination to the roadway's; the noria of the ancient east, that irrigates the fields; the primitive plough;* the old

* "The construction of their plough is remarkable for its simplicity. The handle, sheet, and share are of one piece.

Sierra of Alfacar thrusting a clear-cut, deep-blue nose into the sky, as though he were some kingly mummy of old time; the olden villages that nestle round his foot. The first and largest of these hamlets is the higher Fargue, a couple of rows of staring house-wall washed with white, or pink, or yellow, and hung with cords of scarlet capsicum like monster rosaries invented for the Devil.

This, with a beam mortised into it and strengthened by a *retch*, with two pins to form the furrow, is the whole implement. Both the handle and the beam are lengthened out by pieces when such assistance is required."

"From a comparison of all the ploughs to be found in the interior provinces of Spain, I am inclined to think that the first idea of this now complicated implement originated in the use of a crooked stick, pushed forwards by a man, to form a furrow in loose soil. When afterwards he called for the help of oxen, it became necessary to contrive a beam, in order to regulate the line of draft, according to the stiffness or looseness of the soil and the depth to which he wished to move the earth. For this purpose it was needful that the beam should be of sufficient length to reach the yoke, that there he might have his point of support to be elevated or depressed as occasion might require. In process of time he found it convenient to have two pins, to be placed in such a direction on the share as to remove the earth to the right and to the left, and thus to form a wider furrow than the share alone could trace."

"Here then we have the plough commonly used for tillage in the kingdom of Granada. As for the fin to the share, the coulter, the fore-sheet, and hind-sheet, the mould-board, the ground-wrist, the drock, the bridle or cat-head, with the foot and wheel or wheels, they are evidently modern, and not yet introduced." (Townsend, *Journey through Spain*, 1792, vol. iii. pp. 53-54.) Similar remarks are applicable at this moment! At the same period, however, in north-eastern Spain the art of ploughing was more advanced. "The ploughs here have all long beams as in the South of France, which reach to the yokes of the oxen, and consequently they have no traces; two small sticks form all the mould-board; they plough all flat." (Young *Tour in Catalonia*, 1793.)

Between the villages are sprinkled clean *cortijos*, not unlike the farmsteads of Cape Colony, excepting that the olive or acacia stands in place of the repulsive though hygienic blue gum. And when the world and I were younger by a dozen years, I saw those trellised vines at Rondebosch and Constantia: those clear-cut, deep blue mountain-noses thrust aloft at Tulbagh, Worcester, or the Paarl.

Soon after leaving Huétor Santillán, a cottage cluster girt with smiling gardens, the scenery grows wilder, and the farms more rare. A little further back their industry was bee-keeping, and rows of hives, cane-woven, lined with clay, were ranged along each wall. But here it changes to esparto, a mean and ugly merchandise, heaped shoulder-high in drear, disordered stacks. Presently the scene grows wilder yet, all habitations cease, the road approaches mountains, then plunges in among them. Beyond the pass, and where the gorges end towards a spacious prospect of forest and of field, lies a caprice of nature known as "The Teeth of the Old Woman"—a multitude of grey or tawny jagged rocks some four or five feet high and shaped precisely like a fang. The annals of the brigandage of Andalusia award this horrid spot a lasting and a melancholy fame. Years, of course, have passed away since last the cry "*alto el coche!*" resounded from behind these hungry looking crags. But few, I think, would care to pass them walking and alone, at night time, even now.

I took occasion to interrogate my driver on the subject of those sombre memories—a decent and intelligent young fellow named Fernando. His father

and his grandfather alike had driven the *diligencia*. The latter, he assured me, had several times been corded to the wheel, for unless they were resisted



The Teeth of the Old Woman

the brigands' practice was seldom to assassinate. Of course, when dealing with a strong *partida*, a military escort only made the situation worse. But what could be more critical than the following adventure, also related to me by my charioteer. One night his father was driving home an empty gondola to Santa Fé, with notes about him from a cattle purchase in Granada. Crossing a bridge, he spied a couple of black figures, crouching, one on either side, within the shadow of the stonework at the farther end. Suspecting that they boded him no good, he lashed the horses up and strove to break away by sheer speed. The two men sprang together at the reins. One of them missed and fell, the

wheels just grazing him. The other also missed the reins, but keeping his feet dashed at the back of the vehicle and there hung on. The handle of the door was new, and what with the stiffness, or the jolting, or with both, it would not turn ; so, smashing the pane with his fist, the brigand let the window down and proceeded to crawl inside, in order to attack the driver at his ease. Aware of this, the latter determined not to incur additional danger by pulling up, but trusting to the horses' knowledge of the road gave them the lash once more with might and main, and fastened the reins to the seat. Then, plucking forth his knife and thrusting it open within his sleeve, after the classical manner of this land, he opened the other window just behind his box, and crawled in also. Fortunately, his foe had stuck in getting past the frame, so that his body hung inside the carriage, and the rest of him without. Observing this, the driver crept to striking range, and drawing his *faca*, gave a sweeping slash ; on which the other, striving to avert the weapon, received it full between his fingers, and writhing desperately fell back into the road.

Up to this point Fernando had told his tale with signal soberness. But since the climax is emotional, no doubt he felt himself constrained to add to it a splash of local colour. "As soon as my father got to Santa Fé, he found, scattered about the floor of the gondola, four bloody fingers ; wrapped them in a piece of paper, and gave them Christian burial."

"*En paz descansen*," I murmured piously—"may they rest in peace."

Such was Fernando's conversation, always entertaining, always picturesque. Once he pointed to a distant hamlet in the middle of a lonely plain, saying



The Inn of the Little Mill, on the Old Road to Guadix

there was no water for the villagers, and that they had to fetch it from afar. "Believe me, Señorito," he added, "those people look at a glass of water as one looks at the face of God."

He meant no irreverence. It was merely an *andaluzada* inherited from his eastern and Egyptian forefathers.

No sign of human habitation lies between the Teeth of the Old Woman and the half-way house denominated the Venta del Molinillo, or "Inn of the Little Mill," immortalized by the author of *Don Quixote*.*

* My friend, Don Miguel de Pareja, says that beyond all doubt this Venta del Molinillo is the very one referred to by

The white auberge, climbed down to by a curling, steep declivity impassable in snowy weather, seems like a homestead rather than a hostelry. Indeed, it is both one and the other now; and looks just like *The Valley Farm* imbedded in a landscape of Salvator Rosa. Frowning cliffs are all around; but in the shadow of their frown these modest walls repose; a stream spanned by a rustic bridge glides with harmonious smoothness past the door; and in the umbrage of some scarcely stirring poplars the ducks and fowls unite their trivial music with the purling of the water.

The people of the Venta betray at a glance that they have "come down in the world." I asked one of the daughters (a foolish question) if the suppression of the diligence had greatly injured them. "Ah, *caballero*," she replied, "this was pure glory in the days gone by. The gold flowed in here then like yonder water flowing past the door." The tears were standing in her eyes: for in their present straits it was as much as the poor folks could contrive to find me a slice of ham and a couple of eggs to make my lunch upon.

When man and beast had fed and rested we re-

Cervantes in the opening sentence of his *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, thus: "At the Venta or hostelry of the Molinillo, which is situate on the confines of the renowned plain of Alcudia, and on the road from Castile to Andalusia, two striplings met by chance on one of the hottest days of summer," &c. In his monograph *Cervantes en Granada*, Sr Pareja points out that although there are several Alcudias in Spain—three in the Balearic Islands, two in the Province of Valencia, one in the Province of Almeria, and one not far from Guadix, this last alone fits in with Cervantes' description.

sumed our way, skirting the woods and mountains of this lonely land, until, mounting a long ascent, we swept upon the hamlet of Diezma. From the panic-stricken air with which the villagers removed their chairs from the middle of the street, they showed that their ears had ceased to be accustomed to the sound of wheels. Formerly, I take it, they merely dozed within the doorway.

It was at Diezma that, exactly one hundred and seventeen years ago, a highly uncomfortable occurrence befell the Reverend Joseph Townsend, "Rector of Pewsey, Wilts; and late of Clare Hall, Cambridge." "The village as now," he tells us in his *Journey*, "comprised about one hundred and seventy families. As I travelled the whole day fasting, I hastened to the butcher's to see what was to be had. There I learnt the price of provisions, and that mutton sold usually for twelve, beef for eight quartos (twopence farthing) the pound of sixteen ounces; bread for six and a half. For wine I paid three quartos the quartillo. But, unfortunately, neither beef nor mutton were to be had; and, to fill up the measure of my consolation, at the *posada* I could obtain no bed, nor yet a room."

"What could be done? The day was closing, and it began to rain. The alcalde was to be sought for; but he was nowhere to be found. At the end of a long search, I met him returning from the field, and after a short salutation, presented him my pass; yet to little purpose, for he could neither write nor read. We went next in pursuit of the *escribano*, but he was not at home. At last, however, we found a peasant

who had learned to read and write. The pass was produced, and submitted to an accurate examination. It required that I should be provided with *everything needful*, at a reasonable price."

"The alcalde having listened to it with attention, inquired what I wished to have. I replied, a bed. A bed! No such thing is mentioned in the pass. But, if your mercy will have the goodness to observe the expression, *everything needful*. No, no, a bed is not *needful* to a traveller; he may do very well without one. I told him, with great humility, that it was for *his mercy* to judge of what the pass implied, and began quietly to retire; when, seeming to recollect himself, he ordered a billet to be made out."

"With this I went to my destined cottage, where a bed was spread upon the floor, and I went supperless to rest, having had little for the whole day but some hard eggs, and, for the want of a corkscrew, such wine only as the vineyards in the neighbourhood produced."

"The next morning the good people of the house prepared my chocolate, and when I was to take my leave no persuasions could prevail on them to accept of money for my bed."

Even to-day one meets some comical Spaniards who like that Mayor of Diezma can neither read nor write. I know of an Andalusian town where even the postman is without these arts; and so, unable to deliver the letters from house to house, he throws them in a heap upon the mayor's table in the townhall, where the populace assemble to take their pick of them. In consequence of this ex-

traordinary custom every one knows every one else's business—who has had a letter from her sweetheart, who from her son in South America, and so on : and every mail provides a paradise for tonguesters without number.

Beyond Diezma the scene is uniform and flat, until the curling road leads down upon a tract unutterably desolate, unutterably strange. The surface of the land is smoothed completely level ; but here and there some mighty cataclysmic force has opened a tremendous gash extending many miles. The sides of these gashes appear to have been moulded by some human architect, and counterfeited with wonderful exactitude, at one point battlements and bastions ; at another, rows of niches ; and at a third, the "stalactite decoration" of the Saracens. The colour of this weird tract is ashen grey combined at intervals with terra cotta ; but at its boundary the gashes alternate with rows of whitish, fang-like peaks, from fifty to a hundred feet in height—a kind of magnified replica of the "Teeth of the Old Woman."*

Two miles before Guadix we reached the village of Purullena. A few of the Purullenians live in cottages ; but by far the greater number are cave dwellers, and scoop themselves abodes, such as hobgoblins might inhabit, among the pits and the protuberances of the landscape. I even saw a farm so scooped, whose chimney projected from a mound a dozen

* For a technical notice of these geological phenomena, see Dr. Von Drasch's report on the geology of the Sierra Nevada, in the sixth volume of the *Boletín de la Comisión del Mapa Geológico de España*, Madrid, 1879.

yards within. Under this prehistoric system there is no landlord and no rent, but only a trifling tax imposed by Government; and one of the hobgoblin-looking tenants, to whom I bawled some questions from my carriage, shrilly assured me that he enjoys a delectable temperature in every weather, and at every time of year.

However this may be, the weirdness of the spot reduces the traveller (or at least it did myself) to a state almost of stupor; and when we rolled into Guadix, I wondered whether I had awoken from one of Knatchbull-Hugessen's fairy stories, such as enthralled me in my uncle's hayfield—was it yesterday, or was it twenty years ago?



A Wayside Wine Shop

XIII

Guadix

ALITTLE old musty, rusty city, scattered along a hillside looking north, and therefore shelterless and bleak: entered through the gate of San Torcuato, a mediæval fabric that has lost all vestige of a door; such is Guadix, the *Acci* of old Rome, whose occupants concern themselves but little with the freaks and frailties of time, and live and do and die as in the doughty days of Ferdinand and Isabella, or even of the Romans, or Phœnicians; or the Bastitani, or the Bastitani's ancestors, as far away as Tubal, Hercules, and Adam.

Even the Reverend Townsend, who finds perhaps too much to say of most things, from the formation of

nitre to the expulsion of the Moriscos, or the history of locusts to the breezes of the Mediterranean, is very nearly mute upon the subject of Guadix. He has my sympathy—the more so at this opening of my chapter, when nineteen-twentieths of it stare me blankly in the face like so many leagues of road without a vehicle to cover them. In two respects, our clerical tourist has the better of me. Guadix in his day was embellished with an avenue, and famous for its power of producing knives. “At the entrance to the city,” he wrote, “is the *alameda* or public walk, well planted, and remarkable for neatness.” I have seen this *alameda*, or rather what is left of it, and nothing in the whole of melancholy Spain is more profoundly melancholy. It lies beside the river bed or *rambla*, a ruinous fountain in the midst of it, a ruinous row of elms on either side—unkempt, unwashed-looking elms, shin-deep in drifted sand. Within a stone’s throw of the endmost tree is the wretched city gateway, and a wretcheder *posada*,* and opposite to these a farriery for horses, asses, mules, and bulls. While putting on his shoe the bull is thrust into a kind of skeleton bathing-machine, with a band round his belly and ropes round his legs. Yet even thus he contrives to deal some very creditable kicks, which do him all the greater honour, seeing

* The comparative standing of Spanish places of rest and refreshment for man and beast may thus be represented :

Hotel = Duke,
 Fonda = Marquis,
 Posada = Earl,
 Mesón = Viscount,
 and
 Venta = Baron.

that this, as Buffon would step forward to apprise us, is not his customary mode of combating.

The streets of Guadix are narrow and mispaved and steep, but

in the midst of them is the cathedral, a solid and ungraceful structure of the eighteenth century. Townsend affirmed it to contain "three orders of architecture, Corinthian, Composite, and Anomalous." I fancy I descried about a hundred. As



The Gateway of Guadix

for the knife manufacture, I saw no sign of it. Townsend, on the contrary, saw, or was made to see, more than he cared about. "The article for which this city is most celebrated being pocket knives, the first attention of my guide was to purchase one; and when we set forwards on our journey the succeeding day, he produced it."

"The blade was sixteen inches long, and when open it was prevented from shutting again by a strong spring. Although this was the first of the kind I had ever seen, my imagination immediately

suggested the purpose for which it was designed. Having produced his weapon, he began to brandish it; then, supposing himself to have been suddenly attacked by some one armed with an implement similar to his own, he stooped forwards, bending his knees, and holding his hat before him, by way of shield, in his left hand; whilst his right hand, depressed and grasping hard the handle of his knife, directed its elevated point. Thus prepared, and casting a look of fury on his supposed antagonist, he sprang forwards, and, appearing to have received in his hat the thrust of his opponent, he gave the fatal blow, which was to enter at the lower belly, and in one instant to rip up the miserable wretch from end to end."

"These knives are strictly forbidden; but unfortunately, inveterate custom is too strong for human laws, more especially in a country where the passions are easily inflamed; and where, from the nature of the judicial process, the laws must be weak in the extreme. For, as we have remarked already, no information can be taken but by the *escribanos*, nor can any judgment be pronounced but upon their record. Now as these officers are usually poor, and not unfrequently destitute of principle, they may, without much difficulty, be persuaded to change the complexion of an action, and at pleasure to make it either black or white. Hence, from impunity, assassinations are frequently committed; and, as little security can be derived from the laws, it becomes the interest of every man to be armed for his own defence. With this view only he procures the formidable weapon; but, when provoked to

anger, his views are changed; that which was designed for his own protection becomes the instrument of treachery, of malice, and of revenge." *

My lodging at Guadix, near enough to the cold ground for me to see, and smell, and taste, and feel the damp—all four sensations simultaneously—was in a humble *fonda*, whose name I shall conceal. The rooms, although they had no carpets and scarcely any furniture, were habitable at a pinch; but the only note of cleanliness about the slovenly Maritornes was the white chrysanthemum in her hair. When I had washed with neither soap nor towel, nor anything but water (and barely a thimbleful of that), I sought the dark and dingy dining-room. Alas poor *comedores*, I know them well; the oilcloth-covered table, the coarse cutlery, the thick glasses and bottles, the crab-shaped *rosca* of bread upon each plate, the flower-stand in the centre, composed of half a dozen simple stands of graduated sizes. The chromo on the wall—a semi-naked damsel feeding from her carmine lips a parrot of a poisonous green—proclaims the excellence of such and such a starch, or such and such a brandy; and thrust into the libellous looking-glass are several dirty business cards.

It is the custom in communicative Spain to speak to every stranger you may meet, except an Englishman (who seldom answers if he does not know the language, and still more seldom if he does); so

* I am sorry to observe that this state of things has not mended very greatly. The use of the sixteen-inch blade which the Reverend Townsend euphemizes as a "pocket-knife," is still "inveterate"; still *escrivanos* are "usually poor," and still by far too frequently devoid of principle.

presently my tongue was wagging with the rest. I could have told the company before I set my eyes on them. Of course there were a couple of commercial travellers, a priest, and the inevitable old gentleman retired on a pension from the service of the state, afflicted with blindness, deafness, lameness, asthma, indigestion, imbecility, and other ailments and diseases. It would have been kinder to have put him out of his misery upon the spot, as Professor somebody or other recommended at a conference, or in an article, not many months ago.

If I exclude this invalid we made between the four a small yet eminently sprightly party. Nevertheless, my attention was from time to time distracted by a pale faced little girl of seven or eight, who waited on us to the best of her diminutive power. I had asked about her on the landing, just before the meal began. "She is only distantly related to us," the landlady had answered, in harsh tones; "we took her in for charity"; and emphasizing *charity* she dealt the child a violent cuff on the side of the head. Upon the cuff I superposed a kiss, deeming it prudent for the little sufferer's sake not to interfere by word of mouth. She took both cuff and kiss with mute indifference; and I saw that she was unaccustomed to the one, while to the other she was all too much accustomed.

But when dessert was nearly ended, we heard outside the room the noise of a smashing plate, followed by a scuffle and a shower of blows and cries. At length one childish cry pealed out above the rest: "If my mother were alive, you never would treat me so."

“*If*.” Alas, there was a world of meaning and of pathos in that microscopic word : for mighty problems agitate an infant’s brain. Whenever a child complains with reason, providence accords to him or her a swift, incisive logic that is harrowing to listen to. For it is terrible to hear a child cry ; but it is far more terrible to hear it explain its sorrows. Above all, in the childish mind the sense of somebody or something lost or absent is poignantly severe. Is any grief so great, so *real*, as that of a broken doll ? The passions of children, stronger as well as purer than our own, pulsate with all sincerity (for pose is but the aftergrowth of more corrupted if maturer years) ; and then their corporal prison is a narrower one than ours.

I looked at the *padre*. He looked at me, winked, grinned, and cracked a walnut.

The cries and blows continued. Again I looked at the *padre*. He was picking his teeth.

The sobbing and ejaculations died away. From the quiet which ensued there might have been a murder. For me a murder had been.

I looked at the *padre* for a third time. He had risen now, and was taking out a pack of cards from behind the mirror.

“*Pobrecilla*,” I cried with unfeigned anguish ; “*que infames !*”

“Don’t be frightened,” rejoined the *padre* suavely and with just the shadow of a sneer ; “the child is very naughty.” He shuffled the cards, sat down, and dealt them into several heaps. He was playing patience.

So, without a pack of cards, was I.

Disgusted with the scene I walked into the street and through the town, discovered the gambling hell denominated the Liceo, went over it, and came away with fresh dejection. However little of our college Greek and Latin may yet survive in us, we still incline to mentally connect Lyceums with literature and other things polite. But here the air is fetid with roulette and *monte*. Therefore the only art indulged in is that of rifling the pockets of the simple or the vicious; and yet there is a library, consisting of perhaps three hundred volumes, locked away into a corner, so as not to obstruct the gaming-tables. A chance acquaintance showed me to these unthumbed tomes. "We have all the English classics," he said; "Makalay" (with a strong emphasis on the *lay*), "Shesspeer, and the rest." At least, I think this was what he said, for I only made out his words across the rattle of the dicebox, and those most unliterary and un-Lyceum-like epithets which as a rule accompany a luckless cast.

That night, when all the lodgers of my inn had sought their rooms, the beating was renewed. Once more that dreadful wail arose across the darkness: "O if my mother were alive, you would not dare to beat me so."

"Strange," I muttered. "No commentator has yet revealed to us how much of Scripture is ironical." The blows and cries continued. Angry and (doubtless) impious reflections surged into my heart; for it is ever in the heart that sensitive persons do their

reasoning. "After all," I thought, covering my ears with the bedeloties, "He who claims to temper the wind to the shorn lamb, let Him temper *this*."

My dreams were troubled, although a grain of consolation was in store for me. Upon the morrow, while I breakfasted, a decently-dressed youth rushed in with an armful of old books and flung them on the table.

"There," he cried, "you may take your pick. They tell me you are fond of such old things."

The first that came into my hand was Perez del Pulgar's *Chronicle of the Catholic Sovereigns*, Saragossa, 1567, black letter, with the wonderful engravings of that period.

"What do you want for this?"

"Whatever you like to give me."

"Better name your price."

"No, Señor, I leave the price to you."

"Very well, I couldn't give you more than a dollar; but I warn you the book may be worth a good deal more."

"Or less."

The grin which accompanied this startling statement excused my flinging conscience to the winds; so I paid the five *pesetas* and clutched my bargain.

We parted, I am sure, with mutual disdain, the vendor of the volume despising me for giving him too much, and I him for accepting too little.



In the Albaycin]

XIV

A Night in the Albaycin



BEYOND the northern border of the Darro, and yet within the echo of his waters and the shadow of his boskage, rises a steepish hill confronting the Alhambra, and, covering this hill from crown to base, the Albaycin. Few tourists penetrate the Albaycin, though numbers cast a careless glance upon the old, historic quarter from the parapet of the Place of Cisterns, or the lordly windows of the Tower of Comares. A thousand years have set its houses up and thrown them down, and set them up and thrown them down once more, so often that Time, one thinks, at last is weary of his work, and even the ruins seem, as himself, perpetual. Ruins, indeed, they are, yet not inanimate. They

seem, I say, to have outgrown the grasp of death, respiring with a subtle dignity the pride of ancient days, the life and legends of the past. So in a quiet and a reverential mood we must approach them. Then they will whisper to us all their secrets ; and we shall find that in these crumbling palaces and unkempt gardens, hidden away like stores of jewels in a cave, are half the glories of Granada.

There is an air about the Albaycin that belongs to it alone ; at least I am aware of nothing even faintly similar in other parts. Here, joined in closest union, are wealth and penury, humility and haughtiness, the orient and the west. Within the limit of the Albaycin the Christian church combines with the *aljama*, the mansion of the Christian noble clings about the courtyard and the columns of the Moor. In either instance both together, locked in a last embrace, are falling to decay, although they do not seem to fall. Already, wondering at the haunted silence of these lanes, and tenements, and temples, we tread upon the ashes of two peoples and two creeds, though vines and blossoms caress the wrinkled walls like fresh-cut wreaths upon a grave, while here and there projects the cypress, starkly desolate. These contrasts have at any hour and any season a sweet and subtle magic ; but best of all observe them by the April or October moon. It is my custom then to plunge into the threadlike alleys of the old faubourg, and clamber up them to the open space before Saint Nicholas. The drooping beams fall full upon the distant snows of the Sierra ; fall upon masses of indigo foliage and russet church-towers ; fall, too,

upon the purple foothills, and the ruddy pile of the Alhambra opposite. When all of these grow dim I often cross the summit of the Albaycín to watch the



The Casa del Gallo

last refulgence from the city wall. My favourite way to this lies past the Casa del Gallo, once the palace of the kingling Badis ben Habus, but now a common lodging-house. The looms, surviving from the linen factory established in the palace ages since, are still at work within; and as I peer between the heavy iron *rejas* I hear them ticking like gigantic clocks across the dark and damp interior.

Not far beyond I strike into the Callejón de las Monjas, "Nuns' Lane," the loneliest in Christendom. On one side is an orchard, on the other the convent and the grounds of Santa Isabel, steeped in monastic silence, solitude and sadness. Just where the lane bends upward to the right is a small aque-

duct, from which they hanged the rebels in the days of Philip the Fifth. Hence the fantastic tales attached to it; though, to be sure, the aqueduct looks red at sundown and ghastly pale beneath the moon; and close beside, a single cypress gives it guard.

From the end of the Callejón de las Monjas to the tavern of "Three and a Half" is only a matter of some paces, through the Puerta Nueva and across the Plaza Larga of the Albaycin. The tavern is just behind one corner of the Plaza. Its owner, nicknamed (why I know not) "*Tres y Medio*," a courteous citizen under middle age, yet stout and serious simultaneously, "of a sedate look, something approaching to gravity," will lead you through a murky chamber strongly reminiscent of the final act of *Rigoletto*—even to the curtain stretched across a portion of the stage—into his orchard and the open air. Here, smothered in foliage, are chairs and tables for his customers. Trellises are overhead, and, if it be their season, pyramids of muscatel, velvety both to look and touch, caress your face in passing. The orchard overhangs the ancient Cuesta de la Alhacaba, once perhaps a moat, but now the roadway leading steeply down into Granada. Above the Cuesta, on the further side, some fifty yards away, stretches the ancient city wall, level at first, declining then towards the Puerta Monaita, and parallel with the convent of Santa Isabel la Real, long centuries ago the palace, of immortal memory, of Daralbaida.

When once the fading of the light has blotted out all detail from the wall, it looks exactly like a minia-

ture Alhambra. So also does the Alhambra dip from left to right about its Alcazaba; and each of these battlements might well be one of the Alhambra's towers; except that here there is no Darro at the foot; only the moated Cuesta. The houses, too, are scanty at this spot, for most of the ravine is filled with gardens. Seldom a wayfarer intrudes upon its silence: his road lies rather through the bowels of the Albaycin. Here, then, unpestered by a human voice, and fenced with fruit, and flowers, and tranquillity, you are at ease to sip your glass of thin *vinillo*, and smoke your cigarette, and sniff the grapes, and watch the city wall.

There are two writers who belong particularly to the Albaycin; to whom the Albaycin particularly belongs. Their names are Gines Perez de Hyta and Manuel Fernandez y Gonzalez. Yet Perez de Hyta was not a Granadino but a Mureian, while Seville was the cradle of Fernandez y Gonzalez. It is the fashion with many an ignorant or an envious critic to scoff at Hyta's tales as idle fantasy, or even as mischievous romance disfiguring the solemn front of history. Even the knavish Echeverria has mauled him with indignant language (although in a later chapter, and in order to procure support for one of his own insipid fictions, he professes to withdraw his hypocritical anathema). Prior to this, the priestly cheat had branded the *Guerras Civiles* as "fabulous throughout," lamenting that in Granada every father gave the volume to his children for their school-book. But though the Murcian novelist is careful to effectively disguise historical facts, the spirit

of Granada is his very own. He is her Walter Scott; and makes us realize, as nobody before or after him, her combats and her riots and her festivals; the splendour of her sultans; the valour of her warriors; the sentiments and passions of her nobles and her populace.

The other writer, Manuel Fernandez y Gonzalez, was also a novelist with a dash of the historian. He died before my time; but many of my friends remember him, and tell me largely of his eccentricities. His tales in general are breathing images of old Granada; but *Martin Gil* and *The Monfies* have brought the Albaycin a second immortality. His manners were pervaded with a quaint conceitedness that furnished endless laughter; for he had steeped himself in bygone ages until he firmly thought himself their citizen. "Gentlemen," he declared to his associates, "you should salute me with your skull in your hand"; and again, "Spain has only two poets: I am the male, and Zorrilla the female." He lived, as well as wrote, romances, and with the full permission of her parents, like Eduardo de Contreras in Gorostiza's comedy, *Contigo Pan y Cebolla*, robbed and carried off his bride (a daughter of the Albaycin) because this seemed to him the classical road to wedlock. "Show him a sword," said one of his admirers, "and he will paint an epoch for you." He threw his work on paper with the swiftness, though not, of course, the versatile and varying inspiration, of a Lope. Once he was told that the Spanish Congress proposed to reward him with a pension. "Tell the Congress,"

exclaimed Fernandez haughtily, "that I am willing to dictate its shorthand writers a novel of a hundred thousand words in six hours; or if it be a novel of history, in seven, in order to give me time to look up Mariana." But the oddest of his customs was to prowling about at midnight in a costume of the seventeenth century, not only dressing his characters, but dressing himself to represent them in a truthful mood. How often, after dark,



A Corner in the Albaycin

while roaming through the Albaycin, have I expected to come upon the lonely phantom of the novelist, striding up and down deserted lanes or *plazuclas*, with a broad and plumed *chambergo* pulled upon his brow, a velvet *capa* of the time of the Philips, and clanking, underneath the cloak, the ponderous rapier of those fighting generations.

And yet this writer's spirit of investigation was a wise one; for everything about this region he so loved is mystery and strangeness. I know a corner of the Albaycin—a corner made for moonlight and

romance—first a mansion, then a water-mill, and now a ruin. Hither the moon may penetrate, but not (from the sequestered nature of the spot) the moving air. A little to one side are ranged the worn-out millstones; a coat of arms still crowns the doorway; the door is dropping from its frame; and over shield and door a weeping willow spreads its mute and melancholy foliage. One night last autumn I sat and watched this wondrous nook until it seemed inalienable from my sight, or even from my memory. My thoughts, inwoven with the scene, were quietude itself. How little I anticipated an adventure. On rising from beside the willow and the millstones, I took a turning that was new to me, and passing along a narrow lane between two rows of garden wall, with only here and there a dwelling, came out upon an open space. Here was the strangest scene of any. I found myself in a deserted *plazuela*, fallen, this one, completely to decay. I do not know its name. I hope it has none. Mountains of rubbish creaked beneath my tread. Houses were all around; not one was tenanted. Lumps of fungus clung like clotted blood about their pallid faces, horribly suggestive of the human dead; for whitewash, in these Andalusian cities, seems inseparable from every kind of dwelling, occupied or no. How does this happen? Who stops at sea to paint a derelict? Who coats these shells with whitewash, even when their inmates have abandoned them? Yet so it is, and whitewash is the first to come and last to leave; at once a building's swaddling-clothes and cerement. Here, then, the moonlight stared

through empty sashes on to pictureless, unpapered walls, and rib-like rafters sodden black with age. Above, the mute Alhambra stood or stalked against a sky leaden yet limpid, marvellously deep, marvellously clear. All of the heights were in eclipse, but towards the valley the darkness grew more dark, or at least more dense; while thereabout, beyond the edge of the Carrera, I seemed to catch the murmur of the stream, as though the spirits of an Arab garrison were whispering underground. The moon was just behind the Moorish Palace, seeming to cast her rays across as well as over it. Even the parapets and ramparts, locked to the rocky ridge like teeth within a jaw, seemed to have lost their substance. Dark they loomed, though not with the opacity of thickness, but of shade. A piece of cardboard held against a candle has the same effect. I felt I could have poked my stick through them. Nothing would have convinced me then that I was looking at a mighty mass of stone. Was *that* the Tower of Comares? I could have sworn no mortal feet, still less my own, had ever stepped within.

I stayed as in a trance till distant chimes sighed forth an early hour, and took, in my regress, another turning. In course of time I felt myself once more in contact with the habitations of the living, though every noise was dulcet, and subdued, and echolike. Across the studded portal of a *carmen* I heard from time to time the murmur of a fountain, or guitar, or women's voices; while here and there the overflow from some *aljibe* coeval with the great Alahmar drew

music from the hollows of the roadway like the cooing of innumerable doves. At length I stumbled on—and almost tumbled over—a lover lying stomach downwards, whispering with his dame across a subterranean *reja*. Such cases are not infrequent in the Albaycin. Stomachs, however, as Ibsen demonstrates in *Hedda Gabler*, possess no element of romance; and I hastened to step aside, partly from delicacy, but also partly from disgust. After this the neighbourhood grew busier by moments; and here and there a grocer's or a barber's shop was open still. I reached the outskirts of the Albaycin. After all, I thought, this is the famous—or notorious—gipsy quarter of Granada—not the Brummagem gipsies whom the grinning *engañabobos* (“take-in-fools”) of an interpreter displays to credulous tourists in the courtyard of one or other of the hotels, but the genuine, uncontaminated, unchristianized *gitano*. Presently I passed an open door illuminated from within. A handsome woman leaned in silhouette against the post. “Come in,” she said; and in a careless yet inquisitive mood I entered.

The place was a small and sordid wine-tavern, stone throughout. A coloured calendar was in the middle of the wall; and in the middle of the calendar a small, round hole, browned at the edge. Put a person in the place of the calendar, and you have a really elegant murder, that would have enchanted De Quincey as constituting, from the point of view of art, a huge advance upon the primitive dagger-thrust of the Morisco. This calendar and the bullet-hole through the middle of

it were positively the first objects that met my eye. As soon as I turned away from them, I found that the woman and myself were not alone. A man, of sinister and frowning features, lolled behind the counter. He had (again from De Quincey's point of view) an unimpeachably Lombrosian head and face. I recognized at this the niceness of my situation; for the place was shady, if not worse; while I, not being prepared for this digression from my walk, was trimly clothed and wore a scarf-pin and a ring of value. Somehow or other, too, the door had closed. However, absorbed in contemplation of another world—that dead, mysterious *plazuela* underneath the ageless stars—I felt no fear of anything a woman could do to me, much less a man. So up I stepped and demanded wine for three. The sinister proprietor poured it out. I took the woman's glass and placed it in her hand, motioned the man to his, and raised my own. The liquor was a foul concoction, “faked” and weakened both with water and saliva; for in these Andalusian taverns all the heeltaps are returned into the bottle. I think I spat out more than I sipped in. “How much?” I asked.

“Three *perrillas* (halfpennies),” was the surlily delivered answer; “since you are no Englishman.”

“Exactly,” I said, “since I am no Englishman. If I were an Englishman you would charge me double?”

“*Toma*, I should think so.”

The woman, who was seated in the middle of the room, now drew, with ostentatious coquetry, a chair beside her; and then another chair beside the first.

She waved her hand to me to occupy the place of preference. Prudently, as I thought, I moved to take the seat remotest from her. Just at that instant the man came round the counter; and if he had looked an ugly ruffian hitherto, viewed at full length he looked considerably uglier; for one of his legs was crooked, as well as his face a nightmare. "*Tiene miedo el señorito?*" he asked with a sneer ("Is the young gentleman afraid?") Having had to do before with some of these pot-valiant scoundrels, particularly in the Mundo Nuevo of Malaga and the Macarena of Seville, I stared at him (and he at me) for quite a while. In moments such as these, the fate of nations is decided. I remember once extolling to Mr. Cunninghame Graham the systematic courtesy peculiar to the Spaniards. "Well but," observed that most agreeable as well as shrewd of satirists, glancing me up and down, "you must be nearly forty inches round the chest." I thought of those forty inches now, and how I should make them to inculcate softer feelings in the bosom of my adversary. As for the woman, I think from the bored expression of her face she would have heartily rejoiced if both of us had come to grief. Probably the real recipient of her favours was waiting round the corner of the street. However that might be, I promptly sat beside her, touching her very shoulder with my own. "Afraid," I said, as jocularly as I could, "not I." With this I shot forth my hand, gripped the bully's wrist, pulled him down upon the other and the outer chair, and clapped my palm upon his leg with a report that must have echoed in the Audiencia. Before he

had reached his pocket for a weapon, I shoved him to his feet, and sent him reeling towards the counter. "Drinks round," I cried, "and let the foreigners alone. I am an Englishman."

These Anglo-Saxon courtesies seldom fail to flabbergast a Latin; nor did they fail on this occasion. My man was more than flabbergasted. Besides, his plans were utterly upset; for Spanish proficient in De Quincey's favourite art, who would not scruple to "suppress" a fellow-countryman, content themselves with merely cheating foreigners, especially the English. This, I maintain, is owing to our national and natural prestige, rather than to any appreciable effort proceeding from that ramshackle circumlocution and circumscription office denominated at Madrid the British Embassy. In either case, I say my man was more than flabbergasted. He seemed to be comparing me with Spanish pictures of an Englishman, such as are seen in comic papers, almanacs, and theatres. I wore no sun-helmet and no whiskers; nor do my teeth project a quarter of a mile. How should I then be English? Nevertheless, he took me at my word. What he would have done to a Spaniard we need not therefore trouble to inquire. What he *did* was to seek his balance and stand and gape at me. At last he said, forcing a laugh, "I knew you were a foreigner. One can see it in your face."

"Thank you," I rejoined, "I had rather you saw it in my face than in my accent."

He held out his hand; and since I have shaken hands with millionaires, I did not feel debased by

taking his. We sealed our peace with several libations from a better cask, in which the woman joined with greater zest than in the conversation, and chatted freely for about two hours. My ex-assassin, or rather, my ex-assassin *in posse*, had been in Cuba—or said he had—and since he described to me in accurate terms the port of Isabela de Sagua, which I had visited as a journalist during the war, I credit his assertion. He had also done some smuggling round the Campo of Gibraltar, of which he told with not a little picturesqueness. Of course upon this latter field I could not claim a partnership with him; although he found me quite an interested listener. When I got up to go, to my astonishment he would not hear of taking further money. “*Vaya*,” he said, as he threw back the door, “you are the only decent Englishman there is. The account is paid.”

Of course we parted friends. First the woman gave me her hand, and then the man. I pointed to the chair. “No offence, I hope?”

“None.”

“Good-night.”

“Good-night.”

But as I descended to the town, the yellow sun stood out from the dark Sierra like a tea rose from a Granadina’s hair.



The Alhambra; the Ladies' Tower

XV

The Alhambra by Moonlight

THE Alhambra by moonlight! Not the gardens of the Alhambra. Not the gardens or the avenues: still less the Calle Real, thronged and profaned by gossiping seekers of fresh air. Nor do I mean the Place of Reservoirs; nor yet the trim, newfangled esplanade that flanks the Tower of Justice. Here too are people and profanity. What I mean is something old and strange; something that I alone have had communion with while all the world was occupied elsewhere. This, then, is what I mean—the Palace of the Moorish kings; the soul of the Alhambra; *the Alhambra*.

Year in, year out, a multitude of modern men and women acquaint themselves with this immortal pile. Year out, year in, they come, and go away, and bear abroad her story and her fame. Wonder and delight are always on their lips and nearly always in their heart. And yet, how singular a thought it is! For all these visitors, only the sun caresses *the Alhambra*.

The night-porter had orders to expect me. I found the outer door ajar; opened, closed, drew back the bolt; then crossed the vestibule and stepped with bated footfall through the Court of Myrtles. For all the studied softness of my tread, I seemed to break a twofold silence—that of sleep and death. Instinctively I paused in reverence, almost in shame. And yet no sign or sound reproved me here. I saw, unshadowed, unbeckoned by my puny presence, three marvellous mirrors of the crimson sundown—the glassy tiles; the glassy pool; beyond the glassy pool, the glassy leafage.

The court concluded at its northern end, not in a massy door but solemn darkness in a filigree *alharaca* frame. Entering through this the boat-shaped Hall of Blessing, totally unlit, I sought the windows of the Tower of Comares that look forth upon the west. The sun had just declined beneath the Vega, altering from shade to shade the whitest wall, the deepest cypress; here the level street, yonder the convent garden of the Albaycín—“*el encumbrado Albaycín, junto con el Alcazaba*.” Midway between the Darro and my balcony above, the “rivulet of the wood” was very faintly murmuring. In tones that I myself

could scarcely overhear, I echoed to its music the plaintive words of Ganivet the suicide:—

*Que silenciosos dormís
Torreones de la Alhambra!
Dormís soñando en la muerte,
Y la muerte está lejána.'*

My whisper floated back into the silence -- and yet the stream sang on beneath the tower. The purling of this water-course does not disturb the stillness of the spot. Rather it seems to fortify and complete that stillness, much as a delicately played accompaniment augments and beautifies the volume of a voice.

I looked again towards the darkening west. Our metaphors and similes portray the sunset as an ending merely. But it is all in all, at once a dissolution and a genesis to one who spells aright its mystic meaning. The phases of its infancy, and prime, and close are absolutely homotaxic with our own. Cradled in rose and slain in blood, the sunset is the saddest and exactest emblem of *our* destiny. Each swift succeeding stage of tone and colour denotes with terrible truth *our* hopes, *our* dreams, *our* doubts, *our* disillusion. Towards the moment of its agony the hues of sunset deepen. The face of day turns ashy pale, his lips turn purple. Then sanguine streaks proclaim the mortal gash, the murder done; and night and death, too shamed or pitiful to strike another blow, desist at last, enveloping those red remains in sable silence.

Chastened by such reflection I drew away to visit the other courts and chambers of the palace. First I looked down upon the small, sad *patio*, wrought by Christian, not by Moslem architects, where the

ghost of the mad queen Juana is fabled by the superstitious crowd to creep and peer behind the heavy grating. After this, proceeding to the Mirador not far beyond, I gazed anew towards the Vega and the Albaycin, the crest of San Miguel, and the valley of the Darro; and then, retracing my steps across the Patio de la Reja, threaded the underground approach that disembogues into the Courtyard of Daraxa.

The Court of Cypresses! The most ethereal name, the most ethereal spot in all the enchanted building. Four walls enclose a garden, bordered with myrtle boundaries; within the garden two medlars and five cypresses enclose in turn an alabaster fountain, edged with an oriental poem around the border of the cup. Its waters, overfalling from cup to basin, moisten as though with tears the tender phrases of the poem and make them into melancholy music. But now, as though the poet's lips were bound in silence and even the fountain slumbered, those waters were not.

The scene was cold and sad, yet not disquieting. I sat upon the sill of a great window reaching nearly to the ground, unglazed and open to the moon, though guarded with herculean bars. Such was the contrast between the moonlight and the shade that when I looked towards the fountain I had to strain my eyes to trace its shape, but when I looked towards a lighted cypress I had to close them for the glare. No daytime shadow is to be compared with this; no sunlight dazzles so fantastically.

Outside, across a dark expanse of soil, I saw the Torre de las Damas with its ragged labyrinth of roof,

and over this a stately row of scintillating elms. Within, a corridor ran down before me, and another at right angles to it on my left, forming between the two a corner of the court. The other corners were concealed by shrubs. Along the corridor confronting me were marble columns white with icy purity, while jagged beamslike icicles protruded from between the pillars and shivered on the paving.



Memories of many princes linger here. I ^{near} The Alhambra; the Court of Cypresses looked towards the Torre de las Damas, and fancied that I saw Boabdil fleeing from his father's wrath, lowered by a silken rope to join his comrades in the whispering wood. I looked at the ceiling of the corridor, and thought that I could hear the emperor pacing to and fro. Yonder, from the dainty *mirador* across the court, a sultanness had drooped her languorous looks upon the Darro. Was she regarding now? Kings of the east and kings of the west were with me on all sides, and in their

company I felt at once exalted, and abashed, and meditative.

Therefrom I next invaded (advisedly I use this word) the Court of Lions, believed to wear a sinister and horrible look beneath the midnight moon. I did not find it so. I found it melancholy, as the Court of Cypresses; but with a melancholy something less subdued. I stole beside that ever-famous fountain, and the lions looked at me, as death or time might look, with round, expressionless eyes that glare with equal measures of indifference across an instant or an æon. Why should I fear them? The atmosphere, or rather (if I may coin an Anglo-Spanish word whose synonym our tongue alone does not possess) the *ambiency*—that which was circumfused about me—seemed even benevolent and suave. I knew these monuments and all their history too well to shrink from them, even from the legend-laden, blood-bespattered Hall of the Abencerrajes just in front of me, not thirty feet away. In this conceit I felt myself a privileged intruder. The lowliest scribe may serve to pen the chronicles of kings. So with this palace and its innates. I had endeavoured to set their story down in earnestness and sympathy, and in return they seemed to recompense my loving labour and exempt me from their terrors.

After another while I turned aside into the Sala de Justicia, profoundly dark, stabbed with an arrowy moonbeam here and there. Now and again a falling scrap of stucco ticked upon the floor, telling, as it were, the agony of those illustrious halls. Then, feeling my passage through, I penetrated to the

venerable Rauda, and stood there till the climbing, creeping shadow enveloped the gravelike niches in the wall. An ancient burial place of Moorish kings. A kingly burial place entombed in the Alhambra, lit by the Andalusian moon and stars, kissed by the breath of the great Sierra of the Snow, and famed by plummy cypresses. How many splendours mingled into one!

I stole away and found myself once more within the Tower of Comares, scanning, asleep beneath my feet, the city and the plain. How many memories and how beautiful must gather at such moments round the lover of Granada and her lore—memories of Moor, and Mudejar, and Christian, and Morisco; of battle, and duel, and joust, and festival; the ringing trumpet, the hooting horn, the beating drum, the mellow piping of the *dulzaina*; the dancing pennons and the multicolour uniforms of all those noble families; the green and scarlet robe of the Zegri; the azure damask, lined with silver cloth, of the Abencerraje, crowned with the cream and azure plume; the glittering shields, and swords, and cimeters; the mares “as white as the Sierra of the Snows.”

Here lay the Bibarrambra even now; where ladies, as the legends tell, gathered to watch and to reward the prowess of Granada’s chivalry; where sat the sultan’s bride resplendent in brocade and gold, “a red rose placed upon the middle of her brow, and in the middle of the rose a priceless ruby, dazzling the eyes of all.” Round the sultana stand the maidens of her court—Galiana of Almeria, herself a prince’s

child, together with Sarracina and Cobaida, Fatima and Alboraida, Jarifa and Zelima, Galiana's younger sister—each name a legend and a loveliness.

I lift my eyes and gaze afield. Yonder is haunted Albolote, famed in many a battle-song; yonder, the Fountain of the Pine, where Albayaldos and his comrade Alabez adventured mortal combat with the Master of Calatrava. Theirs is a legend of Arthurian grandeur that I found myself repeating now. "So had the sun arisen about an hour when they drew beside the fountain, shadowed, as its name betokeneth, by a sturdy pine. Yet nobody was near, so leaping from their steeds they slung their shields upon the saddle-bow, and seated by the fountain's brink relieved their thirst upon its cooling water."

While they were thus engaged their Spanish foes came prancing up to the encounter, each in a pard and emerald tunic, with a cross upon his shield and feathers of two colours on his helmet. Then either pair saluted, and in a tone half playful, half of delicate courtesy, the Master said to Albayaldos with a smile: "At least till now we are the losers, being the latest to arrive." "It matters not," rejoined the Moor; "not in this circumstance abides the victory."

Under his splendid dress each knight was mailed in massive armour cap-a-pie. So taking either pair its proper station they were preparing to fall on, when one of the chargers pricked its ears and gave a neigh. Then looked they all, and spied the valiant Muza, armed as themselves beneath a tunic of bright orange, spurring to meet them from the highroad to Granada.

Up rode he and drew rein. "O gentlemen," he cried reproachfully, "well did ye all agree to bring this matter to an end betwixt yourselves. By Allah, for all my spurring I was but on the point of time. But how is this, O generous sirs and strong? What is your cause for battle; or have ye not a worthy cause? What shall it profit ye if either slay the other, or if both be slain? All of you are my friends whom I well love, and what mischance soever befalleth unto you, befalleth also unto me. Forego your enmities. Make me a boon of this. Shall my arrival and my prayer to you have been in vain?" And as he spoke these moving words, he looked more earnestly towards the Master.

"Most noble Muza," said the Master then; "if my antagonist consent, for our good friendship's sake right gladly will I lay aside this skirmish."

Muza made answer; "great is the mercy that thou grantest me; nor did I expect a less one from so principal a cavalier. And thou, O Alabayaldos, wilt thou not stay thy rancour also, and be friends with him?"

"Muza," returned the Moor, "it may not be. The Master spilled my cousin's blood, that is so present to my memory: thy prayer must not be satisfied. Yet would I not be loth to perish by the Master's hand. Such were an honourable death; or else, if I prevail, a double glory shall be mine. These are my words: in them I am resolved."

With this broke in the other pair of combatants, Don Manuel Ponce de Leon and Alabez the Moor. "Gentlemen," cried the first, "it is the will of

Albayaldos to avenge his cousin's death. Let him work out that will, nor hinder him therefor. Begin our battle, and let Muza be the umpire of us all."

"It is well spoken," added Alabez. "Why waste our time in words, where deeds outweigh all talking? So thou, Don Manuel, exchange thy horse with mine and let us draw." Then, as his willing foe dismounted, "take this," he said, "in payment of thine own; yet verily ere long the twain shall be the property of only one of us"; and each remained contented with the horse that came to him.

Herewith they motioned Muza to his post and fell to fighting. Each knight was quick of eye and vigorous of arm, a master horseman, inured to every stroke and stratagem, practised in every wile of war, insomuch that the issue of the day proved arduous and doubtful. Now was a helmet shattered, now a gauntlet, now a shield. Now they would hurl their lances from afar, now close, and clash, and struggle furiously. Now it was Albayaldos who flung the Master all along his charger's neck, clutching the mane to keep from tumbling underfoot; and now the Master who clove the other's mail, biting the flesh beyond. Now Alabez, now Ponce de Leon would feint and wheel like falcons round their prey, or now run in, and shock, and grapple hand to hand, or carve and thrust with cimeter and sword, till blood was spouting from each horse and through the harness of each cavalier.

So when the afternoon was wearing to its end, and sky and sward alike were coloured with abundant

crimson, two of the combatants above the rest grew faltering and strengthless. These were the Moorish champions, both of whom, unhorsed at length, lay prone and motionless beneath the uplifted dagger of their foe, till Muza, darting forward, stayed the conqueror's arm and begged their lives, or, in the case of one, the scanty remnant of a life, seeing that Albayaldos had received three mortal wounds. Who, breathing feebly and with pain, declared his wish to die a faithful follower of Christ. At



The Tower of Homage, seen from the Albaycin

this his enemies (that had been) rejoiced exceedingly, and raised him in their arms, and bore him to the little fountain near the field, and by its brink the Master gave him Christian baptism, together with *Don Juan* for his baptismal name.

Presently with many a gentle word the Spaniards took their leave and rode away to join their squadrons on the shores of the Genil, while Alabez had washed and dressed his wounds, and staggering to the

saddle turned his horse's head for home. But loyal Muza watched beside his friend, until the other's eyes grew dim, and with a passionate appeal to our Redeemer on his stiffening lips Don Juan gave up the ghost. Just then four country fellows, carrying each a spade, passed by to gather roots for fuel, and these, at Muza's bidding, dug the warrior's grave and buried him, and went their way in consternation at his wounds. But Muza made a trophy of the hero's arms and hung them from the pine above his head, and when the day was ending took the bridle of his comrade's horse and wended slowly home, now glancing back towards the place of death, regarding now the empty saddle at his side, now contemplating, through a mist of angry tears, the darkening minarets and sanguine battlements of Granada.

Such is the tale I tell myself once more, gazing with dreamy eyes into the enchanted plain. Then, as I turn to go, each frigid beam that falls across the *ajimez*, discovering in the circumjacent gloom a point or surface of old ornament, inspires it with a sad similitude of life and light, until the deep interior of the tower looks like some lesser firmament of stars, whose borrowed brilliance is resorbed by the pale moon.

Solemn indeed is this Alhambra now. Now is the hour among all hours; when night, disrobing, trails her violet vest across the dim Sierra; when cloud assumes the shape of mountain, mountain the shape of cloud; when the Vega looks like billow

The Alhambra by Moonlight

upon billow of steel-cold water, and the city like a campo-santo beside a desert ocean, her white walls staring from the solitude—colossal tombstones, guarding the memory of those mighty dead.

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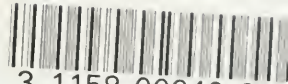
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