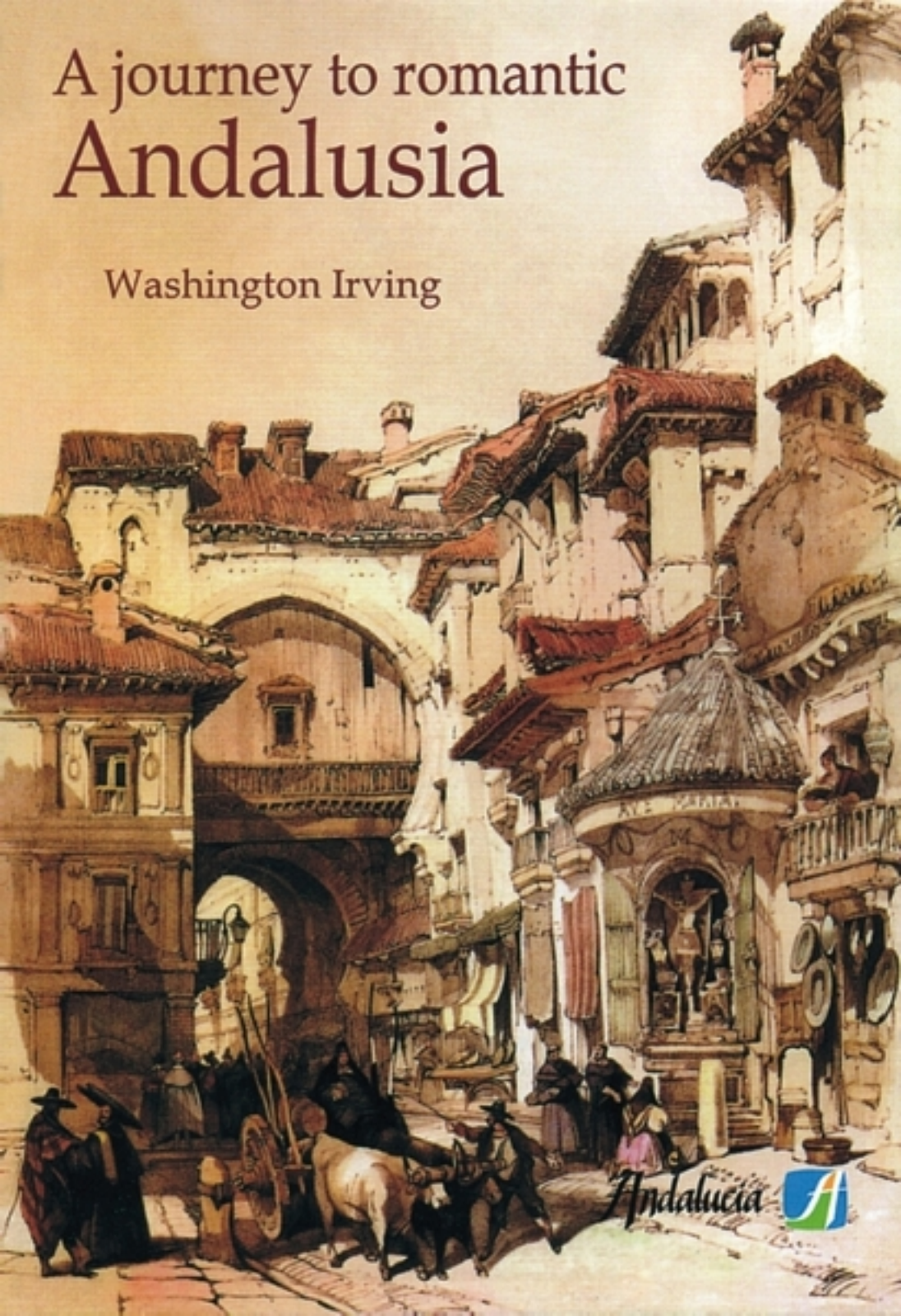
A journey to romantic Andalusia

Washington Irving



A JOURNEY TO ROMANTIC ANDALUSIA

WASHINGTON IRVING

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An edition in honour of Washington Irving on the 180th anniversary of his arrival in Spain

JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA
CONSEJERÍA DE TURISMO, COMERCIO Y DEPORTE

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Prologue: Rocío Plaza Orellana

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DEDICATION

The romantic Andalusia that
Washington Irving experienced
still exists. We hope that you will
also enjoy it.
With my best wishes,

PAULINO PLATA
Regional Minister for Tourism, Commerce and Sports
of the Junta de Andalucía

PROLOGUE

WASHINGTON IRVING

In March 1828 Washington Irving from New York crossed Sierra Morena in a stagecoach towards Cordoba. He had already partially imagined the landscape, which lay ahead of him just behind this mountain range separating the South of Spain. Despite all that had been fantasized in travel literature and theatre plays on Andalusia, this was the land from which the first Europeans set off and arrived on American coasts in order to settle. The infinite olive groves of Cordoba, the luminous Arenal in Seville, the absorption of the Church of Santa Clara de Moguer, the silence in the Convent of La Rábida and the fresh vineyards of Palos had been Christopher Columbus' landscapes prior to his journeys of discovery and conquest. Hoping that they were still there Irving set off to find these landscapes. It would not be long until he discovered that they were still waiting for him. Sixteen months went by before he left them behind, almost half the time he had spent in Spain on his first journey in 1826.

This land came along his life when he was 45 years old, just after a sentimental loss and a heavy disappointment in love, a ditched law career, a literary vocation, which had not started yet, several journeys through Europe and the humilia-

tion of having to inform his family of the collapse of his business in England, which left him in helplessness. At that time, right in the middle of the financial nightmare that started in 1815, he met the editor John Murray, who was one of the most active ones in bringing out the memoirs of Anglo-Saxons travelling through Hispanic lands. While he was working on some literary essays in Bordeaux in January of 1826 he received a letter from the US ambassador in Madrid, Alexander Everett, who offered him the possibility to translate to English a Spanish book on Columbus' journeys, which just had been published. The author was Martín Fernández de Navarrete and the title of the book was Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos, que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV.

Enthralled with this proposal he decided to accept it and thus arrived in Madrid on February 15 of 1826. When he was confronted with his job he decided to write his own biography of Columbus and therefore deviated from the simple task of translation, which he had been assigned. In the summer of 1827 he completed the manuscript and handed it over to John Murray with the title The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus who at first questioned the publication but in the end decided to get involved in Irving's work. Finally this first book on Spanish matters would be published in four volumes at the beginning of 1828, when Irving was preparing his journey through Andalusia.

From Cordoba he travelled to Granada, where he would spend only eleven days on this first trip. Then Malaga, Gibraltar and Cadiz followed until he arrived in Seville on April 14, which would become one of his improvised permanent residences. The manuscripts of the Archive of the Indies relating to Columbus and the presence of the painter David Wilkie would keep him there. From there he visited Columbus related places in Huelva, until he left Seville again towards Granada in May of 1829, accompanied by his friend, the attaché to the Russian legation in Madrid, Prince Dolgorouki.

Although it is true that the search for Columbus had taken him to the South it was there where chance led him to one of the most valuable encounters for his future literary production: the Alhambra. Via the Prince they found board in this former royal palace that overlooked the town. After the departure of his friend he was left on his own, staying in a room from where one could make out a small garden and the river Darro's horizon, just as he described enthusiastically in a letter to his brother Peter dated on May 12 of 1829.

He hardly ever went down into town. Since the city theatre was closed at that time he entertained himself working on his writings, so there was no reason for him to leave this quiet spot. This peace and quiet would lead him to wonder in his tales whether poor King Chico would be better of than him in the palace. All throughout this stay in Andalusia he

wrote A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, which Murray also accepted. Then they proposed him the post as secretary to the American legation in London - this was an offer, which he could not refuse after so many ups and downs. So he held this diplomatic office from the end of 1829 until 1832. From then on he would combine his literary vocation (strengthened by the sudden success of his The Alhambra in 1832) and a diplomatic career which would bring him back to Spain for four years, however this time without him producing anymore literature.

Rocío Plaza Orellana

A JOURNEY TO ROMANTIC ANDALUSIA

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ. R. A.[1]

MY DEAR SIR;

You may remember, that in the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain, particularly Toledo and Seville, we remarked a strong mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic, remaining from the time of the Moors, and were more than once struck with scenes and incidents in the streets, which reminded us of passages in the «Arabian Nights». You then urged me to write something that should illustrate those peculiarities, «something in the Haroun Alraschid style», that should have a dash of that Arabian spice which pervades everything in Spain. I call this to your mind to show you that you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work, in which I have given a few «arabesque» sketches from the life and tales founded on popular traditions, which were chiefly struck-off during a residence in one of the most Morisco-Spanish places in the Peninsula.

I inscribe these pages to you as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together in that land of adventure,

---

[1] English painter. This dedication appeared in the original publication.

and as a testimonial of an esteem for your worth which is only exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow-traveller,

THE AUTHOR

May, 1832

THE JOURNEY

In the spring of 1829, the author of this work whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada in company with a friend, a member of the Russian Embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship and with them the remembrance of one in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the remembrance of his gentleness and worth!

And here, before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish travelling. Many are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region, decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater

part, it is a stern, melancholy country with rugged mountains and long sweeping plains destitute of trees and indescribably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness is the absence of singing-birds, a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain cliffs and soaring over the plains, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths, but the myriads of smaller birds which animate the whole face of other countries are met with in but few provinces in Spain, and in those chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the interior provinces the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving, at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt, but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil. At length he perceives some village on a steep hill or rugged crag with mouldering battlements and ruined watchtower, a stronghold in old times against civil war or Moorish inroad, for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the maraudings of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people, and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and of La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight here and there of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air or beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert, or a single herdsman armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country

is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market town without his *trabuco*, and perhaps a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder, and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparation of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce also a mode of travelling, resembling on a diminutive scale the caravans of the East. The *arrieros* or carriers congregate in convoys and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days, while additional travellers swell their number and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic and the legitimate traverser of the land, crossing the Peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpujarras, the *Serranía de Ronda*, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his *alforjas* of coarse cloth hold his scanty stock of provisions, a leathern bottle hanging at his saddle-bow contains wine or water, for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains. A mulecloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low but cleanlimbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by

sudden emotion; his demeanour is frank, manly and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation: «*¡Dios guarde a usted!*» «*¡Vaya usted con Dios, caballero!*» «God guard you! God be with you, cavalier!»

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burden of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles and ready to be snatched out for desperate defence. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders, and the solitary *bandolero*, armed to the teeth and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant wayfaring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflexions. These he chants forth with a loud voice and long, drawling cadence, seated sideways on his mule who seems to listen with infinite gravity and to keep time with its paces to the tune. The couplets thus chanted, are often old traditional romances about the Moors or some legend of a saint or some love ditty or, what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold *contrabandista* or hardy *bandolero*, for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often the song of the muleteer is composed at the

instant and relates to some local scene or some incident of the journey. This talent for singing and improvising is frequent in Spain and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes that they illustrate, accompanied, as they are, by the occasional jingle of the mulebell.

It has a most picturesque effect also to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain-pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height, or perhaps the voice of the muleteer, admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditionary ballad. At length you see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels and saddle-cloths, while, as they pass by, the ever-ready *trabuco* slung behind the packs and saddles gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast *sierras* or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree

and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sunburnt summits against a deep-blue sky, yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most verdant and fertile valleys, where the desert and the garden strain for mastery, and the very rock is, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

In the wild passes of these mountains the sight of walled towns and villages, built like eagles' nests among the cliffs and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carries the mind back to the chivalric days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing these lofty *sierras*, the traveller is often obliged to alight, and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep dark and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it straggles through rugged *barrancos* or ravines, worn by winter torrents, the obscure path of the *contrabandista*, while ever and anon the ominous cross, the monument of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the

traveller that he is among the haunts of banditti, perhaps at that very moment under the eye of some lurking *bandolero*. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures in untamed wildness, strangers almost to the face of man. They know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowing of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.

I have been betrayed unconsciously into a longer disquisition than I had intended on the general features of Spanish travelling, but there is a romance about all the recollections of the Peninsula that is dear to the imagination.

It was on the first of May that my companion and myself set forth from Seville on our route to Granada. We had made all due preparations for the nature of our journey which lay through mountainous regions where the roads are little better than mere mule-paths, and too frequently beset by

robbers. The most valuable part of our luggage had been forwarded by the *arrieros*; we retained merely clothing and necessaries for the journey and money for the expenses of the road, with a sufficient surplus of the latter to satisfy the expectations of robbers should we be assailed, and to save ourselves from the rough treatment that awaits the too wary and empty-handed traveller. A couple of stout hired steeds were provided for the conveyance of a sturdy Biscayan lad of about twenty years of age, who was to guide us through the perplexed mazes of the mountain roads, to take care of the horses, to act occasionally as our valet, and at all times as our guard, for he had a formidable *trabuco* or carbine to defend us from *rateros* or solitary footpads, about which weapon he made much vain-glorious boast, though, to the discredit of his generalship, I must say that it generally hung unloaded behind his saddle. He was, however, a faithful, cheery, kind hearted creature, full of saws and proverbs as that miracle of squires the renowned Sancho himself, whose name we bestowed upon him, and, like a true Spaniard, though treated by us with companionable familiarity, he never for a moment, in his utmost hilarity, overstepped the bounds of respectful decorum.

Thus equipped and attended, we set out on our journey with a genuine disposition to be pleased. With such a dispo-

sition, what a country is Spain for a traveller, where the most miserable inn is as full of adventure as an enchanted castle and every meal is in itself an achievement! Let others repine at the lack of turnpike-roads and sumptuous hotels, and all the elaborate comforts of a country cultivated into tameness and the commonplace, but give me the rude mountain scramble, the roving, haphazard manners that give such a true game flavour to romantic Spain!

Our first evening's entertainment had a relish of the kind. We arrived after sunset at a little town among the hills after a fatiguing journey over a wide houseless plain, where we had been repeatedly drenched with showers. In the inn were a party of *migueletes* who were patrolling the country in pursuit of robbers. The appearance of foreigners like ourselves was unusual in this remote town; mine host, with two or three old gossiping comrades in brown cloaks, studied our passports in a corner of the *posada*, while an *alguacil* took notes by the dim light of a lamp. The passports were in foreign languages and perplexed them, but our squire Sancho assisted them in their studies and magnified our importance with the grandiloquence of a Spaniard. In the meantime, the magnificent distribution of a few cigars had won the hearts of all around us; in a little while the whole community seemed put in agitation to make us welcome.

The *corregidor* himself waited upon us, and a great rush-bottomed arm chair was ostentatiously bolstered into out room by our landlady, for the accommodation of that important personage. The commander of the patrol took supper with us, a lively, talking, laughing *andaluz* who had made a campaign in South America, and recounted his exploits in love and war with much pomp of phrase, vehemence of gesticulation and mysterious rolling of the eye. He told us that he had a list of all the robbers in the country and meant to ferret out every mother's son of them; he offered us at the same time some of his soldiers as an escort. «One is enough to protect you, *señores*; the robbers know me and know my men; the sight of one is enough to spread terror through a whole sierra». We thanked him for his offer, but assured him in his own strain that with the protection of out redoubtable squire, Sancho, we were not afraid of all the *ladrones* of Andalusia.

While we were supping with our drawcansir friend, we heard the notes of a guitar and the click of castanets, and presently a chorus of voices singing a popular air. In fact, mine host had gathered together the amateur singers and musicians and the rustic belles of the neighbourhood, and on going forth, the court-yard or *patio* of the inn presented a scene of true Spanish festivity. We took our seats with mine

host and hostess and the commander of the patrol under the archway of the court; the guitar passed from hand to hand, but a jovial shoemaker was the Orpheus of the place. He was a pleasant-looking fellow, with huge black whiskers; his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows. He touched the guitar with masterly skill and sang little amorous ditties with an expressive leer at the women, with whom he was evidently a favourite. He afterwards danced a *fandango* with a buxom Andalusian damsel, to the great delight of the spectators. But none of the females present could compare with mine host's.pretty daughter, Pepita, who, had slipped away and made her toilette for the occasion, and had covered her head with roses, and who distinguished herself in a *bolero* with a handsome young dragoon. We had ordered our host to let wine and refreshment circulate freely among the company, yet, though there was a motley assembly of soldiers, muleteers and villagers, no one exceeded the bounds of sober enjoyment. The scene was a study for a painter; the picturesque group of dancers, the troopers in their half military dresses, the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks; nor must I omit to mention the old meagre *alguacil* in a short black cloak, who took no notice of anythinq going on, but sat in a corner diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp that might have figured in the days of Don Quixote.

I am not writing a regular narrative and do not pretend to give the varied events of several days, rambling over hill and dale, moor and mountain. We travelled in true *contrabandista* style, taking everything, rough and smooth, as we found it, and mingling with all classes and conditions in a kind of vagabond companionship. It is the true way to travel in Spain. Knowing the scanty larders of the inns, and the naked tracts of country, which the traveller has often to traverse, we had taken care, on starting to have the *alforjas* or saddle-bags of our squire well stocked with cold provisions, and his *bota* or leathern bottle which was of portly dimensions, filled to the neck with choice Valdepeñas wine. As this was a munition for our campaign more important than even his *trabuco*, we exhorted him to have an eye to it and I will do him the justice to say that his namesake, the trencher-loving Sancho himself, could not excel him as a provident purveyor. Though the *alforjas* and *bota* were repeatedly and vigorously assailed throughout the journey, they appeared to have a miraculous property of being never empty, for out vigilant squire took care to sack everything that remained from our evening repast at the inns to supply our next day's luncheon.

What luxurious noontide repasts have we made, on the green sward by the side of a brook of fountain, under a

shady tree, and then what delicious *siestas* on our cloaks, spread out on the herbage!

We paused one day at noon for a repast of the kind. It was in a pleasant little green meadow, surrounded by hills covered with olive-trees. Our cloaks were spread on the grass under an elm-tree by the side of a bubbling rivulet, our horses were tethered where they might crop the herbage and Sancho produced his *alforjas* with an air of triumph. They contained the contributions of four day's journeying, but had been signally enriched by the foraging of the previous evening in a plenteous inn at Antequera. Our squire drew forth the heterogeneous contents, one by one, and these seemed to have no end. First came forth a shoulder of roasted kid, very little the worse for wear, then an entire partridge, then a great morsel of salted codfish wrapped in paper, then the residue of a ham, then the half of a pullet, together with several rolls of bread and a rabble rout of oranges, figs, raisins, and walnuts. His *bota* also had been recruited with some excellent wine of Malaga. At every fresh apparition from his larder, he would enjoy our ludicrous surprise, throwing himself back on the grass and shouting with laughter. Nothing pleased the simple-hearted varlet more than to be compared for his devotion to the trencher to the renowned squire of Don Quixote. He was well versed in the

history of Don Quixote and, like most of the common people of Spain, firmly believed it to be a true history.

«All that, however, happened a long time ago, *señor*?» said he to me one day with an inquiring look.

«A very long time», was the reply.

«I dare say more than a thousand years?» –still looking dubiously.

«I dare say, not less.»

The squire was satisfied.

As we were making a repast, above described, and diverting ourselves with the simple drollery of our squire, a solitary beggar approached us, who had almost the look of a pilgrim. He was evidently very old with a grey beard and supported himself on a staff, yet age had not bowed him down; he was tall and erect, and had the wreck of a fine form. He wore a round Andalusian hat, a sheep-skin jacket, and leathern breeches, gaiters and sandals. His dress, though old and patched, was decent, his demeanour manly and he addressed us with that grave courtesy that is to be remarked in the lowest Spaniard. We were in a favourable mood for such a visitor, and in a freak of capricious charity gave him some silver, a loaf of fine wheaten bread, and a goblet of our choice wine of Malaga. He received them thankfully, but without any grovelling tribute of gratitude. Tasting the wine,

he held it up to the light with a slight beam of surprise in his eye, then quaffing it off at a draught, «It is many years», said he, «since I have tasted such wine. It is a cordial to an old man's heart». Then, looking at the beautiful wheaten loaf, «¡bendito sea tal pan!» «blessed be such bread!» So saying, he put it in his wallet. We urged him to eat it on the spot. «No, señores», replied he, «the wine I had to drink or leave, but the bread I must take home to share with my family.»

Our man Sancho sought our eye and reading permission there gave the old man some of the ample fragments of our repast, on condition, however, that he should sit down and make a meal.

He accordingly took his seat at some little distance from us, and began to eat slowly and with a sobriety and decorum that would have become an hidalgo. There was altogether a measured manner and a quiet self-possession about the old man that made me think he had seen better days; his language too, though simple, had occasionally something picturesque and almost poetical in the phraseology. I set him down for some broken-down cavalier. I was mistaken; it was nothing but the innate courtesy of a Spaniard, and the poetical turn of thought and language often to be found in the lowest classes of this clear-witted people. For fifty years, he told us, he had been a shepherd, but now he was out of

Corner of the Alcazar Garden of Seville
E. Sánchez Perrier (1855-1907). Oil on board, 46,5 x 34 cm

employ, and destitute. «When I was a young man», said he, «nothing could harm or trouble me. I was aIways gay, but now I am seventy-nine years of age and a beggar, and my heart begins to fail me.»

Still he was not a regular mendicant; it was not until recently that want had driven him to this degradation, and he gave a touching picture of the struggle between hunger and pride, when abject destitution first came upon him. He was returning from Malaga without money; he had not tasted food for some time and was crossing one of the great plains of Spain, where there were but few habitations. When almost dead with hunger, he applied at the door of a venta or country inn. «¡Perdone usted, por Dios hermano!» (Excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) was the reply –the usual mode in Spain of refusing a beggar «I turned away», said he, «with shame greater than my hunger, for my heart was yet too proud. I came to a river with high banks and deep rapid current, and felt tempted to throw myself in. «What should such an old, worthless, wretched man as I live for?» But when I was on the brink of the current, I thought on the Blessed Virgin and turned away. I travelled on until I saw a country-seat at a little distance from the road and entered the outer gate of the court-yard. The door was shut, but there were two young señoras at a window. I approached and

begged: – «¡Perdone usted, por Dios, hermano!» (Excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) and the window closed. I crept out of the court-yard, but hunger overcame me and my heart gave way. I thought my hour at hand, so I laid myself down at the gate, commended myself to the Holy Virgin and covered my head to die. In a little while afterwards, the master of the house came home; seeing me lying at his gate, he uncovered my head, had pity on my grey hairs, took me into his house and gave me food. So, señores, you see that one should always put confidence in the protection of the Virgin.»

The old man was on his way to his native place, Archidona, which was close by on the summit of a steep and rugged mountain. He pointed to the ruins of its old Moorish castle: «That castle», he said, «was inhabited by a Moorish king at the time of the wars of Granada. Queen Isabella invaded it with a great army, but the king looked down from his castle among the clouds and laughed her to scorn! Upon this the Virgin appeared to the queen and guided her and her army up a mysterious path in the mountains, which had never before been known. When the Moor saw her coming, he was astonished and springing with his horse from a precipice was dashed to pieces! «The marks of his horse's hoof», said the old man, «are to be seen in the margin of the

rock to this day. And see, señores, yonder is the road by which the queen and her army mounted; you see it like a riband up the mountain side, but the miracle is that, though it can be seen at a distance, when you come near it disappears!»

The ideal road to which he pointed was undoubtedly a sandy ravine of the mountain, which looked narrow and defined at a distance, but became broad and indistinct on an approach.

As the old man's heart warmed with wine and wassail, he went on to tell us a story of the buried treasure left under the castle by the Moorish king. His own house was next to the foundations of the castle. The curate and notary dreamed three times of the treasure and went to work at the place pointed out in their dreams. His own son-in-law heard the sound of their pick-axes and spades at night. What they found, nobody knows; they became suddenly rich, but kept their own secret. Thus the old man had once been next door to fortune, but was doomed never to get under the same roof.

I have remarked that the stories of treasure buried by the Moors, which prevail throughout Spain, are most current among the poorest people. It is thus kind nature consoles with shadows for the lack of substantials. The thirsty man dreams of fountains and running-streams, the hungry man

of ideal banquets and the poor man of heaps of hidden gold. Nothing certainly is more magnificent than the imagination of a beggar.

The last travelling sketch I shall give is an evening scene at the little city of Loja. This was a famous belligerent frontier post in the time of the Moors and repulsed Ferdinand from its walls. It was the stronghold of old Aliatar, the father-in-law of Boabdil, when that fiery veteran sallied forth with his son-in-law on their disastrous inroad, that ended in the death of the chieftain and the capture of the monarch. Loja is wildly situated in a broken mountain-pass on the banks of the Genil among rocks and groves, meadows and gardens. The people seem still to retain the bold fiery spirit of the olden time. Our inn was suited to the place. It was kept by a young and handsome Andalusian widow, whose trim basquiña of black silk, fringed with bugles, set off the play of a graceful form and round pliant limbs. Her step was firm and elastic, her dark eye was full of fire, and the coquetry of her air and varied ornaments of her person showed that she was accustomed to be admired.

She was well matched by a brother, nearly about her own age; they were perfect models of the Andalusian majo and maja. He was tall, vigorous and well-formed, with a clear olive complexion, a dark beaming eye and curling chestnut

whiskers that met under his chin. He was gallantly dressed in a short green velvet jacket, fitted to his shape, profusely decorated with silver buttons, with a white handkerchief in each pocket. He had breeches of the same, with rows of buttons from the hips to the knees, a pink silk handkerchief round his neck, gathered through a ring, on the bosom of a neatly planted shirt, a sash round the waist to match, botines or spatterdashes of the finest russet-leather, elegantly worked and open at the calf to show his stocking, and russet-shoes, setting off a well-shaped foot.

As he was standing at the door, a horseman rode up and entered into low and earnest conversation with him. He was dressed in similar style and almost with equal finery, a man about thirty, square-built, with strong Roman features, handsome, though slightly pitted with the small-pox, with a free, bold and somewhat daring air. His powerful black horse was decorated with tassels and fanciful trappings, and a couple of broad-mouthed blunderbusses hung behind the saddle. He had the air of one of those contrabandistas that I have seen in the mountains of Ronda and evidently had a good understanding with the brother of mine hostess, nay, if I mistake not, he was a favoured admirer of the widow. In fact, the whole inn and its inmates had something of a contrabandista aspect, and the blunderbuss stood in a corner

beside the guitar. The horseman I have mentioned passed his evening in the posada and sang several bold mountain romances with great spirit. As we were at supper, two poor Asturians put in in distress, begging food and a night's lodging. They had been waylaid by robbers as they came from a fair among the mountains, robbed of a horse which carried all their stock in trade, stripped of their money and most of their apparel, beaten for having offered resistance and left almost naked in the road. My companion, with a prompt generosity natural to him ordered them a supper and a bed, and gave them a sum of money to help them forward towards their home.

As the evening advanced, the dramatis personnae thickened. A large man about sixty years of age, of powerful frame, came strolling in to gossip with mine hostess. He was dressed in the ordinary Andalusian costume, but had a huge sabre tucked under his arm, wore large moustaches, and had something of a lofty swaggering air. Every one seemed to regard him with great deference.

Our man Sancho whispered to us that he was Don Ventura Rodríguez, the hero and champion of Loja, famous for his prowess and the strength of his arm. In the time of the French invasion he surprised six troopers who were asleep. He first secured their horses, them attacked them with his

sabre, killed some and took the rest prisoners. For this exploit the king allows him a peseta (the fifth of a duro or dollar) per day, and has dignified him with the title of Don.

I was amused to notice his swelling language and demeanour. He was evidently a thorough Andalusian, boastful as he was brave. His sabre was always in his hand or under his arm. He carries it always about with him as a child does her doll, calls it his Santa Teresa and says that when he draws it, «¡tiembla la tierra!» –the earth trembles.

I sat until a late hour listening to the varied themes of this motley group who mingled together with the unreserve of a Spanish posada. We had contrabandista songs, stories of robbers, guerrilla exploits and Moorish legends. The last were from our handsome landlady who gave a poetical account of the infiernos or infernal regions of Loja –dark caverns, in which subterranean streams and waterfalls make a mysterious sound. The common people say that there are money-coiners shut up there from the time of the Moors and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in those caverns.

Were I the purport of this work, I could fill its pages with the incidents and scenes of our rambling expedition, but other themes invite me. Journeying in this manner, we at length emerged from the mountains and entered upon the beautiful vega of Granada. Here we took our last midday's

repast under a grove of olive-trees, on the borders of a rivulet, with the old Moorish capital in the distance and animated by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while far above in the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver. The day was without a cloud and the heat of the sun tempered by cool breezes from the mountains; after our repast, we spread our cloaks and took our last siesta, lulled by the humming of bees among the flowers and the notes of ring-doves from the neighbouring olive trees. When the sultry hours were past, we resumed our journey and, after passing between hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and through a wilderness of gardens, arrived about sunset at the gates of Granada.

* * *

To the traveller imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical, the Alhambra of Granada is as much an object of veneration as is the Kaaba or sacred house of Mecca to all true Moslem pilgrims. How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous, how many songs and romances, Spanish and Arabian, of love and war and chivalry are associated with this romantic pile! The reader may judge therefore of our delight when, shortly after our arrival in Granada, the Governor of the Alhambra gave us his permission to occupy his vacant apartments in the Moorish palace. My companion

was soon summoned away by the duties of his station, but I remained for several months, spellbound in the old enchanted pile. The following papers are the result of my reveries and researches during that delicious thraldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra.

GOVERNMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA

The Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise and made their last stand for empire in Spain. The palace occupies but a portion of the fortress, the walls of which, studded with towers, stretch irregularly round the whole crest of a lofty hill that overlooks the city and forms a spur of the Sierra Nevada or Snowy Mountain.

In the time of the Moors the fortress was capable of containing an army of forty thousand men within its precincts and served occasionally as a stronghold of the sovereigns against their rebellious subjects. After the kingdom had passed into the hands of the Christians, the Alhambra continued'as a royal demesne and was occasionally inhabited by the Castilian monarchs. The Emperor Charles V. began a sumptuous palace within its walls, but was deterred from completing it by repeated shocks of earthquakes[1]. The

[1] The true reason for the interruption in construction was a Morisco revolt, for the Moriscoes used to contribute 80.0000 ducats yearly for this purpose, in exchange for certain privileges. (Ed. note.)

last royal residents were Philip V. and his beautiful queen Elizabetta of Parma early in the eighteenth century. Great preparations were made for their reception. The palace and gardens were placed in a state of repair and a new suite of apartments erected and decorated by artists brought from Italy. The sojourn of the sovereigns was transient, and after their departure the palace once more became desolate. Still the place was maintained with some military state. The governor held it immediately from the crown, its jurisdiction extended down into the suburbs of the city and was independent of the Captain General of Granada. A considerable garrison was kept up, the governor had his apartments in the front of the old Moorish palace and never descended into Granada without some military parade. The fortress in fact was a little town of itself, having several streets of houses within its walls, together with a Franciscan convent and a parochial church.

The desertion of the court, however, was a fatal blow to the Alhambra. Its beautiful halls became desolate and some of them fell to ruin, the gardens were destroyed and the fountains ceased to play. By degrees the dwellings became filled up with a loose and lawless population; contrabandistas who availed themselves of its independent jurisdiction to carry on a wide and daring course of smuggling, and

thieves and rogues of all sorts, who made this their place of refuge from whence they might depredate upon Granada and its vicinity. The strong arm of government at length interfered; the whole community was thoroughly sifted; none were suffered to remain but such as were of honest character and had legitimate right to a residence; the greater part of the houses were demolished and a mere hamlet left, with the parochial church and the Franciscan convent. During the recent troubles in Spain, when Granada was in the hands of the French, the Alhambra was garrisoned by their troops, and the palace was occasionally inhabited by the French commander. With that enlightened taste which has ever distinguished the French nation in their conquests, this monument of Moorish elegance and grandeur was rescued from the absolute ruin and desolation that were overwhelming it[2]. The roofs were repaired, the saloons and galleries protected from the weather, the gardens cultivated, the water-courses restored, the fountains once more made to throw up their sparkling showers, and Spain may thank her

[2] This was far from being the case; the French commander, prior to evacuating the Alhambra, mined it and would have blown it up but for the presence of mind of a Spanish ex-soldier who cut the fuse. The depredations of Napoleon's troops in Spain are a shocking episode in the history of war, exceeded only by the barbarities inflicted on the civil population, immortalized in Goya's «Disasters of War». (Ed. note.).

invaders for having preserved to her the most beautiful and interesting of her historical monuments.

On the departure of the French they blew up several towers of the outer wall, and left the fortifications scarcely tenable. Since that time the military importance of the post is at an end. The garrison is a handful of invalid soldiers whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers which serve occasionally as a prison of state, and the governor, abandoning the lofty hill of the Alhambra, resides in the centre of Granada, for the more convenient dispatch of his duties. I cannot conclude this brief notice of the state of the fortress without bearing testimony to the honourable exertions of its present commander, Don Francisco de Serna, who is tasking all the limited resources at his command to put the palace in a state of repair and by his judicious precautions has for some time arrested its too certain decay. Had his predecessors discharged the duties of their station with equal fidelity, the Alhambra might yet have remained in almost its pristine beauty; were government to second him with means equal to his zeal, this edifice might still be preserved to adorn the land and to attract the curious and enlightened of every clime for many generations.

INTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA

The Alhambra has been so often and so minutely described by travellers that a mete sketch will probably be sufficient for the reader to refresh his recollection. I will give therefore a brief account of our visit to it the morning after our arrival in Granada.

Leaving our posada of La Espada, we traversed the renowned square of the Bibarrambla, once the scene of Moorish jousts and tournaments, now a crowded market-place. From thence we proceeded along the Zacatín, the main street of what in the time of the Moors was the Great Bazaar, where the small shops and narrow alleys still retain the Oriental character. Crossing an open place in front of the Palace of the Captain-General, we ascended a confined and winding street, the name of which reminded us of the chivalric days of Granada. It is called the calle or street of the Gomeres from a Moorish family famous in chronicle and song. This street led up to a massive gateway of Grecian architecture built by Charles V., forming the entrance to the domains of the Alhambra.

At the gate were two or three ragged and superannuated soldiers, dozing on a stone bench, the successors of the

Zegríes and the Abencerrages, while a tall meagre varlet whose rustybrown cloak was evidently intended to conceal the ragged state of his nether garments was lounging in the sunshine and gossiping with an ancient sentinel on duty. He joined us as we entered the gate and offered his services to show us the fortress.

I have a traveller's dislike to officious ciceroni and did not altogether like the garb of the applicant.

«You are well acquainted with the place, I presume?»

«Ninguno más; pues, Señor, soy hijo de la Alhambra.»– (Nobody better; in fact, Sir, I am a son of the Alhambra!)

The common Spaniards have certainly a most poetical way of expressing themselves. «A son of the Alhambra!» The appellation caught me at once; the very tattered garb of my new acquaintance assumed a dignity in my eyes. It was emblematic of the fortunes of the palace and befitted the progeny of a ruin.

I put some further questions to him and found that his title was legitimate. His family had lived in the fortress from generation to generation ever since the time of the conquest. His name was Mateo Jiménez. «Then perhaps», said I «you may be a descendant from the great Cardinal Jiménez?» –«¡Dios sabe! God knows, señor! It may be so. We are the oldest family in the Alhambra. –Cristianos viejos, old

Christians, without any taint of Moor or Jew. I know we belong to some great family or other, but I forget which. My father knows all about it; he has the coat of arms hanging up in his cottage up in the fortress.» –There is not any Spaniard, however poor, but has some claim to high pedigree. The first title of this ragged worthy, however, had completely captivated me; so I gladly accepted the services of the «son of the Alhambra.»

We now found ourselves in a deep narrow ravine, filled with beautiful groves with a steep avenue and various footpaths winding through it, bordered with stone seats and ornamented with fountains. To our left we beheld the towers of the Alhambra beetling above us; to our right on the opposite side of the ravine we were equally dominated by rival towers on a rocky eminence. These, we were told, were the Torres Bermejas, or Vermilion Towers, so called from their ruddy hue. No one knows their origin. They are of a date much anterior to the Alhambra; some suppose them to have been built by the Romans, others by some wandering colony of Phoenicians. Ascending the steep and shady avenue, we arrived at the foot of a huge square Moorish tower forming a kind of barbican, through which passed the main entrance to the fortress. Within the barbican was another group of veteran invalids, one mounting guard at the portal, while the

rest wrapped in their tattered cloaks slept on the stone benches. This portal is called the Gate of Justice from the tribunal held within its porch during the Moslem domination, for the immediate trial of petty causes, a custom common to the oriental nations and occasionally alluded to in the Sacred Scriptures.

The great vestibule or porch of the gate is formed by an immense Arabian arch of horseshoe form, which springs to half the height of the tower. On the key-stone of this arch is engraven a gigantic hand. Within the vestibule on the keystone of the portal is sculptured in like manner a gigantic key. Those who pretend to some knowledge of Mahometan symbols affirm that the hand is the emblem of doctrine and the key of faith; the latter, they add, was emblazoned on the standard of the Moslems when they subdued Andalusia, in opposition to the Christian emblem of the Cross. A different explanation, however, was given by the legitimate son of the Alhambra, and one more in unison with the notions of the common people who attach something of mystery and magic to everything Moorish and have all kinds of superstitions connected with this old Moslem fortress.

According to Mateo it was a tradition handed down from the oldest inhabitants and which he had from his father and grandfather that the hand and key were magical devices on

which the fate of the Alhambra depended. The Moorish king who built it was a great magician or, as some believed, had sold himself to the devil and had laid the whole fortress under a magic spell. By this means it had remained standing for several hundred years in defiance of storms and earthquakes, while almost all other buildings of the Moors had fallen to ruin and disappeared. This spell, the tradition went on to say, would last until the hand on the outer arch should reach down and grasp the key, when the whole pile would tumble to pieces and all the treasures buried beneath it by the Moors would be revealed.

Notwithstanding this ominous prediction, we ventured to pass through the spellbound gateway, feeling some little assurance against magic art in the protection of the Virgin, a statue of whom we observed above the portal.

After passing through the barbican, we ascended a narrow lane winding between walls and came on an open esplanade within the fortress, called the Plaza de los Aljibes or Place of the Cisterns from great reservoirs which undermine it, cut in the living rock by the Moors, for the supply of the fortress. Here also is a well of immense depth, furnishing the purest and coldest of water, another monument of the delicate taste of the Moors who were indefatigable in their exertions to obtain that element in its crystal purity.

In front of this esplanade is the splendid pile commenced by Charles V., intended, it is said, to eclipse the residence of the Moslem kings. With all its grandeur and architectural merit, it appeared to us like an arrogant intrusion and, passing by it, we entered a simple unostentatious portal, opening into the interior of the Moorish palace.

The transition was almost magical; it seemed as if we were at once transported into other times and another realm, and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court, paved with white marble and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles; it is called the Court of the Alberca. In the centre was an immense basin or fishpond, a hundred and thirty feet in length by thirty in breadth, stocked with gold-fish and bordered by hedges of roses. At the upper end of this court rose the great Tower of Comares.

From the lower end we passed through a Moorish archway into the renowned Court of Lions. There is no part of the edifice that gives us a more complete idea of its original beauty and magnificence than this, for none has suffered so little from the ravages of time. In the centre stands the fountain famous in song and story. The alabaster basins still shed their diamond drops, and the twelve lions which support them cast forth their crystal streams as in the days of

Boabdil. The court is laid out in flower-beds and surrounded by light Arabian arcades of open filigree-work, supported by slender pillars of white marble. The architecture, like that of all the other parts of the palace, is characterized by elegance rather than grandeur, bespeaking a delicate and graceful taste and a disposition to indolent enjoyment. When one looks upon the fairy tracery of the peristyles and the apparently fragile fretwork of the walls, it is difficult to believe that so much has survived the wear and tear of centuries, the shocks of earthquakes, the violence of war and the quiet, though no less baneful, pilferings of the tasteful traveller, it is almost sufficient to excuse the popular tradition that the whole is protected by a magic charm.

On one side of the court a portal, richly adorned, opens into a lofty hall paved with white marble and called the Hall of the Two Sisters. A cúpula or lantern admits a tempered light from above and a free circulation of air. The lower part of the walls is encrusted with beautiful Moorish tiles, on some of which are emblazoned the escutcheons of the Moorish monarchs; the upper part is faced with the fine stucco-work invented at Damascus, consisting of large plates, cast in moulds and artfully joined, so as to have the appearance of having been laboriously sculptured by the hand into light relievos and fanciful arabesques, intermin-

gled with texts of the Koran and poetical inscriptions in Arabian and Cufic characters. These decorations of the walls and cúpula are richly gilded and the interstices pencilled with lapis lazuli, and other brilliant and enduring colours. On each side of the hall are recesses for ottomans and couches. Above an inner porch is a balcony which communicated with the women's apartment. The latticed jalousies still remain, from whence the dark-eyed beauties of the harem might gaze unseen upon the entertainments of the hall below.

It is impossible to contemplate this once favourite abode of Oriental manners without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday; but where are the Zoraydas and Lindaraxas?

On the opposite side of the Court of Lions is the Hall of the Abencerrages, so called from the gallant cavaliers of that illustrious line, who were here perfidiously massacred. There are some who doubt the whole truth of this story, but our humble attendant Mateo pointed out the very wicket of the portal through which they are said to have been introduced, one by one, and the white marble fountain in the

centre of the hall where they were beheaded. He showed us also certain broad ruddy stains in the pavement, traces of their blood which, according to popular belief, can never be effaced. Finding we listened to him with easy faith, he added that there was often heard at night in the Court of Lions, a low, confused sound, resembling the murmuring of a multitude, with now and then a faint tinkling, like the distant clank of chains. These noises are probably produced by the bubbling currents and tinkling falls of water, conducted under the pavement through pipes and channels to supply the fountains; but, according to the legend of the son of the Alhambra, they are made by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages who nightly haunt the scene of their suffering and invoke the vengeance on Heaven on their destroyer.

From the Court of Lions we retraced our steps through the Court of the Alberca or Great Fish-pool, crossing which, we proceeded to the Tower of Comares, so called from the name of the Arabian architect. It is of massive strength and lofty height, domineering over the rest of the edifice and overhanging the steep hill side which descends abruptly to the banks of the Darro. A Moorish archway admitted us into a vast and lofty hall which occupies the interior of the tower and was the grand audience-chamber of the Moslem monarchs, thence called the Hall of Ambassadors. It still

bears the traces of past magnificence. The walls are richly stuccoed and decorated with arabesques; the vaulted ceiling of cedar wood, almost lost in obscurity from its height, still gleams with rich gilding and the brilliant tints of the Arabian pencil. On three sides of the saloon are deep windows cut through the immense thickness of the walls, the balconies of which look down upon the verdant valley of the Darro, the streets and convents of the Albaicín, and command a prospect of the distant vega.

I might go on to describe minutely the other delightful apartments of this side of the palace: the Tocador or toilet of the queen, an open belvedere on the summit of a tower, where the Moorish sultanas enjoyed the pure breezes from the mountain and the prospect of the surrounding paradise; the secluded little patio or garden of Lindaraxa, with its alabaster fountain, its thickets of roses and myrtles, of citrons and oranges; the cool halls and grottoes of the baths, where the glare and heat of day are tempered into, a soft mysterious light and a pervading freshness. But I forbear to dwell minutely on those scenes; my object is merely to give the reader a general introduction into an abode where, if so disposed, he may linger and loiter with me through the remainder of this work, gradually becoming familiar with all its localities.

An abundant supply of water, brought from the mountains by old Moorish aqueducts, circulates throughout the palace, supplying its baths and fish-pools, sparkling in jets within its halls or murmuring in channels along the marble pavements. When it has paid its tribute to the royal pile and visited its gardens and pastures, it flows down the long avenue leading to the city, tinkling in rills, gushing in fountains and maintaining a perpetual verdure in those groves that embower and beautify the whole hill of the Alhambra.

Those only who have sojourned in the ardent climates of the South can appreciate the delights of an abode combining the breezy coolness of the mountain with the freshness and verdure of the valley.

While the city below pants with the noontide heat and the parched vega trembles to the eye, the delicate airs from the Sierra Nevada play through these lofty halls, bringing with them the sweetness of the surrounding gardens. Everything invites to that indolent repose, the bliss of southern climes, and while the half-shut eye looks out from shaded balconies upon the glittering landscape, the ear is lulled by the rustling of groves and the murmur of running streams.

THE TOWER OF COMARES

The reader has had a sketch of the interior of the Alhambra and may be desirous of a general idea of its vicinity. The morning is serene and lovely, the sun has not gained sufficient power to destroy the freshness of the night; we will mount to the summit of the Tower of Comares and take a bird's eye view of Granada and its environs.

Come then, worthy reader and comrade, follow my steps into this vestibule, ornamented with rich tracery, which opens to the Hall of Ambassadors. We will not enter the hall, however, but turn to the left to this small door opening in the wall. Have a care! Here are steep winding steps and but scanty light; yet up this narrow, obscure and winding staircase the proud monarchs of Granada and their queens have often ascended to the battlements of the Tower to watch the approach of Christian armies or to gaze on the battles in the vega. At length we are on the terraced roof and may take breath for a moment, while we cast a general eye over the splendid panorama of city and country, of rocky mountain, verdant valley and fertile plain, of castle, cathedral, Moorish towers and Gothic domes, crumbling ruins and blooming groves.

Let us approach the battlements and cast our eyes immediately below. See, on this side we have the whole plan of the Alhambra laid open to us and can look down into its Court of the Alberca with its great tank or fish-pool, bordered with flowers; and yonder is the Court of Lions, with its famous fountains and its light Moorish arcades and in the centre of the pile is the little garden of Lindaraxa, buried in the heart of the building, with its roses and citrons and shrubbery of emerald green.

That belt of battlements, studded with square towers, straggling round the whole brow of the hill, is the outer boundary of the fortress. Some of the towers, you may perceive, are in ruins and their massive fragments are buried among vines, fig trees and aloes.

Let us look on this northern side of the tower. It is a giddy height; the very foundations of the tower rise above the groves of the steep hillside. And see, a long fissure in the massive walls shows that the tower has been rent by some of the earthquakes which from time to time have thrown Granada into consternation and which, sooner or later, must reduce this crumbling pile to a mere mass of ruin. The deep, narrow glen below us, which gradually widens as it opens from the mountains, is the valley of the Darro; you see the little river winding its way under embowered terraces and

among orchards and flower-gardens. It is a stream famous in old times for yielding gold and its sands are still sifted occasionally in search of the precious ore. Some of those white pavilions which here and there gleam from among groves and vineyards were rustic retreats of the Moors to enjoy the refreshment of their gardens.

The airy palace, with its tall white towers and long arcades, which breasts yon mountain among pompous groves and hanging gardens is the Generalife, a summer palace of the Moorish kings, to which they resorted during the sultry months to enjoy a still more breezy region than that of the Alhambra. The naked summit of the height above it, where you behold some shapeless ruins, is the Silla del Moro or Seat of the Moor, so called from having been a retreat of the unfortunate Boabdil during the time of an insurrection, where he seated himself and looked down mournfully upon his rebellious city.

A murmuring sound of water now and then rises from the valley. It is from the aqueduct of von Moorish mill nearly at the foot of the hill. The avenue of trees beyond is the Alameda along the bank of the Darro, a favourite resort in evenings and a rendezvous of lovers in the summer nights, when the guitar may be heard at a late hour from the benches along its walks. At present, there are but a few loi-

tering monks to be seen there and a group of water-carriers from the fountain of Avellano.

You start! It is nothing but a hawk that we have frightened from his nest. This old tower is a complete breeding place for vagrant birds; the swallow and martlet abound in every chink and cranny, and circle about it the whole day long, while at night, when all other birds have gone to rest, the moping owl comes out of its lurking-place and utters its boding cry from the battlements. See how the hawk we have dislodged sweeps away below us, skimming over the tops of the trees and sailing up to the ruins above the Generalife.

Let us leave this side of the tower and turn our eyes to the west. Here you behold in the distance a range of mountains bounding the Vega, the ancient barrier between Moslem Granada and the land of the Christian. Among their heights you may still discern warrior towns, whose grey walls and battlements seem of a piece with the rocks on which they are built; while here and there is a solitary atalaya or watch-tower, mounted on some lofty point and looking down, as it were from the sky, into the valleys on either side. It was down the defiles of these mountains by the pass of Lope that the Christian armies descended into the Vega. It was round the base of yon grey and naked mountain, almost insulated from the rest and stretching its bold rocky promontory into

the bosom of the plain that the invading squadrons would come bursting into view with flaunting banners and the clangour of drums and trumpets. How changed is the scene! Instead of the glittering line of mailed warriors, we behold the patient train of the toilful muleteer, slowly moving along the skirts of the mountain. Behind that promontory is the eventful bridge of Pinos, renowned for many a bloody strife between Moors and Christians, but still more renowned as being the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella, just as he was departing in despair, to carry his project of discovery to the court of France.

Behold another place famous in the history of the discoverer. Yon line of walls and towers gleaming in the morning sun in the very centre of the Vega, is the city of Santafé, built by the Catholic sovereigns during the siege of Granada, after a conflagration had destroyed their camp. It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen, and within them the treaty was concluded that led to the discovery of the western world.

Here, towards the south, the eye revels in the luxuriant beauties of the Vega; a blooming wilderness of grove and garden and teeming orchard, with the Xenil winding through it in silver links and feeding innumerable rills, con-

ducted through ancient Moorish channels which maintain the landscape in perpetual verdure. Here are the beloved bowers and gardens and rural retreats, for which the Moors fought with such desperate valour. The very farm-houses and hovels which are now inhabited by the boors, retain traces of arabesques and other tasteful decorations which show them to have been elegant residences in the days of the Moslems.

Beyond the embowered region of the Vega you behold to the south a line of arid hills, down which a long train of mules is slowy moving. It was from the summit one of those hills that the unfortunate Boabdil cast back his last look upon Granada and gave vent to the agony of his soul. It is the spot famous in song and story, «The last sigh of the Moor.»

Now raise your eyes to the snowy summit of yon pile of mountains shining like a white summer cloud in the blue sky. It is the Sierra Nevada, the pride and delight of Granada, the source of her cooling breezes and perpetual verdure, of her gushing fountains and perennial streams. It is this glorious pile of mountains that gives to Granada that combination of delights so rare in a southern city: the fresh vegetation and the temperate airs of a northern climate, with the vivifying ardour of a tropical sun and the cloudless azure of a southern sky. It is this aërial treasury of snow which, melting in pro-

Washington Irving researching in an archive in Seville
David Wilkie, 1828-1829. Leicester (Leicestershire),
Museum and Art Galleris

portion to the increase of the summer heat, sends down rivulets and streams through every glen and gorge of the Alpujarras, diffusing emerald verdure and fertility throughout a chain of happy and sequestered valleys.

Those mountains may weIl be called the glory of Granada. They dominate the whole extent of Andalusia and may be seen from its most distant parts. The muleteer hails them, as he views their frosty peaks from the sultry level of the plain, and the Spanish mariner on the deck of his bark far, far off on the bosom of the blue Mediterranean watches them with a pensive eye, thinks of delightful Granada and chants in low voice some old romance about the Moors.

But enough– the sun is high above the mountains, and is pouring his full fervour upon our heads. Already the terraced roof of the tower is hot beneath our feet; let us abandon it and descend and refresh ourselves under the arcades by the Fountain of the Lions.

REFLECTIONS
ON THE
MOSLEM DOMINATION IN SPAIN

One of my favourite resorts is the balcony of the central window of the Hall of Ambassadors in the lofty tower of Comares. I have just been seated there, enjoying the close of a long brilliant day. The sun, as he sank behind the purple mountains of Alhama, sent a stream of effulgence up the valley of the Darro, that spread a melancholy pomp over the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while the Vega covered with a slight sultry vapour that caught the setting ray spread out in the distance like a golden sea. Not a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the hour; and though the faint sound of music and merriment now and then arose from the gardens of the Darro, it but rendered more impressive the monumental silence of the pile which overshadowed me. It was one of those hours and scenes in which memory asserts an almost magical power and, like the evening sun beaming on these mouldering towers, sends back her retrospective rays to light up the glories of the past.

As I sat watching the effect of the declining daylight upon this Moorish pile, I was led into a consideration of the light,

elegant and voluptuous character prevalent throughout its internal architecture and to contrast it with the grand but gloomy solemnity of the Gothic edifices, reared by the Spanish conquerors. The very architecture thus bespeaks the opposite and irreconcilable natures of the two warlike people who so long battled here for the mastery of the Peninsula. By degrees I fell into a course of musing upon the singular fortunes of the Arabian or Morisco Spaniards, whose whole existence is as a tale that is told and certainly forms one of the most anomalous yet splendid episodes in history. Potent and durable as was their dominion, we scarcely know how to call them. They are a nation, as it were, without a legitimate country or a name. A remote wave of the great Arabian inundation, cast upon the shores of Europe, they seemed to have all the impetus of the first rush of the torrent. Their career of conquest from the rock of Gibraltar to the cliffs of the Pyrenees was as rapid and brilliant as the Moslem victories of Syria and Egypt. Nay, had they not been checked on the plains of Tours, all France, all Europe, might have been overrun with the same facility as the empires of the East, and the crescent might at this day have glittered on the fanes of Paris and of London.

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa, that formed this great irruption,

gave up the Moslem principle of conquest and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent dominion. As conquerors, their heroism was only equalled by their moderation, and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them as they supposed by Allah and strove to embellish it with everything that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the arts and sciences, and promoting agriculture, manufactures and commerce, they gradually formed an empire unrivalled for its prosperity by any of the empires of Christendom, and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements that marked the Arabian empire in the East at the time of its greatest civilisation, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the western regions of benighted Europe.

The cities of Arabian Spain became the resort of Christian artisans, to instruct themselves in the useful art. The Universities of Toledo, Cordova, Seville, and Granada[1], were

[1] A medersa or madraza, amongst the Arabs, signified a school or college. Those cited by the author were renowned throughout the Spain of the period. The madraza of Granada occupied the site of the Old Town Hall (Ayuntamiento Viejo) which stands directly opposite the Royal Chapel. (Ed. note.)

sought by the pale student from other lands to acquaint himself with the sciences of the Arabs and the treasure lore of antiquity; the lovers of the gay sciences resorted to Cordova and Granada to imbibe the poetry and music of the East, and the steel-clad warriors of the North hastened thither to accomplish themselves in the graceful exercises and courteous usages of chivalry.

If the Moslem monuments in Spain, if the mosque of Cordova, the alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada, still bear inscriptions fondly boasting of the power and permanence of their dominion, can the boast be derided as arrogant and vain? Generation after generation, century after century, had passed away and still they maintained possession of the land. A period had elapsed longer than that which has passed since England was subjugated by the Norman Conqueror and the descendants of Musa and Taric might as little anticipate being driven into exile, across the same straits traversed by their triumphant ancestors, as the descendants of Rollo and William their veteran peers may dream of being driven back to the shores of Normandy.

With all this, however, the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished. Severed from all their neighbours in the West

by impassable barriers of faith and manners, and separated by seas and deserts from their kindred of the East, they were an isolated people. Their whole existence was a prolonged, though gallant and chivalric, struggle for a foothold in a usurped land.

They were the outposts and frontiers of Islamism. The Peninsula was the great battle-ground where the Gothic conquerors of the North and the Moslem conquerors of the East met and strove for mastery, and the fiery courage of the Arab was at length subdued by the obstinate and persevering valour of the Goth.

Never was the annihilation of a people more complete than that of the Morisco-Spaniards. Where are they? Ask the shores of Barbary and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once powerful empire disappeared among the barbarians of Africa and ceased to be a nation. They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people. The home of their adoption and of their occupation for ages refuses to acknowledge them, except as invaders and usurpers. A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion, as solitary rocks, left far in the interior, bear testimony to the extent of some vast inundation. Such is the Alhambra –a Moslem pile in the midst of a

Christian land, an Oriental palace amidst the Gothic edifices of the West, an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent, and graceful people who conquered, ruled and passed away.

THE HOUSEHOLD

It is time that I give some idea of my domestic arrangements in this singular residence. The Royal Palace of the Alhambra is entrusted to the care of a good old maiden dame, called Doña Antonia Molina, but who, according to Spanish custom, goes by the more neighbourly appellation of Tía Antonia (Aunt Antonia). She maintains the Moorish halls and gardens in order and shows them to strangers, in consideration of which she is allowed all the perquisites received from visitors and all the produce of the gardens, excepting that she is expected to pay an occasional tribute of fruits and flowers to the Governor. Her residence is in a corner of the palace and her family consists of a nephew and niece, the children of two different brothers. The nephew, Manuel Molina, is a young man of sterling worth and Spanish gravity. He has served in the armies both in Spain and the West Indies, but is now studying medicine, in hopes of one day or other becoming physician to the fortress, a post worth at least a hundred and forty dollars a year. As to the niece, she is a plump little black-eyed Andalusian damsel named Dolores, but who from her bright looks and cheerful

disposition merits a merrier name. She is the declared heiress of all her aunt's possessions, consisting of certain ruinous tenements in the fortress, yielding a revenue of about one hundred and fifty dollars. I had not been long in the Alhambra, before I discovered that a quiet courtship was going on between the discreet Manuel and his bright-eyed cousin, and that nothing was wanting to enable them to join their hands and expectations, but that he should receive his doctor's diploma and purchase a dispensation from the Pope, on account of their consanguinity.

With the good dame Antonia I have made a treaty, according to which she furnishes me with board and lodging, while the merry-hearted little Dolores keeps my apartment in order, and officiates as handmaid at meal-times. I have also at my command a tall, stuttering yellow-haired lad named Pepe who works in the gardens, and would fain have acted as valet, but in this he was forestalled by Mateo Jiménez, «the son of the Alhambra». This alert and officious wight has managed somehow or other to stick by me ever since I first encountered him at the outer gate of the fortress and to weave himself into all my plans, until he has fairly appointed and installed himself my valet, cicerone, guide, guard and historiographic squire, and I have been obliged to improve the state of his wardrobe, that he may

not disgrace his various functions, so that he has cast his old brown mantle as a snake does his skin, and now appears about the fortress with a smart Andalusian hat and jacket, to his infinite satisfaction and the great astonishment of his comrades. The chief fault of honest Mateo is an overanxiety to be useful. Conscious of having foisted himself into my employ and that my simple and quiet habits render his situation a sinecure, he is at his wit's end to devise modes of making himself important to my welfare. I am in a manner the victim of his officiousness; I cannot put my foot over the threshold of the palace, to stroll about the fortress, but he is at my elbow to explain everything I see, and if I venture to ramble among the surrounding hills he insists upon attending me as a guard, though I vehemently suspect he would be more apt to trust to the length of his legs than the strength of his arms in case of attack. After all, however, the poor fellow is at times an amusing companion; he is simple-minded and of infinite good humour with the loquacity and gossip of a village barber and knows all the small talk of the place and its environs, but what he chiefly values himself on, is his stock of local information, having the most marvellous stories to relate of every tower and vault and gateway of the fortress, in all of which he places the most implicit faith.

Most of these he has derived, according to his own account, from his grandfather, a little legendary tailor who lived to the age of nearly a hundred years, during which he made but two migrations beyond the precincts of the fortress. His shop, for the greater part of a century, was the resort of a knot of venerable gossips, where they would pass half the night talking about old times and the wonderful events and hidden secrets of the place. The whole living, moving, thinking, and acting of this historical little tailor had thus been bounded by the walls of the Alhambra; within them he had been born, within them he lived, breathed and had his being; within them he died and was buried. Fortunately for posterity, his traditionary lore died not with him. The authentic Mateo, when an urchin, used to be an attentive listener to the narratives of his grandfather and of the gossip group assembled round the shop-board, and is thus possessed of a stock of valuable knowledge concerning the Alhambra, not to be found in the books and well worthy the attention of every curious traveller.

Such are the personages that contribute to my domestic comforts in the Alhambra, and I question whether any of the potentates, Moslem or Christian, who have preceded me in the palace have been waited upon with greater fidelity or enjoyed a serener sway.

When I rise in the morning, Pepe, the stuttering lad from the gardens, brings me a tribute of fresh-culled flowers which are afterwards arranged in vases by the skilful hand of Dolores who talces a female pride in the decoration of my chamber. My meals are made wherever caprice dictates, sometimes in one of the Moorish halls, sometimes under the arcades of the Court of Lions, surrounded by flowers and fountains, and when I walk out, I am conducted by the assiduous Mateo to the most romantic retreats of the mountains and delicious haunts of the adjacent valleys, not one of which but is the scene of some wonderful tale.

Though fond of passing the greater part of my day alone, yet I occasionally repair in the evenings to the little domestic circle of Doña Antonia. This is generally held in an old Moorish chamber that serves for kitchen as well as hall, a rude fireplace having been made in one corner, the smoke from which has discoloured the walls and almost obliterated the ancient arabesques. A window with a balcony overhanging the valley of the Darro lets in the cool evening breeze, and here I take my frugal supper of fruit and milk, and mingle with the conversation of the family. There is a natural talent or mother wit, as it is called, about the Spaniards, which render them intellectual and agreeable companions, whatever may be their condition in life or

however imperfect may have been their education; add to this, they are never vulgar; nature has endowed them with an inherent dignity of spirit. The good Tía Antonia is a woman of strong and intelligent though uncultivated mind, and the bright-eyed Dolores, though she has read but three or four books in the whole course of her life, has an engaging mixture of naïveté and good sense, and often surprises me by the pungency of her artless sallies. Sometimes the nephew entertains us by reading some old comedy of Calderón or Lope de Vega, to which he is evidently prompted by a desire to improve as well as amuse his cousin Dolores; though to his great mortification the little damsel generally falls asleep before the first act is completed. Sometimes Tía Antonia has a little levee of humble friends and dependents, the inhabitants of the adjacent hamlet, or the wives of the invalid soldiers. These look up to her with great deference as the custodian of the palace and pay their court to her by bringing the news of the place or the rumours that may have straggled up from Granada. In listening to these evening gossipings I have picked up many curious facts, illustrative of the manners of the people and the peculiarities of the neighbourhood. These are simple details of simple pleasures; it is the nature of the place alone that gives them interest and importance. I tread haunted ground and am

surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood when on the banks of the Hudson I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams, and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold for once a day-dream realized; yet I can scarce credit my senses or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through these Oriental chambers and hear the murmur of fountains and the song of the nightingale, as I inhale the odour of the rose and feel the influence of the balmy climate, I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the paradise of Mahomet and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

THE TRUANT

Since noting the foregoing pages, we have had a scene of petty tribulation in the Alhambra which has thrown a cloud over the sunny countenance of Dolores. This little damsel has a female passion for pets of all kinds, and from the superabundant kindness of her disposition one of the ruined courts of the Alhambra is thronged with her favourites. A stately peacock and his hen seem to hold regal sway here over pompous turkeys, querulous guinea fowls and a rabble rout of common cocks and hens. The great delight of Dolores, however, has for some time past been centred in a youthful pair of pigeons who have lately entered into the holy state of wedlock and who have even supplanted a tortoise-shell cat and kittens in her affections.

As a tenement for them wherein to commence housekeeping, she had fitted up a small chamber adjacent to the kitchen, the window of which looked into one of the quiet Moorish courts. Here they lived in happy ignorance of any world beyond the court and its sunny roofs. Never had they aspired to soar above the battlements or to mount to the summit of the towers. Their virtuous union was at length

crowned by two spotless and milk-white eggs to the great joy of their cherishing little mistress. Nothing could be more praiseworthy than the conduct of the young married folks on this interesting occasion. They took turns to sit upon the nest until the eggs were hatched and while their callow progeny required warmth and shelter; while one thus stayed at home, the other foraged abroad for food and brought home abundant supplies.

This scene of conjugal felicity has suddenly met with a reverse. Early this morning, as Dolores was feeding the male pigeon, she took a fancy to give him a peep at the great world. Opening a window therefore which looks down upon the valley of the Darro, she launched him at once beyond the walls of the Alhambra. For the first time in his life the astonished bird had to try the full vigour of his wings. He swept down into the valley and then rising upwards with a surge, soared almost to the clouds. Never before had he risen to such a height or experienced such delight in flying, and, like a young spendthrift just come to his estate, he seemed giddy with excess of liberty and with the boundless field of action suddenly opened to him. For the whole day he has been circling about in capricious flights, from tower to tower and tree to tree. Every attempt has been vain to lure him back by scattering grain upon the roofs; he seems to have lost all

thought of home, of his tender helpmate and his callow young. To add to the anxiety of Dolores, he has been joined by two palomas ladronas or robber-pigeons whose instinct it is to entice wandering pigeons to their own dovecotes. The fugitive, like many other thoughtless youths on their first launching upon the world, seems quite fascinated with these knowing but graceless companions who have undertaken to show him life and introduce him to society. He has been soaring with them over all the roofs and steeples of Granada. A thunderstorm has passed over the city, but he has not sought his home; night has closed in and still he comes not. To deepen the pathos of the affair, the female pigeon, after remaining several hours on the nest, without being relieved, at length went forth to seek her recreant mate, but stayed away so long, that the young ones perished for want of the warmth and shelter of the parent bosom. At a late hour, in the evening, word was brought to Dolores, that the truant bird had been seen upon the towers of the Generalife. Now it happens that the administrador of that ancient palace has likewise a dovecote, among the inmates of which are said to be two or three of these inveigling, birds, the terror of all neighbouring pigeon-fanciers. Dolores immediately concluded that the two feathered sharpers who had been seen with her fugitive, were these bloods of the Generalife. A council of war

was forthwith held in the chamber of Tía Antonia. The Generalife is a distinct jurisdiction from the Alhambra and of course some punctilio, if not jealousy, exists between their custodians. It was determined therefore to send Pepe, the stuttering lad of the gardens, as ambassador to the administrador, requesting that if such fugitive should be found in his dominions, he might be given up as a subject of the Alhambra. Pepe departed accordingly on his diplomatic expedition, through the moonlight groves and avenues, but returned in an hour with the afflicting intelligence, that no such bird was to be found in the dovecote of the Generalife. The administrador, however, pledged his sovereign word that if such a vagrant should appear there, even at midnight, he should instantly be arrested and sent back prisoner to his little black-eyed mistress.

Thus stands the melancholy affair, which has occasioned much distress throughout the palace and has sent the inconsolable Dolores to a sleepless pillow.

«Sorrow endureth for a night», says the proverb, «but joy cometh in the morning». The first object that met my eyes, on leaving my room this morning, was Dolores with the truant pigeon in her hands, and her eyes sparkling with joy. He had appeared at an early hour on the battlements, hovering shyly about from roof to roof, but at length entered the window,

and surrendered himself prisoner. He gained little credit, however, by his return, for the ravenous manner in which he devoured the food set before him, showed that, like the prodigal son, he had been driven home by sheer famine. Dolores upbraided him for his faithless conduct, calling him all manner of vagrant names (though, womanlike, she fondled him at the same time to her bosom, and covered him with kisses). I observed, however, that she had taken care to clip his wings, to prevent all future soarings, a precaution which I mention for the benefit of all those who have truant lovers or wandering husbands. More than one valuable moral might be drawn from the story of Dolores and her pigeon.

THE AUTHOR'S CHAMBER

On taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suite of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the Governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade; the further end communicated with a cluster of little chambers, partly Moorish, partly modern, inhabited by Tía Antonia and her family; these terminated in a large room which serves the good old dame for parlour, kitchen and hall of audience. It had boasted of some splendour in the time of the Moors, but a fireplace had been built in one corner, the smoke from which had discoloured the walls, nearly obliterated the ornaments, and spread a sombre tint on the whole. From these gloomy apartments, a narrow blind corridor and a dark winding staircase led down an angle of the tower of Comares, groping along which and opening a small door at the bottom, you were suddenly dazzled by emerging into the brilliant antechamber of the Hall of Ambassadors, with the fountain of the court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier apartment of the palace and longed to ensconce

myself in the very heart of the building. As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls, I found in a remote gallery a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery; here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty; the door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture, though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which were of deep panel-work of cedar, richly and skilfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks of faces, but broken in many places. The walls had evidently, in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travellers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chamber. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the panelled ceilings were baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated; the windows were in the same shat-

tered state as in the other chambers. This fanciful suite of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation along this retired little garden that it awakened an interest in its history. I found on inquiry that it was an apartment fitted up by Italian artists in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabeth of Parma were expected at the Alhambra and was destined for the queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping-room, and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvedere, originally a mirador of the Moorish sultanas, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabeth, and which still retains the name of the Tocador or Toilette of the Queen. The sleeping-room I have mentioned, commanded from one window a prospect of the Generalife and its embowered terraces; under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still further back to the period of another reign of beauty, to the days of the Moorish sultanas.

«How beauteous is this garden!» says an Arabic inscription, «where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of

heaven! What can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain, filled with crystal water? Nothing but the moon in her fullness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky!»

Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained! The garden of Lindaraxa was still adorned with flowers, the fountain still presented its crystal mirror; it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had become the nestling-place of the lizard, but there is something in the very decay that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking, as it did, of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation too of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabeth, had a more touching charm for me than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendour, glittering with the pageantry of a court. I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

My determination excited great surprise in the family who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote and forlorn an apartment. The good Tía Antonia considered it highly dangerous; the neighbourhood, she said, was infested by vagrants; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gypsies; the palace was ruinous, and easy to be entered in many parts, and the rumour of a stranger

quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visitors in the night, specially as foreigners are always supposed to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place, nothing but bats and owls flitting about; then there were a fox and a wild cat, that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

I was not to be diverted from my humour; so calling in the assistance of a carpenter and the ever-officious Mateo Jiménez, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security. With all these precautions, I must confess, the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber, and their taking leave of me and returning along the waste antechambers and echoing galleries, reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of an enchanted house.

Even the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now by a perversion of fancy added to the gloom. Here was the scene of their transient gaiety and loveliness; here the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment, but what and where were they? –Dust and ashes! Tenants of the tomb! Phantoms of the memory!

A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers awakened by the evening's conversation, but I felt that it was something more unreal and absurd. In a word, the long-buried impressions of the nursery were reviving and asserting their power over my imagination. Everything began to be affected by the working of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron-trees beneath my window had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets, indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window, but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in and flitted about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

Rousing myself and half smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a limited distance around me. I walked as it were in a mere halo of light and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me!

My own shadow playing about the walls, and the echoes of my own footsteps, disturbed me.

In this excited state, as I was traversing the great Hall of Ambassadors there were added real sounds to these conjectural fancies. Low moans and indistinct ejaculations, seemed to rise as it were beneath my feet. I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an animal, at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds, in that still hour and singular place, destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacrity than I had sallied forth and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls and the door bolted behind me. When I awoke in the morning with the sun shining in at my window and lighting up every part of the building with his cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

Still, the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard, were not ideal; but they were soon accounted for by my handmaid Dolores, being the ravings of a poor maniac, a

brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the Hall of Ambassadors.

THE ALHAMBRA BY MOONLIGHT

I have given a picture of my apartment on my first taking possession of it; a few evenings have produced a thorough change in the scene and in my feelings. The moon which then was invisible has gradually gained upon the night and now rolls in full splendour above the towers, pouring a flood of tempered light into every court and hall. The garden beneath my windows is gently lighted up, the orange and citron-trees are tipped with silver, the fountain sparkles in the moonbeams and even the blush of the rose is faintly visible.

I have sat for hours at my window, inhaling the sweetness of the garden and musing on the chequered fortunes of those whose history is dimly shadowed out in the elegant memorials around. Sometimes I have issued forth at midnight, when everything was quiet, and have wandered over the whole building. Who can do justice to a moonlight night in such a climate and in such a place! The temperature of an Andalusian midnight in summer is perfectly ethereal. We seem lifted up into a purer atmosphere; there is a serenity of soul, a buoyancy of spirits, an elasticity of frame that render

mere existence enjoyment. The effect of moonlight, too, on the Alhambra, has something like enchantment. Every rent and chasm of time, every mouldering tint and weather-stain disappears, the marble resumes its original whiteness, the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams, the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance, until the whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale.

At such a time I have ascended to the little pavilion called the Queen's Toilette to enjoy its varied and extensive prospect. To the right, the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada would gleam like silver clouds against the darker firmament, and all the outlines of the mountain would be softened, yet delicately defined. My delight, however, would be to lean over the parapet of the tocador and gaze down upon Granada, spread out like a map below me, all buried in deep repose and its white palaces and convents sleeping, as it were, in the moonshine.

Sometimes I would hear the faint sounds of castanets from some party of dancers lingering in the Alameda; at other times I have heard the dubious tones of a guitar and the notes of a single voice rising from some solitary street and have pictured to myself some youthful cavalier serenading his lady's window, a gallant custom of former days, but now sadly on the decline, except in the remote towns and villages

A celebration in the tenement
John Phillip (1817-1867)

of Spain. Such were the scenes that have detained me for many an hour loitering about the courts and balconies of the castle, enjoying that mixture of reverie and sensation which steal away existence in a southern climate, and it has been almost morning before I have retired to my bed and been lulled to sleep by the falling waters of the fountain of Lindaraxa.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALHAMBRA

I have often observed that the more proudly a mansion has been tenanted in the day of its prosperity, the humbler are its inhabitants in the day of its decline and that the palace of the king commonly ends in being the nestling-place of the beggar.

The Alhambra is in a rapid state of similar transition. Whenever a tower falls to decay, it is seized upon by some tatterdemalion family who become joint-tenants with the bats and owls of its gilded halls and hang their rags, those standards of poverty, out of its windows and loopholes.

I have amused myself with remarking some of the motley characters that have thus usurped the ancient abode of Royalty and who seem as if placed here to give a farcical termination to the drama of human pride. One of these even bears the mockery of a regal title. It is a little old woman named María Antonia Sabonea, but who goes by the appellation of la Reina Coquina or the Cockle-queen. She is small enough to be a fairy, and a fairy she may be for aught I can find out, for no one seems to know her origin. Her habitation is in a kind of closet under the outer staircase of the palace,

and she sits in the cool stone corridor, plying her needle and singing from morning till night with a ready joke for every one that passes; for though one of the poorest, she is one of the merriest little women breathing. Her great merit is a gift for story-telling, having, I verily believe, as many stories at her command as the inexhaustible Scheherezade of the Thousand and One Nights. Some of these I have heard her relate in the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, at which she is occasionally an humble attendant.

That there must be some fairy gift about this mysterious little old woman would appear from her extraordinary luck, since, notwithstanding her being very little, very ugly and very poor, she has had according to her own account five husbands and a half reckoning as a half one, a young dragoon who died during courtship. A rival personage to this little fairy queen is a portly old fellow with a bottle nose, who goes about in a rusty garb with a cocked hat of oilskin and a red cockade. He is one of the legitimate sons of the Alhambra and has lived here all his life, filling various offices, such as deputy alguacil, sexton of the parochial church, and marker of a fives court established at the foot of one of the towers. He is as poor as a rat, but as proud as he is ragged, boasting of his descent from the illustrious house of Aguilar, from which sprang Gonzalvo of Cordova, the

Grand Captain. Nay, he actually bears the name of Alonso de Aguilar, so renowned in the history of the conquest, though the graceless wags of the fortress have given him the title of El Padre Santo or the Holy Father, the usual appellation of the Pope, which I had though too sacred in the eyes of true Catholics to be thus ludicrously applied. It is a whimsical caprice of fortune to present in the grotesque person of this tatterdemalion a namesake and descendant of the proud Alonso de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry, leading an almost mendicant existence about this once haughty fortress which his ancestor aided to reduce; yet such might have been the lot of the descendants of Agamemnon and Achilles, had they lingered about the ruins of Troy!

Of this motley community, I find the family of my gossiping squire, Mateo Jiménez, to form from their numbers at least a very important part. His boast of being a son of the Alhambra is not unfounded. His family has inhabited the fortress ever since the time of the Conquest, handing down an hereditary poverty from father to son, not one of them having ever been known to be worth a maravedí. His father by trade a riband-weaver and who succeeded the historical tailor as the head of the family is now near seventy years of age and lives in a hovel of reeds and plaster, built by his own hands just above the Iron Gate. The furniture consists of a crazy bed, a table

and two or three chairs, a wooden chest, containing his clothes and the archives of his family, that is to say, a few papers concerning old lawsuits which he cannot read; but the pride of his hovel is a blazon of the arms of the family, brilliantly coloured and suspended in a frame against the wall, clearly demonstrating, by its quarterings, the various noble houses with which this poverty-stricken brood claim affinity.

As to Mateo himself, he has done his utmost to perpetuate his line, having a wife and a numerous progeny who inhabit an almost dismantled hovel in the hamlet. How they manage to subsist, He only who sees into all mysteries can tell; the subsistence of a Spanish family of the kind, is always a riddle to me, yet they do subsist and what is more appear to enjoy their existence. The wife takes her holiday stroll in the Paseo of Granada with a child in her arms and half a dozen at her heels, and the eldest daughter, now verging into womanhood, dresses her hair with flowers and dances gaily to the castanets.

Here are two classes of people to whom life seems one long holiday, the very rich, and the very poor; one, because they need do nothing, the other, because they have nothing to do; but there are none who understand the art of doing nothing and living upon nothing better than the poor classes

of Spain. Climate does one half and temperament the rest. Give a Spaniard the shade in summer and the sun in winter, a little bread, garlic, oil and garbanzos, an old brown cloak and a guitar, and let the world roll on as it pleases. Talk of poverty! With him it has no disgrace. It sits upon him with a grandiose style, like his ragged cloak. He is an hidalgo even when in rags.

The «sons of the Alhambra» are an eminent illustration of this practical philosophy. As the Moors imagined that the celestial paradise hung over this favoured spot, so I am inclined at times to fancy that a gleam of the golden age still lingers about the ragged community. They possess nothing, they do nothing, they care for nothing. Yet, though apparently idle all the week, they are as observant of all holidays and saints' days as the most laborious artisan. They attend all fêtes and dancings in Granada and its vicinity, light bonfires on the hills on St. John's eve and have lately danced away the moonlight nights on the harvest-home of a small field within the precincts of the fortress, which yielded a few bushels of wheat.

Before concluding these remarks, I must mention one of the amusements of the place, which has particularly struck me. I had repeatedly observed a long lean fellow perched on the top of one of the towers, manœuvring two or three

fishingrods, as though he was angling for the stars. I was for some time perplexed by the evolutions of this aërial fisherman and my perplexity increased on observing others employed in like manner on different parts of the battlements and bastions; it was not until I consulted Mateo Jiménez that I solved the mystery.

It seems that the pure and airy situation of this fortress has rendered it, like the castle of Macbeth, a prolific breeding place for swallows and martlets who sport about its towers in myriads with the holiday glee of urchins just let loose from school. To entrap these birds in their giddy circlings, with hooks baited with flies, is one of the favourite amusements of the ragged «sons of the Alhambra», who, with the good-fornothing ingenuity of arrant idlers, have thus invented the art of angling in the sky.

THE COURT OF LIONS

The peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past, and thus clothing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these «vain shadows», I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favourable to this phantasmagoria of the mind, and none are more so than the Court of Lions and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendour exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile and rent its rudest towers, yet see, not one of those slender columns has been displaced, not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way, and all the fairy fretwork of these domes, apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost, yet exist after the lapse of centuries, almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist. I write in the midst of these mementoes of the past, in the fresh hour of early morning, in the fated Hall of the Abencerrages. The bloodstained fountain, the legendary

monument of their massacre, is before me; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the ancient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around! Everything here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings, for everything is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal I behold the Court of Lions with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades and sparkling in its fountains. The lively swallow dives into the Court and then surging upwards darts away twittering over the roofs; the busy bee toils humming among the flower-beds and painted butterflies hover from plant to plant and flutter up and sport with each other in the sunny air. It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem, loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

He, however, who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes, let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the Court and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls. Then nothing can be more serenely melancholy or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the Court. Here was performed in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella and their triumphant Court the pompous ceremonial of high mass, on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall where the altar was erected, and where officiated the Grand Cardinal of Spain and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land. I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host, that mixture of mitred prelate and shaven monk, steel-clad knight and silken courtier, when crosses and croziers and religious standards were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain, and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus, the future discoverer of a world, taking his modest stand in a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic Sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar and pouring forth thanks for their victory, while the vaults resounded with sacred minstrelsy and the deep-toned Te Deum.

The transient illusion is over –the pageant melts from the fancy– monarch, priest and warrior return into oblivion, with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of

their triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vault and the owl hoots from the neighbouring tower of Comares.

On entering the Court of the Lions a few evenings since, I was startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly seated near the fountain. It seemed, for a moment, as if one of the superstitions of the place were realised and some ancient inhabitant of the Alhambra had broken the spell of centuries and become visible. He proved, however, to be a mere ordinary mortal, a native of Tetuan in Barbary, who had a shop in the Zacatín of Granada, where he sold rhubarb, trinkets and perfumes. As he spoke Spanish fluently, I was enabled to hold conversation with him, and found him shrewd and intelligent. He told me that he came up the hill occasionally in the Alhambra which reminded him of the old palaces in Barbary, which were built and adorned in similar style, though with less magnificence.

As we walked about the palace, he pointed out several of the Arabic inscriptions, as possessing much poetic beauty.

«Ah, señor», said he, «when the Moors held Granada they were a gayer people than they are now-a-days! They thought only of love, of music and poetry. They made stanzas upon every occasion and set them all to music. He who could make the best verses and she who had the most

tuneful voice might be sure of favour and preferment. In those days, if anyone asked for bread, the reply was make me a couplet, and the poorest beggar, if he begged in rhyme, would often be rewarded with a piece of gold.»

«And is the popular feeling for poetry», said I, «entirely lost among you?»

«By no means, señor; the people of Barbary, even those of the lower classes, still make couplets and good ones too, as in the olden time; but talent is not rewarded as it was then; the rich prefer the jingle of their gold to the sound of poetry or music.»

As he was talking, his eye caught one of the inscriptions that foretold perpetuity to the power and glory of the Moslem monarchs, the masters of this pile. He shook head and shrugged his shoulders, as he interpreted it. «Such might have been the case», said he, «the Moslems might still have been reigning in the Alhambra, had not Boabdil been a traitor and given up his capital to the Christian. The Spanish monarchs would never have been able to conquer it by open force.»

I endeavoured to vindicate the memory of the unlucky Boabdil from this aspersion and to show that the dissensions which led to the downfall of the Moorish throne originated in the cruelty of his tiger-hearted father, but the Moor would admit of no palliation.

«Muley Hassan», said he, «might have been cruel, but he was brave, vigilant, and patriotic. Had he been properly seconded, Granada would still have been ours, but his son Boabdil thwarted his plans, crippled his power, sowed treason in his palace and dissension in his camp. May the curse of God light upon him for his treachery!» With these words the Moor left the Alhambra.

The indignation of my turbaned companion agrees with an anecdote related by a friend who in the course of a tour in Barbary, had an interview with the Pacha of Tetuan. The Moorish governor was particular in his inquires about the soil and especially concerning the favoured regions of Andalusia, the delights of Granada and the remains of its royal palace. The replies awakened all those fond recollections, so deeply cherished by the Moors, of the power and splendour of their ancient empire in Spain. Turning to his Moslem attendants, the Pacha stroked his beard and broke forth in passionate lamentations that such a sceptre should have fallen from the sway of true believers. He consoled himself, however, with the persuasion that the power and prosperity of the Spanish nation were on the decline, that a time would come when the Moors would conquer their rightful domains and that the day was perhaps not far distant when Mahommedan worship would again be offered

up in the Mosque of Cordova and a Mahommedan prince sit on his throne in the Alhambra.

Such is the general aspiration and belief among the Moors of Barbary, who consider Spain and especially Andalusia their rightful heritage, of which they have been despoiled by treachery and violence. These ideas are fostered and perpetuated by the descendants of the exiled Moors of Granada, scattered among the cities of Barbary. Several of these reside in Tetuan, preserving their ancient names, such as Páez and Medina, and refraining from intermarriage with any families who cannot claim the same high origin. Their vaunted lineage is regarded with a degree of popular deference rarely shown in Mahommedan communities to any hereditary distinction, except in the royal line.

These families, it is said, continue to sigh after the terrestrial paradise of their ancestors and to put up prayers in their mosques on Fridays, imploring Allah to hasten the time when Granada shall be restored to the faithful, an event to which they look forward as fondly and confidently as did the Christian crusaders to the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. Nay, it is added, that some of them retain the ancient maps and deeds of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada and even the keys of the houses,

holding them as evidences of their hereditary claims, to be produced at the anticipated day of restoration.

The Court of the Lions has also its share of supernatural legends. I have already mentioned the belief in the murmuring of voices and clanking of chains, made at night by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages. Mateo Jiménez, a few evenings since, at one of the gatherings in Dame Antonia's apartment related a fact which happened within the knowledge of his grandfather, the legendary tailor.

There was an invalid soldier, who had charge of the Alhambra to show it to strangers. As he was one evening about twilight passing through the Court of Lions, he heard footsteps in the Hall of the Abencerrages. Surprising some visitors to be lingering there, he advanced to attend upon them, when to his astonishment he beheld four Moors richly dressed with gilded cuirasses and scimitars and poniards glittering with precious stones. They were walking to and fro with solemn pace, but paused and beckoned to him. The old soldier, however, took to flight and could never afterwards be prevailed upon to enter the Alhambra. Thus it is that men sometimes turn their backs upon fortune, for it is the firm opinion of Mateo that the Moors intended to reveal the place where their treasures lay buried. A successor to the invalid soldier was more knowing; he came to the Alhambra poor,

but at the end of a year went off to Malaga, bought houses, set up a carriage and still lives there one of the richest as well as oldest men of the place, all which, Mateo sagely surmises, was in consequence of his finding out the golden secret of these phantom Moors.

BOABDIL EL CHICO

My conversation with the man in the Court of Lions set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil. Never was surname applicable than that bestowed upon him by his subjects of «el Zogoybi» or «the Unlucky». His misfortunes began almost in his cradle. In his tender youth he was imprisoned and menaced with death by an inhuman father, and only escaped through a mother's stratagem; in after years his life was embittered and repeatedly endangered by the hostilities of an usurping uncle; his reign was distracted by external invasions and internal feuds; he was alternately the foe, the prisoner, the friend, and always the dupe of Ferdinand, until conquered and dethroned by the mingled craft and force of that perfidious monarch. An exile from his native land, he took refuge with one of the princes of Africa and fell obscurely in battle, fighting in the cause of a stranger. His misfortunes ceased not with his death. If Boabdil cherished a desire to leave an honourable name on the historic page, how cruelly has he been defrauded of his hopes! Who is there that has turned the least attention to the romantic history of the Moorish domination in Spain without kindling with indig-

nation at the alleged atrocities of Boabdil? Who has not been touched with the woes of his lovely and gentle queen, subjected by him to a trial of life and death on a false charge of infidelity? Who has not been shocked by his alleged murder of his sister and her two children in a transport of passion? Who has not felt his blood boil at the inhuman massacre of the gallant Abencerrages, thirty-six of whom, it is affirmed, he ordered to be beheaded in the Court of Lions? All these charges have been reiterated in various forms; they have passed into ballads, dramas and romances, until they have taken too thorough possession of the public mind to be eradicated. There is not a foreigner of education that visits the Alhambra but asks for the fountain where the Abencerrages were beheaded and gazes with horror at the grated gallery where the Queen is said to have been confined; not a peasant of the Vega or the Sierra but sings the story in rude couplets to the accompaniment of his guitar while his hearers learn to execrate the very name of Boabdil.

Never, however, was name more foully and unjustly slandered. I have examined all the authentic chronicles and letters written by Spanish authors, contemporary with Boabdil, some of whom were in the confidence of the Catholic Sovereigns and actually present in the camp throughout the war. I have examined all the Arabian

authorities I could get access to through the medium of translation, and can find nothing to justify these dark and hateful accusations. The whole of these tales may be traced to a work commonly called The Civil Wars of Granada, containing a pretended history of the feuds of the Zegries and Abencerrages, during the last struggle of the Moorish empire. This work appeared originally in Spanish, and professed to be translated from the Arabic by one Ginés Pérez de Hita, an inhabitant of Murcia. It has since passed into various languages and Florian has taken from it much of the fable of his Gonsalvo of Cordova; it has since in a great measure usurped the authority of real history, and is currently believed by the people and especially the peasantry of Granada. The whole of it, however, is a mass of fiction, mingled with a few disfigured truths which give it an air of veracity. It bears internal evidence of its falsity; the manners and customs of the Moors being extravagantly misrepresented in it and scenes depicted, totally incompatible with their habits and their faith, and which never could have been recorded by a Mahommedan writer.

I confess there seems to me something almost criminal in the wilful perversions of this work; great latitude is undoubtedly to be allowed to romantic fiction, but there are limits which it must not pass, and the names of the distin-

guished dead which belong to history are no more to be calumniated than those of the illustrious living. One would have thought, too, that the unfortunate Boabdil had suffered enough for his justifiable hostility to the Spaniards by being stripped of his kingdom, without having his name thus wantonly traduced and rendered a by-word and a theme of infamy in his native land, and in the very mansion of his fathers!

It is not intended hereby to affirm that the transactions imputed to Boabdil are totally without historic foundation, but as far as they can be traced, they appear to have been the acts of his father, Aben Hassan, who is represented by both Christian and Arabian chroniclers as being of a cruel and ferocious nature. It was he who put to death the cavaliers of the illustrious line of the Abencerrages, upon suspicion of their being engaged in a conspiracy to dispossess him of his throne.

The story of the accusation of the Queen of Boabdil and of her confinement in one of the towers may also be traced to an incident in the life of his tiger-hearted father. Aben Hassan in his advanced age married a beautiful Christian captive of noble descent, who took the Moorish appellation of Zorayda, by whom he had two sons. She was of an ambitious spirit and envious that her children should succeed to

the crown. For this purpose she worked upon the suspicious temper of the King, inflaming him with jealousies of his children by other wives and concubines, whom she accused of plotting against his throne and life. Some of them were slain by the ferocious father. Ayxa la Horra, the virtuous mother of Boabdil, who had once been his cherished favourite, became likewise the object of his suspicion. He confined her and her son in the tower of Comares and would have sacrificed Boabdil to his fury, but that this tender mother lowered him from the tower in the night by means of the scarfs of herself and her attendants, and thus enabled him to escape to Guadix.

Such is the only shadow of a foundation that I can find for the story of the accused and captive Queen, and in this it appears that Boabdil was the persecuted, instead of the persecutor.

Throughout the whole of his brief, turbulent and disastrous reign, Boabdil gives evidence of a mild and amiable character. He in the first instance won the hearts of the people by his affable and gracious manners; he was always peaceable and never inflicted any severity of punishment upon those who occasionally rebelled against him. He was personally brave, but he wanted moral courage, and in times of difficulty and perplexity was wavering and irresolute.

This feebleness of spirit hastened his downfall, while it deprived him of that heroic grace which would have given a grandeur and dignity to his fate and rendered him worthy of closing the splendid drama of the Moslem domination in Spain.

MEMENTOS OF BOABDIL

While my mind was still warm with the subject of the unfortunate Boabdil, I set forth to trace the mementos connected with his story, which yet exist in this scene of his sovereignty and his misfortunes. In the picture-gallery of the Palace of the Generalife hangs his portrait. The face is mild, handsome and somewhat melancholy, with a fair complexion and yellow hair; if it be a true representation of the man, he may have been wavering and uncertain, but there is nothing of cruelty or unkindness in his aspect.

I next visited the dungeon where he was confined in his youthful days, when his cruel father meditated his destruction. It is a vaulted room in the tower of Comares under the Hall of Ambassadors; a similar room, separated by a narrow passage, was the prison of his mother, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra. The walls are of prodigious thickness and the small windows secured by iron bars. A narrow stone gallery with a low parapet extends round three sides of the tower, just below the windows, but at a considerable height from the ground. From this gallery, it is presumed, the Queen lowered her son with the scarfs of herself and her female

attendants, during the darkness of night to the hillside, at the foot of which waited a domestic with a fleet steed to bear the prince to the mountains.

As I paced this gallery, my imagination pictured the anxious Queen leaning over the parapet and listening with the throbbings of a mother's heart to the last echoes of the horse's hoofs, as her son scoured along the narrow valley of the Darro.

My next search was for the gate by which Boabdil departed from the Alhambra, when about to surrender his capital. With the melancholy caprice of a broken spirit he requested of the Catholic monarchs that no one afterwards might be permitted to pass through this gate. His prayer, according to ancient chronicles, was complied with, through the sympathy of Isabella and the gate walled up. For some time I inquired in vain for such a portal; at length, my humble attendant, Mateo, learned among the old residents of the fortress that a ruinous gateway still existed by which, according to tradition, the King Chico had left the fortress, but which had never been open within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

He conducted me to the spot. The gateway is in the centre of what was once an immense tower, called La Torre de los Siete Suelos or the Tower of Seven Floors. It is a place famous

in the superstitious stories of the neighbourhood, for being the scene of strange apparitions and Moorish enchantments.

This once redoubtable tower is now a mere wreck, having been blown up with gunpowder by the French, when they abandoned the fortress. Great masses of the wall lie scattered about, buried in the luxuriant herbage or overshadowed by vines and fig-trees. The arch of the gateway, though rent by the shock still remains, but the last wish of poor Boabdil has again, though unintentionally, been fulfilled, for the portal has been closed up by loose stones gathered from the ruins and remains impassable.

Following up the route of the Moslem monarch, as it remains on record, I crossed on horseback the hill of Los Mártires, keeping along the garden of the convent of the same name, and thence down a rugged ravine, beset by thickets of aloes and Indian figs and lined by caves and hovels swarming with gypsies. It was the road taken by Boabdil to avoid passing through the city. The descent was so steep and broken that I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse.

Emerging from the ravine, and passing by the Puerta de los Molinos (the Gate of the Mills), I issued forth upon the public promenade called the Prado and pursuing the course of the Xenil arrived at a small Moorish mosque, now converted into the chapel or hermitage of San Sebastián. A tablet

on the wall relates that on this spot Boabdil surrendered the keys of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns. From thence I rode slowly across the Vega to a village where the family and household of the unhappy King awaited him, for he had sent them forward on the preceding night from the Alhambra that his mother and wife might not participate in his personal humiliation or be exposed to the gaze of the conquerors. Following on in the route of the melancholy band of royal exiles, I arrived at the foot of a chain of barren and dreary heights, forming the skirt of the Alpuxarra mountains. From the summit of one of these the unfortunate Boabdil took his last look at Granada; it bears a name expressive of his sorrows: La Cuesta de las Lágrimas (the Hill of Tears). Beyond it, a sandy road winds across a rugged cheerless waste, doubly dismal to the unhappy monarch, as it led to exile.

I spurred my horse to the summit of a rock where Boabdil uttered his last sorrowful exclamation, as he turned his eyes from taking their farewell gaze; it is still denominated El último Suspiro del Moro (the Last Sigh of the Moor). Who can wonder at his anguish at being expelled from such a kingdom and such an abode? With the Alhambra he seemed to be yielding up all the honours of his line and all the glories and delights of life.

It was here, too, that his affliction was embittered by the reproach of his mother, Ayxa, who had so often assisted him in times of peril and had vainly sought to instil into him her own resolute spirit. «You do well», said she «to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man» —a speech that savours more of the pride of the princess than the tenderness of the mother.

When this anecdote was related to Charles V. by Bishop Guevara, the emperor joined in the expression of scorn at the weakness of the wavering Boabdil. «Had I been he or he been I», said the haughty potentate, «I would rather have made this Alhambra my sepulchre, than have lived without a kingdom in the Alpuxarra.»

How easy it is for those in power and prosperity to preach heroism to the vanquished! How little can they understand that life itself may rise in value with the unfortunate, when nought but life remains!

THE BALCONY

In the Hall of Ambassadors, at the central window there is a balcony, of which I have already made mention; it projects like a cage from the face of the tower, high in midair above the tops of the trees that grow on the steep hillside. It serves me as a kind of observatory, where I often take my seat to consider not merely the heaven above, but the earth beneath. Besides the magnificent prospect which it commands of mountain, valley and vega, there is a busy little scene of human life laid open to inspection immediately below. At the foot of the hills is an alameda or public walk which, though not so fashionable as the more modern and splendid paseo of the Xenil, still boasts a varied and picturesque concourse. Hither resort the small gentry of the suburbs, together with priests and friars, who walk for appetite and digestion, majos and majas the beaux and belles of the lower classes in their Andalusian dresses, swaggering contrabandistas and sometimes half-muffled and mysterious loungers of the higher ranks on some secret assignation.

It is a moving and motley picture of Spanish life and character, which I delight to study, and as the naturalist has

his microscope to aid him in his investigations, so I have a small pocket-telescope which brings the countenances of the motley groups so close as almost, at times, to make me think I can divine their conversation by the play and expression of their features. I am thus in a manner an invisible observer and, without quitting my solitude, can throw myself in an instant into the midst of society– a rare advantage to one of somewhat shy and quiet habits and who, like myself, is fond of observing the drama of life, without becoming an actor in the scene.

There is a considerable suburb lying below the Alhambra, filling the narrow gorge of the valley and extending up the opposite hill of the Albaicín. Many of the houses are built in the Moorish style round patios or courts, cooled by fountains and open to the sky, and as the inhabitants pass much of their time in these courts and on the terraced roofs during the summer season, it follows that many a glance at their domestic life may be obtained by an aërial spectator like myself who can look down on them from the clouds.

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[1] i.e. El Diablo Cojuelo (The Devil who limped) by Luis Vélez de Guevara, a sixteenth century writer. According to the story, a certain student named Don Cleofás Pérez Zambullo freed the imp Asmodeus from the bottle in which he was imprisoned; Asmodeus, out of gratitude, took him on a tour over the rooftops of Madrid, having removed the roofs beforehand. The result, naturally, is a subtle satire on the manners of the age. (Ed. note.)

I enjoy in some degree the advantage of the student in the famous old Spanish story[1], who beheld all Madrid unroofed for his inspection, and my gossiping squire, Mateo Jiménez, officiates occasionally as my Asmodeus to give me anecdotes of the different mansions and their inhabitants.

I prefer, however, to form conjectural histories for myself and thus can sit for hours weaving from casual incidents and indications that pass under my eye the whole tissue of schemes, intrigues and occupations of certain of the busy mortals below. There is scarce a pretty face or a striking figure that I daily see, about which I have not thus gradually framed a dramatic story, though some of my characters will occasionally act in direct opposition to the part assigned them and disconcert my whole drama. A few days since, as I was reconnoitring with my glass the streets of the Albaicín, I beheld the procession of a novice about to take the veil and remarked several circumstances that excited the strongest sympathy in the fate of the youthful being thus about to be consigned to a living tomb. I ascertained to my satisfaction that she was beautiful and by the paleness of her cheek that she was a victim rather than a votary. She was arrayed in bridal garments and decked with a chaplet of white flowers, but her heart evidently revolted at this mockery of a spiritual union and yearned after its earthly loves. A tall stern-looking

man walked near her in the procession; it was evidently the tyrannical father who, from some bigoted or sordid motive had compelled this sacrifice. Amidst the crowd was a dark handsome youth in Andalusian garb, who seemed to fix on her an eye of agony. It was doubtless the secret lover from whom she was for ever to be separated. My indignation rose as I noted the malignant expression painted on the countenances of the attendant monks and friars. The procession arrived at the chapel of the convent; the sun gleamed for the last time upon the chaplet of the poor novice, as she crossed the fatal threshold and disappeared within the building. The throng poured in with cowl and cross and minstrelsy; the lover paused for a moment at the door. I could divine the tumult of his feelings, but he mastered them and entered. There was a long interval –pictured to myself the scene passing within; the poor novice despoiled of her transient finery, clothed in the conventual garb, her bridal chaplet taken from her brow, her beautiful head shorn of its long silken tresses– I heard her murmur the irrevocable vow. I saw her extended on her bier the death-pall spread over her; the funeral service was performed; I heard the deep tones of the organ and the plaintive requiem chanted by the nuns; the father looked on with a hard unfeeling countenance. The

lover –but no, my imagination refused to paint the lover– there the picture remained a blank.

After a time the throng again poured forth and dispersed various ways to enjoy the light of the sun and mingle with the stirring scenes of life; the victim, however, remained behind. Almost the last that came forth were the father and the lover; they were in earnest conversation. The latter was vehement in his gesticulations; I expected some violent termination to my drama, but an angle of a building interfered and closed the scene. My eye has since frequently been turned to that convent with painful interest. I remarked late at night a light burning in a remote window of one of its towers. «There», said I, «the unhappy nun sits weeping in her cell, while perhaps her lover paces the street below in unavailing anguish.»

The officious Mateo interrupted my meditations, and destroyed in an instant the cobweb tissue of my fancy. With his usual zeal he had gathered facts concerning the scene that put my fictions all to flight. The heroine of my romance was neither young nor handsome; she had no lover; she had entered the convent of her own free will as a respectable asylum, and was one of the most cheerful residents within its walls.

It was some little while before I could forgive the wrong done me by the nun in being thus happy in her cell, in contradiction to all the rules of romance; I diverted my spleen, however, by watching for a day or two the pretty coquetries of a dark-eyed brunette who from the covert of a balcony shrouded with flowering shrubs and a silken awning was carrying on a mysterious correspondence with a handsome, dark well-whiskered cavalier who was frequently in the street beneath her window. Sometimes I saw him at an early hour stealing forth wrapped to the eyes in a mantle. Sometimes he loitered at a corner in various disguises apparently waiting for a private signal to slip into the house. Then there was the tinkling of a guitar at night and a lantern shifted from place to place in the balcony. I imagined another intrigue like that of Almaviva[2], but was again disconcerted in all my suppositions by being informed that the supposed lover was the husband of the lady and a noted contrabandista, and that all his mysterious signs and movements had doubtless some smuggling scheme in view.

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[2] The author recalls us the plot of Le barbier de Seville, by Beaumarchais, the eighteenth century French writer, popularised in the nineteenth century through the opera of Rossini. (Ed. note.)

I occasionally amused myself with noting from this balcony the gradual changes that came over the scenes below according to the different stages of the day.

Scarce has the grey dawn streaked the sky and the earliest cock crowed from the cottages of the hillside, when the suburbs give signs of reviving animation, for the fresh hours of dawning are precious in the summer season in a sultry climate. All are anxious to get the start of the sun in the business of the day. The muleteer drives forth his loaded train for the journey, the traveller slings his carbine behind his saddle and mounts his steed at the gate of the hostel, the brown peasant urges his loitering beasts, laden with panniers of sunny fruit and fresh dewy vegetables, for already the thrifty housewives are hastening to the market.

The sun is up and sparkles along the valley, tipping the transparent foliage of the groves. The matin bells resound melodiously through the pure bright air, announcing the hour of devotion. The muleteer halts his burthened animals before the chapel, thrusts his staff through his belt behind and enters with hat in hand, smoothing his coal-black hair, to hear a mass and put up a prayer for a prosperous wayfaring across the sierra. And now steals forth on fairy foot the gentle señora in trim basquiña, with restless fan in hand and dark eye flashing from beneath the gracefully

folded mantilla; she seeks some well-frequented church to offer up her morning orisons, but the nicely adjusted dress, the dainty shoe and cobweb stocking, the raven tresses, exquisitely braided, the fresh plucked rose that gleams among them like a gem show that earth divides with Heaven the empire of her thoughts. Keep an eye upon her, careful mother, or virgin aunt or vigilant dueña, whichever you be, that walk behind!

As the morning advances, the din of labour augments on every side; the streets are thronged with man and steed and beast of burden, and there is a hum and murmur, like the surges of the ocean. As the sun ascends to his meridian, the hum and bustle gradually decline; at the height of noon there is a pause. The panting city sinks into lassitude and for several hours there is a general repose. The windows are closed, the curtains drawn, the inhabitants retire into the coolest recesses of their mansions, the full fed monk snores in his dormitory, the brawny porter lies stretched on the pavement beside his burden, the peasant and the labourer sleep beneath the trees of the Alameda, lulled by the sultry chirping of the locust. The streets are deserted, except by the water-carrier who refreshes the ear by proclaiming the merits of his sparkling beverage «colder than the mountain snow.»

As the sun declines, there is again a gradual reviving, and when the vesper bell rings out his sinking knell, all nature seems to rejoice that the tyrant of the day has fallen. Now begins the bustle of enjoyment, when the citizens pour forth to breathe the evening air and revel away the brief twilight in the walks and gardens of the Darro and the Xenil.

As night closes, the capricious scene assumes new features. Light after light gradually twinkles forth, here a taper from a balconied window, there a votive lamp before the image of a saint. Thus by degrees the city emerges from the pervading gloom, and sparkles with scattered lights, like the starry firmament. Now break forth from court and garden and street and lane the tinkling of innumerable guitars and the clicking of castanets; blending, at this lofty height in a faint but general concert. «Enjoy the moment», is the creed of the gay and amorous Andalusian, and at no time does he practise it more zealously than in the balmy night of summer, wooing his mistress with the dance, the love ditty and the passionate serenade.

I was one evening seated in the balcony, enjoying the light breeze that came rustling along the side of the hill among the tree-tops, when my humble historiographer Mateo who was at my elbow pointed out a spacious house in

an obscure street of the Albaicín, about which he related, as nearly as I can recollect, the following anecdote.

Loja (Granada)
David Roberts (1796-1864), lithograph

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON

There was once upon a time a poor mason or bricklayer in Granada, who kept all the Saints' days and holidays and Saint Monday into the bargain, and yet with all his devotion he grew poorer and poorer and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it, and beheld before him a tall, meagre, cadaverous looking priest.

«'Hark ye, honest friend!' said the stranger, 'I have observed that you are a good Christian and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?'

«'With all my heart, señor padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly.'

«'That you shall be, but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded.'

«To this the mason made no objection. So, being hoodwinked, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the

mason was conducted through an echoing corridor and a spacious hall to an interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes and he found himself in a patio or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp. In the centre was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before daybreak, the priest put a piece of gold into his hand and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

«'Are you willing' said he, 'to return and complete your work?'

«'Gladly, señor Padre, provided I am so well paid.'

«'Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again.'

«He did so, and the vault was completed.

«'Now', said the priest, 'you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault.'

«The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words: he followed the priest with trembling steps into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on perceiving three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money and it was with great labour that he and the

priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated. The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand: 'Wait here', said he, 'until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you'. So saying, he departed. The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rang its matin peal, he uncovered his eyes and found himself on the banks of the Xenil, whence he made the best of his way home and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights work, after which he was as poor as ever.

«He continued to work a little and pray a good deal and keep saints' days and holidays, from year to year, while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gypsies. As he was seated one evening at the door of his hovel, he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon who was noted for owning many houses and being a griping landlord. The man

of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of anxious shagged eyebrows.

«I am told, friend, that you are very poor.'

«There is no denying the fact, señor, it speaks for itself.'

«'I presume then, that you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap.'

«'As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada.'

«That's what I want. I have an old house fallen into decay, that costs me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it, so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible.'

«The mason was accordingly conducted to a large deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain. He paused for a moment, for a dreaming recollection of the place came over him.

«'Pray', said he, 'who occupied this house formerly?'

«'A pest upon him!' cried the landlord, 'it was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich and, having no relations, it was thought he would leave all his treasures to the Church. He died suddenly and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth, but nothing could they find but a

few ducats in a leathern purse. The worst luck has fallen on me, for since his death the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent and there is no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking of gold all night in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false, these stories have brought a bad name on my house and not a tenant will remain in it.'

«'Enough' said the mason sturdily: 'let me live in your house rent-free until some better tenant present and I will engage to put it in repair, and to quiet the troubled spirit that disturbs it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, and am not to be daunted by the Devil himself, even though he should come in the shape of a big bag of money!'

«The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted; he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state; the clinking of gold was no more heard at night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbours and became one of the richest men in Granada. He gave large sums to the Church, by way, no doubt, of satisfying his

conscience and never revealed the secret of the vault until on his death-bed to his son and heir.»

A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS

I use frequently to amuse myself towards the close of the day, when the heat has subsided, with taking long rambles about the neighbouring hills and the deep umbrageous valleys, accompanied by my historiographic squire, Mateo, to whose passion for gossiping I on such occasions give the most unbounded licence; and there is scarce a rock or ruin or broken fountain or lonely glen about which he has not some marvellous story or above all some golden legend, for never was poor devil so munificent in dispensing hidden treasures.

A few evenings since, we took a long stroll of the kind, in the course of which Mateo was more than usually communicative. It was towards sunset that we sallied forth from the Great Gate of Justice and, ascending an alley of trees, Mateo paused under a clump of fig and pomegranate trees at the foot of a huge ruined tower called the Tower of the Seven Floors (de los Siete Suelos). Here pointing to a low archway in the foundation of the tower, he informed me of a monstrous sprite or hobgoblin said to infest this tower ever since the time of the Moors and to guard the treasures of a Moslem King. Sometimes it issues forth in the dead of the

night and scours the avenues of the Alhambra and the streets of Granada in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six dogs with terrible yells and howlings.

«But have you ever met with it yourself, Mateo, in any of your rambles?», demanded I.

«No, señor, God be thanked! But my grandfather, the tailor, knew several persons that had seen it, for it went about much oftener in his time than at present, sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another. Everybody in Granada has heard of the Belludo, for the old women and the nurses frighten the children with it when they cry. Some say it is the spirit of a cruel Moorish King who killed his six sons and buried them in these vaults, and that they hunt him at nights in revenge.»

I forbear to dwell upon the marvellous details given by the simple-minded Mateo about this redoubtable phantom which has, in fact, been time out of mind a favourite theme of nursery tales and popular tradition in Granada and of which honourable mention is made by an ancient and learned historian and topographer of the place[1]. I would only observe that through this tower was the gateway by which the unfortunate Boabdil issued forth to surrender his capital.

[1] i. e. the Padre Echevarría, who mentions this fable in his work Paseos por Granada. (Ed. note.)

Leaving this eventful pile, we continued our course, skirting the fruitful orchards of the Generalife, in which two or three nightingales were pouring forth a rich strain of melody. Behind these orchards we passed a number of Moorish tanks with a door cut into the rocky bosom of the hill, but closed up. These tanks, Mateo informed me, were favourite bathing places of himself and his comrades in boyhood, until frightened away by a story of a hideous Moor who used to issue forth from the door in the rock to entrap unwary bathers.

Leaving these haunted tanks behind us, we pursued our ramble up a solitary mule-path that wound among the hills and sort found ourselves amidst wild and melancholy mountains, destitute of trees, and here and there tinted with scanty verdure. Everything within sight was severe and sterile, and it was scarcely possible to realise the idea that but a short distance behind us was the Generalife with its blooming orchards and terraced gardens and that we were in the vicinity of delicious Granada, that city of groves and fountains. But such is the nature of Spain –wild and stern the moment it escapes from cultivation. The desert and the garden are ever side by side.

The narrow defile up which we were passing is called, according to Mateo, el Barranco de la Tinaja or the Ravine of

the Jar, because a jar full of Moorish gold was found here in old times. The brain of poor Mateo is continually running upon these golden legends.

«But what is the meaning of the cross I see yonder upon a heap of stones in that narrow part of the ravine?»

«Oh, that's nothing –a muleteer was murdered there some years since.»

«So then, Mateo, you have robbers and murderers even at the gates of the Alhambra?»

«Not at present, señor, that was formerly, when there used to be many loose fellows about the fortress, but they've all been weeded out. Not but that the gypsies who live in caves in the hillsides just out of the fortress are many of them fit for anything, but we have had no murder about here for a long time past. The man who murdered the muleteer was hanged in the fortress.»

Our path continued up the barranco with a bold, rugged height to our left called the Silla del Moro or Chair of the Moor, from the tradition already alluded to that the unfortunate Boabdil fled thither during a popular insurrection and remained all day seated on the rocky summit looking mournfully down on his factious city.

We at length arrived on the highest part of the promontory above Granada, called the Mountain of the Sun. The

evening was approaching; the setting sun just gilded the loftiest heights. Here and there, a solitary shepherd might be descried driving his flock down the declivities to be folded for the night, or a muleteer and his lagging animals, threading some mountain path, to arrive at the city gates before night-fall.

Presently the deep tones of the cathedral bell came swelling up the defiles, proclaiming the hour of oración or prayer. The note was responded to from the belfry of every church and from the sweet bells of the convents among the mountains. The shepherd paused on the fold of the hill, the muleteer in the midst of the road, each took off his hat and remained motionless for a time, murmuring his evening prayer. There is always something pleasingly solemn in this custom, by which at a melodious signal every human being throughout the land unites at the same moment in a tribute of thanks to God for the mercies of the day. It spreads a transient sanctity over the land; the sight of the sun sinking in all his glory adds not a little to the solemnity of the scene.

In the present instance the effect was heightened by the wild and lonely nature of the place. We were on the naked and broken summit of the haunted Mountain of the Sun, where ruined tanks and cisterns and the mouldering foun-

dations of extensive buildings spoke of former populousness, but where all was now silent and desolate.

As we were wandering among these traces of old times, Mateo pointed out to me a circular pit that seemed to penetrate deep into the bosom of the mountain. It was evidently a deep well, dug by the indefatigable Moors, to obtain their favourite element in its greatest purity. Mateo, however, had a different story, and much more to his humour. This was, according to tradition, an entrance to the subterranean caverns of the mountain, in which Boabdil and his court lay bound in magic spell and from whence they sallied forth at night at allotted times to revisit their ancient abodes.

The deepening twilight which in this climate is of such short duration admonished us to leave this haunted ground. As we descended the mountain defiles, there was no longer herdsman or muleteer to be seen nor anything to be heard but our own footsteps and the lonely chirping of the cricket. The shadows of the valley grew deeper and deeper, until all was dark around us. The lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada alone retained a lingering gleam of daylight; its snowy peaks glaring against the dark blue firmament and seeming close to us from the extreme purity of the atmosphere.

«How near the Sierra looks this evening!», said Mateo, «it seems as if you could touch it with your hand, and yet it is

many long leagues off. While he was speaking, a star appeared over the snowy summit of the mountain, the only one yet visible in the heavens, and so pure, so large, so bright and beautiful, as to call forth ejaculations of delight from honest Mateo.

«¡Qué estrella más hermosa! ¡Qué clara y limpia es! ¡No puede haber estrella más brillante!»

(What a beautiful star! How clear and lucid! No star could be more brilliant!)

I have often remarked this sensibility of the common people of Spain to the charms of natural objects. The lustre of a star, the beauty or fragrance of a flower, the crystal purity of a fountain will inspire them with a kind of poetical delight, and then what euphonious words their magnificent language affords, with which to give utterance to their transports!

«But what lights are those, Mateo, which I see twinkling along the Sierra Nevada, just below the snowy region and which might be taken for stars, only that they are ruddy and against the dark side of the mountain?»

«Those, señor, are fires, made by the men who gather snow and ice for the supply of Granada. They go up every afternoon with mules and asses, and take turns, some to rest and warm themselves by the fires, while others fill the pan-

niers with ice. They then set off down the mountain, so as to reach the gates of Granada before sunrise. That Sierra Nevada, señor, is a lump of ice in the middle of Andalusia to keep it all cool in summer.»

It was now completely dark; we were passing through the barranco where stood the cross of the murdered muleteer, when I beheld a number of lights moving at a distance and apparently advancing up the ravine. On nearer approach, they proved to be torches, borne by a train of uncouth figures arrayed in black; it would have been a procession dreary enough at any time, but was peculiarly so in this wild and solitary place.

Mateo drew near and told me in a low voice that it was a funeral train bearing a corpse to the burying ground among the hills.

As the procession passed by, the lugubrious light of the torches falling on the rugged features and funeral-weeds of the attendants had the most fantastic effect, but was perfectly ghastly, as it revealed the countenance of the corpse which, according to the Spanish custom, was borne uncovered on an open bier. I remained for some time gazing after the dreary train, as it wound up the dark defiles of the mountain. It put me in mind of the old story of a procession

of demons bearing the body of a sinner up the crater of Stromboli.

«Ah! señor», cried Mateo, «I could tell you a story of a procession once seen among these mountains, but then you'd laugh at me and say it was one of the legacies of my grandfather, the tailor.»

«By no means, Mateo. There is nothing I relish more than a marvellous tale.»

«Well, señor, it is about one of those very men we have been talking of, who gather snow on the Sierra Nevada[2].»

«You must know, that a great many years since, in my grandfather's time, there was an old fellow, Tio Nicolás (Uncle Nicholas) by name who had filled the panniers of his mule with snow and ice, and was returning down the mountain. Being very drowsy he mounted upon the mule, and soon falling asleep, went with his head nodding and bobbing about from side to side while his sure-footed old mule stepped along the edge of precipices and down steep and broken barrancos, just as safe and steady as if it had been on plain ground. At length, Tío Nicolás awoke, and gazed about him and rubbed his eyes –and, in good truth, he had reason.

[2] The Camino de los Neveros still exists. Neveros were porters who collected and transported ice and snow for consumption in the city. (Ed. note.)

The moon shone almost as bright as day and he saw the city below him, as plain as your hand, and shining with its white buildings, like a silver platter in the moonshine, but, Lord! señor, it was nothing like the city he had left a few hours before! Instead of the cathedral, with its great dome and turrets and the churches with their spires, and the convents with their pinnacles, all surmounted with the blessed cross, he saw nothing but Moorish mosques and minarets and cupolas, all topped off with glittering crescents, such as you see on the Barbary flags. Well, señor, as you may suppose, Tío Nicolás was mightily puzzled at all this, but while he was gazing down upon the city, a great army came marching up the mountain, winding along the ravines, sometimes in the moonshine, sometimes in the shades. As it drew nigh, he saw that there were horse and foot, all in Moorish armour. Tío Nicolás tried to scramble out of their way, but his old mule stood stock still and refused to budge, trembling, at the same time, like a leaf –for dumb beasts, señor, are just as much frightened at such things as human beings. Well, señor, the hobgoblin army came marching by; there were men that seemed to blow trumpets, and others to beat drums and strike cymbals, yet never a sound did they make; they all moved on without the least noise, just as I have seen painted armies move across the stage in the theatre of Granada and

all looked as pale as death. At last, in the rear of the army, between two black Moorish horsemen, rode the Grand Inquisitor of Granada, on a mule as white as snow. Tío Nicolás wondered to see him in such company, for the Inquisitor was famous for his hatred of Moors and indeed of all kinds of infidels, Jews and heretics, and used to hunt them out with fire and scourge. However, Tío Nicolás felt himself safe, now that there was a priest of such sanctity at hand. So making the sign of the cross, he called out for his benediction, when, ¡hombre! he received a blow that sent him and his old mule over the edge of a steep bank, down which they rolled, head over heels, to the bottom! Tío Nicolás did not come to his senses until long after sunrise, when he found himself at the bottom of a deep ravine, his mule grazing beside him, and his panniers of snow completely melted. He crawled back to Granada sorely bruised and battered, but was glad to find the city looking as usual, with Christian churches and crosses. When he told the story of his night's adventure, every one laughed at him; some said he had dreamed it all, as he dozed on his mule; others thought it all a fabrication of his own –but what was strange, señor, and made people afterwards think more seriously of the matter, was that the Grand Inquisitor died within the year. I have often heard my grandfather, the tailor, say that there was more meant, by that hobgoblin army

bearing off the resemblance of the priest than folks dared to surmise.»

«Then you would insinuate, friend Mateo, that there is a kind of Moorish limbo or purgatory in the bowels of these mountains, to which the padre Inquisitor was borne off?»

«God forbid, señor! I know nothing of the matter –I only relate what I heard from my grandfather.»

By the time Mateo had finished the tale which I have more succinctly related and which was interlarded with many comments, and spun out with minute details, we reached the gate of the Alhambra.

LOCAL TRADITIONS

The common people of Spain have an Oriental passion for story-telling and are fond of the marvellous. They will gather round the doors of their cottages in summer evenings or in the great cavernous chimney corners of the ventas in the winter and listen with insatiable delight to miraculous legends of saints, perilous adventures of travellers and daring exploits of robbers and contrabandistas. The wild and solitary character of the country, the imperfect diffusion of knowledge, the scarceness of general topics of conversation and the romantic adventurous life that every one leads in a land where travelling is yet in its primitive state, all contribute to cherish this love of oral narration and to produce a strong infusion of the extravagant and incredible. There is no theme, however, more prevalent and popular than that of treasures buried by the Moors; it pervades the whole country. In traversing the wild sierras, the scenes of ancient fray and exploit, you cannot see a Moorish atalaya or watch-tower, perched among the cliffs or beetling above its rock-built village, but your muleteer, on being closely questioned, will suspend the smoking of his cigarrillo to tell some

tale of Moslem gold buried beneath its foundations; nor is there a ruined alcázar in a city but has its golden tradition, handed down from generation to generation among the poor people of the neighbourhood.

These, like most popular fictions, have sprung from some scanty ground-work of fact. During the wars between Moor and Christian, which distracted this country for centuries, towns and castles were liable frequently and suddenly to change owners, and the inhabitants during sieges and assaults were fain to bury their money and jewels in the earth or hide them in vaults and wells, as is often done at the present day in the despotic and belligerent countries of the East. At the time of the expulsion of the Moors also many of them concealed their most precious effects, hoping that their exile would be but temporary and that they would be enabled to return and retrieve their treasures at some future day. It is certain that from time to time hoards of gold and silver coin have been accidentally dug up, after a lapse of centuries from among the ruins of Moorish fortresses and habitations, and it requires but a few facts of the kind to give birth to a thousand fictions.

The stories thus originating have generally something of the Arabic and the Gothic which seems to me to characterize everything in Spain, and especially in its southern provinces.

The hidden wealth is always laid under magic and secured by charm and talisman. Sometimes it is guarded by uncouth monsters or fiery dragons, sometimes by enchanted Moors who sit by it in armour with drawn swords, but motionless as statues, maintaining a sleepless watch for ages.

The Alhambra, of course, from the peculiar circumstances of its history, is a stronghold for popular fictions of the kind, and various relics dug up from time to time have contributed to strengthen them. At one time an earthen vessel was found containing Moorish coins and the skeleton of a cock which according to the opinion of certain shrewd inspectors must have been buried alive. At another time a vessel was dug up containing a great scarabaeus or beetle of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscriptions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. In this way the wits of the ragged brood who inhabit the Alhambra have been set wool gathering, until there is not a hall or tower or vault of the old fortress that has not been made the scene of some marvellous tradition. Having, I trust, in the preceding papers made the reader in some degree familiar with the localities of the Alhambra, I shall now launch out more largely into the wonderful legends connected with it and which I have diligently wrought into shape and form from various legendary scraps and hints picked up in the course

of my perambulations; in the same manner that an antiquary works out a regular historical document from a few scattered letters of an almost defaced inscription.

If anything in these legends should shock the faith of the over-scrupulous reader, he must remember the nature of the place and make due allowances. He must not expect here the same laws of probability that govern commonplace scenes and everyday life; he must remember that he treads the halls of an enchanted palace and all is «haunted ground.»

THE AUTHORS FAREWELL TO GRANADA

My serene and happy reign in the Alhambra was suddenly brought to a close by letters which reached me, while indulging in Oriental luxury in the cool hall of the baths, summoning me away from my Moslem Elysium to mingle once more in the bustle and business of the dusty world. How was I to encounter its toils and turmoils, after such a life of repose and reverie? How was I to endure its commonplace, after the poetry of the Alhambra?

But little preparation was necessary for my departure. A two-wheeled vehicle, called a tartana, very much resembling a covered cart, was to be the travelling equipage of a young Englishman and myself through Murcia to Alicante and Valencia on our way to France, and a long-limbed varlet who had been a contrabandista and, for aught I knew, a robber was to be our guide and guard. The preparations were soon made, but the departure was the difficulty. Day after day was it postponed; day after day was spent in lingering about my favourite haunts and day after day they appeared more delightful in my eyes.

The social, and domestic little world also, in which I had been moving, had become singularly endeared to me, and the concern evinced by them at my intended departure convinced me that my kind feelings were reciprocated. Indeed, when at length the day arrived, I did not dare venture upon a leave-taking at the good dame Antonia's; I saw the soft heart of little Dolores at least was brim full and ready for an overflow. So I bade a silent adieu to the palace and its inmates, and descended into the city as if intending to return. There, however, the tartana and the guide were ready; so, after taking a noon-day's repast with my fellow-traveller at the posada, I set out with him on our journey.

Humble was the cortege and melancholy the departure of El Rey Chico the Second! Manuel, the nephew of Tía Antonia, Mateo, my officious but now disconsolate squire, and two or three old invalids of the Alhambra with whom I had grown into gossiping companionship, had come down to see me off, for it is one of the good old customs of Spain to sally forth several miles to meet a coming friend, and to accompany him as far on his departure. Thus then we set out, our long-legged guard striding ahead, with his escopeta on his shoulder, Manuel and Mateo on each side of the tartana, and the old invalids behind.

At some little distance to the north of Granada, the road gradually ascends the hills; here I alighted and walked up slowly with Manuel who took this occasion to confide to me the secret of his heart and of all those tender concerns between himself and Dolores with which I had been already informed by the all-knowing and all-revealing Mateo Jiménez. His doctor's diploma had prepared the way for their union and nothing more was wanting but the dispensation of the Pope, on account of their consanguinity. Then, if he could get the post of médico of the fortress, his happiness would be complete! I congratulated him on the judgment and good taste he had shown in his choice of a helpmate, invoked all possible felicity on their union and trusted that the abundant affections of the kind-hearted little Dolores would in time have more stable objects to occupy them than recreant cats and truant pigeons.

It was indeed a sorrowful parting when I took leave of these good people and saw them slowly descend the hills, now and then turning round to wave me a last adieu. Manuel, it is true, had cheerful prospects to console him, but poor Mateo seemed perfectly cast down. It was to him a grievous fall from the station of prime minister and historiographer to his old brown cloak and his starveling mystery of ribbon-wearing, and the poor devil, notwithstan-

ding his occasional officiousness, had somehow or other acquired a stronger hold on my sympathies than I was aware of. It would have really been a consolation in parting could I have anticipated the good fortune in store for him, and to which I had contributed; for the importance I had appeared to give to his tales and gossip and local knowledge, and the frequent companionship in which I had indulged him in the course of my strolls, had elevated his idea of his own qualifications and opened a new career to him, and the son of the Alhambra has since become its regular and well-paid cicerone, insomuch that I am told he has never been obliged to resume the ragged old brown cloak in which I first found him.

Towards sunset I came to where the road wound into the mountains and here I paused to take a last look at Granada. The hill on which I stood commanded a glorious view of the city, the Vega and the surrounding mountains. It was at an opposite point of the compass from La cuesta de las Lágrimas (the hill of tears) noted for the «last sigh of the Moor». I now could realize something of the feelings of poor Boabdil when he bade adieu to the paradise he was leaving behind and beheld before him a rugged and sterile road conducting him to exile.

The setting sun as usual shed a melancholy effulgence on the ruddy towers of the Alhambra. I could faintly discern the balconied window of the tower of Comares, where I had indulged in so many delightful reveries. The bosky groves and gardens about the city were richly gilded with the sunshine, the purple haze of a summer evening was gathering over the Vega; everything was lovely, but tenderly and sadly so to my parting gaze.

«I will hasten from this prospect», thought I, «before the sun is set. I will carry away a recollection of it clothed in all its beauty.»

With these thoughts I pursued my way among the mountains. A little further and Granada, the Vega and the Alhambra, were shut from my view and thus ended one of the pleasantest dreams of a life which the reader perhaps may think has been but too much made up of dreams.

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