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Tales from the Alhambra

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TALES FROM THE ALHAMBRA

BY

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Introduction

HERE is a promontory in the southwest corner of Europe which rises from the sea on one side and a once unknown ocean on the other, cliff above cliff, hill above hill, mountain above mountain.

About its shores in Queen Dido's time prowled the high-beaked ships of Carthage, hungry for trade.

Curiously their captains scanned the mountain-paths down which, in order to traffic on the sea beach, came tall, bold-featured Iberians. Having finished bargaining, the savages distrustfully turned away, remounted the stony trails, to melt again into the mists that crowned their vast and gloomy tableland.

What was it like up there? the Phœnician trader wondered.

Years afterward, when Carthaginian generals had crushed many a hardy and liberty-loving race, the Phœnicians wondered still more. For the taciturn Iberians withdrew from every attempt at conquest.

One thing the old-world empires did know, however. Out of that unknown interior four great rivers wore their way westward into the Atlantic and as they fell toward the beach they washed down gold. And it was the rumour of this gold that called those sailing kites of wealth, Carthage, Greece, Rome, the Goths, which make the first chapter of Spanish history.

Each of these nations in turn conquered the green strip of Spanish shore.

Not any one of them entered the guarded heart of Spain. Her invincible mountain rampart rolled back the invaders as the cliffs rolled back the sea: while from above the ancient Iberians looked down unconquerable, silent, and melancholy.

By and by a fifth invasion came.

Out of North Africa across the straits, rushing up and over the mountain barriers that had kept out the great races before them, came the desert-born Moors! They came like wildfire driving before them the old Iberian race until they hemmed it into the little northwest corner where Castile and North Portugal are outlined. There they passed it by for a time while they poured through the Pyrenees and streamed down into the green plains of France.

Like a seatide the green and glancing Moslem host rolled into the history of Europe.

In its path waited a forlorn army.

Fragments and remnants of the broken Roman Empire had gathered together, dreary and desperate, for a last stand. Before them loomed one colossus, Charles the Sledge-Hammer, that day the savior of a continent.

It was on the plain of Tours in the year

732 that was fought one of the greatest battles of the world. Darkness and despair led by Charles the Sledge-Hammer broke and shattered the Moorish array.

Abdurrahman was killed, and slowly and sullenly the Moors receded southward again.

And now begins the romance of Spain.

The Moors had come back to stay. They built beautiful cities, graceful palaces, and Spain began to blossom like a garden.

Music and poetry flourished under the kindly smile of the Khalifs.

But behind this smile of peace the spirit of Iberia was gathering itself together up among the mountains of Castile. As soon as the Moors began to busy themselves in other ways than fighting, the Castilian Knights began to let down their drawbridges.

One day when everything was ready, they rode forth followed by their men-at-arms, their priests blessing them as they went.

For they were going to fight against the infidels whose religion was a worse crime than their conquest.

Step by step the Iberians won back their country.

At last in the very same year when Columbus sailed for the discovery of the New World, the day came when Boabdil and a handful of lamenting Moors surrendered the last jewel of their kingdom, one of the most wonderful palaces in the world — the Alhambra — and left forever the shores of Spain.

But the spirit of the Moor never has disappeared from Spain. Still he rules the Sierra Morena and haunts every watercourse of Andalusia. To this day after nightfall Spain is no Christian kingdom, but is ruled over by the Khalif. The Spanish peasant who lingers too late on the mountain roads, bringing down snow or wood to cool the water or build the fire of the Spanish city-dwellers, runs the risk of being over-

taken and caught up by some phantom cavalcade and swept away with them into their caverns deep under the mountains. There they sleep an enchanted slumber by day and with the night come forth to resume their ancient realm.

And this is why Spain is the most romantic country of Europe. The genius of the Moor enchanted her even while she drove him out.

A good many years ago one of our countrymen travelled into Spain on a sober errand of historical research. He was getting ready to write the life of the man who discovered America. It was this fortunate project which enabled him, four hundred years after Spain discovered America, to bring it about that America discovered Spain.

Washington Irving went to Spain in 1826. Some of the time he stayed at Court in Madrid, but best of all he loved the days in

which he lived in the palace of the Moors. There, on the very spot where it reached its glory, he re-created the strangest, most gifted, most unreal monarchy that ever reared its fabric for a time in Europe.

Of his first sight of the Alhambra Irving wrote:

"But Granada, bellissima Granada!

"Think what must have been our delight when after passing the famous bridge of Pinos, the scene of many a bloody encounter between Moor and Christian . . . we turned a promontory of the arid mountains of Elvira and Granada with its towers, its Alhambra and its snowy mountains burst upon our sight! The evening sun shone gloriously upon its red towers as we approached it and gave a mellow tone to the rich scenery of the vega. It was like the magic glow which poetry and romance have shed over this enchanting place.

"The more I contemplate these places the

more my admiration is awakened for the elegant habits and delicate taste of the Moorish monarchs. The delicately ornamented walls: the aromatic groves, mingling with the freshness and the enlivening sounds of fountains: the retired baths bespeaking purity and refinement: the balconies and galleries open to the fresh mountain breeze and overlooking the loveliest scenery of the valley of the Darro and the magnificent expanse of the vega — it is impossible to contemplate this delicious abode and not feel an admiration of the genius and the poetical spirit of those who first devised this earthly paradise.

Of the Moors he said:

"It is impossible to travel about Andalusia and not imbibe a kind feeling for the Moors. They deserved this beautiful country. They won it bravely: they enjoyed it generously and kindly. They embellished, enriched, elevated and defended their beloved Spain. Everywhere I meet traces of their sagacity,

courage, urbanity, high poetical feeling and elegant taste. Whenever I enter these beautiful marble patios, set out with shrubs and flowers, refreshed by fountains, sheltered with awnings from the sun: where the air is cool at noonday, the ear delighted in sultry summer by the sound of falling water: when in a word, a little paradise is shut up within the walls of home, I think on the poor Moors, the inventors of all these delights. I am at times almost ready to join in sentiment with a worthy friend and countryman of mine whom I met in Malaga, who swears the Moors are the only people that ever deserved the country and prays to Heaven that they may come over from Africa and conquer it again."

Legend of The Arabian Astrologer

N old times, many hundred years ago, there was a Moorish king named Aben Habuz, who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. In his youthful days he had been a great conqueror, but now that he had grown old, he desired nothing more than to live at peace with all the world and to enjoy in quiet the possessions he had taken from his neighbours.

It so happened, however, that he had young rivals to deal with; princes full of the desire for fame and fighting, who had some old scores to settle with him which he had run up with their fathers. He also had some discontented districts in his own kingdom, which in his days of warfare he had treated with a

high hand, and which, now that he languished for repose, were prone to rise in rebellion and threaten to invade him in his capital. Thus he had foes on every side; and as Granada is surrounded by wild and craggy mountains, which hide the approach of an enemy, the unfortunate Aben Habuz was kept in a constant state of watchfulness and alarm.

He built watch-towers on the mountains, and stationed guards at every pass with orders to make fires at night and smoke by day, on the approach of an enemy. But it was all in vain. His foes baffled him at every turn, and were sure to break out of some unthought-of pass, plunder his lands under his very nose, and then make off to the mountains with their prisoners and booty.

It chanced that while Aben Habuz was thus so sadly perplexed, an ancient Arabian arrived at his court. His white beard hung to his girdle, and he had every mark of ex-

treme age, yet he had travelled almost the whole way from Egypt on foot, with no other aid than a staff marked with hieroglyphics. His fame had preceded him. His name was Ibrahim, and it was said that he had lived ever since the days of Mahomet. He had, when a child, followed the Arabian army into Egypt, where he had remained many years studying magic among the priests, and there he had learned the secret of prolonging life.

This wonderful old man was honourably entertained by the king. He invited him to remain in an apartment in his palace, but the old Arab preferred a cave in the side of the hill which rises above the city of Granada. He had the cave enlarged to form a spacious hall, with a circular hole at the top, through which he could see the heavens and behold the stars. The walls of this hall were covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics, and with the figures of the stars in their signs.

In a little while the sage Ibrahim became

the bosom friend of the king, who applied to him for advice on every occasion. One day the king was as usual lamenting over the injustice of his neighbours and the strict watchfulness he was obliged to observe to guard himself against their invasions. The old Arab remained silent a moment, and then replied:

"Know, O king, that when I was in Egypt, I beheld a great marvel. On a mountain, above the city of Borsa, and overlooking the great valley of the Nile was a figure of a ram, and above it a figure of a cock, both of brass, and turning upon a pivot. Whenever the country was threatened with invasion, the ram would turn in the direction of the enemy, and the cock would crow. Upon this the inhabitants of the city knew of the danger, and of the quarter from which it was approaching, and could take timely means to guard against it."

"God is great!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, "what a treasure would be such a ram to

keep an eye upon these mountains around me: and then such a cock, to crow in time of danger! How securely I might sleep in my palace with such sentinels on the top!"

"Listen, king," said the Arab. "When the city was conquered, this talisman was destroyed, but I was present and examined it and studied its secret and mystery, and I can make one of even greater power."

"O wise one," cried Aben Habuz, "better were such a talisman than all the watch-towers on the hills, and sentinels upon the borders. Give me such a safeguard, and the riches of my treasury are at your command."

And so the old Arab set to work at once to carry out the wishes of the king. He caused a great tower to be built upon the top of the royal palace. It was built of stones brought from Egypt, and taken, it is said, from one of the pyramids. In the upper part of the tower was a circular hall, with windows looking toward every point of the compass, and before

each window was a table, on which was arranged, as on a chess-board, a mimic army of horse and foot, with an image of the monarch who ruled in that direction, all carved of wood.

To each of these tables there was a small lance, no bigger than a bodkin, on which were engraved certain Chaldaic characters. This hall was kept constantly closed, by a gate of brass, with a great lock of steel, the key of which was in possession of the king.

On the top of the tower was a bronze figure of a Moorish horseman, fixed on a pivot, with a shield on one arm and a lance. The face of this horseman was toward the city, as if keeping guard over it. But if any foe were at hand, the figure would turn in that direction, and would level the lance as if for action.

When this talisman was finished, Aben Habuz was all impatient to try it. And he now longed as much for an invasion as he had before sighed for peace. He soon had his

wish. Tidings were brought, early one morning, that the face of the bronze horseman was turned toward the mountains of Elvira, and that his lance pointed directly against the Pass of Lope.

"Let the drums and trumpets sound to arms, and all Granada be put on the alert," said Aben Habuz.

"Let not your city be disturbed," said the Arab, "nor your warriors called to arms. Send your attendants away and let us go alone to the secret hall of the tower."

So the ancient Aben Habuz mounted the staircase, leaning on the arm of the still more ancient Ibrahim. They unlocked the door and entered. The window that looked toward the Pass of Lope was open.

"In that direction," said the astrologer, "lies the danger. Behold, O king, the mystery of the table."

The king stepped close to the board on which were placed the small wooden figures,

and, to his surprise, saw that they were all in motion. The horses pranced, the warriors brandished their weapons, and there was a faint sound of drums and trumpets, and a clang of arms, and the neighing of steeds: but all no louder, nor more distinct, than the hum of a bee.

"Behold," said the astrologer, "a proof that your enemies are even now in the field. They must be advancing through the mountains, by the Pass of Lope. If you wish them to retreat without loss of life, strike these images with the head of the magic lance, but if you would cause bloodshed among them, strike with the point."

Aben Habuz seized the lance with trembling eagerness.

"Son of Abu Ayub," exclaimed he, in a chuckling tone, "I think we will have a little blood!"

So saying, he thrust the magic lance into one of the images, and beat others with the

head, upon which the former fell as dead upon the board, and the rest turned upon each other and began fighting pell-mell.

It was hard for the astrologer to stay the hand of the old king, and prevent him from killing all of his foes, but at last he persuaded him to leave the tower, and scouts were at once sent out to the mountains.

They returned with the news that a Christian army had advanced through the heart of the Sierra, almost within sight of Granada, where disagreement had broken out among them. They had turned upon each other, and after much killing had retreated over the border.

Aben Habuz was overjoyed.

"At length," said he, "I shall lead a life of peace, and have all my enemies in my power."

And to the Arab he said:

"What can I give you in reward for so great a blessing?"

"The wants of an old man and a philosopher are few and simple. Grant me but the means of fitting up my cave and I am content," answered Ibrahim.

The king was secretly pleased to know that he asked so small a reward. He ordered his treasurer to give him whatever sums might be required to furnish and complete his cave.

The astrologer now gave orders to have various chambers hewn out of the solid rock. These he caused to be furnished with beautiful ottomans and divans, and the walls to be hung with rich silks from Damascus.

"I am an old man," said he, "and can no longer rest my bones on stone couches. These damp walls require covering."

He had the apartments hung with silver and crystal lamps, which were filled with a fragrant oil made according to a recipe which he had found in the tombs of Egypt. These lights diffused a soft radiance.

"The light of the sun," said he, "is too bright for the eyes of an old man. The light of these lamps is better suited to the studies of a philosopher."

The treasurer of King Aben Habuz groaned at the sums daily demanded by the astrologer, and he finally carried his complaints to the king. The royal word, however, had been given. Aben Habuz shrugged his shoulders.

"We must have patience," said he. "All things have an end, and so will the furnishing of this cavern."

And he was right. The hermitage was at last complete, and formed a sumptuous underground palace.

While the Arab passed his time in his cave, Aben Habuz carried on furious battles in the tower. It was a glorious thing for an old man, like himself, to have war made easy, and to be able to amuse himself in his cham-

ber by brushing away whole armies like so many swarms of flies. And by degrees, his enemies grew weary from repeated failures and tried no more to invade his kingdom.

At length, one day, the bronze horseman turned suddenly round, and lowering his lance, made a dead point towards a certain range of mountains. Aben Habuz hastened to his tower, but the magic table in that direction was quiet — not a single warrior was in motion. The king was perplexed and sent out a troop to scour the mountains. They returned after three days' absence.

"We have searched every mountain pass," said they, "but not a helm nor spear was stirring. All that we have found was a Christian damsel of great beauty, sleeping at noontide beside a fountain."

"Let her be brought before me," said the king.

So the Christian damsel was brought into the king's presence. She was dressed in the

style of the Spaniards at the time of the Arabian conquest. Pearls were entwined in her hair, and jewels sparkled on her forehead. Around her neck was a golden chain, to which was suspended a silver lyre which hung by her side.

The flashes of her dark eyes were like sparks of fire on the old yet combustible heart of Aben Habuz.

"Fairest of women," cried he, "who and what are you?"

"The daughter of a Spanish prince who but lately ruled over this land. The armies of my father have been destroyed, as if by magic, among these mountains. He has been driven into exile, and his daughter is a captive."

"Beware, O king!" whispered Ibrahim. "This may be some evil spirit sent by your foes to do you harm — I think I read witchcraft in her eye. Doubtless this is the enemy pointed out by the talisman."

"You are a wise man I grant," replied the king, "but you are little versed in the ways of women. In that knowledge I yield to no man. As to this damsel, I see no harm in her. She is fair to look upon and finds favour in my eyes."

"Hearken, king!" said the astrologer. "I have given you many victories by means of my talisman, but have never shared any of the spoil. Give me this stray captive, to solace me in my solitude with her silver lyre."

"What!" cried Aben Habuz. "You have already dancing-women to solace you."

"Dancing-women I have, it is true," said Ibrahim, "but I would have a little minstrelsy to refresh my mind when weary with the toils of study."

But the king would not listen to the Arab's request, and they parted in high displeasure.

All kinds of festivities were devised for the

entertainment of the princess — minstrelsy, dancing, tournaments, bull-fights. Granada for a time was a scene of perpetual pageant. But she treated all this as a matter of course, and seemed to take delight in causing expense as if she wished to drain the treasury of the king.

Aben Habuz could not flatter himself that he had made any impression on the heart of the princess. She never frowned on him, it is true, but then she never smiled. Whenever he began to plead his suit, she struck her silver lyre, and in an instant the old monarch began to nod and gradually sink into a deep sleep. All Granada scoffed at his infatuation.

At length the danger burst on the head of Aben Habuz, but this time the talisman gave him no warning. His palace was surrounded by an armed rabble, and both his life and that of the princess were in danger. At the head

of a handful of guards he sallied forth, put the rebels to flight, and crushed the insurrection in the bud.

When quiet was again restored, he went in great alarm to the astrologer who still remained shut up in his cave.

"Wise Ibrahim," said he, "what you foretold has in some sort come to pass. The princess has brought trouble and danger upon me. How can I be secure from my enemies? Show me some safe retreat where I can stay in peace."

A gleam shone from the eyes of the Arab under his bushy eyebrows.

"You have heard, no doubt," said he, "of the palace and garden of Irem named in the Koran."

And the king answered:

"I have heard of that garden: wonderful things are told of it by the pilgrims who visit Mecca, but I have thought them only wild fables."

"Listen," said Ibrahim. "In my younger days, when I was a mere Arab of the desert, I tended my father's camels. Once one of them strayed from the rest and was lost. I searched after it for several days, but in vain, until, weary and faint, I laid myself down and slept under a palm tree by the side of a well. When I awoke, I found myself at the gate of the city. I entered and saw noble streets and squares and market places, but all were silent and without an inhabitant. I wandered on until I came to a palace with a garden adorned with fountains and fish ponds and groves and flowers and orchards of delicious fruits. But still no one was to be seen. I became frightened and hastened to depart, and when I had gone through the gate of the city, I turned to look upon the palace once more, but it was no longer to be seen — nothing but the silent desert before my eyes. I met an ancient Arabian, who knew the secrets of the land, and told him what had be-

fallen me: 'This,' said he, 'is the Garden of Irem, one of the wonders of the desert. It only appears at times to some wanderer like yourself.' In after years, when I had been in Egypt and made myself master of all kinds of magic spells, I made up my mind to visit again this wonderful garden. I did so. It was revealed to me and I passed several days in the palace. The genii who watch over the palace obeyed my magic power, and from them I learned how the whole garden came into existence, and how it was made invisible. What say you, king, would you have a palace and garden like that of Irem, filled with all manner of delights, but hidden from the eyes of mortals?"

"O wise one," exclaimed the king eagerly, "make me such a garden and ask any reward even to the half of my kingdom."

"Alas," replied the other, "you know I am an old man and a philosopher, and easily satisfied. All the reward I ask is the first

beast of burden with its load, which shall enter the gates of the garden."

The king gladly agreed and the Arab began his work. On the top of the hill just above his underground hall, he had a great gateway built. There was an outer porch with a lofty arch, and within was a portal secured by massive gates. On the top stone of the portal, the Arab, with his own hand, made the figure of a huge key, and on the top stone of the outer arch, which was loftier than that of the portal, he carved a gigantic hand. Over these he repeated many sentences in an unknown tongue.

When this gateway was finished, he shut himself up for two days in his hall, engaged in secret incantations. The third day he went to the summit of the hill, and passed the whole day there. At a late hour he came down and appeared before the king.

"My work is finished," said he. "On the summit of the hill stands one of the most

wonderful palaces that ever the head of man devised, or the heart of man desired. It contains beautiful halls, galleries, gardens, cool fountains, and fragrant baths. The whole mountain is like paradise. Like the garden of Irem, it is hidden from the sight of mortals, except those who know the secret of the talismans."

"Enough!" cried Aben Habuz joyfully. "To-morrow morning with the first light we will take possession."

Scarcely had the rays of the sun begun to play about the mountains when Aben Habuz mounted his steed, and with a few of his attendants ascended a steep and narrow road leading up the hill. Beside him on a white palfrey rode the princess. Her whole dress sparkled with jewels, and round her neck was suspended her silver lyre. The Arab, who never mounted a steed of any kind, walked beside the king carrying his staff.

Aben Habuz looked to see the towers of the palace, the terraces and gardens, but as yet nothing of the kind was to be seen.

"That is the mystery of the place," said the Arab; "nothing can be discerned until you have passed the spell-bound gateway."

As they drew near, Ibrahim paused, and pointed out the hand and key carved upon the portal of the arch.

"These," said he, "are the talismans which guard the entrance to this paradise. Until the hand shall reach down and seize the key no evil can prevail against the lord of this mountain."

While the king was gazing in silent wonder at these signs, the palfrey of the princess went on and bore her in at the portal, to the very centre of the barbican.

"Behold," cried the astrologer, "my promised reward: the first animal with its burden that should enter the gateway."

The king smiled at first, not thinking the

old man in earnest, but when he found that he was, his gray beard trembled with indignation.

"You know the meaning of my promise," said he sternly, "the first beast of burden, with its load, that should enter this portal. Take the strongest mule in my stables, load it with the most precious things of my treasury, and it is yours, but dare not to think that I shall give you the princess."

"What need I of wealth?" cried the Arab scornfully. "The princess is mine by right. Your word is pledged. I claim her as my own."

The princess looked down haughtily from her palfrey, as she listened to this dispute between two gray heads.

"Base son of the desert," cried the king, "you may be master of many arts, but know me for your master, and do not try to juggle with your king."

"My master!" echoed the Arab, "my king

indeed! Farewell, Aben Habuz, reign over your petty kingdom! As for me, I shall laugh at you in my retirement."

And saying this, he seized the bridle of the palfrey on which the princess was seated, smote the earth with his staff, and sank with her through the centre of the barbican. The earth closed and no trace remained of the opening.

Aben Habuz was struck dumb for a time. Then he ordered a thousand workmen to dig into the ground where the Arab had disappeared. They digged and digged, but in vain. As soon as they threw the earth out, it filled in again. They sought the Arab's cavern at the foot of the hill, but there was no entrance to be found.

All of the king's talismans now ceased to be of use. The bronze horseman remained fixed with his face turned toward the hill and his spear pointed to the spot where the Arab

had descended, as if there still lurked the king's deadliest foe.

The top of the mountain, the site of the promised palace and garden, remained a desolate waste. And the neighbours of the king, finding him no longer protected by magic spell, invaded his lands from all sides, and the remainder of his life was a tissue of turmoils.

At length Aben Habuz died and was buried.

Ages have since rolled away. The Alhambra has been built on the mountain, and in some measure resembles the fabled garden of Irem. The spell-bound gateway still stands with the mystic hand and key, and now forms the entrance to the fortress. Under the gateway, it is said, the old Arab still remains in his underground cavern, nodding on his divan, lulled by the silver lyre of the princess.

The old sentinels, who guard the gate, hear the music of the lyre sometimes in the summer nights, and doze quietly at their posts.

It is said that even those who watch by day are generally found nodding on the stone benches, or sleeping under the trees, so that in truth it is the drowsiest military post in all the world.

And the legends tell us that this will endure. From age to age the Christian princess will remain a captive to the old Arab, and by the music of her lyre he will remain in magic slumber, unless the mystic hand shall grasp the fated key and dispel the whole charm of this enchanted mountain.

Legend of Prince Ahmed al Kamel

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THERE was once a Moorish king of Granada, who had but one son, whom he named Ahmed, to which his courtiers added the surname of al Kamel, or the Perfect, from the signs of super-excellence which they perceived in him in his very infancy. The astrologers predicted everything in his favour that could make a perfect prince and a prosperous sovereign. One cloud only rested upon his destiny. Unless he could be kept from falling in love until he was of mature age, he would run great perils.

To prevent this danger, the king wisely determined to rear him in a seclusion where he would never see a woman. For this purpose he built a beautiful palace on the brow

of the hill above the Alhambra, in the midst of delightful gardens, but surrounded by lofty walls, being, in fact, the same palace known at the present day as the Generalife. In this palace the youthful prince was shut up and entrusted to the care of Eben Bonabben, one of the wisest and dryest of Arabian sages, who had passed the greatest part of his life in Egypt, studying hieroglyphics, and making researches among the tombs and pyramids, and who saw more charms in an Egyptian mummy than in a living beauty.

The prince grew up in the seclusion of the palace and its gardens, under the vigilant care of Eben Bonabben, who sought to instruct him in the abstruse lore of Egypt. But in this he made little progress, and it was soon evident that he had no turn for philosophy.

He was, however, amazingly ductile for a youthful prince, ready to follow any advice, and always guided by the last counsellor.

He suppressed his yawns, and listened patiently to the long and learned discourse of Eben Bonabben, from which he imbibed a smattering of various kinds of knowledge, and thus happily attained his twentieth year, a miracle of princely wisdom.

About this time, however, a change came over the conduct of the prince. He completely abandoned his studies, and took to strolling about the gardens, and musing about the side of the fountains. He had been taught a little music among his various accomplishments. It now engrossed a great part of his time, and a turn for poetry became apparent. The sage Eben Bonabben took the alarm, and endeavoured to work these idle humours out of him by a severe course of algebra: but the prince turned from it with distaste.

"I cannot endure algebra," said he. "I want something that speaks more to the heart."

The sage Eben Bonabben shook his dry head at the words.

"Here is an end to philosophy," thought he. "The prince has discovered he has a heart."

As algebra was not to be mentioned, and he had exhausted almost all kinds of agreeable knowledge, he now tried to instruct him in the language of birds. This Eben Bonabben had learned in Egypt, and the prince applied himself to the study with such avidity that he soon became as great an adept as his master.

The tower of the Generalife was no longer a solitude: he had companions at hand with whom he could converse.

The first acquaintance he formed was with a hawk, who built his nest in a crevice of the lofty battlements, whence he soared far and wide in quest of prey. The prince, however, found little to like or esteem in him. He was a mere pirate of the air, swaggering and

boastful, whose talk was all about carnage and desperate exploits.

His next acquaintance was an owl, a wise-looking bird, with a huge head and staring eyes, who sat blinking and goggling all day in a hole in the wall, but roamed forth at night. He had great pretensions to wisdom, talked of the moon, hinted at the dark sciences, and was grievously given to metaphysics, and the prince found him even more ponderous than Eben Bonabben.

Then there was a bat, that hung all day by his heels in the dark corner of a vault, but sallied out in slipshod style at twilight. He, however, had but twilight ideas on all subjects, and seemed to take delight in nothing.

Besides these there was a swallow, with whom the prince was at first much taken. He was a smart talker, but restless, bustling, and forever on the wing. He turned out in the end to be a mere smatterer, who did but skim over the surface of things, pretending

to know everything, but knowing nothing thoroughly.

These were the only feathered associates with whom he had any opportunity of exercising his newly acquired language. The tower was too high for any other birds to frequent it. He soon grew weary of his new acquaintances whose conversation spoke so little to the head and nothing to the heart, and gradually relapsed into his loneliness. A winter passed away, spring opened with all its bloom and verdure, and the time arrived for birds to build their nests. Suddenly, as it were, a universal burst of song broke from the groves and gardens of the Generalife, and reached the prince in the solitude of his tower. From every side he heard the same universal theme — love — love — love — chanted, and responded to in every variety of note and tone. He listened in silence and perplexity.

"What can this love be?" thought he,

"of which the world seems to be so full, and of which I know nothing?"

He applied for information to his friend the hawk. The bird answered in a tone of scorn.

"You must apply," said he, "to the vulgar, peaceable birds of earth, who are made for the prey of us princes of the air. My trade is war, and fighting my delight. I am a warrior, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince turned from him with disgust and sought the owl in his retreat.

"This is a bird," said he, "of peaceful habits, and may be able to solve my question."

So he asked the owl to tell him what was this love about which all the birds in the groves below were singing.

Upon this the owl put on a look of offended dignity.

"My time," said he, "is taken up with

study and research. As to these singing birds of whom you talk, I never listen to them — I despise them and their themes. Allah be praised, I cannot sing: I am a philosopher, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince now repaired to the vault, where his friend the bat was hanging by the heels, and asked the same question. The bat wrinkled up his nose into a most snappish expression.

"Why do you disturb me in my morning's nap with such an idle question?" said he peevishly. "I only fly by twilight, when all birds are asleep, and never trouble myself with their concerns. I am neither bird nor beast, and I thank Heaven for it. I have found out the villainy of the whole of them, and hate them one and all. I know nothing of this thing called love."

As a last resort, the prince now sought the swallow, and stopped him just as he was circling about the summit of the tower. The

swallow, as usual, was in a hurry, and had scarce time to make a reply.

"Upon my word," said he, "I have so much public business to attend to, and so many pursuits to follow, that I have had no time to think on the subject. I have every day a thousand visits to pay; a thousand affairs of importance to examine into, that leaves me not a moment of leisure for these little sing-song matters. In a word, I am a citizen of the world — I know nothing of this thing called love."

So saying, the swallow dived into the valley and was out of sight in a moment.

The prince remained disappointed and perplexed, and while he was still in this mood, Eben Bonabben entered the tower. The prince advanced eagerly to meet him.

"O Eben Bonabben," cried he, "you have revealed to me much of the wisdom of the earth; but there is one thing of which I remain in utter ignorance, and would fain be

informed. Tell me, most profound of sages, what is the nature of this thing called love?"

Eben Bonabben was struck as with a thunderbolt. He trembled and turned pale, and felt as if his head sat but loosely on his shoulders. What could have suggested such a question to the prince? Where could he have learnt so idle a word?

The prince led him to the window of the tower.

"Listen, O Eben Bonabben," said he. The sage listened. The nightingale sat singing in the thicket below the tower, and from every grove rose a strain of melody; and love — love — love — was still the unvarying strain.

"Allah Akbar! God is great!" cried the wise Bonabben. "Who shall pretend to keep this secret from the heart of man, when even the birds of the air conspire to betray it?"

Then turning to Ahmed:

"O prince," cried he, "shut your ears to

these strains. Close your mind against this dangerous knowledge. Know that this love is the cause of half the ills of wretched mortality. It is this which produces bitterness and strife between brethren and friends; care and sorrow, weary days and sleepless nights, are its attendants. It withers the bloom and blights the joy of youth, and brings on the ills and griefs of premature age. Allah preserve you in total ignorance of this thing called love!"

The sage Eben Bonabben hastily retired, leaving the prince plunged in still deeper perplexity. It was in vain he attempted to dismiss the subject from his mind. It still continued uppermost in his thoughts.

"Surely," said he to himself, as he listened to the tuneful strains of the birds, "there is no sorrow in those notes. If love be a cause of such wretchedness and strife, why are not these birds drooping in solitude, or tearing each other in pieces, instead of fluttering

cheerfully about the groves, or sporting with each other among the flowers?"

One morning, as the prince sat at his window in the tower, there was a sudden rushing noise in the air. A beautiful dove, pursued by a hawk, darted in at the window, and fell panting on the floor, while the pursuer, balked of his prey, soared off to the mountains.

The prince took up the gasping bird and smoothed its feathers. When he had soothed it, he put it in a golden cage, and offered it the finest and whitest of wheat and the purest of water. The bird, however, refused food, and sat drooping and pining, and uttering piteous moans.

"Have you not everything your heart can wish?" said Ahmed.

"Alas, no!" replied the dove. "Am I not separated from my mate and that too in the happy spring-time, the very season of love?"

"Pray, pretty bird," said the prince. "Can you then tell me what is love?"

"Too well can I," replied the dove. "It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is the charm which draws two beings together, and unites them by tender sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by such ties?"

"I like my old teacher, Eben Bonabben, better than any other being. But he is often tedious, and I occasionally feel myself happier without his society."

"That is not the sympathy I mean. I speak of love, the great principle of life. Every created being has its mate. The very beetle wooes its lady-beetle in the dust. Is there no beautiful princess nor lovely damsel who has ensnared your heart?"

"I begin to understand," said the prince, sighing.

A little further conversation ensued, and the first lesson was complete.

"Alas!" said he, "if love be such a delight, and its interruption such a misery, Allah forbid that I should mar the joy of any of its votaries."

He opened the cage, took out the dove, and carried it to the window.

"Go, happy bird," said he, "rejoice with your mate in the days of youth and springtime. Why should I make you a fellow prisoner in this dreary tower, where love can never enter?"

The dove flapped its wings in rapture, gave one vault into the air, and then swooped downward to the blooming bowers of the Darro.

A few mornings afterward, as the prince was ruminating on the battlements of the tower, the dove came hovering in the air, and alighted fearlessly upon his shoulder.

"Happy bird," said he, "who can fly, as it were, with the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the earth, where have you been since we parted?"

"In a far country, prince, whence I bring you tidings in reward for my liberty. In the wild compass of my flight, which extends over plain and mountain, as I was soaring in the air, I beheld below me a delightful garden with all kinds of fruits and flowers. It was in a green meadow, on the banks of a winding stream: and in the centre of the garden was a stately palace. I alighted in one of the bowers to rest after my weary flight. On the green bank below me was a youthful princess. She was surrounded by female attendants, young like herself, who decked her with garlands, but no flower of the field could compare with her for loveliness. 'Here,' thought I, 'is the being formed by Heaven to inspire my prince with love.'"

The resolution of the prince was taken. He addressed a letter to the princess: "To the Unknown Beauty, from Ahmed al Kamel," and gave it to the dove.

"Away, trustiest of messengers!" said he.

"Fly over mountain and valley, river and plain. Rest not until you have given this letter to the princess."

The dove soared high in the air, and taking his course, darted away. The prince followed him with his eye until he was a mere speck on a cloud, and gradually disappeared behind a mountain.

Day after day he watched for the return of the messenger, but he watched in vain. At last, one evening toward sunset, the faithful bird fluttered into his apartment, and, falling at his feet, expired. The arrow of some archer had pierced his breast, yet he had struggled with the lingerings of life to deliver the message. As the prince bent with grief over the gentle martyr, he beheld a chain of pearls round his neck, attached to which, beneath his wing, was a small enamelled picture. It represented a lovely princess in the very flower of her years, and was doubtless the unknown beauty of the

garden. But who and where was she? And was this picture sent as a token of her approval of his letter? Unfortunately the death of the faithful dove left everything in mystery and doubt. The prince gazed on the picture. "I will fly from this palace," said he, "which has become an odious prison, and will seek this unknown princess throughout the world."

To escape from the tower in the day, when every one was awake, might be a difficult matter: but at night the palace was slightly guarded, for no one thought of the prince making any attempt of the kind. He had always been passive in his captivity. How was he to guide himself, however, in his flight, being ignorant of the country? He bethought him of the owl, who was used to roaming at night, and must know every by-lane and secret path. Seeking him in his hermitage, he questioned him touching his knowledge of the land. Upon this the owl put on a mighty self-important look.

"You must know, O prince," said he, "that we owls are of a very ancient and extensive family, though rather fallen to decay, and possess ruinous castles and palaces in all parts of Spain. There is scarcely a tower of the mountains, or a fortress of the plains or old citadel, but has some brother, or uncle, or cousin, quartered in it. And in going the rounds to visit my numerous kindred, I have pried into every nook and corner, and made myself acquainted with every secret of the land."

The prince was overjoyed to find the owl so deeply versed in topography, and now informed him of his intended elopement, urging him to be his companion and counsellor.

"Go to!" said the owl, with a look of displeasure. "Am I a bird to engage in such an affair as this? — I whose whole time is devoted to meditation and the moon?"

"Be not offended, most solemn owl," replied the prince. "Abstract yourself for a

time from meditation and the moon. Aid me in my flight, and you shall have whatever heart can wish."

"I have that already," said the owl. "A few mice are sufficient for my frugal table, and this hole in the wall is spacious enough for my studies. What more does a philosopher like myself desire?"

"But think, wise owl, that while moping in your cell and gazing at the moon, all your talents are lost to the world. I shall one day be a sovereign prince, and may advance you to some post of honour and dignity."

The owl, though a philosopher, and above the ordinary wants of life, was not above ambition, so he was finally prevailed on to elope with the prince and be his guide in the pilgrimage.

The prince collected all his jewels, and concealed them about his person as travelling funds. That very night he lowered himself by his scarf from a balcony of the tower, clambered over the outer walls of the Gen-

eralife, and, guided by the owl, made good his escape before morning to the mountains.

He now held a council with his guide as to his future course.

"Might I advise," said the owl, "I would recommend you to repair to Seville. You must know that many years since I was on a visit to an uncle, an owl of great dignity and power, who lived in a ruined wing of the Alcazar. In my hoverings at night over the city, I frequently remarked a light burning in a lonely tower. At length I alighted on the battlements, and found it to proceed from the lamp of an Arabian magician. He was surrounded by his magic books, and on his shoulder was perched an ancient raven, who had come with him from Egypt. I am acquainted with that raven, and owe to him a great part of the knowledge I possess. The magician is since dead, but the raven still inhabits the tower, for these birds are of wonderfully long life. I would advise you,

O prince, to seek that raven, for like all ravens, especially those of Egypt, he is a renowned soothsayer and a conjuror."

The prince was struck with the wisdom of this advice, and accordingly bent his course towards Seville. He travelled only in the night to accommodate his companion, and lay by during the day in some dark cavern or mouldering watch-tower, for the owl knew every hiding place of the kind, and had a great taste for ruins.

At length one morning, at daybreak, they reached the city of Seville, where the owl, who hated the glare and bustle of crowded streets, halted without the gate, and took up his quarters in a hollow tree.

The prince entered the gate and readily found the magic tower, which rose above the houses of the city as a palm tree rises above the shrubs of the desert. It was in fact the same as the tower standing to-day, and known as the Giralda.

The prince ascended by a great winding staircase to the summit of the tower, where he found the raven — an old, mysterious, gray-headed bird, ragged in feather, with a film over one eye. He was perched on one leg, with his head turned on one side, poring with his remaining eye on a diagram described on the pavement.

The prince approached him with awe and reverence.

"Pardon me, most ancient and wise raven," exclaimed he, "if for a moment I interrupt those studies which are the wonder of the world. You behold in me a pilgrim of love, and I would seek your counsel how to obtain the object of my devotion."

"And can you be at any loss for an object in Andalusia?" said the old raven, leering upon him with his single eye. "Above all, can you be at a loss in Seville, where black-eyed damsels dance the zambra under every orange grove?"

The prince was somewhat shocked at hearing an old bird with one foot in the grave talk thus loosely.

"Believe me," said he gravely, "I am on no such light errand as that. The black-eyed damsels of Andalusia who dance among the orange groves are naught to me. I seek the original of this picture. And I beseech you, most potent raven, if it be within the scope of your knowledge or reach of your art, inform me where she may be found."

The gray-headed raven was rebuked by the gravity of the prince.

"What know I," replied he dryly, "of youth and beauty? My visits are to the old and not the young and fair. I am the harbinger of fate who croak bodings of death from the chimney-top and flap my wings at the sick man's window. You must seek elsewhere for tidings of your unknown princess."

"And where can I seek if not among the

sons of wisdom? Know that I am a royal prince, fated by the stars, and sent on a mysterious enterprise on which may hang the destiny of empires."

When the raven heard that it was a matter of vast moment, he changed his tone and manner, and listened with profound attention to the story of the prince. When it was finished, he replied:

"Touching this princess, I can give you no information of myself, for my flight is not among gardens, or around ladies' bowers. But go to Cordova, seek the palm tree which stands in the court of the principal mosque. At the foot of it you will find a great traveller who has visited all countries and courts. He will give you tidings of the object of your search."

"Many thanks for this information," said the prince. "Farewell."

"Farewell," said the raven dryly, and again fell to pondering on the diagram.

The prince sallied forth from Seville, sought his fellow-traveller, the owl, who was still dozing in the hollow tree, and set off for Cordova.

He approached it along hanging gardens, and orange and citron groves, overlooking the fair valley of the river. When they arrived at the city gates, the owl flew up to a dark hole in the wall, and the prince proceeded in quest of the palm tree which had been planted in days of yore. It stood in the midst of the great court of the mosque towering from amidst orange and cypress trees. Men were seated in groups under the cloisters of the court, and many of the faithful were washing at the fountains, before entering the mosque.

At the foot of the palm tree was a crowd listening to the words of one who appeared to be a great talker.

"This," said the prince to himself, "must be the great traveller who is to give me tidings of the unknown princess."

He mingled in the crowd, but was astonished to perceive that they were all listening to a parrot, who, with his bright-green coat, pragmatical eye and consequential top-knot, had the air of a bird on excellent terms with himself.

"How is this," said the prince to one of the by-standers, "that so many grave persons can be delighted with a chattering bird?"

"You know not whom you speak of," said the other. "This parrot is a descendant of the famous parrot of Persia, renowned for his story-telling talent. He has all the learning of the East at the tip of his tongue, and can quote poetry as fast as he can talk. He has visited various foreign courts, where he has been considered an oracle of erudition."

"Enough," said the prince, "I will have some private talk with this distinguished traveller."

He sought a private interview, and told the parrot the nature of his errand. He had

scarcely mentioned it when the parrot burst into a fit of dry rickety laughter, that brought tears into his eyes.

"Excuse my merriment," said he, "but the mere mention of love always sets me laughing."

The prince was shocked at this ill-timed mirth.

"Is not love," said he, "the universal bond of sympathy?"

"A fig's end!" cried the parrot, interrupting him. "Prithee where have you learned this jargon? Trust me, love is quite out of vogue. One never hears of it in the company of wits and people of refinement."

The prince sighed as he recalled the different language of his friend the dove. He then directed his inquiries to the immediate purport of his visit.

"Tell me," said he, "have you in the course of your travels met with the original of this portrait?"

The parrot took the picture in his claw, turned his head from side to side, and examined it curiously with either eye.

"Upon my honour," said he, "a very pretty face, a very pretty face. But then one sees so many pretty women in one's travels that one can hardly — but hold — bless me! now I look at it again — sure enough, this is the princess Aldegonda. How could I forget one who is such a favourite with me!"

"The princess Aldegonda!" echoed the prince. "And where is she to be found?"

"Softly, softly," said the parrot: "easier to be found than gained. She is the only daughter of the Christian king who reigns at Toledo, and is shut up from the world until her seventeenth birthday. You will not get a sight of her. No mortal man can see her. I was admitted to her presence to entertain her, and I assure you, on the word of a parrot who has seen the world, I have

conversed with much sillier princesses in my time."

"A word in confidence, my dear parrot," said the prince. "I am heir to a kingdom, and shall one day sit upon a throne. I see that you are a bird of parts, and understand the world. Help me to gain possession of this princess, and I will advance you to some distinguished place about my court."

"With all my heart," said the parrot. "But let it be a sinecure, if possible, for we wits have a great dislike to labour."

Arrangements were promptly made. The prince sallied forth from Cordova through the same gate by which he had entered. He called the owl down from the hole in the wall, introduced him to his new travelling companion as a brother savant, and off they set on their journey.

The prince was impatient, but they travelled much more slowly than he wished. The parrot was accustomed to high life, and

did not like to be disturbed early in the morning. The owl, on the other hand, was for sleeping at mid-day, and lost a great deal of time by his long siestas. His antiquarian taste also was in the way, for he insisted on pausing and inspecting every ruin, and had long legendary tales to tell about every old tower and castle in the country.

The prince had supposed that he and the parrot, being both birds of learning, would delight in each other's society, but never had he been more mistaken. They were eternally bickering. The one was a wit, the other a philosopher. The parrot quoted poetry, was critical on new readings and eloquent on small points of erudition: the owl treated all such knowledge as trifling, and cared for nothing but metaphysics. Then the parrot would sing songs and crack jokes upon his solemn neighbour, and laugh at his own wit. The owl considered all this as an invasion on his dignity, and he would

scowl and sulk and swell, and be silent for a whole day together.

The prince, being wrapped up in the dreams of his own fancy, gave no heed to the wranglings of his companions. In this way they journeyed through the stern passes of the mountains, across the sunburnt plains of La Mancha and Castile, and along the banks of the Tagus, which winds its wizard mazes over one half of Spain and Portugal.

At length they came in sight of a strong city with walls and towers built on a rocky promontory, round the foot of which the Tagus circled with brawling violence.

"Behold!" exclaimed the owl, "the ancient city of Toledo. Behold those venerable domes and towers, in which so many of my ancestors have meditated."

"Pish!" cried the parrot, interrupting his solemn rapture. "What have we to do with legends and your ancestry? Behold what is

more to the purpose — behold at length, O prince, the abode of your long-sought princess."

The prince looked in the direction indicated by the parrot, and beheld, in a delightful green meadow on the banks of the Tagus, a stately palace rising from amidst the bowers of a garden. It was just such a place as had been described by the dove as the residence of the original of the picture. He gazed at it with a throbbing heart.

"Perhaps at this moment," thought he, "the beautiful princess is sporting beneath those shady bowers, or pacing with delicate step those stately terraces, or reposing beneath those lofty roofs!"

As he looked more closely, he perceived that the walls of the garden were of great height, so as to defy access, while numbers of armed guards patrolled around them.

The prince turned to the parrot.

"Most accomplished of birds," said he,

"you have the gift of human speech! Hie you to yon garden. Seek the princess, and tell her that Prince Ahmed, guided by the stars, has arrived in quest of her."

The parrot, proud of his embassy, flew away to the garden, mounted above its lofty wall, and, after soaring for a time over the lawns and groves, alighted on the balcony of a pavilion that overhung the river. Here, looking in at the casement, he beheld the princess reclining on a couch, with her eyes fixed on a paper, while tears gently stole after each other down her pallid cheek.

Pluming his wings for a moment, and adjusting his bright-green coat, the parrot perched himself beside her with a gallant air. Then he assumed a tenderness of tone.

"Dry your tears, most beautiful of princesses," said he; "I come to bring solace to your heart."

The princess was startled on hearing a voice, but turning and seeing nothing but a

little green-coated bird bobbing and bowing before her:

"Alas! what solace can you yield," said she, "seeing you are but a parrot?"

The parrot was nettled at the question.

"I have consoled many ladies in my time," said he; "but let that pass. At present I come ambassador from a royal prince. Know that Ahmed, the prince of Granada, has arrived in quest of you, and is encamped even now on the banks of the Tagus."

The eyes of the princess sparkled at these words.

"O sweetest of parrots," cried she, "joyful indeed are your tidings, for I was faint and weary with doubt of the constancy of Ahmed. Tell him that the words of his letter are engraven in my heart, and that his poetry has been the food of my soul. Tell him, however, that he must prepare to prove his love by force of arms. To-morrow is my seventeenth birthday, when the king, my father,

holds a great tournament. Several princes are to enter the lists, and my hand is to be the prize of the victor."

The parrot again took wing, and flew back to where the prince awaited his return. The rapture of Ahmed on finding the original of the portrait, and finding her kind and true, can only be understood by those favoured mortals who have had the good fortune to realize day-dreams and turn a shadow into substance.

Still there was one thing that alloyed his transport — this impending tournament. In fact, the banks of the Tagus were already glittering with arms, and resounding with trumpets of the various knights, who were prancing on toward Toledo.

Like the prince, the princess had been shut up from the world until her seventeenth birthday, but the fame of her charms had been enhanced by this seclusion. Several powerful princes had contended for her hand;

and her father, who was a king of wondrous shrewdness, to avoid making enemies, had referred them all to the power of arms. Among the rival candidates were several renowned for strength and prowess. What a predicament for the unfortunate Ahmed, unprovided as he was with weapons, and unskilled in the exercise of arms!

"Luckless prince that I am!" said he, "to have been brought up in seclusion under the eye of a philosopher!"

"Allah Akbar! God is great!" exclaimed the owl. "In his hands are all secret things: he alone governs the destinies of princes! Know, O prince, that this land is full of mysteries hidden from all but those who, like myself, can grope after knowledge in the dark. Know that in the neighbouring mountains there is a cave, and in that cave there is an iron table, and on that table there lies a suit of magic armour, and beside that table there stands a spell-bound steed, which

have been shut up there for many generations."

The prince stared with wonder.

"Many years since," continued the owl, "I accompanied my father to these parts on a tour of his estates, and we sojourned in that cave; and thus I became acquainted with the mystery. It is a tradition in our family which I have heard from my grandfather, when I was yet but a very little owlet, that this armour belonged to a Moorish magician who took refuge in this cavern when Toledo was captured by the Christians, and died here leaving his steed and weapons under a mystic spell, never to be used but by a Moslem, and by him only from sunrise to mid-day. In that time, whoever uses them will overthrow every opponent."

"Enough: let us seek this cave!" exclaimed Ahmed.

Guided by the owl, the prince found the cavern, which was in a wild, rocky cliff. A

lamp of everlasting oil shed a solemn light through the place. On an iron table in the centre of the cavern lay the magic armour, against it leaned the lance, and beside it stood an Arabian steed, ready for the field, but motionless as a statue. When Ahmed laid his hand upon the steed's neck, he pawed the ground and gave a loud neigh of joy that shook the walls of the cavern. Thus provided with "horse and rider and weapon to wear," the prince determined to defy the field in the coming tourney.

The eventful morning arrived. The lists for the combat were prepared in the Vega just below the walls of Toledo, where stages and galleries were erected for the spectators, covered with rich tapestry, and sheltered from the sun by silken awnings. All the beauties of the land were assembled in those galleries, while below pranced plumed knights with their pages and esquires, among

whom were the princes who were to contend in the tourney.

All the beauties of the land, however, were eclipsed when the princess Aldegonda appeared in the royal pavilion, and for the first time broke forth upon the gaze of an admiring world.

The princess, however, had a troubled look. The colour came and went from her cheek, and her eye wandered with a restless expression over the plumed throng of knights. The trumpets were about sounding for the encounter, when the herald announced the arrival of a strange knight, and Ahmed rode into the field.

A steel helmet rose above his turban. His cimeter and dagger were of the workmanship of Fez, and flamed with precious stones. A round shield was at his shoulder, and in his hand he bore the charmed lance. The lofty and graceful demeanour of the prince struck every eye, and when his name was

announced, a flutter prevailed among the fair dames in the gallery.

When Ahmed presented himself at the lists, however, they were closed against him. None but princes, he was told, were admitted to the contest. He declared his name and rank. Still worse! — he was a Moslem, and could not engage in a tourney when the hand of a Christian princess was the prize.

With haughty looks the rival princes surrounded him ; and one sneered at his light and youthful form. The ire of the prince was aroused. He defied his rival to an encounter. They took distance, wheeled and charged; and at the first touch of the magic lance the scoffer was tilted from his saddle.

Here the prince would have paused, but, alas! nothing would control his horse and armour. The Arabian steed charged into the thickest of the throng. The lance overturned everything that presented. The gentle prince was carried pell-mell about the field, strew-

ing it with high and low, gentle and simple. The king stormed and raged at this outrage on his subjects and his guests. He ordered out his guards — they were unhorsed as fast as they came up. The king threw off his robes, grasped buckler and lance, and rode forth to awe the stranger with the presence of majesty itself. Alas! majesty fared no better than the vulgar. The steed and lance were no respecters of persons. To the dismay of Ahmed, he was borne full tilt against the king, and in a moment the royal heels were in the air, and the crown was rolling in the dust.

At this moment the sun reached the meridian. The magic spell resumed its power. The Arabian steed scoured across the plain, leaped the barrier, plunged into the Tagus, swam its raging torrent, bore the prince breathless and amazed to the cavern, and resumed his station beside the iron table.

The prince dismounted right gladly, and replaced the armour. Then he seated him-

self in the cavern, and began to think. Never again should he dare to show his face at Toledo after inflicting such disgrace upon its chivalry, and such an outrage on its king. What, too, would the princess think? Full of anxiety, he sent forth his winged messengers to gather tidings.

The parrot resorted to all the public places and crowded resorts of the city, and soon returned with a world of gossip. All Toledo was in consternation. The princess had been borne off senseless to the palace. The tournament had ended in confusion. Every one was talking of the Moslem knight. Some thought him a Moorish magician; while others thought he might be one of the enchanted warriors who were said to be hidden in the caves of the mountains. All agreed that no ordinary mortal could have wrought such wonders.

The owl flew out at night and hovered about the dusky city, perching on the roofs

and chimneys. He then wheeled his flight up to the royal palace, and went prowling about, eavesdropping at every cranny, and glaring in with his big goggling eyes at every window where there was a light, so as to throw two or three maids of honour into fits. It was not until the grey dawn began to peer above the mountains that he returned from his expedition and related to the prince what he had seen.

"As I was prying about one of the loftiest towers of the palace," said he, "I beheld through a casement a beautiful princess. She was reclining on a couch, with attendants and physicians around her, but she would have none of their ministry and relief. When they retired, I beheld her draw a letter from her bosom, and read it, and give way to loud lamentations, at which, philosopher as I am, I could but be greatly moved."

Ahmed was distressed at these tidings.

"Too true were your words, O Eben Bon-

abben!" cried he. "Care and sorrow, and sleepless nights are the lot of lovers. Allah preserve the princess from the blighting influence of this thing called love."

Further news from Toledo showed that the report of the owl was true. The city was a prey to uneasiness and alarm. The princess was conveyed to the highest tower of the palace, every avenue to which was strongly guarded. In the meantime, a devouring melancholy had seized upon her, of which no one could divine the cause. She refused food, and turned a deaf ear to every consolation. The most skilful physicians had essayed their art in vain. It was thought some magic spell had been practised upon her, and the king made proclamation, declaring that whoever should effect her cure should receive the richest jewel in the royal treasury.

When the owl, who was dozing in a corner, heard of this, he rolled his large eyes and looked more mysterious than ever.

"Allah Akbar!" exclaimed he, "happy the man that shall effect that cure, should he but know what to choose from the royal treasury."

"What mean you, most reverend owl?" said Ahmed.

"Hearken, prince, to what I shall relate. We owls, you must know, are a learned body, and much given to dark and dusty research. During my late prowling at night about the domes and turrets of Toledo, I discovered a college of owls, who hold their meetings in a great vaulted tower where the royal treasury is deposited. Here they were discussing ancient gems and jewels, and golden and silver vessels, heaped up in the treasury, the fashion of every country and age. But mostly they were interested about certain relics and talismans which have remained in the treasury since the time of Roderick the Goth. Among them was a box of sandal-wood, secured by bands of

steel, and inscribed with mystic characters known only to the learned few. This box and inscription had occupied the college for several sessions, and had caused much long and grave dispute. At the time of my visit a very ancient owl, who had recently arrived from Egypt, was seated on the lid of the box lecturing upon the inscription, and he proved from it that the coffer contained the silken carpet of the throne of Solomon the Wise."

When the owl had concluded his harangue, the prince remained for a time absorbed in thought.

"I have heard," said he, "from the sage Eben Bonabben of the wonderful properties of that talisman, which disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem and was supposed to be lost to mankind. Doubtless it remains a sealed mystery to the Christians of Toledo. If I can get possession of the carpet, my fortune is secure."

The next day the prince laid aside his rich

attire, and arrayed himself in the simple garb of an Arab of the desert. He dyed his complexion to a tawny hue, and no one could have recognized in him the splendid warrior who had caused such admiration and dismay at the tournament. With staff in hand, and a small pastoral reed, he repaired to Toledo, and presenting himself at the gate of the royal palace, announced himself as a candidate for the reward offered for the cure of the princess. The guards would have driven him away with blows.

"What can a vagrant Arab like you pretend to do," said they, "in a case where the most learned of the land have failed?"

The king, however, overheard, and ordered the Arab to be brought into his presence.

"Most potent king," said Ahmed, "you behold before you a Bedouin Arab, the greater part of whose life has been passed in the solitudes of the desert. These solitudes,

it is well known, are the haunts of demons and evil spirits, who beset us poor shepherds in our lonely watchings, enter into and possess our flocks and herds, and sometimes render even the patient camel furious. Against these, our counter-charm is music: and we have legendary airs handed down from generation to generation, that we chant and pipe, to cast forth these evil spirits. I am of a gifted line, and possess this power in its fullest force. If it be any evil influence of the kind that holds a spell over your daughter, I pledge my head to free her from its sway."

The king, who was a man of understanding, and knew the wonderful secrets often possessed by the Arabs, was inspired with hope by the language of the prince. He conducted him immediately to the lofty tower, in the summit of which was the chamber of the princess. The windows opened upon a terrace, commanding a view over Toledo and

all the surrounding country. The windows were darkened, for the princess lay within, a prey to devouring grief.

The prince seated himself on the terrace, and performed on his pastoral pipe several wild Arabian airs which he had learnt from his attendants in the Generalife at Granada. The princess continued insensible, and the doctors who were present shook their heads, and smiled with contempt. At length the prince laid aside the reed, and, to a simple melody, chanted the verses of the letter which he had sent to the princess.

The princess recognized the strain — she raised her head and listened. She would have asked for the minstrel to be brought into her presence, but maiden coyness held her silent. The king read her wishes, and at his command Ahmed was conducted into the chamber. The prince and princess exchanged glances which spoke volumes. Never was triumph of music more complete. The rose

had returned to the soft cheek of the princess, and the light to her eyes.

All the physicians present stared at each other with astonishment. The king regarded the Arab minstrel with admiration and awe.

"Wonderful youth!" exclaimed he, "you shall henceforth be the first physician of my court, and no other prescription will I take but your melody. For the present receive your reward, the most precious jewel in my treasury."

"O king," replied Ahmed, "I care not for silver or gold or precious stones. You have one relic in your treasury, handed down from the Moslems, who once owned Toledo — a box of sandal-wood containing a silken carpet. Give me that box, and I am content."

All present were surprised at the moderation of the Arab, and still more when the box of sandal-wood was brought and the carpet drawn forth. It was of fine green silk.

The court physicians looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and smiled.

"This carpet," said the prince, "once covered the throne of Solomon. It is worthy of being placed beneath the feet of beauty."

So saying, he spread it on the terrace beneath an ottoman that had been brought to the princess — then seating himself at her feet:

"Who," said he, "shall counteract what is written in the book of fate? Behold the prediction of the astrologers verified. Know, O king, that your daughter and I have long loved each other in secret."

These words were scarcely said when the carpet rose in the air, bearing off the prince and princess. The king and the physicians gazed after it with open mouths and straining eyes until it became a little speck, and then disappeared in the blue vault of Heaven.

The king in a rage summoned his treasurer.

"How is this," said he, "that you have suffered an infidel to get possession of such a talisman?"

"Alas, sir, we knew not its nature. If it be indeed the carpet of the throne of Solomon, it is possessed of magic power, and can transport its owner from place to place through the air."

The king assembled a mighty army, and set off for Granada in pursuit of the fugitives. His march was long and toilsome. Encamping in the Vega, he sent a herald to demand his daughter. The king of Granada himself came forth with all his court to meet him, and in him the Christian king beheld the minstrel, for Ahmed had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and the beautiful Aldegonda was the sultana.

The Christian king was easily pacified when he found that his daughter continued in his faith; not that he was particularly pious, but religion is always a point of pride

and etiquette with princes. Instead of battles, there was a succession of feasts and rejoicings, after which the king returned well pleased to Toledo, and the youthful couple continued to reign as happily as wisely in the Alhambra.

It is proper to add that the owl and the parrot had severally followed the prince by easy stages to Granada: the former travelling by night, and stopping at the various hereditary possessions of his family — the latter figuring in gay circles of every town and city on his route.

Ahmed gratefully requited the services which they had rendered on his pilgrimage. He appointed the owl his prime minister, and the parrot his master of ceremonies. It is needless to say that never was a realm more sagely administered, nor a court conducted with more exact punctilio.

Legend of
The Moor's Legacy

Legend of The Moor's Legacy

JUST within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open space, called the Place of the Cisterns, so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water. At one corner of this place is a Moorish well, cut through the rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. This well is famous throughout Granada, and water-carriers, some bearing great water-jars on their shoulders, others driving donkeys before them laden with earthen vessels, are going up and down the woody avenues, from early morning until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells have always been noted gossiping-places in hot climates; and

at this well there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the livelong day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious do-nothing folk, who sit on the stone benches, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question every water-carrier that arrives about the news of the city, and make long comments on everything they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen, lingering with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle.

Among the water-carriers who once resorted to this well, there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged little fellow, named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Like all the water-carriers he was a Gallego, or native of Gallicia.

Peregil had begun business with merely a great earthen jar which he carried upon his shoulder; but by degrees he rose in the world, and was enabled to purchase a don-

key. On each side of his long-eared companion, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars, covered with fig-leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water-carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey, singing the usual summer note that resounds throughout the Spanish towns:

"Who wants water — water colder than snow? Who wants water from the well of the Alhambra, cold as ice and clear as crystal?"

When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused a smile; and if, perchance, it was a comely dame or dimpling damsel, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest, and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who

sings loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening.

He had a wife, too, who was anything but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill at dancing the bolero and rattling the castanets; and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketing parties into the country on Sundays and Saints' Days, and those innumerable holidays, which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie-abed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water; neg-

lecting house, household, and everything else, to loiter slipshod in the houses of her gossip neighbours.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars; and, however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children, too, even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated; for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged, little brood. The great pleasure of honest Peregil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holiday, to take the whole litter with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among the

orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holiday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water-carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry. The night was one of those delicious moonlights which tempt the inhabitants of summer climes to linger in the open until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate, painstaking father, thought of his hungry children.

"One more journey to the well," said he to himself, "to earn a Sunday's puchero for the little ones."

So saying, he trudged up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song, or re-

freshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu of provender in Spain for all beasts of burden.

When arrived at the well, he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on a stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach.

"I am faint and ill," said he: "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay you double what you could gain by your jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water-carrier was touched at the appeal of the stranger.

"God forbid," said he, "that I should ask fee or reward for doing an act of kindness."

He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the ground.

When they entered the city, the water-carrier demanded whither he should conduct him.

"Alas!" said the Moor faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation; I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath your roof, and you shall be amply repaid."

Honest Peregil thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow-being in so forlorn a plight; so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth open-mouthed, as usual, on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with affright when they beheld the turbaned stranger and hid themselves behind their mother. The latter stepped forth like a ruffling hen before her brood.

"What infidel companion," cried she, "is this you have brought home at this late hour?"

"Be quiet, wife," replied Peregil: "here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home. Would you turn him forth to perish in the streets?"

The wife would still have remonstrated, for although she lived in a hovel, she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house. The little water-carrier, however, was for once stiff-necked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and a sheepskin for him on the ground, in the coolest part of the house, being the only kind of bed that he had.

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the skill of the water-carrier. He called Peregil to his side and addressing him in a low voice:

"My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die, I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity."

So saying, he opened his cloak, and showed

a small box of sandal-wood, strapped round his body.

"God grant, my friend," replied the little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be."

The Moor shook his head. He laid his hand upon the box, and would have said something more about it, but his convulsions returned, and in a little while he expired.

The water-carrier's wife was now as one distracted.

"This comes," said she, "of your foolish good nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be sent to prison as murderers."

Poor Peregil almost repented of having done a good deed, for, in truth, he was as distracted as his wife. At length a thought struck him.

"It is not yet day," said he. "I can convey the dead body out of the city, and bury

it in the sands on the banks of the Xenil. No one saw the Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know anything of his death."

So said, so done. The wife aided him: they rolled the body of the Moor in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the donkey, and Perègil set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill-luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water-carrier a barber named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, and mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasel-faced, spider-legged varlet. The famous barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept with but one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that even in his sleep he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of

chronicle for the quidnuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

You may be sure that he heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour of the night. His head was instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a look-out, and he saw his neighbour assist a man in Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was so strange an occurrence, that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night. Every five minutes he was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of Peregil's door, and before daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The barber was in a fidget. He slipped on his clothes, and silently followed the water-carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury the dead body.

He then went back to his shop. At sunrise he took a basin under his arm, and sal-

lied forth to the house of his daily customer, the alcalde. The alcalde was just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin of hot water under his chin, and began his work.

"Strange doings," said he: "robbery and murder and burial all in one night!"

"Hey! — how! — what is that you say?" cried the alcalde.

"I say," replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, — "I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moor, and buried him this blessed night. Accursed be the night for the same!"

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the alcalde.

"Be patient, Señor, and you shall hear all about it," replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then told all he had seen, shaving his beard,

and washing his chin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moor.

Now it so happened that this alcalde was one of the most overbearing and greedy judges in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery. Doubtless there must be a rich spoil. It was not long before he had the poor water-carrier before him.

"Hark you, culprit," roared he in a voice that made little Peregil's knees shake, "everything is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime you have committed, but I am merciful. The man that has been murdered in your house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. Render up the property of which you have robbed him, and we will hush the matter up."

The poor water-carrier called upon all the saints, but alas! not one of them appeared.

He related the whole story of the dying Moor truthfully, but it was all in vain.

"Will you persist in saying," demanded the judge, "that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels?"

"He had nothing but a small box of sandal-wood," said Peregil, "which he gave me in reward for my services."

"A box of sandal-wood! a box of sandal-wood!" exclaimed the alcalde, his eyes sparkling at the idea of jewels. "And where is this box? Where have you concealed it?"

"Please, your grace," replied the water-carrier, "it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship."

He had hardly spoken the words, when the keen alguazil darted off, and reappeared in an instant with the box of sandal-wood. The judge opened it with an eager and trembling hand. All pressed forward to gaze upon the treasure it was expected to con-

tain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper.

The alcalde, finding that there was no booty in the case, discharged Peregil from arrest, permitting him to carry off the Moor's legacy, the box of sandal-wood and its contents; but alas, he kept his donkey in payment of costs and charges.

Poor unfortunate Peregil! He now had to be his own water-carrier and trudge up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder. As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon, his usual good humour forsook him.

"Dog of an alcalde!" would he cry, "to rob a poor man of the best friend he had in the world!"

And then at the remembrance of his beloved companion, he would exclaim:

"Ah, donkey of my heart! I warrant me you think of your old master! I warrant me you miss the water-jars — poor beast!"

To add to his trouble, he had to endure the railings and reproaches of his wife. He was much grieved in flesh and spirit. At length, one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she was scolding him as usual, he seized the sandal-wood box, and dashed it to the floor.

"Unlucky was the day I ever set eyes on you," he cried, "or sheltered your master beneath my roof."

As the box struck the floor, the lid flew open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth.

"Who knows," thought Peregil, "but this may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care?"

Picking it up, therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying water through the streets, he stopped

at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangiers, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively.

"This manuscript," he said, "is a form of incantation for the recovery of enchanted treasures."

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me? I am no enchanter."

So saying, he took his water-jar and trudged forward on his daily rounds.

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well, he heard some of the gossips who had gathered at the place — they were as poor as rats — talking about the enchanted riches left by the Moors in different parts of the Alhambra. They told marvellous tales of the treasures which they believed were buried deep in the earth under the tower of the seven floors. These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of the honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as

he returned alone down the darkling avenues.

"If, after all," thought he, "there should be treasure hid beneath that tower; and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!"

He well nigh let fall his water-jar at the thought.

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for his thoughts. Bright and early he went again to the Moor's shop and told him all that was passing in his mind.

"You can read Arabic," said he: "suppose we go together to the tower, and try the effect of the charm; if it fails, we are no worse off than before; but if it succeeds, we will share equally all the treasure we may discover."

"This writing is not sufficient of itself," said the Moor: "it must be read at midnight, by the light of a taper singularly prepared of

certain ingredients, which are not within my reach. Without such a taper the scroll is of no avail."

"Say no more!" cried the little Gallego. "I have such a taper at hand, and will bring it here in a moment."

So saying, he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of a yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandal-wood. The Moor smelt of it.

"Here are rare and costly perfumes," said he. "While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open, but woe to him who lingers within until it goes out. He will remain enchanted with the treasure."

It was now agreed between them to try the charm that very night. At a late hour when only bats and owls were stirring, they climbed the woody hill of the Alhambra and made their way to the awful tower. By the light of a lantern they groped their way through bushes,

and over fallen stones, to the door of a vault beneath. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber, damp and drear. Then they went down another flight into a deeper vault, and so on until they had gone down four flights of stairs, and into four different vaults. The floor of the fourth was solid. The air was damp and chilly. Here they waited until they heard the clock in the watchtower strike midnight. Then they lit the taper which diffused an odour of myrrh and frankincense and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished when there was a noise as of thunder beneath them. The earth shook, and the floor opened, showing a flight of steps. They went down and found themselves in another vault covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the centre stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor

in armour. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth handfuls of broad pieces of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal. Sometimes a necklace of pearl would stick to their fingers. And all the time the enchanted Moors sat glaring at them with unwinking eyes.

They fancied they heard a noise from above and both rushed up the staircase, falling over each other as they went. They overturned the waxen taper, and when it went out, the floor closed again with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay, they did not pause until they had groped their way out of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then seating themselves upon the grass, they divided their treasures and determined to return some night for more. To make sure of each other's good faith, also,

they divided the talismans between them, one taking the scroll, the other the taper. This done, they set off with light hearts and well-lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill, the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water-carrier.

"Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure, and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the alcalde, we are undone!"

"Certainly," replied the Gallego, "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and can keep a secret, but you have a wife."

"She shall not know a word of it," replied the little water-carrier sturdily.

Never was promise more sincere; but alas! what man can keep a secret from his wife? Certainly not such a one as Peregil

the water-carrier. On his return home, he found his wife moping in a corner.

"You 've come at last," she cried, " after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor."

Then bursting into tears, she began to wring her hands.

"What will become of us?" she cried. "My husband a do-no-good that no longer brings home bread to his family, but goes rambling about day and night, with infidel Moors! O my children! my children! what will become of us? We shall all have to beg in the streets!"

Honest Peregil was so moved by her tears that he could not help whimpering also. Thrusting his hand into his pocket, he hauled forth three or four gold pieces, and slipped them into her bosom. Then he took out a golden chain and dangled it before her, all the time smiling from ear to ear.

"What have you been doing, Peregil?" exclaimed the wife. "Surely you have not been committing robbery!"

But she became so sure of it, after the idea entered her brain, that she fell into violent weeping. What could the poor man do? He had no other way to ease her mind than to tell her the whole story of his good fortune. Her joy was boundless. And, of course, she promised to keep the secret.

"Now, wife," exclaimed the little man with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow-creature in distress."

Peregil slept soundly that night. Not so his wife. She emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat, and sat counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on necklaces and earrings, and fancying the figure she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches.

On the following morning the honest Gallego sold one of the coins to a jeweller, and with the money bought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, and good things to eat, and returning to his dwelling, set all his children dancing around him, while he capered in their midst, the happiest of fathers.

What was surprising, his wife kept the secret. For a whole day and a half she went about with a look of mystery and a heart almost bursting, yet she told not a word of it. It is true, she gave herself a few airs. She talked of buying a new basquiña all trimmed with gold lace, and a new mantilla. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water-carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health.

The gossips stared at each other and thought she had lost her wits, and the moment her back was turned, they were quite merry over her airs and graces. When she

got home, she put a string of pearls round her neck, bracelets on her arms, a diamond aigrette on her head, and sailed backwards and forwards in her rags, admiring herself in a piece of broken mirror. And she could not resist showing herself at the window to enjoy the effect on the passers by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the meddlesome barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his shop on the opposite side of the street, when his ever-watchful eye caught the sparkle of the diamonds. In an instant he was at his loophole watching Peregil's wife decorated with the splendour of an eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate inventory of her ornaments than he posted off with all speed to the alcalde, and before the day was over the unfortunate Peregil was once more dragged into the presence of the judge.

"How is this, villain!" cried the alcalde, in a furious voice. "You told me that the

Moor who died in your house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with pearls and diamonds. Wretch that you are! Prepare to render up the spoils of your miserable victim and to swing on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for you."

The terrified water-carrier fell on his knees and confessed the whole secret. The Moor was sent for. He entered half-frightened out of his wits. When he beheld the water-carrier, he understood the whole matter.

"Miserable animal," said he, as he passed near him, "did I not warn you against babbling to your wife?"

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of Peregil: but the alcalde affected to be slow of belief and threw out menaces of imprisonment.

"Softly, good Señor Alcalde," said the Moor, who by this time had recovered his

usual shrewdness and self-possession. "Let us not mar fortune's favours in a scramble for them. Nobody knows anything of this matter but ourselves. Let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a fair division and all shall be produced. Refuse, and the cave shall remain for ever closed."

The alcalde consulted apart with the alguazil. The latter was a fox in his profession.

"Promise anything," said he, "until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if they dare to murmur, threaten them with the faggot and the stake."

The alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow, and turning to the Moor, he said:

"This is a strange story and may be true, but I must have proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we

will share it between us and say nothing further of the matter. If you have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands."

Towards midnight they started out. Everything turned out as before. The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper was lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The alcalde, the alguazil, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water-carrier entered the lower vault, and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars, filled with golden coin and precious stones. The water-carrier bore them up one by one upon his shoulders and slung them on each side of his donkey. Peregil staggered beneath their weight, and they were as much as the animal could bear.

"Let us be content for the present," said the Moor. "Here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being seen, and enough to make us all wealthy."

"Is there more treasure remaining?" demanded the alcalde.

"The greatest prize of all," said the Moor: "a huge coffer bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones."

"Let us have up the coffer by all means," cried the grasping alcalde.

"I will descend for no more," said the Moor. "Enough is enough for a reasonable man."

"And I," said the water-carrier, "will bring up no further burden to break the back of my poor donkey."

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the alcalde turned to his two adherents.

"Aid me," said he, "to bring up the cof-

fer, and its contents shall be divided between us."

So saying, he descended the steps, followed by the alguazil and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he blew out the yellow taper. The pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three remained buried.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the open air. The little water-carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What have you done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault."

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor devoutly.

"And will you not release them?" demanded the Gallego.

"Allah forbid!" replied the Moor, smoothing his beard. "It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until

some future time when the charm shall be broken."

So saying, he hurled the waxen taper into the gloomy thickets of the glen.

There was now no remedy, so the Moor and Peregil, with the richly laden donkey, proceeded toward the city. The honest little water-carrier was so happy to have his long-eared companion restored to him once more, that he could not refrain from hugging him. It is doubtful which gave him the most joy at that moment — the rich treasures, or the recovery of his beloved donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil fairly, except that the Moor made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones, but then he always gave the water-carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massive gold, of five times the size, with which the latter was heartily content.

They took great care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy

their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned to Africa, to his native city of Tangiers, and the Gallego, with his wife, his children, and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here he became a personage of some consequence, for his wife made him array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side — and change his name to Don Pedro Gil. His children grew up as merry hearted as himself, while Señora Gil, befringed, belaced, and betasselled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of fashion and finery.

As to the alcalde and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great tower of the seven floors, and there they remain spellbound at the present day.

Legend of the Three Beautiful Princesses

Legend of the Three Beautiful Princesses

N old times there reigned a Moorish king in Granada, whose name was Mohamed, to which his subjects added the title of "The Left-handed." Some say he was so called on account of his being really more expert with his left than his right hand; others, because he was prone to take everything by the wrong end, or, in other words, to mar wherever he meddled. Certain it is he was continually in trouble. Thrice was he driven from his throne, and on one occasion barely escaped to Africa with his life, dressed as a fisherman. Still he was as brave as he was blundering; and, though left-handed, wielded his cimeter to such purpose that he always succeeded in keeping his throne.

As this Mohamed was one day riding forth with a train of his courtiers, he met a band of horsemen returning from a foray into the land of the Christians. They were conducting a long string of mules laden with spoil, and many captives, among whom the monarch was struck with the appearance of a beautiful damsel, who sat weeping on a low palfrey, and heeded not the consoling words of a duenna who rode beside her.

The monarch noted her beauty, and on inquiring of the captain of the troop, found that she was the daughter of an alcayde. Mohamed claimed her as his royal share of the booty, had her taken to the Alhambra, and soon sought to make her his queen.

At first the Spanish maid would not listen to him. He was an infidel, a foe to her country, and, what was worse, he was stricken in years!

Finding his addresses of no avail, Mohamed decided to enlist in his favour the

services of the duenna, who had been captured with the lady. She was an Andalusian whose name was Kadiga. No sooner had he had a little private conversation with her than she promised to undertake his cause with her young mistress.

"Go to, now!" cried she. "What is there in all this to weep and wail about? Is it not better to be mistress of this beautiful palace, with its gardens and fountains, than to be shut up within your father's tower? As to this Mohamed being an infidel, what is that to the purpose? You marry him, not his religion. At any rate, you are in his power, and must either be a queen or a slave."

The arguments of Kadiga prevailed. The Spanish lady dried her tears, and became the queen of Mohamed, the Left-handed. She even conformed in appearance to the faith of her royal husband.

In process of time, Mohamed was made the happy father of three daughters, all born

at the same time, and, as was usual with Moorish kings, he sent for his astrologers.

"Your daughters," said they, "will most need your watchfulness when they arrive at a marriageable age. At that time gather them under your wings, and trust them to no one else."

Mohamed the Left-handed had little fear of not being able to outwit the fates, for he considered himself a wise king, as did also his courtiers.

Within a few years, the queen died, leaving her infant daughters to his love, and to the fidelity of Kadiga. Many years had yet to pass before they would arrive at the period of danger — the marriageable age.

"It is good, however, to be cautious in time," said the shrewd Mohamed, so he determined to have the princesses reared in a distant castle, on the summit of a hill overlooking the Mediterranean sea. It was a royal retreat, and here they remained, separ-

ated from the world, but surrounded by every pleasure.

In this abode, the three princesses grew up into wondrous beauty; but, though all reared alike, they gave early tokens of a difference of character. Their names were Zayda, Zorayda and Zorahayda.

Zayda, the eldest, was of an intrepid spirit, and took the lead of her sisters in everything. She was curious and inquisitive, and fond of getting at the bottom of things.

Zorayda had a great feeling for beauty, which was the reason, no doubt, of her delighting to regard her own image in a mirror or a fountain, and of her fondness for flowers and jewels, and other tasteful ornaments.

As to Zorahayda, the youngest, she was soft and timid, and very sensitive, with a vast deal of tenderness, as was evident from her number of pet flowers, and pet birds, and pet animals, all of which she cherished with the fondest care. Her amusements, too, were

of a gentle nature, and mixed with musing and reverie. She would sit for hours in a balcony, gazing on the stars of a summer's night, or on the sea when lit up by the moon; and at such times the song of a fisherman, faintly heard from the beach, or the notes of a Moorish flute, elevated her feelings into ecstasy. The least uproar of the elements, however, filled her with dismay, and a clap of thunder was enough to throw her into a swoon.

Years rolled on serenely. Kadiga was faithful to her trust, and attended the three princesses with unremitting care.

The castle, as has been said, was built on the sea-coast. One of the outer walls straggled down the hill, until it reached a rock overhanging the sea. A small watch-tower on this rock had been fitted up as a pavilion, with latticed windows to admit the sea-breeze. Here the princesses used to pass the sultry hours of mid-day.

The curious Zayda was one day seated at a window of the pavilion, as her sisters, reclining on ottomans, were taking their siesta, when her attention was attracted to a galley which came coasting along. As it drew near, she saw that it was filled with armed men. The galley anchored at the foot of the tower. A number of Moorish soldiers landed on the narrow beach, conducting several Christian prisoners.

Zayda awakened her sisters, and all three peeped cautiously through the lattice. Among the prisoners were three Spanish cavaliers, richly dressed. They were youthful and noble, and though loaded with chains and surrounded with enemies, carried themselves in a lofty manner. The princesses had been cooped up in the castle so long that it is not to be wondered at that they should gaze with breathless interest at three gallant cavaliers in the pride of youth.

"Did ever nobler being tread the earth

than the cavalier in crimson ?" cried Zayda. "See how proudly he bears himself, as though all around him were his slaves!"

"But notice the one in green!" exclaimed Zorayda. "What grace! what elegance! what spirit!"

The gentle Zorahayda said nothing, but she secretly gave preference to the cavalier in blue.

The princesses remained gazing until the prisoners were out of sight, and then sat down, musing and pensive, on their ottomans.

Kadiga found them in this situation, and they related to her what they had seen.

"Poor youths!" exclaimed she. "I 'll warrant their captivity makes many a fair and high-born lady's heart ache in their native land! Ah! my children, you have little idea of the life these cavaliers lead in their own country. Such devotion to the ladies ! Such courting and serenading !"

The curiosity of Zayda was fully aroused.

She plied the duenna with questions, and drew from her tales of her youthful days and native land.

The beautiful Zorayda slyly regarded herself in a mirror, when the theme turned upon the charms of the Spanish ladies.

Zorahayda suppressed a sigh at the mention of moonlight serenades.

Every day the curious Zayda renewed her inquiries, and every day Kadiga repeated her stories. The old woman awoke at length to the mischief she might be doing. She had been used to thinking of the princesses only as children, but she realized now that there bloomed before her three damsels of the marriageable age.

"It is time," thought she, "to give notice to the king."

Mohamed the Left-handed was seated one morning on a divan in a cool hall of the Alhambra, when a slave arrived with a message

from Kadiga, congratulating him on the anniversary of his daughters' birthday. The slave at the same time presented a delicate little basket decorated with flowers, within which lay a peach, an apricot, and a nectarine, all three in a stage of ripeness. The king being versed in the language of fruits and flowers at once understood the meaning of this offering.

"So," said he, "the critical period pointed out by the astrologers has arrived. My daughters are at a marriageable age. What is to be done? They are shut up from the eyes of men under the care of Kadiga — all very good — but still they are not under my own eye. I must gather them under my wing, and trust them to no one else."

So saying, he ordered that a tower of the Alhambra should be prepared for them, and departed with his guards for the castle, to conduct them home in person.

It had been three years since Mohamed

had beheld the princesses, and he could scarcely believe his eyes at the wonderful change which that small space of time had made in them.

Zayda was tall and finely formed, with a lofty manner. She entered with a stately step, and made a profound reverence to Mohamed, treating him more as her sovereign than her father.

Zorayda was of the middle height, with an alluring look heightened by the assistance of the toilette. She approached her father with a smile, kissed his hand, and recited several stanzas from an Arabian poet. The king was delighted.

Zorahayda was shy and timid, smaller than her sisters, and with a beauty of that tender kind which looks for fondness and protection. She was little fitted to command like Zayda or to dazzle like Zorayda. She drew near to her father, with a faltering step, and would have taken his hand to

kiss, but on looking up into his face, and seeing it beam with a smile, she threw her arms about his neck.

Mohamed the Left-handed looked at the three princesses with mingled pride and perplexity, for while he exulted in their charms, he bethought him of the prediction of the astrologers.

"Three daughters! three daughters!" said he to himself, "and all of a marriageable age! Here's tempting fruit that requires a dragon watch!"

He prepared for his return to Granada by sending heralds before him, commanding every one to keep out of the road by which he was to pass, and that all doors and windows should be closed at their approach. This done, they set forth.

The princesses rode beside the king, closely veiled, on beautiful white palfreys. The bits and stirrups were of gold and the silk bridles were adorned with precious

stones. The palfreys were covered with little silver bells, which made the most musical tinkling as they ambled along. Woe to the unlucky wight, however, who lingered in the way when he heard the tinkling of these bells! — the guards were ordered to cut him down without mercy.

The cavalcade was drawing near to Granada, when it overtook, on the banks of the river Xenil, a small body of Moorish soldiers with some prisoners. It was too late for the soldiers to get out of the way, so they threw themselves on their faces on the earth, ordering their captives to do the like. Among the prisoners were the three cavaliers whom the princesses had seen from the pavilion. They either did not understand, or were too proud to obey the order, and remained standing and gazing upon the cavalcade as it approached.

The ire of the monarch was kindled at this defiance of his orders. Drawing his cimeter, and pressing forward, he was about to deal

a left-handed blow that might have been fatal to at least one of the gazers when the princesses crowded round him, and implored mercy for the prisoners.

Even the timid Zorahayda forgot her shyness.

Mohamed paused, with uplifted cimeter, when the captain of the guard threw himself at his feet.

"Let not your highness," said he, "do a deed that may cause great trouble throughout the kingdom. These are three brave and noble Spanish knights, who have been taken in battle, fighting like lions. They are of high birth, and may bring great ransoms."

"Enough!" said the king. "I will spare their lives, but they must be punished. Let them be taken to the Vermilion Towers and put to hard labour."

Mohamed was making one of his left-handed blunders. In the tumult of this blustering scene, the veils of the three princesses

had been thrown back. In those days people fell in love much more suddenly than at present, as all ancient stories will tell you. And therefore it is not a matter of wonder that the hearts of the three cavaliers were completely captured, each of them with a several beauty. As to the princesses, they were more than ever struck with the noble demeanour of the three cavaliers.

The cavalcade resumed its march. The princesses rode pensively along on their tinkling palfreys, now and then glancing back in search of the Christian captives who were being conducted to their allotted prison.

The residence provided for the princesses was in a tower, somewhat apart from the main palace of the Alhambra, though connected with it by the wall which encircled the whole summit of the hill. On one side it looked into the interior of the fortress, and

had, at its foot, a small garden filled with flowers. On the other side it overlooked a deep embowered ravine, separating the grounds of the Alhambra from those of the Generalife.

The interior of the tower was divided into small fairy apartments, ornamented in light Arabian style, surrounding a lofty hall, the roof of which rose almost to the summit of the tower. The walls and ceilings of the hall were adorned with arabesque and fret-work, sparkling with gold and bright pencilling. In the centre of the marble pavement was an alabaster fountain, set round with shrubs and flowers, and throwing up a jet of water that cooled the whole place. Round the hall were hung gold and silver cages, containing singing birds.

The princesses had always been cheerful when in the castle, and the king had expected to see them enraptured with the Alhambra. To his surprise, however, they began to pine

and grow melancholy, and dissatisfied with everything around them. They did not like the flowers — the song of the nightingale disturbed their night's rest — and they were out of all patience with the fountain with its drop-drop and splash-splash, from morning till night and from night till morning.

The king at first took this in high displeasure. Then he reflected that his daughters were no longer children.

"They are women grown," said he, "and need suitable objects to interest them."

He therefore had all the dressmakers and jewellers in Granada set to work, and the princesses were overwhelmed with robes of silk and brocade, and cashmere shawls, and necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and rings and bracelets and anklets and all manner of precious things.

All, however, was of no avail. They continued pale and languid in the midst of their finery and looked like three blighted rose-

buds, drooping from one stalk. The king was at his wits' end, and called in the aid of the duenna.

"Kadiga," said he, "I wish you to find out the secret malady that is preying upon the princesses, and devise some means of restoring them to health and cheerfulness."

Kadiga promised obedience. In fact she knew more of the malady of the princesses than they did themselves.

"My dear children," said she, "what is the reason you are so dismal and downcast in so beautiful a place, where you have everything that heart can wish?"

The princesses looked vacantly round the apartment, and sighed.

"What more, then, would you have? Shall I get you the wonderful parrot that talks all languages?"

"Odious!" exclaimed the princess Zayda. "A horrid, screaming bird, that chatters without ideas."

"Shall I send for a monkey from the rock of Gibraltar, to divert you with his antics?"

"A monkey! faugh!" cried Zorayda. "The detestable mimic of man. I hate the animal."

"What say you to the famous black singer, Casem, from Morocco? They say he has a voice as fine as a woman's."

"I am terrified at the sight of these black slaves," said the delicate Zorahayda. "Besides I have lost all relish for music."

"Ah, my child, you would not say so," replied Kadiga slyly, "had you heard the music I heard last evening from the three Spanish cavaliers whom we met on our journey. But bless me, children! what is the matter that you are all in such a flutter?"

"Nothing, nothing, good mother: pray proceed."

"Well, as I was passing by the tower last evening, I saw the three cavaliers resting after their day's labour. One was playing on a guitar, and the others sang by turns, and

they did it in such style that the very guards seemed like statues. Allah forgive me! I could not help being moved at hearing the songs of my native country. And then to see three such noble and handsome youths in chains and slavery!"

Here the kind-hearted old woman could not keep back her tears.

"Perhaps, mother, you could manage to procure us a sight of these cavaliers," said Zayda.

"I think," said Zorayda, "a little music would be quite reviving."

The timid Zorahayda said nothing, but threw her arms round the neck of Kadiga.

"Mercy on me!" cried she. "What are you talking of, my children? Your father would be the death of us all if he heard of such a thing. To be sure, these cavaliers seem well-bred and high-minded; but what of that? They are the enemies of our faith, and you must not think of them."

But her argument was of no avail. The princesses hung around her and coaxed, and declared that a refusal would break their hearts.

What could she do? She certainly was a most faithful servant to the king. But was she to see three beautiful princesses break their hearts for the mere tinkling of a guitar? Besides, though she had been so long among the Moors, she was a Spaniard born, and had the lingerings of Christianity in her heart. So she set about to contrive how the wish of the princesses might be gratified.

The Christian captives, confined in the Vermilion Towers, were under the charge of a big-whiskered, broad-shouldered man, called Hussein Baba, who was said to have a most itching palm. Kadiga went to him privately and slipped a broad piece of gold into his hand.

"Hussein Baba," said she, "my mistresses the three princesses who are shut up in the

tower are in sad want of amusement. They have heard of the musical talents of the three Spanish cavaliers, and wish to hear a specimen of their skill. I am sure you are too kind-hearted to refuse so innocent a request."

"What! and to have my head set grinning over the gate of my own tower! for that would be the reward if the king should discover it."

"No danger of anything of the kind: the affair may be managed so that the king will know nothing about it. You know the deep ravine outside the walls, which passes below the tower. Put the three Christians to work there, and at the intervals of their labour, let them play and sing, as if for their own pleasure. In this way the princesses will be able to hear them from the windows of the tower."

As the good old woman finished speaking, she kindly pressed the rough hand of Hus-

sein Baba, leaving in it another piece of gold.

The very next day the three cavaliers were put to work in the ravine. During the noontide heat, when their fellow labourers were sleeping in the shade, and the guard nodding at his post, they seated themselves at the foot of the tower and sang a Spanish roundelay to the music of the guitar.

The glen was deep, the tower was high, but their voices rose distinctly in the stillness of the summer noon.

The princesses listened from their balcony. They had been taught the Spanish language by their duenna, and were moved by the tenderness of the song. Kadiga, on the contrary, was terribly shocked.

"Allah preserve us!" cried she. "They are singing a song addressed to yourselves. I will run to the slave-master and have them punished."

But the three princesses were filled with

horror at the idea. Besides the music seemed to have a beneficial effect upon them. Their eyes sparkled, and a bloom came to their cheeks, so with all her indignation, Kadiga was soon appeased and made no further objection to the song.

When it was finished, Zorayda took up a lute, and with a sweet, though faint and trembling voice, warbled a little Arabian air, the burden of which was:

"The rose is concealed among her leaves, but she listens with delight to the song of the nightingale."

From this time forward the cavaliers worked almost daily in the ravine. Hussein Baba became more and more indulgent and daily more prone to sleep at his post. By degrees the princesses showed themselves at the balcony, when they could do so without being seen by the guards, and conversed with the cavaliers. The change effected in their looks and spirits surprised

and gratified the left-handed king, but no one was more elated than Kadiga, who considered it all owing to her able management.

At length there was an interruption. For several days the cavaliers ceased to make their appearance in the glen. The princesses looked out from the tower in vain. In vain they stretched their swan-like necks from the balcony: in vain they sang like captive nightingales in their cage. Nothing was to be seen of their Christian lovers — not a note responded from the groves. Kadiga sallied forth in quest of intelligence, and soon returned with a face full of trouble.

"Ah, my children!" cried she. "I saw what all this would come to, but you would have your way. You may now hang your lutes on the willows. The Spanish cavaliers are ransomed by their families. They are down in Granada preparing to return to their native country."

The three beautiful princesses were in despair at the tidings.

Zayda was indignant at the slight put upon them, in thus being deserted without a parting word.

Zorayda wrung her hands and cried, and looked in the glass and wiped away her tears, and cried afresh.

The gentle Zorahayda leaned over the balcony and wept in silence, and her tears fell drop by drop among the flowers where the faithless cavaliers had so often been seated.

Kadiga did all in her power to soothe their sorrow.

"Take comfort, my children," said she, "this is nothing when you are used to it. This is the way of the world. Ah! when you are as old as I am, you will know how to value these men. I 'll warrant these cavaliers have their loves among the Spanish beauties of Cordova and Seville, and will soon be serenading under their balconies, and thinking no

more of the Moorish beauties in the Alhambra. Take comfort, therefore, my children, and drive them from your thoughts."

But the words of Kadiga only redoubled their distress, and for two days they could not be consoled. On the morning of the third, the good old woman entered their apartment all ruffling with indignation.

"Who would have believed such insolence in mortal man!" exclaimed she, as soon as she could find words to speak. "But I'm rightly served for helping to deceive your worthy father. Never talk more to me of your Spanish cavaliers."

"Why, what has happened, good Kadiga?" exclaimed the princesses.

"What has happened? — treason has been proposed; and to me, the trustiest of duennas! Yes, my children, the Spanish cavaliers dared to ask me to persuade you to fly with them to Cordova, and become their wives!"

Here Kadiga covered her face with her

hands, and gave way to a violent burst of grief. The three beautiful princesses turned pale and red and trembled, and looked at each other, but said nothing. Meantime the old woman sat rocking backward and forward in violent agitation.

At length the eldest princess, who had the most spirit and always took the lead, approached her, and laid her hand upon her shoulder.

"Well, mother," said she, "supposing we were willing to fly with these Christian cavaliers — is such a thing possible?"

Kadiga paused suddenly.

"Possible," echoed she, "to be sure it is possible. Have not the cavaliers already bribed Hussein Baba to arrange the whole plan? But then, to think of deceiving your father!"

And here she gave way to a fresh burst of grief.

"But our father has never placed any con-

fidence in us," said the eldest princess, "but has trusted to bolts and bars, and treated us as captives."

"Why, that is true enough," replied the old woman, again pausing in her grief: "he has indeed treated you unreasonably, keeping you shut up here in a moping old tower, like roses left to wither in a flower-jar. But then, to fly from your native land!"

"And is not the land we fly to the native land of our mother, where we shall live in freedom? And shall we not each have a youthful husband in exchange for a severe old father?"

"Why, that again is all very true, but what then," again giving way to grief, "would you leave me behind to bear the brunt of his displeasure?"

"By no means, my good Kadiga: cannot you fly with us?"

"Very true, my child, and to tell the truth, when I talked the matter over with

Hussein Baba, he promised to take care of me, if I would fly with you. But then, bethink you, children, are you willing to renounce the faith of your father?"

"The Christian faith was the original faith of our mother," said Zayda. "I am ready to embrace it, and so, I am sure, are my sisters."

"Right again," exclaimed the old woman, brightening up. "It was the original faith of your mother, and bitterly did she lament, on her death-bed, that she had renounced it. I promised her then to take care of your souls, and I rejoice to see that they are now in a fair way to be saved. Yes, my children, I too was born a Christian, and have remained a Christian in my heart, and am resolved to return to the faith. I have talked with Hussein Baba, who is a Spaniard, by birth, and comes from a place not far from my native town. He is equally anxious to see his own country, and the cavaliers have

promised that if we are disposed to become man and wife, on returning to our native land, they will provide for us handsomely."

In a word, it appeared that Kadiga had consulted with the cavaliers and Hussein Baba, and had made the whole plan of escape.

Zayda and Zorayda agreed to the plan at once, but Zorahayda hesitated, for she was gentle and timid of soul. At last, however, with silent tears and stifled sighs, she prepared herself for flight.

In old times, the rugged hill on which the Alhambra is built had many underground passages cut through the rock, leading from the fortress to various parts of the city, and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and Xenil. They had been built at different times by the Moorish kings, as a means of escape from sudden insurrections, and by one of these passages Hussein Baba had undertaken to conduct the princesses

beyond the walls of the city, where the cavaliers were to be ready with fleet steeds, to bear the whole party over the borders.

The appointed night arrived. The tower of the princesses had been locked up as usual, and the Alhambra was buried in deep sleep. Towards midnight, Kadiga listened from the balcony of a window that looked into the garden. Hussein Baba was already below, and gave the signal. The duenna fastened the end of a ladder of ropes to the balcony, lowered it into the garden and descended. The two eldest princesses followed with beating hearts, but when it came to Zorahayda, she hesitated and trembled. Several times she placed her foot upon the ladder, and as often drew it back, while her poor little heart fluttered more and more the longer she delayed. She cast a wistful look back into the silken chamber. She had lived in it, to be sure, like a bird in a cage,

but within it she was secure. Who could tell what dangers might beset her, should she flutter forth into the wide world! Now she bethought her of her Christian lover, and her little foot was instantly upon the ladder: and anon she thought of her father and shrank back.

In vain her sisters implored, the duenna scolded, and Hussein Baba blasphemed beneath the balcony. The gentle Moorish maid stood doubting and wavering. Every moment increased the danger of discovery. A distant tramp was heard.

"The patrols are walking their rounds!" cried Hussein Baba. "If we linger, we perish. Princess, descend instantly or we leave you."

Zorahayda was for a moment in fearful agitation; then loosening the ladder of ropes, she flung it from the balcony.

"It is decided!" cried she: "flight is now out of my power! Allah guide and bless you, my dear sisters!"

The two eldest princesses were shocked at the thoughts of leaving her behind, and would fain have lingered, but the patrol was advancing, Hussein Baba was furious, and they were hurried away to the passage. They groped their way through the heart of the mountain, and succeeded in reaching an iron gate that opened outside of the walls. The Spanish cavaliers were waiting to receive them, disguised as Moorish soldiers.

The lover of Zorahayda was frantic when he learned that she had refused to leave the tower, but there was no time to waste in lamentations. The two princesses were placed behind their lovers, Kadiga mounted behind Hussein Baba, and they all set off at a round pace in the direction of the Pass of Lope, which leads through the mountains towards Cordova.

They had not gone very far when they heard the noise of drums and trumpets from the battlements of the Alhambra.

"Our flight is discovered!" said Hussein Baba.

"We have fleet steeds, the night is dark, and we may distance all pursuit," replied the cavaliers.

They put spurs to their horses, and scoured across the Vega. When they reached the foot of the mountain of Elvira, Hussein Baba paused and listened.

"As yet," said he, "there is no one on our traces. We shall make good our escape to the mountains."

While he spoke a light blaze sprung up on the top of the watch-tower of the Alhambra.

"Confusion!" cried he, "that bale fire will put all the guards of the passes on the alert. Away! away! Spur like mad — there is no time to be lost."

Away they dashed — the clattering of their horses' hoofs echoed from rock to rock, as they swept along the road. As they galloped

on, the bale fire of the Alhambra was answered in every direction. Light after light blazed on the watch-towers of the mountains.

"Forward! forward!" cried Hussein Baba, "to the bridge, before the alarm has reached there!"

They doubled the mountains and arrived in sight of the famous Bridge of Pinos that crosses a rushing stream. To their confusion, the tower of the bridge blazed with lights and glittered with armed men.

Hussein Baba pulled up his steed, rose in his stirrups and looked about him for a moment; then beckoning to the cavaliers, he struck off from the road, skirted the river for some distance, and dashed into its waters. The cavaliers called upon the princesses to cling to them, and did the same. They were borne for some distance down the rapid current, the surges roared round them, but the princesses clung to their Christian knights, and never uttered a complaint. The cavaliers

attained the opposite bank in safety, and Hussein Baba conducted them, by rude and unfrequented paths, through the heart of the mountains, so as to avoid all the regular passes. In a word they succeeded in reaching the ancient city of Cordova.

Their restoration to their country and friends was celebrated with great rejoicings, for they were of the noblest families. The beautiful princesses were forthwith received into the bosom of the Church, and after being in all due form made Christians, were rendered happy wives.

In our hurry to make good the escape of the princesses across the river, and up the mountains, we forgot to mention the fate of Kadiga. She had clung, like a cat, to Hussein Baba in the scamper across the Vega, screaming at every turn, and when he prepared to plunge his steed into the river, her terror knew no bounds.

"Grasp me not so tightly," cried Hussein Baba. "Hold on my belt and fear nothing."

She held firmly with both hands by the leather belt, but when he halted with the cavaliers to take breath on the mountain summit, the duenna was no longer to be seen.

"What has become of Kadiga?" cried the princesses in alarm.

"Allah alone knows!" replied Hussein Baba. "My belt came loose in the midst of the river, and Kadiga was swept with it down the stream. The will of Allah be done! But it was an embroidered belt and of great price."

There was no time to waste in idle regrets; yet bitterly did the princesses bewail the loss of their faithful duenna. That excellent old woman, however, did not lose more than half of her nine lives in the water. A fisherman, who was drawing his nets some distance down the stream, brought her to land, and he was not a little astonished at his

miraculous draught. What further became of her, the story does not tell; but it is certain that she never ventured within reach of Mohamed the Left-handed.

Almost as little is known of the conduct of that wise monarch when he discovered the escape of his daughters, and the deceit practised upon him by the most faithful of servants. It was the only instance in which he had called in the aid of counsel, and he was never afterwards known to be guilty of a similar weakness.

He took good care, however, to guard his remaining daughter who had no disposition to elope. It is thought, indeed, that she secretly repented having remained behind. Now and then she was seen leaning on the battlements of the tower, and looking in the direction of Cordova, and sometimes the notes of her lute were heard as she sang plaintive songs in which she was said to lament the loss of her sisters and her lover,

and to bewail her solitary life. She died young, and, according to popular rumour, was buried in a vault beneath the tower, and her untimely fate has given rise to more than one traditionary fable.

Legend of
The Rose of the Alhambra

Legend of The Rose of the Alhambra

FOR some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors, that delightful city was a frequent and favourite residence of the Spanish kings, until they were frightened away by shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down houses, and made the old Moslem towers rock.

Many, many years then rolled away, during which Granada was rarely honoured by a royal guest. The palaces remained silent and shut up, and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat mournfully among her neglected gardens. The tower, which was once the residence of the three beautiful princesses, partook of the general desolation. The spider spun her web across the gilded vault,

and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda. The neglect of this tower may have been partly owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbours. It was said that the spirit of Zorahayda was often seen by moonlight seated beside the fountain in the hall, or heard moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver lute could be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length the city was once more to welcome the king and queen, and the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition for the visit. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted palace. The clamour of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues, the glitter of arms and display of banners, recalled the ancient and warlike glories

of the fortress. Within the palace, there was the rustling of robes and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of courtiers about the ante-chambers, a loitering of pages and maids of honour about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favourite page of the queen, named Ruyz de Alarcon. He was just turned of eighteen, light and lithe of form, and very graceful. To the queen he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generalife, and had taken with him for his amusement a favourite ger-falcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles, seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made

a swoop at his quarry, but missing it, soared away, regardless of the calls of the page. The page followed the bird with his eye, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower, in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the fortress from the grounds of the Generalife. It was, in fact, the "Tower of the Princesses."

The page descended into the ravine and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height made any attempt to scale it useless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls.

A small garden overhung with myrtle lay before the tower. Opening a wicket, the page passed between beds of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep inside. There was a small Moorish

hall with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the centre hung a gilt cage containing a singing-bird. Beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoise-shell cat among reels of silk, and a guitar leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste in a lonely, and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of the enchanted hall of the Alhambra; and the tortoise-shell cat might be some spell-bound princess.

He knocked gently at the door. A beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly withdrawn. He waited, expecting that the door would be opened, but he waited in vain. No footstep was to be heard within — all was silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while the beaming face once more

peeped forth. It was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated in the most courteous way to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

"I dare not open the door, Señor," replied the little damsel: "my aunt has forbidden it."

"I do beseech you, fair maid — it is the favourite falcon of the queen. I dare not return to the palace without it."

"Are you then one of the cavaliers of the court?"

"I am, fair maid. But I shall lose the queen's favour and my place if I lose this hawk."

"Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of the court my aunt has charged me specially to bar the door."

"Against wicked cavaliers doubtless, but I am none of these, only a simple harmless

page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request."

The heart of the little damsel was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described. He was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming.

The page redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him, and the little warden of the tower descended and opened the door. The page was charmed with her appearance. Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquiña set off her round form. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the custom of Spain. It is true her complexion was tinged with the southern sun, but it served to give richness to the

bloom of her cheek, and heighten the lustre of her eyes.

Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry. He thanked her, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon.

He soon returned with the truant bird upon his fist. The damsel, in the meantime, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall and was winding silk. In her agitation she let the reel fall upon the pavement. The page sprang and picked it up, then dropping on one knee, presented it to her. In doing so, he seized her hand, and imprinted on it a kiss more fervent than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

"Ave Maria, Señor," exclaimed the damsel.

The page made a thousand apologies, assuring her that it was the way at court of expressing the most profound homage.

Just then a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

"My aunt is returning from mass!" cried the damsel in affright. "I pray you, Señor, depart."

"Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance."

She hastily untwisted the flower.

"Take it," cried she, "but pray begone."

The page took the rose, again kissing the fair hand that gave it. Then placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall.

"A ger-falcon pursued his prey into the hall," said Jacinta.

"Mercy on us!" said the aunt. "To think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk?"

The aunt's name was Fredegonda and she was one of the most wary of ancient spin-

sters. Jacinta was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had only recently been placed under the care of her aunt. Her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighbourhood had given her the name of "The Rose of the Alhambra."

The wary aunt kept a faithful watch over her little niece till at length the king cut short his sojourn at Granada, and departed with his court. Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued from the gate and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight, she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over.

To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket gate of her garden. To her horror she saw through the

thickets of roses a youth in gayly embroidered dress at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta, in the agony of her grief, lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke into sobs and tears.

"He's gone! — he's gone!" she cried, "and I shall never see him more!"

"Gone! — who is gone? — what youth is that I saw at your feet?"

"A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell."

"A queen's page, child!" echoed Fredegonda, "and when did you become acquainted with the queen's page?"

"The morning that the ger-falcon came into the tower. It was the queen's ger-falcon, and he came in pursuit of it."

"Ah silly, silly girl!" said the indignant aunt. "There are no ger-falcons half so dangerous as these young prankling pages, and it is precisely such simple birds as you that they pounce upon."

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumn rains came down in torrents from the mountains, and the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle. Still he did not come. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song and blossom. Still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the meantime poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned, her silk lay entangled, her flowers were neglected, and her eyes were dimmed with weeping.

"Alas, silly child!" the staid Fredegonda

would say. "What could you expect from one of a haughty family — you an orphan, the descendant of a fallen line? Be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as you. Therefore, drive these idle notions from your mind."

But the words of Fredegonda only served to increase Jacinta's melancholy.

At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had gone to rest, Jacinta remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. The poor little damsel's heart was overladen with sad recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell drop by drop into the fountain. By degrees the water became agitated, and — bubble — bubble — bubble — bubble — boiled up and was tossed about, until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish dress, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall, and was afraid to return. The next morning she related to her aunt what she had seen, but the good lady thought she had fallen asleep and dreamt beside the fountain.

"You have been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once lived in this tower," said she, "and it has entered into your dreams."

"What story, aunt? I know nothing of it."

"You have certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda and Zorahayda, who were shut up in this tower by the king, their father, and agreed to fly with three Christian cavaliers. The first two accomplished their escape, but the third failed in her resolution, and, it is said, died in this tower."

"I now remember to have heard it," said Jacinta, "and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda."

"You may well weep," continued the aunt,

"for the lover of Zorahayda was your ancestor. He long bemoaned his fate, but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady from whom you are descended."

"If indeed it be the spirit of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid?" thought Jacinta. "I 'll watch by the fountain to-night — perhaps the visit will be repeated."

Towards midnight, when everything was quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell in the distant watch-tower struck the midnight hour, the fountain was again agitated: and bubble — bubble — bubble — it tossed about the waters until the Moorish woman again rose to view. She was young and beautiful. Her dress was rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition.

"Daughter of mortality," said she, "why

do your tears trouble my fountain, and your sighs disturb the quiet watches of the night?"

"I weep because of the faithlessness of man, and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state."

"Take comfort. Your sorrows may yet have an end. Behold in me a Moorish princess, who was, like you, unhappy. A Christian knight, your ancestor, would have borne me to his native land, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this the evil genii have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this tower until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Will you undertake the task?"

"I will," replied Jacinta, trembling.

"Come hither, then, and fear not. Dip your hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me, and baptize me after the manner of your faith. So shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose."

Jacinta advanced with faltering steps,

dipped her hand into the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled benignly. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta, crossed her white arms, and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dew-drops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night; but when she awoke at day-break out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a dream. On descending into the hall, however, she beheld the silver lute lying beside the fountain, glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, to relate all that had befallen her, and called her to behold the lute as a proof of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any doubts, they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she played such a beautiful melody

that Fredegonda's frigid heart was entirely thawed, and nothing but supernatural music could have produced such an effect.

The power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer, passing by the tower, was detained, as it were, spell-bound. The very birds gathered in the trees, and, hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence. Rumour soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra to catch a few notes of the wonderful music that floated about Jacinta's tower.

The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honour to her. Wherever she went, her vigilant aunt kept a dragon watch at her elbow, awing the throngs of admirers who listened to her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city. Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all

became mad on the theme. Nothing was talked of throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra.

While all Andalusia was thus music mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. The king, as was well known, was subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendours of a court and the glories of a crown, and guided the sceptre of her lord with an expert and steady hand.

At the moment we treat of, a freak had come over the mind of the king that surpassed all former moods. After a long spell of imaginary illness, the monarch, fairly in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to the queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude befitting a dead man. But to their annoyance, he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him, and began to grow impatient because they left him unburied.

In the midst of this fearful dilemma, a rumour reached the court of the female minstrel who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. Nothing was so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the power of music, so the queen dispatched messengers in all haste to summon Jacinta to the court.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honour was walking in the stately gardens of the palace, the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The queen gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that

had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress, her silver lute in hand, and stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her "the Rose of the Alhambra."

As usual, she was accompanied by the ever-vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. The queen was pleased when she learnt that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown.

"If your powers equal your renown," said she, "and you can cast forth this evil spirit that possesses the king, your fortune shall henceforth be my care, and honours and wealth attend you."

The queen was impatient to make trial of her skill, and led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch.

Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through the files of guards and crowds of

courtiers. They came at length to a great chamber hung with black. The windows were closed to exclude the light of day. A number of yellow wax tapers in silver sconces diffused a light which dimly revealed the figures of the courtiers as they glided about with noiseless step and woebegone visage. In the midst of a funeral bier, his hands folded on his breast and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and pointing to a footstool in an obsure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence as she proceeded, drew forth such wonderful harmony that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the king, who had already considered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody or the music of the spheres.

By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of Jacinta accompanied the lute. She sang one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra and the achievements of the Moors. The funeral chamber resounded with the strains. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around. He sat up on his couch. His eyes began to kindle. At length, leaping upon the floor he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute, was complete. The demon of melancholy was cast forth, and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open and the glorious Spanish sunshine burst into the chamber. All eyes sought the lovely enchantress, but the lute had fallen from her hand, she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the heart of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The wedding of the happy couple was celebrated soon afterwards with great splendour, and "The Rose of the Alhambra" became the ornament and delight of the court.

"But hold — not so fast —" I hear the reader exclaim. "This is jumping to the end of a story at a furious rate! First let us know how Ruyz de Alarcon managed to account to Jacinta for his long neglect."

Nothing more easy: the venerable, time-honoured excuse — the opposition to his wishes by a proud pragmatical old father.

"But how was the proud pragmatical old father reconciled to the match?"

O! as to that, his scruples were easily overcome by a word or two from the queen, especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favourite of royalty. Besides, the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest breast.

Pronouncing Vocabulary

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION BASED ON WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

ā as in ale	ē as in eve	ō as in old	ū as in use
ȧ " " senate	ė̄ " " event	o " " obey	ṻ " " unite
â " " care	ĕ " " end	ô " " orb	û " " urn
ă " " am	ẽ " " ever	ŏ " " odd	ŭ " " cup
ä " " arm	ĭ " " ice	o͝o " " foot	
ȧ " " dance	y̆ " " ill	o͝o " " wool	

Abdurrahman (äb-dör-räh′män).
Founder of a dynasty of khalifs who reigned in the East.

Aben Habuz (ä′bŭn ä-boos′).

Abu Ayub (ä-bo͝o′ ä-yŭb′).

Ahmed al Kamel (ä-med′ äl-kä′mel).

Akbar (äk′bär).

alcalde (äl-käl′dȧ).
Magistrate in a Spanish town.

Alcazar (äl-kä′thär).
Moorish palace of Seville.

Aldegonda (ăl-dā-gōn′dȧ).

alguazil (ăl′gwä-zēl′).
Officer or justice in Spain.

Alhambra (äl-ăm′brȧ).
Means in Arabian "red" — great citadel and palace enclosing four hills or spurs of the snow-clad Sierra Nevada mountains — its thick walls strengthened by great square towers — the palace the finest example of Moorish art — consists of galleries surrounding arcaded courts, beautiful with flowers and sub-tropical vegetation — decorated with porcelain mosaics and gilded stucco work — the Moorish inscriptions are of three sorts: 1, verses from the Koran; 2, devout sentences not taken from the Koran; 3, poems in praise of the builders or owners of the palace.

Allah (äl′ä).
God.

Pronouncing Vocabulary

Andalusia (ăn′dȧ-lū′zhȧ).
Eight provinces of southern Spain called the "garden of Spain."

Angosturas (ăn-gos-to͞o′rahs).
Narrow passes.

basquiña (băs-kee′nyah).
Upper petticoat worn by Spanish women.

Bedouin (bĕd′o͞o-ĭn).
Nomadic Arab of the Arabian, Syrian or North African deserts.

Boabdil (bō-ăb-dēl′).
Last Moorish king of Granada.

Borsa (bôr′sȧ).

Carthage (kär′thāg).
Ancient state in northern Africa.

Castile (kăs-tēl′).
An old kingdom of Spain, so named from the number of its frontier castles.

Chaldaic (kăl-dā′ĭk).
An Eastern dialect.

Cordova (kôr′dō-vȧ).

Damascus (dȧ-măs′kŭs).
Formerly the most important city of Syria.

Darro (dä′rō).

Dido (dī′dō).
A queen of Carthage.

Don Pedro Gil (don pā′drō hĭl).

Duenna (dū-ĕn′a).
An elderly woman who keeps guard over the young women of Spain.

Eben Bonabben (ā′ben bō-näb′bē).

Elvira (ĕl-vē′rȧ).

Fez (fäs).
Sultanate in the northern part of Morocco.

Fredegonda (frā-dā-gōn′dȧ).

Gallego (găl-lyāy′gō).

Gallicia (gȧ-lĭsh′ĭ-ȧ).
Old kingdom, now province of Spain.

Generalife (hĕn-ēr-ȧ-lĭf′e).
Built high above the Alhambra amidst gardens and terraces. It has lofty towers and white walls. Here are the famous cypresses which flourished in the time of the Moors.

genii (jē′nĭ-ī).

ger-falcon (jûr-fŏl′k'n).

A large falcon of northern regions used in the sport of taking wild fowl or game by means of falcons.

giralda (hē-räl′dȧ).

The bell-tower of the cathedral at Seville.

Granada (grȧ-nä′dȧ).

Means "pomegranate" — capital of the province of Granada, Spain — famous for the Alhambra.

hieroglyphics (hī′er-o-glif′ĭks).

Hussein Baba (o͞o′sân bä′bä′).

Iberians (ī-bē′rĭ-ans).

Ancient inhabitants of Spain and Portugal.

Ibrahim (ĭb-rȧ-hē′m).

Irem (ī′rem).

Jacinta (hä-cĭn′tȧ).

Kadiga (kă-dī′gȧ).

Koran (kō-rän′).

Sacred Book of the Mohammedans. Mohammed was merely the person to whom it was revealed. At first the Koran was not written but committed to memory, but when the best Koran reciters had been killed in battle it was written down. It consists of 114 suras, the addresses of Mohammed at Mecca and Medina. Legends of the Koran are drawn from the Old Testament.

La Mancha (lä män′chȧ).

Lope (lō′pe).

Mahomet (mȧ-hŏm′ĕt).

"The praised one." Born at Mecca; died at Medina. Founded the Mohammedan religion. At about twelve accompanied a caravan to Syria. Was for some time a shepherd. Married Khadijah fifteen years his senior. Had six children of which Fatima became most famous. Retired to solitary places especially to the cave of Mount Hira north of Mecca. Lived a simple life, his common diet being barley bread and water. Was kind and liberal, but on occasion cruel.

Malaga (mä-lä-gä).

A city of Andalusia.

Mecca (mĕk′ă).

Capital of Arabia — the sacred city of the Mohammedans. Every Moslem once in his lifetime undertakes a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Mohammed (mô-hăm′ĕd).
Same as Mahomet.
Megrim (mē′grĭm).
Whim or fad — depression of spirit.
Morena (mô-rā′nȧ).
Moslem (mŏs′lem).
Followers of Mohammed.
Pedrillo Pedrugo (pĕd′rē-yô pĕd-rōō′gô).
Peregil (per-ĭ-hĭl′).
Pedro Gil (pā′drô hĭl).
Phœnician (fê-nĭsh′ăn).
People of Phœnicia, an ancient country on the coast of Syria.
Puchero (pōō-chay′ro).
A standing dish in Spain — composed of meat and vegetables.
Pyrenees (pĭr′ê-nēz).
Mountain range which separates France on the north from Spain on the South.
Ruyz de Alarcon (rōō-ēs′ dȧ-l-är-cōn′).
Señor (sēn′your).
Señora (sēn-your′a).
Seville (sê-vĭl).
Sierra Nevada (sĭ-ĕr′rȧ nê-vä′dȧ).
Means "snowy range," mountains in Spain.
Siesta (sĭ-ĕs′tȧ).
Solomon (sŏl′ô-mŭn).
King of Israel — famous for wealth and wisdom, the last a special gift of God — supposed to have possessed extraordinary magical power.
Sultana (sŭl-tä′nȧ).
Tagus (tā′gŭs).
Tangiers (tăn-jērz′).
Toledo (tô-lē′dō).
Vega (vā′gä).
A plain.
Xenil (cĕ′nĭl).
Zambra (zäm′brȧ).
A Spanish dance.
Zayda (zī′dȧ or thī′dȧ).
Zorahayda (zô-rä-ī′dȧ or thô-rä-ī′dȧ).
Zorayda (zô-rī′dȧ or thô-rī′dȧ).

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