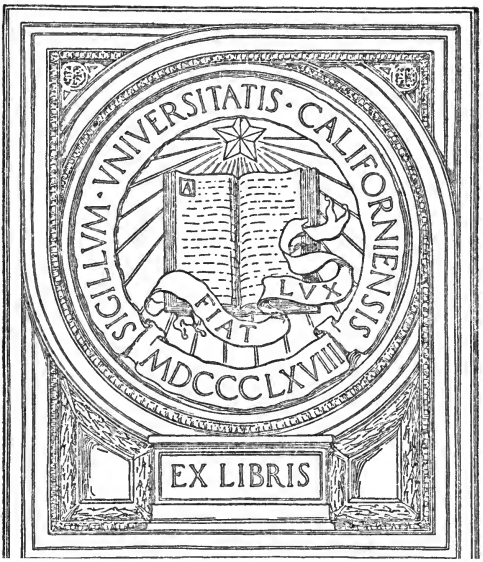

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"THE PARTISAN," "MARTIN FABER," &c.

"Nor should the narrow spirit chide the toil
Through these old ruins. They have noble spoil
And goodly treasure."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

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1838.

TO

WILLIAM HAYNE SIMMONS,

OF EAST FLORIDA—

TO ONE WHOSE MUSE, ALIKE GRACEFUL AND CORRECT,
IS OBNOXIOUS TO NO CENSURE SAVE THAT WHICH
IS DUE TO HER INDOLENCE, I BEG LEAVE,
WITH AFFECTIONATE RESPECT,

To Inscribe this Romance.

W. G. S.

Woodland, S. Carolina, May 20th, 1838.

ADVERTISEMENT

In this story, which has a basis sufficiently historical to be called an historical romance, the reader will yet discover some few departures from what is usually received as history. But let this give him no concern. The license is less real than seeming. My facts are, perhaps, quite as genuine as the greater number of those more ostentatious narratives, devoted to the period and place of which I write, which boldly announce their veracity in the titlepage. Nothing can be more contradictory and uncertain than the authorities, so called, on the subject of Gothic-Spain, particularly during the time which this story occupies. On many of the leading topics and events no two of the chroniclers agree; and such is the extent of this discrepance, that some of the more important personages, such as the Lady Cava, for example, are supposed, by one class of these historians, never to have had existence. The only instance in which I may fairly be convicted of departing from facts on which the historians are generally agreed, is in finding other names than those which they bore for the fugitive sons of King Witiza. One of these I have made synonymous with the native hero, most insisted upon by the Spaniards as the founder of their na-

tion, and its defender against the Africans; whom he frequently defeated and constantly baffled among the fastnesses of the Asturias, at a time when those fierce invaders overrun the country with little or no resistance elsewhere. It is scarcely necessary to add that this hero gives the name to my story, and that his adventures form a portion of its material.

Charleston, S. C., September, 1838.

PELAYO:

A STORY OF THE GOTH.

BOOK I.

PELAYO.

BOOK I.

I.

THERE is, after all, only a certain quantity of power in the world, and the loss of it from one spot simply announces its transfer to another. Our plaints for the decayed town or the ruined empire, grateful enough to the spirit of poetry, are not often called for in reality. These events usually result from some leading necessity, which, deplorable enough at the time, the foresight of a benevolent Providence designs for some lasting and general benefit. Our regrets are most usually precipitate: our sorrows, in half the number of cases, in advance of their occasion, and imagination, in this way, too frequently usurps the province of experience. Change is the subject of lament, for ever, with the men who are themselves stationary—the men who receive, but never transmit, opinions. Innovation, sometimes ruinous, is always of good import, since it indicates mental activity—the lack of which is the worst feature in the history of men and nations. Even revolutions, the horrors of which are lamentable, are injurious to places rather than to people. The great bulk of mankind grow wiser upon them, and the discovery of a new abiding-place, like the discovery of a new truth, must always afford an added empire to thought, and a wider realm to the wing of liberty.

II.

With the decay of Rome arose the stupendous genius of the Gothic empire, happily imaged by Hercules, its tutelar divinity. Auxiliaries first, then allies, the Visigoths became at last, under Euric, protectors of the Romans. The power of this monarch was prodigious. In the language of history, as well as of the poet, the North was excited or appeased by his nod; and Rome, the proud and terrible, was content to receive the aid and recognise the law, of a race it still continued to consider as barbarian. At this period the Visigoths were dreaded among the mightiest nations, even so remote as Persia; and the oracle of history here pauses to demand, to what magnitude would their power have risen had Euric, under whom it grew, survived till the maturity of his son Alaric, and had not the national adversary been Clovis, the valiant and ambitious genius, raised up, we may suppose as an especial agent, for its control. France took rank with the death of Euric. Alaric ascended the throne of the Visigoths when a mere boy, and the circumstance stimulated the bigoted Franks into hostile activity. They were orthodox Catholics, the Visigoths were Arians. "It grieves me," cried Clovis to his warriors, "it grieves me to see the Arians in possession of the fairest part of Gaul. Let us march against them, and, with the aid of God, vanquish these heretics, and divide their provinces." Bigotry and spoil, the common stimulants of war, had their due influence. The proposition was received with a unanimous shout of assent, and Clovis marched upon his enemy. The two monarchs met near Poictiers; a decisive battle took place,—the Visigoths were defeated, and Alaric slain. The provinces were divided, and the honours of the Catholic faith restored by the strong arm in all those portions of Gaul from which the Arian Goths had hitherto expelled it.

III.

Sixty years after this event, Leovogild ascended the throne of the Goths. He rolled back the tide of war upon his enemies, sustained and reinvigorated his drooping people, and by mixed valour and prudence effectually restored the confidence and stability of the kingdom. From his time to that of Witiza, a space of a hundred years, this prosperity continued, and the Goths were still powerful by sea and land. The reign of Witiza at the outset promised a like increase of glory with that of his predecessors. Brave and equitable at first, he gave to the choice of the people the fullest sanction, while maintaining for a long period the same elevated character. Justice and moderation, so far, marked the progress of his rule; and the best evidence, perhaps, of the correctness of history in its estimate of his virtues, may be gathered from the fact that, for the first time in a long series of years, a liberal and independent spirit began to prevail throughout the nation, adorning, with a show of moral beauty, that name which was soon to be blotted out for ever. Powerful and seemingly united at home, feared, or at least respected, among the neighbouring nations, the empire of the Goths, at this time, was not unworthy of the high-flown pretension with which it claimed and challenged a comparison with Rome. Almost arrogant in its boldness, we may yet estimate highly its firm resolve and elevated character, when, under the sway of the present monarch, we find the National Council of Toledo firmly and successfully resisting the demand then urged by the Pope, as successor to St. Peter, of absolute dominion in and over the Christian states of Europe. Such was the nation then; but, in one sense, the evidence of character is defective. The nation was never nigher than at that moment, to its overthrow. The independence and improved

mental character of the people were the deadliest foes possessed by the existing government. Their affections were not with their rulers—there was no community of feeling between them. A new truth had gotten abroad among men. Veneration, the bearded despot, was tottering upon his ancient towers. Implicit obedience had given way to doubt—doubt had brought inquiry into exercise, and the scales of superstition and a blind obedience had fallen, in consequence, from a thousand eyes. Once seeing, it saw all—it never slept again. The very power which had bidden defiance to the chains of Rome was of itself fatal to the old tyrannies which had made a serf of the subject, and degraded the neck of manhood to a collar. Power was embraced by change, and the issue was revolution.

IV.

Moderate tyrannies are of all others the most dangerous and deadly, and it is therefore fortunate for mankind that it is the very essence of misrule to glide or leap into excess. Excess provokes resistance, and the tyranny is overthrown. To Witiza himself, the reigning prince, is ascribed the activity of innovation and thought among the people. Though, at first, rather remarkable for the equity and moderation of his rule, the possession of power beyond the legitimate grasp of his own intellect, as in the case of Nero, is said to have corrupted his heart: it certainly changed his character. His reign, in progress of time, became unpopular—with a part of the nation at least; and some harsh proceedings against the Jews, who continued to draw out a miserable existence, under every sort of privation, among a people whose laws denied them toleration and decreed their expulsion, at length prompted this oppressed and wretched people to an intrigue with the neighbouring Saracens—even then, to the Goths, a frequent and formidable enemy.

Such an event threatened the empire, at the same moment, with foreign and intestine war. But the aim of the Jews miscarried—their plans were discovered in time for prevention, the insurrectionists were put down; and, as a necessary consequence, their bonds grew heavier and their penalties less endurable than ever.

V.

But though the insurrectionists were quelled, or quieted, the general discontent following internal strife and unaccustomed privation was not so readily subdued. War and disaffection had brought their own troubles along with them; and, as in the old condition of all the European states there never could have been any sympathy between the ruler and the great body of the ruled, the intrigues of the oppressed Jews had opened the eyes of thousands, in other classes, to their own oppression. In the general ferment, the Gothic nobles, who were luxurious and sensual, had their sufficient share; and by their arts the people were stimulated to that fever which was to be their own death. They were no longer the brave barbarians who, under Euric, had vanquished the martial nobles of the Tarragonese provinces, had penetrated to the heart of Lusitania, and, when Odoacer usurped the sovereignty of Italy, compelled him to yield up, as far as the Rhine and the ocean, all the Roman conquests beyond the Alps. They were no longer the people whose dauntless valour overcame the hardy discipline of the Roman legion. They too had soon fallen into all the degeneracies and the tastes of Rome. Like her, and with far greater rapidity, they had sunk from all the attributes of that forward valour and manly simplicity of character which had made them, like her, the sovereigns of the world and period. To a people so deteriorated, the consequences of unaccustomed warfare may readily be told. Discontent among the people grew with

increasing expenditure on the part of the nobles. The latter, under oppressions not sanctioned by popular sympathy, had occasioned expenditures which that people were yet to satisfy. This taught them the difference of interest which, once known, must overthrow every rule —the difference between the people and their rulers— the consciousness of a dissimilarity of purpose and position, at once provoking discontent and demanding hostility. Nor was this spirit of dissatisfaction entirely confined to the people. The inferior nobles had their discontents also; discontents which continued to increase as they surveyed the excesses in which the more wealthy of their order engaged. They craved equally their indulgences, but they lacked the necessary resources. To oppress the inferior, therefore—to imitate the exactions of those above them—was the resort of this latter division. The Jews, for whom, after their late intrigue, there was little sympathy, were the first and legitimate victims. Their goods were the common spoil, and what they could not withhold or secrete, became, in great part, the prey of their oppressors. After these, the inferior orders of the Christians—for religion does not hold ground against misrule—succeeded to their fate, and a reckless and rash spirit of provocation throughout the land paved the way for a downfall of that power in which the sway of the government seemed to be deposited. Nothing could limit the excesses of this petty nobility, which did not content itself with the possessions of the inferior, but, in the end, proceeded to subject to its unrefined desires the wives and daughters of the classes most unprivileged, or seeming least secure.

VI.

With a re-awakening of the early spirit of virtue which was said to have distinguished the outset of his reign, and from which he had himself lamentably fallen,

the king, Witiza, determined to make head against these excesses. In aid of this determination, it so happened that Theodofred, an old and decayed noble, was guilty of a gross outrage upon a woman of the lower orders. The rabble took up the cause of justice, and pursued the offender into the very court of the palace of Toledo. Theodofred, secure as he thought of the protection of the king, no less than of his caste, looked to be defended against the rabble which pursued him; but he was mistaken. Whether it was that a sentiment of right in reality gave the monarch a spur to justice, or whether, as is more probable, he hoped by a timely and severe act of authority to win back some of those golden opinions from the people which he had but too obviously neglected, may now only be conjectured; but his proceeding was marked with all the decision, even if it lacked the impulse and the intention of justice. He met the crowd—assured them of his sympathy, and promised them the adequate punishment of the criminal. They were pacified, and he kept his word. Theodofred was immediately deprived of his sight—a favourite punishment with the Goths—and, in despite of the prayers and murmurs of the nobles, was immured, under the doom of imprisonment for life, in a dungeon at Cordova.

VII.

This terrible, but strictly just, punishment was the signal for a greater rebellion than that which had been recently put down. The nobles made common cause in defence of their order, the privileges of which they asserted to have been invaded. Witiza refused to make any concessions, and they raised the standard of insurrection throughout the kingdom. The common people themselves, though truly without motive for coalition with the nobles, joined with them against the sovereign, in whose person they saw only the imbodied form of

that domination which had oppressed them. To these, the Jews, glad of any chances for that commotion which they had themselves laboured to provoke in vain, at once gave all their assistance. Thus, welded into one, the extreme castes of the nation stood up, a solid and headlong power, in array against their common ruler. It was Roderick, the son of Theodofred, that led them. His wrong was that most present to their eyes, and his valour and known recklessness, at the same time, lent force to the suggestion that proposed him as their leader. His first stroke against the sovereign was made in the city of Cordova. The dungeon which enclosed his sightless father was assaulted and stormed—the son stood before the sire, and was unseen.

"Who is it that approaches?—what new danger awaits me? Must Theodofred look now for death from the hands of Witiza? Lo! I am ready," was the speech of the captive.

"Not death!—not death! but freedom!" exclaimed the son.

"Who speaks?—that voice—" cried the victim, as he tottered forward at the well-known sounds.

"Is thy son's—is Roderick's. He brings thee freedom and vengeance. Father! I stand before thee."

"I hear thee, but I see thee not, my son!"

"That is a word for strife and a fierce vengeance, and thou shalt have it! I swear it on my sword, the tyrant shall perish, even as thy sight."

"Approach—let my hand press thy head—let me feel, for I know thee not, my son."

The son knelt to the blind old sire, and the guided hands rested upon the uncovered head in benediction. The warriors around hailed the auspices with a shout of fierce enthusiasm, and they daringly began the war which was destined to shake the kingdom of the Goths to its centre. Three armies, at the same moment, traversed the empire. One of these was led by Witiza, who, lacking nothing of the valour come from his ances-

tors in direct lineage, at once went forth against the insurgents. Another, and the most numerous, was that of Roderick. The third, infinitely inferior in every respect to both of these, was led, in support of the reigning monarch, by his two sons, Egiza and Pelayo; but at too great a distance from the scene of war to co-operate with their sire against the approaching power of his enemy.

VIII.

The respective armies of the sovereign and the rebel, after several skirmishes, indecisive and only stimulating a wish for a closer struggle, met, at length, under the walls of the capital city of Toledo. The close strife of the sword, the spear, and the cleaving battle-axe, came terribly on, after the manner of the time, and with a revival of much of that sanguinary valour long suspended in their history, but which, at one time, had made even the Imperial Queen of Cities, the mighty Rome, cower and give back before the Gothic arms. Then rose the shout and the hurrah—the cry of conquest and the shriek of pain—the concentrated hate and malignity so naturally the result of a strife in which people of the same land and origin stand up in arms against each other. The insolent hope of rebellion rose into a desperate halloo, mingled with the confident cry of legitimate power. Both were anxious, prompted by leading, but different motives. Never were the arms of opposing arrays more equally balanced. The battle was protracted from sunrise to sunset; now approaching, and now receding from beneath, the walls of Toledo. The citizens thronged upon the towers and the battlements, looking forth in anxious doubt upon the progress of the strife. Twice did the insurrectionists fall back in panic before the well-ordered array of the sovereign. Twice did Witiza, with the golden horns of royalty upon his brow, and

mounted upon a car blazing with jewels, such as was common to all the luxurious monarchs of the Goths, rush forward upon the retreating thousands of Roderick, crying, "Victory!—victory! gallant nobles and fair gentlemen of Spain—one more blow—one more blow, and a rich prize for the head of the traitor." But such was not the destiny of the insurgent chief. He threw himself into the thick of battle. He stood in the path of his retreating troops—his own sword cleft the neck of the foremost fugitive, and his voice rang, like a clear note from the full-throated trumpet, in a peal more full of terror than any shock of the foe. He cheered them with a new hope—he led them forward with a fresh strength and better decision, and, for the third time, the armies clashed spears in opposing battle. How close was that struggle—how doubtful the result! What then were the hopes of insurrection—what then the doubts of legitimacy! The stake was great alike, to the sovereign and the rebel; and the efforts of both were worthy of the adventure. For a long time the battle hung in suspense—a feather's weight, a word more or less, on either side, had determined the issue; and, duly conscious of this truth, Roderick determined to single out, and by opposing manfully the danger in its very head, if possible, to make it less. Through the thick masses he pressed forward on his way. Amid the crowd and the dust, defying the hostile spear, and dashing aside the friendly, the strong-armed rebel rushed daringly to grapple with his king. Witiza beheld his approach, and readily conceived his object. He shrank not from the encounter, but, leaping from his car of battle, armed only with battle-axe and sword, he stood upon a small eminence, and waved his hand in signal to his enemy. His nobles gave back at his bidding, and, as if by tacit consent, the two armies threw up their crossed spears and suspended their strokes, in breathless anticipation of the single combat of the chiefs.

"I have thee, tyrant!—I have thee now, for vengeance!"

cried Roderick as he came; and he lifted his battle-axe to his shoulder, and rushed fearlessly up the hill.

"Thou comest for justice, and thou shalt have it, traitor!" cried the monarch, who knew how much he might rely on his ancient prowess.

And then came the stroke and the clash—the affronting thrust of the sword and the resolute parry, the keen eye guiding it in the true direction, so that it touched not. The king gave back before the rebel, and then rose, with a thrilling joy, the shout from the force of the insurgents; then trembled the ranks of the sovereign, and they would have rushed forward to his aid; but when they looked again, it was Roderick who had shrunk —Witiza pressing upon him, and the rebel partly upon his knee. Once more did he recover to the attack, and so stoutly plied he his blows that the weary arm of the monarch might well have failed to meet them with corresponding vivacity. But Witiza had an old renown. Had he not met the insurgent Basques, and overthrown the Tarragonese nobles, and driven back the invading Franks, until his name became a terror to each foreign power? Should he now give back before rebellion? He did not; he knew the strength of his arm—the superiority of his skill—and his soul was fearless as his steel was true. He put aside his enemy's blows, and dreadful and thick were his own. It was Roderick's turn to shrink—to give way—to flee. He yielded to what seemed his destiny, and the brave monarch pressed hard upon the rebel, as, fighting and facing to the last, he descended, still battling, from the eminence where, in the sight of both armies, the combat had been going on. At that instant a voice arose from the crowd of insurgent chiefs—a solemn, deep voice of inquiry. It came from the lips of the blind Theodofred.

"Speak!" cried he to the warriors around him—"speak! tell me how the fight goes; for I hear not the shouts of our people, and my eyes see not the form of my son."

Roderick heard—and shame and a new fury grew active in his bosom.

"I fight still, my father. Thou shalt have vengeance, though thine eyes behold it not. Ho! Witiza, I cross swords with thee again!" and he resolutely rushed up the hill. The monarch met him, unrelaxing, with his ancient spirit.

"Thou art not stronger, nor I weaker, thou traitor, than when I struck with thee before. Thy hope shall be the same."

And they renewed the strife; but scarcely had it begun, when an arrow—a single arrow—perfidiously shot from the insurgent ranks, with deadly aim, penetrated the eye of Witiza. The monarch reeled beneath the shaft, and his lifted battle-axe struck wide of the head of his enemy, upon which it was otherwise unerringly descending. In that moment he cried—

"Ha! slave, thou hast slain thy king! It is over."

Dizzy and dazzled, he reeled about like one drunk with wine, and the steel of Roderick's weapon then penetrated his bosom. He clasped the weapon-blade in his hands, and fell heavily to the earth. The star of rebellion was triumphant and in the ascendant, while that of Witiza went down in blood. The king of the Goths lay prostrate beneath his conqueror, the foot of the rebel was upon his breast, and the cry of horror from the one array, and the shout of exultation from the other, went up in a fierce diapason, as thus, bestriding his victim, his sharp blade smote the neck of the sovereign, till the gray head rolled from it along the hill. That event determined the conflict—the courage of Witiza's army fell with its leader; and, now a confusion, and now a rout, they fled before their enemy. The streets of the neighbouring city of Toledo, to which they retreated for shelter, ran thick with their blood, as, without offering resistance, they sunk under the swords of their pursuers. In that hour, while yet the conqueror stood over the body of his sovereign, and on the spot

where he had slain him, three of his bravest warriors seized upon him, and pinioned him to the earth. A dozen crossed their spears over his body, while in his sight waved as many swords.

"Swear!" cried the chiefs.

"Swear!" cried the people.

"Swear as a Gothic noble!" cried the nobles.

"Swear as a Goth!" cried the common soldiery.

"I swear as a Goth—I swear as a noble!" was the response of Roderick.

"Swear to be honourable!" cried one of the former.

"Swear to be merciful!" cried one of the latter.

"Swear to be true!" cried the noble.

"Swear to be just!" cried the soldier.

"In the name of the great God of heaven and earth—the friend of man—the protector of the Goths—the father of the most holy faith, I, Roderick, son of Theodofred, and true descendant from Chindaswind the Goth, I swear to you, nobles of the Goths—I swear to be honourable and true. I swear to you, people of the Goth—I swear to be just and merciful. God sees, God hears! I have sworn!"

"Bring the buckler—he has sworn," was the cry of those around him. The buckler was brought, and, raising the successful rebel from the earth, they placed him upon it, pronouncing him their king, and the king of the Goths. As with one voice, the vast multitude then swore allegiance to one destined to be the last monarch of their once mighty empire.

IX.

A FEW leagues off from the scene of battle, but rapidly advancing along the Tagus with levies hastily gathered among the neighbouring towns and provinces, came the two young princes, Egiza and Pelayo, sons of the monarch whose death we have just witnessed.

They had been aiming at a junction with their father, but though they had hurried with all due diligence with this object, they were still at some distance when the battle joined. It was in a narrow valley, about seven miles from Toledo, that they paused at nightfall for a brief rest. Their troops had been greatly wearied by the rapid and continued travel of the long day, and such a pause became absolutely necessary to enable them to commence their march again that night. It was then that they gained the first intelligence of Witiza's defeat. Fugitive after fugitive, each confirming, with some new disaster, the story of the preceding, made his appearance in the camp of the young princes, until the narrative of misfortune was finally complete, in the appalling communication, to them, of the murder of their father. Then the elder brother burst into tears and lamentations before his whole army, and his heart sunk within him at the tidings; but Pelayo, who was a brave and fearless spirit, rebuked this weakness, and spoke boldly to the messengers.

"Now, tell ye forth your story, ye that have run so fleetly with its burthen. Halt ye not in what ye came for, but impart the manner of the fight. Say out the whole—where stood the king—what force brought Roderick on—who was the traitor lord that led the flight, and had no thought for vengeance. Speak it all."

The fugitives then told him what he sought, dwelling with closeness upon all the events, until he came to the death of the old monarch, when the sorrows of Egiza, the elder brother, burst forth afresh.

"Now shame on thy woman heart!" cried the sterner Pelayo; "thy tears were fitting were they those of the man, which are blood, and not those of the woman, which are water. Go to—are we the sons of Witiza, and shall we borrow a thought from the child and weep? No, Egiza—I have for thee a better counsel. We shall fight. Let not thy tears damp the brave hearts of the warriors that follow us. Look battle, and send out a

fierce cry, that we may all gather strength for vengeance." Thus saying, he strove to fill the soul of his elder brother with his own brave spirit; but Egiza took greatly to heart the news which he had heard.

"I hope my father is in heaven," cried Pelayo to the troops. "Mine is a true charity, my friends, since I would despatch after him the traitor Roderick, who sent him there. So make fitting your weapons, and let us at once go forward to avenge our friends. Let us pluck down the rebel and do justice upon him, showing ourselves worthy in the sight of our country."

And faintly the soldiers cheered at the speech of Pelayo. They had been depressed by the intelligence brought by the fugitives and looked not with their former spirit. When Pelayo saw this, he rebuked his brother.

"This it is to be a woman; thy weakness has dashed the spirits of thy men, and they have grown feeble like thyself. Speak thou to them, and put on the show of a valour which thou seem'st not now to have. Let them hear thee, and, if thou canst, teach them to have souls fit for their swords, which are of Toledo."

Thus, nobly encouraging both his brother and the army, did Pelayo speak. Moved by his rebuke, Egiza threw aside his sorrows, and addressed the warriors manfully, as became the good stock from which he sprang. But their depression had been too great from the news brought by the fugitives, and, in addition to this, the emissaries of the rebel lurked even among themselves. The young prince spoke to men who were blinded or staggering. Conscious of their own numerical inferiority, and assured of the complete dispersion of that stronger array of the monarch, on the junction with which they had so much relied, they began to sink under the overwhelming despondency which these events brought along with them. But a few chiefs and warriors showed signs of a true courage, and a willingness to advance; and these too soon drew back when they found how feebly they were seconded by the re-

mainder of the army. Even the valorous and sanguine Pelayo saw plainly enough that nothing could be hoped from them in their present condition of mind; and, with shame and sorrow, he assented to the necessity which compelled them to fall back with their force upon the city of Cordova, where they hoped to find support in their quarrel. In this retreat their power gradually diminished, until at length, approaching Cordova, and hearing that it also had declared for Roderick, the two unfortunate princes now found themselves sustained only by a small band, chiefly of the nobles, who had clung to them and were true in all seasons. The rabble, always fickle and uncertain, had fled in every direction; some with the fear of punishment, and some in the hope of reward from the conqueror—so that the policy left for the young princes was, simply to disband their small, but trusty, remaining force, and wait for better times. This done, though they well knew the danger, yet, as they had many friends in Cordova, they approached that city. Carefully disguising themselves, unattended, they entered the city at nightfall, amid the sound of barbaric music, and the shouts of thousands assembled to glorify the annunciation of a new monarch over them—he the usurper of the throne, and the destroyer of one whom they had so lately professed to love with a feeling little short of adoration. Bitterly cursing their insincerity in his heart, and musing upon the instability of fortune, Pelayo led the way for his less elastic brother, until, sheltered by the night, they entered unperceived into the palace of their paternal uncle, Lord Oppas, the Archbishop of Cordova. It was then, at midnight, in the dim seclusion of a secret chamber, that the archbishop held conference with the young princes, his nephews, on the best mode for regaining the empire of which they had just been deprived by the successful usurpation of Roderick. The churchman and the elder prince, Egiza, the immediate heir to the throne, were seated thus in conference, the brow of the prince sad and

thoughtful; while Pelayo, the younger, who was of a fiery and restless spirit, strode, gloomily and impatient, to and fro along the apartment.

X.

"'Tis an evil day, my sons," exclaimed the archbishop, after they had briefly related to him the particulars of their late mishap, "'tis an evil day, but it is not all evil. We have lost the battle, and, for the time, our enemy is victorious. But cheer ye up—all is not lost, if we be not lost to ourselves. Let us not be downcast—let us not despair. 'Tis the woman's heart that will not hope on in spite of denial and in defiance of the misjudging fortune. 'Tis not for the strong man to be shaken with the sudden tempests nor the mighty tree to be cast down like the timid shrub—wherefore, then, Egiza, do you thus hang your head as if it awaited the stroke of the headsman? Look up, my son—put on the semblance of battle; and though we hide our weapon for a season, let us have the spirit for ever warm and ready within us that shall prompt us to its use."

While he spoke the clangour of the oriental drum, mingled with the shrill notes of the Roman trumpets, and the clamours of the multitude, announced to them the exulting progress of Roderick's faction. The finger of Egiza was uplifted as the sounds filled the apartment, but he made no other reply to the encouraging exhortations of the archbishop. The latter continued,

"'Tis true—those clamours and that exulting trumpet tell us all—the throne is lost—your father slain—the power departed to another hand, for a season at least; but they only tell us what your own lips have already been free enough to utter. They give us no new cause of apprehension. They carry with them no terrors to heighten those of the disastrous field where the sun of

Witiza set in blood. Let us not despond, and, above all, despond not thou. Thou art the rightful heir to the throne, and, if thou be'st a man, they can only keep it from thee for a season. That season over, and, by the holy martyrs of Antioch, I promise thee thou shalt come to thy own."

The words of the archbishop aroused the youth, if they did not encourage him. With a deep sigh he answered—

"I would hope, my uncle—I would that I could not fear. But give us better ground than these empty words. Whence comes your hope—where are our friends, our arms, our confidence? We stand alone. The warriors that followed us so lately are all fled, and, by this time, I doubt not, those who fled not fill the ranks of the usurper. The base multitude, forgetting their past favours and the glories of our race, shrink from the sides of those whose sires led them in triumph over the neck of Rome, and bore the banner of the Goth from the Danube to the Atlantic Sea. On such as these we may not rely, and for such as these we should not look. The coward hinds, though they swore most trimly when the foe was yet distant, had neither word nor blow when he approached us. They lingered not even to behold him; and are now, such as follow not in his train, shut up and trembling among the caves of the mountains, without the spirit of utterance, when a stout battle had given them the victory and me the crown that I should challenge but vainly now."

"They will come with the occasion, my son," replied the archbishop. "Their flight and terror now are natural enough; let us not upbraid them, but content ourselves, as we well know that the unobtrusive power (so ordered by the mazy Providence) comes ever with the necessity which demands its service. Let us await its coming. 'Tis not now that we can challenge the sudden growth of Roderick, and raise a party for his overthrow.

It were madness to move in such an effort. We must abide our time, watch patiently the season when he sleeps, and when they whom he oppresses are ready to awake in a common cause with our own."

"'Tis a long watch," said Pelayo, now for the first time joining in the discussion, "and asks more patience, my good uncle, than altogether befits my temper. I am not in the mood to wait. I have resolved—ay, sworn by the sword and by the soul of my father—an awful spirit now hovering over us—to yield it no such leisure. To-morrow I speed for the Asturias. We have some friends there—some true, strong-handed friends; men who lock not up their anger in smooth discourse, and plead, even while the foe plucks them by the beard, in long, dull maxims of propriety, till the hot blood grows cold."

"You are rash, Pelayo—rash and ill-advised," exclaimed the archbishop, in tones more moderate than his language. "Your active and open movement, my son, would be fatal to our success. It would take from wisdom its design, and, where a sober and calm thought would win the way, by some hasty movement you were sure to lose it. Hear to my counsel, son. We must not offend the uncertain power of the tyrant, who is not yet easy in his seat. He is jealous now, and watchful, and not his own eyes merely, but a thousand others watch for him, if 'twere only to buy his favour. We must pause until he ceases to fear from opposition, until his eyes close. Any movement now, even if the tyrant failed to arrest it, would only arouse him to a closer watch, which must keep off the good day of our deliverance."

"And how long are we to watch thus, good uncle—and where is the better hope from delay? The reason must be strong to make me sheathe the sword. Did they not tell us, brother, that the blood-streaming head of my father was stuck high upon the gates of Toledo?"

"There let it remain," said the archbishop, coolly; "and, for your vengeance, let it remain also. Know, my son, that the appetite grows the keener from the delay; and this knowledge alone, were it not our policy too, should make us deliberate in our movement. Hear me, Pelayo, and hearken to my hope, which springs rather from the nature of this people and this tyrant than the particular strength of the army we might bring against them. What is the Goth in Spain? Rude, wild, ever bent for action, sickening with peace, yet swilled and drunken with the sensuality of the Greek. They cannot bear long with one like Roderick, whose self-indulgence shall prove a barrier to theirs, offending them by restraints which he attaches not to his own wild passions. What of the Iberian?"

"He is with us—more with us than with Roderick—I too am an Iberian," exclaimed Pelayo.

"Ay, but he is broken in spirit—dispersed and ill-directed. Dreading every leader as a new tyrant, and having but little hope from any. Teach them to confide in thee, and thou wilt do more than Wamba or Ervigius."

"I will do it!" said Pelayo.

"Be it so—but thou canst not now, and our better hope is in Roderick himself."

"How—what mean you, uncle?" exclaimed Egiza.

"From his tyranny over Goth, and Iberian, and Basque, and Jew, and all—from his fierce nature and his jealous passion. I know him well, my sons. I have long known him, and I well know he cannot long please the nobles. His lustful thoughts, always passionate and wilful, wanting now the curb which belonged to his lowlier station, and kept him within due limits, will soon work ruin for his cause among their haughty leaders. Let him have but little sway, and, my life upon it, he will make for us a thousand partisans among his most favourite nobles."

"Speak, in what way, sir?" said Egiza.

"In a thousand ways, my son, and each of them helping on to our purpose. He is voluptuous as the Moor; and, now that he is sovereign, will not pause, like him, to satisfy his fierce passions at every risk. Some damsel of the court shall catch his eye, and he will straight assay her as a prince having power to take his will. With his blood roused, it will not be her plea or the Lord's prayer that shall make him give over his purpose. He will on, though maidenhood survive not in Iberia. Some youthful noble shall but look awry upon his amours or his insolence, and his head pays for it, and crowns a pikestaff rather than its own shoulders. In this and a thousand other ways shall he offend the people and make us friends; and, as we are better secure of this than of any open movement, we gather by delay."

"No delay for me!" exclaimed Pelayo, abruptly.

"How, brother!" said Egiza.

"How!" responded the former; "wherefore ask me how? What see you in this argument of the Lord Oppas to stead you by delay? I see nothing. Roderick may be lustful and insolent, or not—he may make enemies or not among his followers; but how does this affect either our rights or duties? I see not. I know that my king has been deposed—my father has been slain—and that a tyrant rides in his place. The sacred person which we have honoured has been hacked by rebellious swords—his reverend head, which, until this evil time, they had never beheld but with downfalling eye and bending reverence, by this usurper has been stricken from the bleeding trunk, and set on high for the Arabian vultures—"

"But, my son—Pelayo," said the archbishop, seeking to interrupt the vehement youth; but he continued thus—

"If you have patience, brother, such as our uncle counsels, be it so. I am of different temper. I am not pleased to listen to such laggard hope as prates for

ever of pause and patience, of what may chance to-morrow, and what not—waiting for opportunity to do its duty, which the honest and fearless mind should ever carve out for itself. You can stay listen, if so it please, to the lord bishop. His preachings shall persuade you, I doubt not, to a most easy duty. For my part, I must seek me out a wilder tutor in the Asturias, and content me with a philosophy which, if less musical, shall, at least, be much more manly."

"Truly, Pelayo, for a younger brother, you have but a slight cast of humility in your deportment. But I forgive you. Your rebuke is scarcely merited. It is my will to avenge the fate of our father, not less, I trust me, than it is yours; and I pledge myself to you to that purpose, as solemnly now as erewhile I pledged myself to his shade. But I seek not to strike till I can strike hopefully. Not to strike fatally were ruinously to risk our object; and it is in this that the reason of our uncle lies. His words are wisdom, and should control our thought. We do not yield our purpose when we delay it; we rather give it strength, and reduce to a measured certainty that which in your movement might well be declared madness."

The archbishop now approached Pelayo, and putting his hand affectionately upon his shoulder, thus urged him to a temporary pause in his contemplated journey.

"Hear me a moment, son; the delay I ask is but a brief one. I have some friends who make our cause their own. They meet with me to-morrow night. Wait patiently till then. There will be little loss of time, and none to make serious concern. Be thou there; hearken their counsel, and, when we have all conferred together, we may then more wisely determine upon our common course hereafter."

"This is right, brother," said Egiza; "the counsel of our uncle is good. Be not distrustful, I pray you.

Let us listen to the wisdom of age, and grow wiser in our own purposes, as we needs must."

But this suggestion did not seem to strike Pelayo with the emphasis with which his brother gave it utterance. He replied with increased impatience.

"I am no child, Egiza," he exclaimed; "why, then, talk to me of age? If that the aged have more wisdom, they also have greater caution; and, in time of civil war and strife, caution is a quality which shows too much like cowardice to be altogether grateful to Pelayo. The aged, indeed! What, I pray you, have the aged to do with those who feel? I'm wronged—I feel my wrong. My heart, that bleeds for love of a dear father, impels me to my purpose. What need I of other lesson?"

"Much need, my son," replied the archbishop. "The heart does well to maintain its feelings truly, but the head must guide them wisely, or they must ever err. Hear me still farther, Pelayo. I have a plan of counsel with Count Julian of Consuegra, and certain arguments which, I trust me, shall move him to our cause. He was the favourite once, and for a long season the follower of your father. He thinks, most surely, with us, and did counsel many adversely to Roderick who yet maintained his faction."

"A stale soldier! Why, then, kept he aloof from action? Why drew he no weapon against the rebel?" demanded Pelayo.

"The wiser, perhaps, for his forbearance, my son, since, as events have shown, his labours must have been unavailing. He kept a neutral station—"

"And thus joined the rebels. Avoid him, say I. Wherefore give confidence to him who neither helps his friend nor strikes his foe? We'll none of him, I think."

"Nay, Pelayo, but we must," said the archbishop. "He has but late come from Tingitania, and has no part in the conflict, and but little knowledge, as yet, of the condition of the realm. We'll seek him out at once.

Hard by is his castle, where he seeks present repose with his fair daughter Cava. Let us find him soon, and, by early speech, secure him for our cause. 'Tis a battle gained. All the troops love him in Ceuta; and be it known that he is with us, a goodly army follows."

"And thinkst thou," demanded Pelayo, "that he will listen to our argument when he left our father to his fate? Methinks, good uncle, this is a most wanton hope, if, in truth, thou feelst it."

"The case is not the same," replied the archbishop, quickly; "thou shouldst remember that Julian has had separate and remote command in Africa, having a force to govern and a duty to perform making him foreign, as it were, to our internal strife. The African had made bold with the Pillars of Hercules but for the close watch of Julian upon him. When the strait of Witiza came to his ears it was too late to serve him. Did he know—did any of us know that the peril was so instant; that rebellion had grown so insolent and commanding, to grapple with the sceptre in one night, and strike down its high sovereign in an hour? Whatever had been his faith, submission to the usurper whom he could not overcome was wisdom; and Julian has submitted to the rebellion only as it has been successful. Let but the people murmur; let them but look their discontent, and Julian, whom we shall now secretly secure, will strike with us, and for our cause."

"And with this shadowy hope," said Pelayo, "this pause for the rascal discontent, we must go sleep and drowse, without dreaming, if we can, of the rusted weapons by our side, and the heavy tread of the usurper above us. This is but another of thy texts, good uncle, which teach delay."

"Even so, my son; and the delay is wise which all texts incline to teach. We must wait for another and yet another day, since it were madness now, in the face of the successful rebel, to attempt the struggle for his

overthrow. But, though I counsel delay, I counsel no relaxation of our purpose. I but require that we should wait a fitting time, and I promise that we shall not wait for it in vain. The hour of hopeful circumstance will come, and, if we are ready then, clothed in our armour, watchful, we shall strike home, even to the heart of our enemy, and make our fortune certain. Any effort now would keep back the hour, and bring sure defeat upon our purpose. This is reason, son—wisdom speaks thus, Pelayo, and she counsels you, even as I do now, to patience. Hearken her counsels, Pelayo, and do nothing rashly which shall prejudice thy brother's cause or thine own."

"Methinks, good uncle, you do wisdom grievous injustice when you fill her mouth with counsels she were loath to utter of her own head. Is't wisdom, think you, that hath the trick, even ere the morning begins, of brooding on patience under all privation, and counselling the humblest submission to all manner of wrong? You mistake her, uncle, or I know her not. Is it she who pleads through the long day and the longer night—a most patient and most needless plea—still for the boon of patience? who puts off all duties for her prayers—a priestly practice in faith, if not a wise one—and learns one lesson only to the grievous exclusion of a thousand better?"

"Thou dost mistake, Pelayo," exclaimed Egiza; "thou dost wrong our uncle's argument."

"Ay, do I, then? Well, I will phrase it more seemingly. Is't her voice that, when the heart beats with its wrongs, implores it to bear its burden, complain, turn humbly to the stripe-giver—ay, solicit newer strokes—when, with a single impulse of honourable wrath, it might avoid the tyranny, avert the scourge, and, giving weapons to the arms that lately bore but a mule's burden, destroy the cruel oppressor, and break his rule for ever? This is thy wisdom, uncle, but not mine. Thou

hast ever ready thy lessons of patience and forbearance which I love not. They better suit the mule than the man. They will do nothing for the cause of our country, or, as thou hast it, my brother's cause and mine."

The archbishop paced the room angrily while Pelayo spoke. When the latter had finished he approached him, and replied in words and with a manner which sufficiently denoted the roused temper of his mind.

"Foolish boy, still wayward and impetuous as thou hast ever been from thy childhood, but that I would have this cause to prosper, I would leave thee to play at thy own pastime with it till it drew down ruin upon thee. What wouldst thou, or what canst thou do of thyself which would avail to bring thee a step nearer to thy revenge, or thy brother to the throne of Witiza? What if thou didst rouse up thy Asturian people into premature action, they could help thee only to a sight of the foe, which their unaided weapons could never overcome. If the Asturians are brave, they are also savages; and mere brute valour would do little against the practised arms and superior aid which Roderick will now bring with him to battle. Our hope now is in wile and strategy. Thou hast said well when thou saidst that the part which I counselled thee was that of the mule rather than the man. That, indeed, is the part we shall play for a season. We must bear with the heavy burden of our wrongs; go forward with dull pace of the unconscious brute, until we feel the reins of the rider slacken upon our neck and the steel relax within our jaws. The same policy, then, which taught us, while our rider was awake and watchful, to submit, will teach us now, when he sleeps, to resist—throw off our burden, and trample with our heavy heel the head of him who has bestridden us. By the mule-seeming, only, shall we delude our tyrant, and persuade him to the lulling security in which we shall destroy him. Yet may we toil, meanwhile, for our-

selves. I counsel not lethargy when I counsel caution and forbearance."

"Cross counsels, uncle. If we are to have no blows, in what shall we labour?" demanded Pelayo.

"By art, which supplies to the weak in arms the ally which shall make them able against the strong. We have many modes of action, though we lift no banner against the usurper now. We must win over the nobles secretly, such as we deem to favour us; such as the tyrant may offend; such as were the best friends of your father; and such as may, from phlegm or deliberation, have kept themselves neutral in the strife just ended. With this object would I go to Count Julian, who is the best able to serve us of any officer in Spain."

To these arguments of Oppas, Egiza added others not less urgent, together with his own prayer that his brother might not prejudice their cause by any unnecessary and injurious precipitation. Pelayo heard him with impatience, but replied thus.

"Have it as you will. You shall not impute it to my rashness, as you are but too prone to do, that I strangled our purpose by quick movement or by hasty deed of mine. I'll be the mule you would have me, and bear my wrongs and my bosom's grief as a heavy weight that would weigh me to the earth, but for the promise of the day of vengeance. I will wait as patiently as I may, but I promise you I wait not long. Let me see you relax in your labours, or fail in the men you look to secure, and by Hercules' awakening, I will use my club, counsel how you may."

"'Tis well, Pelayo," replied the archbishop; "we plead for nothing more than this. I trust we shall wait not long, though we wait patiently. I know that Roderick cannot long satisfy the imperious nobles whom he has bought for the present to his cause; that they must fly from his banner, if 'twere only to escape from his injustice, and they will fly to ours if 'twere only from the

love of change. Our best hope is in this; and I doubt not that it must sufficiently serve our purpose. And now, Pelayo—Egiza, my children—I pray you, embrace each other. You have spoken impatiently, and your tones erewhile were ungentle in your mutual ears. This must not be. Remember, ye are alone in your fortunes, and out of the world's love; this were strong reason that ye should more than ever love one another. Embrace, my children, forget the unkind words, and God's blessing be upon you."

"True, uncle," said Egiza, "we have spoken wildly, and we should pray to be forgiven. Pelayo, forgive me, as I truly forgive thee what thou hast said in thy impatience; this, indeed, I may the more easily do, as it would need a word unknown to me now to make me greatly angered with thee. Give me thy hand, Pelayo."

"Ay—my hand, my heart, my sword, all that is mine, Egiza, so that thou wait not too long with this mule purpose," was the reply of Pelayo.

"Fear not, Pelayo, and be not suspicious of our faith, to thy own pain and the injustice of those who feel and wish as thou wouldst have them. But it is fitting that ye sleep now, my sons. Your toils have been many, and your fatigue must be great. I will conduct you to the secret chamber, where you will lie in perfect safety. But, ere the dawn, you must leave the city. You shall wear the habits of my household, that ye be not discovered; and in this disguise ye will go with me to the castle of Count Julian. I know him well, and will discover his leaning ere I unfold to him our purpose. This caution thou regardest with scorn, Pelayo—nay, I see it in thine eyes—but thou wilt yet have to learn, my son, that wisdom requires such art for her purpose, which would fail by directness, and sometimes falter even by the weight of her armour, were she not to crave and keep such assistance."

"Wisdom call you it?" said Pelayo, scornfully.

"Well—Heaven help us to right names, or we are like to make sad mistakes ere long. Wouldst have my name for this art, good uncle?"

"Ay, let us hear, Pelayo."

"Hypocrisy, I call it," was the reply; "the cunning of the knave who dares not show his purpose, and meditates deeds which he fears to utter even to the friendly arm which shall help him in their performance. These are goodly lessons for mankind and morality; and thus it is that the wise man, so called, tutors his scholar unto wrong; and thus it is that the father counsels his son to falsehood; and thus it is that the predominant and infallible priest trains the suppliant soul to an everduring damnation. Go to with thy philosophy, good uncle, and lead the way to our chamber. Thou wilt not counsel us to patience and forbearance in the matter of sleep which we are to take."

With a grave countenance the archbishop listened to the free words of the fearless Pelayo, and, without farther speech, led the way to the secret chamber which had been assigned them in his palace for repose. There, promising to arouse them ere the dawning, he bestowed his blessing upon them, and left them to those slumbers which the fatigues of the day had made absolutely necessary, but which the thoughts and excitements of their minds continued to baffle until a late hour. It seemed to them but a few moments after he had left them when the archbishop awakened them for their morning journey.

XI.

A FEW leagues from Cordova lay one of the castles of Count Julian. Fortunately for the conspirators seeking him, he was even then within its walls. In a splendid antechamber they waited his coming, and thus discoursed among themselves prior to his approach; Pe-

layo, whose impatience grew with every moment of delay, being the first to speak.

"'Tis an old saw: truth is still a beggar, whom they let feed as she may without the temple. 'Tis pretence only that can force its way within, since 'tis pretence only that keeps the entrance."

"It were little better for her, my son—perhaps much worse—were she to become bolder. Hospitality, at least among the Goth, would be apt, if she thrust herself in without command, to thrust her back again over the threshold. It is for that reason that I counsel you to the mule's part, since any other would be too presumptuous for those who toil in the cause of truth."

"And therefore would I not counsel the patience which is ever thy lesson. It is because of this so severe condition that the friends of truth need to draw the sword in her favour, and pierce her way to justice."

"And yet her cause, my son," said the archbishop, "she being the acknowledged parent of peace, would seem to crave more forbearance from her worshipper. She may be denied, and she may be baffled, my son; but know we not from the word that is blessed, as it is truth's own, that in time she must be triumphant? The very destiny, being at the end of a supposed period, would, of itself, counsel us to patience."

"Ay, 'tis our patience, uncle, that baffles her so long. Were her friends but as prompt as her enemies, we should have but little wrong in the world, and justice would have no judgment-place, as she would never need to hear appeal. 'Tis in our pause now that she suffers, and every moment that we linger adds a new link to her bonds."

"Be not rash, Pelayo, in what thou sayst before Julian; I pray thee let thy speech be modest, like thy present fortune. We are too weak to be bold, and can offer but little in temptation which should make us confident of him we seek. Above all, we too greatly need

the aid of Julian to offend him by precipitate look or language. Remember that Roderick is now strongly seated; the nation submits to his rule even if it does not love it; and so long as the name of the usurper is new in their ears, and so long as he lavishes the treasure of your father, will the rabble cling to his feet and strive in his behalf. These truths will press on Julian as they press on all minds throughout the nation; and it will be only through nice argument and liberal promises that we shall be able to win him to our cause. Whatsoever, then, you hear from his lips, my son, I pray you let pass; say nothing that may vex or startle him, and I trust we shall secure him. It will be for me to show him the policy of his action with us, to note his fears or his feelings, and to meet them with proper argument, which shall help to bend them to our purpose."

"Short speeches, then, good uncle, I pray you, for such has been the practice of your Seville bishopric that, I trow, your grace for festival and prayer for grace do equally grow into a sermon."

The archbishop turned away from the reckless speaker, while Egiza expostulated with him.

"Nay, Pelayo, you are too rude; you vex our uncle by your timeless speech."

"Oh, go; you are as much a priest as he, Egiza, though your sermons be not quite so long. Let me enjoy my humour after my own fashion, or let me go sleep."

"And better do that than vex our friends for ever while you wake," responded Egiza; and he would have proceeded farther, but the impatient Pelayo arrested the exhortation in the opening.

"Enough, good elder brother; you are the wiser brother as the elder; I yield to you. Enough, then, this acknowledgment made, for this brief season; we'll have time enough to prate at another, when our patience is in full exercise. We'll have need of words then to

make up the lack of action, and you and our uncle will do wisely to keep your sermons for the day of need. May it be a day of grace to us all, for our patience will be perfect then."

"'Tis much to be hopeful of thine, Pelayo, for thy stubbornness grows upon thee. Wherefore is it thus, my son? Why wilt thou not list to reason?"

"There it is again; the cold-blooded jade, misnamed Reason; we shall have the burden-bearer next, the mill jade, the mule, Patience."

"Be patient, brother," said Egiza.

"I knew 'twould come. Patience in thy speech, uncle, and my brother's, is as necessary an ingredient as gold in all the doings of the church. Thy exhortations to me end with a prayer for patience, while those of the church end with a prayer for gold. Were I possessed of the gold, wouldst thou tax me for so much patience as thou dost, uncle? Alas for thy soul and mine, I fear me not. I should be permitted my mood, of whatever make it might be, could my coffers bear me out in the purchase of indulgence."

"I bear with thee, Pelayo," said the archbishop, "in love of our dear brother, and because of the duty which is before us. But have a care, my son, the messenger of Count Julian approaches."

At that moment a page entered the apartment, and briefly stated that his master awaited them above, and solicited their attendance. While he did so his eyes were fixed upon the person of Pelayo with so much earnestness as to provoke the attention of the latter, who, forgetting the disguise which he wore, in his impatience thus addressed the slave.

"Dost know me, fellow?"

The slave hesitated, but after a moment replied,

"It is the Prince Pelayo."

"Ha!" exclaimed the archbishop. Pelayo coolly spoke:

"Thou know'st too much, fellow, for thy honesty or my good: but take this gold, and preserve thine eyes, that they may peruse some lesson which thou hast not yet learned. Go thy way."

The abashed page received the piece of gold which Pelayo put in his hand, and, without looking up for an instant, led the way to his master. The thought of Pelayo, meanwhile, broke forth as they proceeded.

"This is one lesson of adversity. That fellow's eyes had guaranty from our misfortune, and he felt himself the greater because his superior had been somewhat humbled. The sod-bearer thus stares when the clay stains the gay cloak of the nobleman, and the water-carrier laughs aloud to behold the rents in a prince's garment. Our kindred from the dust begin to claim us, and I am more disposed, good uncle, to look upon thy rule as a good one."

"What rule, Pelayo?"

"The mule's, besure; the patience that makes the text and the tail of thine and my brother's preachings."

XII.

In another apartment of his palace, more secure from the intrusion of the crowd, Count Julian prepared to receive his visiters. Busied with his official duties, for he had just been apprized, by despatches from the usurper, that he had determined to continue him in his public station, he hurriedly gave his commands to several attendants in waiting as the guests approached the chamber.

"Take these," he said to one of the couriers, "to my Castle of Algeziras; see that Count Astaulph's hands receive them, and await his answer. Bring them with all speed, on thy life. Hence; thy errand is of worth, beyond the value of the steed that bears

thee, ay, beyond thy own. Spare neither in thy journey. Hence. These," he said to another, when the first courier had gone, "these are for Merida; seek for the Lord Ervigia; let him note their purpose, and haste thee with his reply. They need despatch; see that they lack it not."

As the courier passed from the apartment the archbishop and the two princes entered it. Count Julian advanced to receive them with friendly countenance, motioned the slave to withdraw who had shown them to the presence, and thus addressed them.

"This is a courtesy, my Lord Oppas, which glads me, though unlooked for. And these gentlemen?"

The archbishop replied, as they advanced,

"The princes, Egiza and Pelayo."

"Sons of the late Witiza?" said the count; the words were scarcely uttered before the voice of Pelayo was heard—

"The *King* Witiza, sir—the murdered King Witiza; a king murdered by subjects—subjects beholding it; the crown upon his head, the sceptre in his hand, Heaven-anointed, and girded with all the outward signs of royalty, as he was endowed with all its substance within. Such, sir, was the *King* Witiza. We are his sons."

Count Julian turned upon the speaker with a countenance in which surprise was equally mingled with respect.

"Thou speakst truly, though somewhat hastily, Prince Pelayo," he replied, after an instant's pause. "Truly was Witiza the king thou declarest him. I meant no doubt, no denial in my words. It were but slack justice for me to say that he was a most gracious and a noble monarch. My honours came from his hand, and my first field was battled beneath his eye. His sons are welcome."

The manner of Count Julian, as he spoke these words,

was well calculated to subdue the harsher mood with which Pelayo began the interview. It was calm, gentle, and ingenuous. An air of bland sincerity marked his demeanour, and won the easy confidence of Egiza, while it encouraged the archbishop to hope for ultimate success from his contemplated application. But the more penetrating mind of Pelayo was less hopeful, even from the first. He saw the features of one who was utterly unmoved; whose impulses had been checked by years; and whose desires were sufficiently under his own control to be governed and modified according to the press of circumstances. Such a man, high in station, having a large influence and considerable authority, was not easily moved, he well thought, to desire or to toil for any change which could add nothing to his present height, and might, indeed, subtract from his power. But though he thought thus, with more forbearance than was his custom, he withheld the speech which would have given it utterance, and listened, without interruption, to the reply which his uncle made to the seemingly hearty welcome which Julian had given them.

"We are indeed grateful for this courtesy, Count Julian; so strange has it become to these, now deserted of all who served them once, that it hath a value in itself, even if it did not promise something more substantial. It is not much, my lord, that a prince overthrown in battle by a usurper may hope from those who are not bound to him by blood; and the service of such has a merit in the eyes of God and man alike, as it would seem to be a tribute beyond the ordinary claims of duty. Your kindness to them now must tax their present acknowledgment, as, if followed up, it should command their more honourable reward."

"No more of this, my lord bishop," replied Julian; "I know not what you may mean by the duties and the reward of which you speak; but it glads me, as I've said, to see them, thus young, still manly and buoyant

in defiance of the storms that have wrecked the fortunes of their sire."

"Not wrecked, I trust, my lord, not if there be hearts in Spain that love the memory of Witiza, respect justice, and are not utterly ungrateful for the blessings, general and individual, which his sway distributed over the land. It were grievous wrong to the brave nobles of Iberia, who owe so much to King Witiza, were we now to think they could utterly desert the cause of his sons. There must be hope from them when the first pressure of the storm is past. They will not always submit to the usurpation which is now triumphant for the time. They will take up the cause of the Prince Egiza as their own, and with this hope have we now come to speak with Count Julian."

"With what end?" demanded Count Julian, looking gravely.

"That question answers all!" exclaimed Pelayo, with his accustomed impetuosity; "let us begone, my brother, let us begone. We have no farther business here; and well may our noble host demand with what end we came."

"Brother, you are mad!" exclaimed Egiza, vainly endeavouring to sooth the irritable youth, whom he led aside to a remote part of the chamber, leaving Oppas and Julian still in conference. But the words of Pelayo were still sternly free; and there was no yielding conciliation in the tones such as Egiza prayed for.

"Oh, yes!" he replied, "it is madness, and little else, to feel that we are wronged and robbed, and yet complain of desertion by those who should be true; men that we have raised from dust and dregs until they grew strong to reject the hand that supports, and base enough to forget the favour which has uplifted them. It is madness, I know, but it is a natural madness, and is not an effect beyond a proper cause."

"Wherefore this coil, my lord bishop?" demanded Julian of his companion.

"Nay, it is nothing, count; it will soon be over. A feverish blood, recent strife, and the painful overthrow of his father—these have vexed him. He is impatient—nothing more,"

"Impatient! nothing more!" exclaimed Pelayo, scornfully, as these last words of the archbishop, though spoke in low and subdued tones, came to his ears. Egiza anxiously caught his arm, and, fearing some more violent burst of utterance from his lips, led him to the farthest end of the apartment, and thus earnestly expostulated with him.

"Wherefore wilt thou do thus, Pelayo? Thou wilt spoil every thing with thy rashness. If thou art reckless of thy own hope, be not regardless of mine. Remember that I am the rightful sovereign, and what thy impatience may lose will be my loss rather than thine. Come not, I pray you, between us and the narrow point to which we aim, nor mar by an idle word what thou canst never mend by thy weapon."

"Pshaw! thou talkst idly and madly, Egiza, though thy tones be far more temperate than mine. Thou mayst deceive thyself, and thou dost, but thou canst not deceive me. What hope hast thou from the warrior who demands of his prince—his prince overthrown by a rebel—wherefore he seeks him? The cold question were enough, did it not prove the lacking thought and the base spirit."

"But you mistake, Pelayo—"

"Well, I mistake, then—and you—do not. We shall see. Go, humble as you please, to your servant. Implore from him the succour which you should command and he proffer. I shall say nothing. Yet hearken me ere you go."

"What would you, brother?"

"Be patient, an it please you. Look soberly, with a downcast eye, and let your words be sweet and slender, and speak them with a modest voice, as if uncertain

what grace they may find in the ears of him to whom you offer them."

Thus speaking together, the two once more approached the spot where Julian and Oppas had been all this while in close conference. The latter had been in no wise sparing of arguments and promises to effect his purpose with the former. It may be added that he had been much less successful than his earnestness in argument, the warmth of his promises, and the justice of his cause would have seemed to promise. The confirmation by the usurper Roderick of the military and high appointment which his predecessor had conferred on Julian had alone defeated the hope of the archbishop, even if Julian had been lacking in other reasons. The former did not abate his zeal, however, as he found the latter cold. He proceeded thus in the discussion, which, we may premise, was scarcely conducted with logical precision on either hand at a period when the laws of succession and divine right were so commonly interrupted and broken by the custom, borrowed from the last days of Roman greatness, of electing by the military. Roderick's best title came from this source, and it was the policy of Oppas to argue only from what he assumed to be the legitimate origin of power.

"But, my Lord Julian," he continued, "if the claim of Wamba to the throne be doubtful, what better claim is that of this son of Theodofred? Wherefore should Roderick have sway over one holding a more perfect right than ever did the mighty Wamba? The title of Witiza comes down purely and without interruption from Recared the Great; and that of Egiza is not less certain. How, then, shall we pause for judgment between the usurper upon the throne and him who now claims your succour for its attainment?"

The archbishop was earnest, but Julian was collected.

"It is true," he replied, "that the blood of Witiza, the

father of these noble youths, comes from the heart of Recared the Great; but even this gives them no title to the crown. You startle, but I speak the truth."

"Indeed!" said Oppas; "but this makes wide disagreement between us. How prove you the truth thus?"

"A word will do it, my lord bishop; for, by the Gothic law, it was not in Recared to convey the crown, even though his blood might move him to the desire; and quite as little is the right to challenge it by his successor. He himself, yea, all of his successors, took their rule from the National Council. The popular assembly decreed and determined the election. They have ever had this office; and the same power hath raised Roderick on the shield in the presence of the army and commanded our obedience. On what plea shall we refuse it, then, and how sustain our opposition to the law, which has had the voice of the whole nation in its favour?"

The archbishop hesitated for an answer, but Pelayo did not. He had so far listened patiently to the arguments, but the last words of Count Julian annoyed him, and he spoke with instant readiness.

"The whole nation, my lord?—not half of it. And who were they that spoke? It was not the army of the Gothic or of the Iberian people, but of the usurper, that raised him upon the shield. An army of ruffians—creatures drawn from the prisons—thieving Greeks from the market-place, and such worthless nobles and citizens as had been banished in the previous reign of my father. These are they—banished brawlers, hireling soldiers, and swilled retainers—who assume to themselves the voice of the nation. It were a sin and shame if Roman nobles gave place to such authority; bow when they nod, and whom they elevate cry sovereign, and make sacred from assault. Shame on such thought, I say;

but I forget—I should be silent here—patient, sweet brother—is not that the word?"

"Foolish boy!" said Oppas, grasping the arm of Pelayo, and whispering the emphatic adjuration in his ear; "foolish boy! will nothing hold you bound—can you not keep your counsel in quiet for a while, and let us labour who would still hope?"

The effort to suppress the speaker had a contrary effect. He broke from the grasp of the archbishop, and, with a voice rising with his movement, he advanced towards Julian, speaking, while he did so, with terrible emphasis.

"No, I must speak, my Lord Oppas, though we despair. Hear *me*, sir count," he continued, now addressing Julian; "hear me, I pray you, and impute it rather to the feelings of justice in my heart than to the presumption of my youth that I am thus confident while I demand your ear."

Julian bowed his head with grave respect, and the youth proceeded thus abruptly—

"'Tis not for a warrior such as you have been, such as you are, sir count, to assume the office of the schoolman, and, ere you draw sword and lift banner, deliberate nicely upon the right of him who calls upon you for the service which it has been your wont to yield. To the true man it matters but little who should be present king and who should not. The laws change daily with the moods of those who make them, and the true warrior may not hold by these. He must seek other standards for his guidance, and—thank Heaven that it is so!—even as he seeks shall he find them. They are in his heart; they come from God; they grow out of warm and honourable impulse, and suffer no cold interest to come between them and the duty which they owe and the service which they have pledged. These teach us never to desert our friend in peril; never to shrink from our foe in fear; to hold fast the right, even as we de-

termine it upon the first movement of our thoughts and feelings, without that delay of the trader, who makes it a thing of prudential and profitable calculation. Ay, more. These standards teach us, farther, in the cause of our country to sacrifice friend, self, and all—all that we honour, all that we love and would cherish, in the field of battle, at the flame, and upon the cross, if need be, and to glory in the prized things which we so yield in compliance with the nobler promotings of our hearts. Surely, Count Julian, these standards of the heart are thine. It cannot be otherwise with the gallant warrior. If't be that they are, they call for but little argument from my good uncle here, and still less from me, to move you in our battle. They must enjoin that, as my father held your faith, it is your duty to maintain his right; that, as my father held your friendship, it is your duty to avenge his murder; that, as my father was the unquestioned sovereign of the Goth, it is the duty of the Gothic noble, pledged to him in faith, in friendship, and no less bound to his country, to punish the rebel who hath slain his sovereign and usurped the rule which he bore so worthily. These are my thoughts, Count Julian, my free thoughts; I fear not to sustain them. It is not wise, perhaps, to speak so bold, and were more prudent, in the world's esteem, for one so free-spoken as myself to have said naught; but I hold you to be a warrior, Count Julian, and I have faith in the honour of a warrior. I fear not, therefore, to offend you in what I have said; and yet—do me justice. If there be right and reason in this plea of mine, my brother here, having the birthright, has the benefit. Give him thy weapon, Count Julian; I plead for no service to myself."

It may be supposed that a speech so daring, so full of defiance, and so pregnant with assertion, if not truth, was well adapted to startle, if not to change the resolution of Count Julian. He paced the room for an instant

before replying, and his face was full of thought when he returned to speak.

"There is matter in what thou sayst, Prince Pelayo, which may well task the thought, if not the weapon of one who was a soldier, and, let me add, a true one, while he lived, of the late monarch. Perchance, had it been practicable for me to have moved in his battle before he perished, your speech had been unnecessary now. I must think on what thou hast boldly, but not unwisely spoken. At present let us stay this discourse. My daughter approaches to bid us to the board."

XIII.

Now the Lady Cava was the loveliest lady in all Spain; the only child of her father, whose affection placed her above all estimate in his idolatrous regard. She was little more than sixteen, and of a beauty that did not the less continue to charm because it was so sudden and so sure to captivate. Yet, to this time, had she little homage from the young gallants of the day, for she had dwelt with her father in seclusion. Here he had studiously maintained her, as he too well knew the dissolute character of the court of Toledo to intrust her there in his absence. Loving him, as she did, with a warmth of regard corresponding to his own, this seclusion had not brought with it a solitary feeling of privation or regret; and in the valley, overhung with high mountains, in which she dwelt usually, or in the frontier castle of her father at Algeziras, where, with his force, he watched the insolent Saracens, she still found it a sufficient pleasure to be alone in the company of a gentle heart and a lively fancy, both of which were truly her own. It was a new feeling that came to the scarcely less youthful bosom of the susceptible Egiza as he looked upon her. His cheeks were flushed, his

eye sunk yet kindled, and his bosom heaved with emotions which he had never known before. While he gazed upon her he forgot the purpose on which he sought her father; he forgot the memory of his own; he forgot all things in the new and absorbing passion which, like sudden electricity from heaven, penetrated his bosom, and deprived him of every consciousness save of its own consuming fire.

"By your leave, sweet Lady Cava," he exclaimed, taking her hand after she had been severally introduced to the guests—"by your leave, lady," and he lifted her hand to his lips with a sense of rapture which he had never before experienced. Her own emotions, not less strong than his, were yet more easily restrained; and while her bosom glowed with warm, fresh feelings, her eye looked nothing but the nice modesty, the shrinking gentleness, and the winning timidity which so adorn her sex.

"I greet you, gentle lords," she said, in reply to their several addresses, "I greet you with thanks and welcome."

The pleased wonder of Egiza could scarcely forbear uttering aloud those delighted fancies which he was constrained to murmur—

"Oh, beautiful! Can such be mortal, having such grace, such movement, such expression? I may not speak to her; nay, I should not look, lest that I maddden."

The approaches of Pelayo were of another sort, and his tall, athletic person seemed but ill calculated for the genuflexion which he made on her appearance, while his words were rather hesitating and confused.

"Your slave, fair Lady Cava," he said, hurriedly, as if he dreaded that his utterance might fail him ere his part were over; "lady—yes—your true servant." He sank back apace when this was done, muttering to himself as he did so—

"I'm a poor gallant, and have no touch of the courtier's quality. I were ill to serve dames or princes, since the painted flesh of the one and the toys that deck the other would never win me to the falsehood, in look or word, which is so much the delight of both. I have no fingers for fine action. I grasp the flower as if 'twere an axe for battle; I press the velvet fingers as if they were those of the rock-heaving warrior. My brother were the best minstrel, and, doubtless, the more graceful king. Let him have the gifts of my mother; I lack them, but I desire them not."

While he muttered thus in soliloquy, Egiza addressed himself with the warmth of a lover and a courtier's ease to the beautiful girl who stood beside him.

"Speak again, sweet Lady Cava; let me not break the music of your lips by praying thee for more of it."

"Brave enough!" exclaimed Pelayo to himself as the words reached his ear. "He were not half so eloquent to her sire, nor half so warm in winning back his kingdom."

The answer of Cava, who was scarcely less pleased than Egiza, came to his ears.

"You flatter me, gracious prince; 'tis the vice of the court, they tell me, to pour sweet falsehoods into willing ears. My ear drinks in the deceit with gladness, though my thought does not the less teach me my undeserving."

"Thought has the right on't," murmured Pelayo to himself; but the response of Egiza was in a very different language.

"Nay, it wrongs thee much, fair lady, if it tells thee other tale than my lips bear thee. What though sweet flattery to willing hearts be the vice of the court, believe me, it is not my vice, nor do I esteem it thy weakness to listen to such pleasant falsehoods. It is because my words are true that thou yieldest me hearing, sweet lady. Ah me! I would it were otherwise, for then

might I the better hope to defy the eyes which assail me now, and the sweet lips which delude me while they glow."

The rapturous glances of Egiza as he spoke this impassioned language, so natural to the time and country, but so little in correspondence with the proper mood of one like Egiza, who had his own and the wrongs of a father to redress, provoked the indignation of Pelayo.

"Oh, patience!" he exclaimed, in tones nearly audible to the rest. "Oh, patience—the mule, the mule now. 'Tis a fit servant here. I must con these lessons of my uncle for very safety. What a dangling shame is this good brother of mine, that shows more soul in seeking a boy's puppet than in struggling for a country and a crown. He hath but just wakened in the woman's presence, and we shall have him prating of patience when he leaves it. Well, they have such tales, even of Hercules the Striker, and it needs not that I should chafe. Yet Hercules could better afford the loss of his beard than can Egiza, who has scarcely got one."

The lovers were too closely engaged and interested with one another to heed the increasing sternness in the looks of Pelayo. They pursued together the same fond wild style of dialogue, which, indeed, was natural enough to the period, without a seeming consciousness that they were remarked by any foreign eyes; and the musings of Pelayo kept pace with their abstraction. As he watched the passionate movements of his brother, the rapturous glances of his eye, and heard the flow of his enamoured speech, his indignation grew more vehement, and at length attracted the notice of the archbishop.

"We wait for thee, Pelayo," he exclaimed. The answer was not to the address.

"A frail thing, which every breath of the season may whirl about at will. Now has he all forgot the business that he came for, and the ghost of our father may go to

his tomb again without revenge. Beggary of fame and honour—but—ah, uncle, patience, I bethink me—patience is the word here, is it not?"

"How? what mean you, Pelayo?" asked the archbishop, who, by this time, approached him. Pelayo slightly touched his arm as he replied.

"Thou hast been a sportsman—thou lovest the sport, dost thou not?"

"Ay, son Pelayo, thou shouldst know what thou'st seen. We have struck the red deer together. Why askst thou this?"

"Thou hast sought thy game, uncle, with a closer speed than thou hast ever sought for heaven?"

"Belike, Pelayo, it is truth that thou speakst," replied Oppas, with humility. "The church hath but too many servants like myself, who forget their duty in vain pursuits and idle imaginings."

"Pshaw, uncle, keep thy homily and self-reproach for those who know thee and the church less. Thou hast wasted one of thy best texts of humility. But to thy sports, good uncle. Look on yon hart and hind. But look on them. 'Twere an easy toil for thee, with all thy bulk upon thee and on foot, to strike both with a single shaft."

The archbishop with his eye followed the direction of Pelayo's finger, but the feelings were not like those of the nephew with which he surveyed them. A new plan for effecting his object arose in his mind as he beheld their manifest regard for each other. He spoke not, and Pelayo continued.

"Let us put aside this prayer for patience, good uncle, or we lose the game—and the hunters, too, will be loss no less. Let us join them, uncle—and see, Count Julian beckons our approach."

They did so, and, as they came nigh to the lovers—for such they were—Egiza, with some incertitude of manner, turned from the maiden to Pelayo, and thus addressed him.

"Brother, the Lady Cava has much wonder to know wherefore you have been so strange, and why you hold yourself so distant. She would know you better, as she misdoubts whether it were easy, so foreign have you proved yourself, to distinguish you hereafter. Pray you, approach, and speak her."

"Indeed, fair Lady Cava, but you would have little loss if you knew me not hereafter; and there would be but little profit in your knowledge of me now. Mine is no courtly temper, such as my brother carries. Where he looks smiles I would look spears; where he talks of delightful things, my speech is only of things dangerous and dreadful. His thoughts are of gentle waters and nodding groves, sweet moonlights and tripping damsels. I think only of the array of battle, of slain tyrants; and I have but little mood for other more sightly objects. For a gentle damsel, his speech were better than mine. I, that mourn the loss of a dear father, the wrongs of a brave people, and revenge upon an enemy, may not move my lips to courtly language and gay compliment. Let him who suffers no such sorrow have thy ear. He hath sweet ballads, and will sing thee when in voice, until thou, like him, shalt forget there is aught of sorrow in the world."

"But he hath his sorrow like thine own, Prince Pelayo," replied the maiden. "Doth he not mourn like thee the loss of a dear father?"

"Ah, Lady Cava, thou hast asked this question of my lips; wouldst thou had asked it of thine own thought. Behold him, lady. He looks too happy in thy smile to know aught of the sorrow in my heart."

"Nay, but thou dost him wrong," replied Cava, quickly, and blushing deeply as she spoke.

Egiza replied also to the reproach of Pelayo, the justice of which he, nevertheless, felt in all its force.

"How now—what mean you, Pelayo, by such speech?"

"What should I mean?" sternly replied Pelayo, in tones suppressed duly for the hearing of him only to whom they were addressed. "What should I mean, but to tell thee that thou growest sinewless in thy purpose?"

The words of Cava bidding them to the entertainment interrupted the vehemence of that anger which Pelayo had only begun to express, and, meeting her glance, he was compelled to soften those features into a smile which, at that moment, were better fitted to denote scorn and indignation. It was no easy task; but, with a power which he possessed over himself, however unfrequently disposed to exercise it, he readily did so.

"Sweet lady, we obey you. Hold me your subject no less than my brother's. I follow—follow where I may not lead!" was the muttered close of his speech of compliment, which, spoken in lower tones that the rest, only reached the ears of Egiza.

"Now be at peace with your suspicions," said the latter. "Wherefore chide me thus? dost think because I speak gently with a noble lady I am less fit to do battle with a rugged man?"

"Pshaw—wouldst thou deceive me, Egiza?" replied the other. "Thou canst not. I see into thy soul; thou art readier for the damsel than for thy duty; and if thou heed not she will win thee from it. Beware!"

Julian advanced to them while the young men thus spoke together, and, with considerate courtesy, he prayed them to attend his daughter to the feast. This done, he followed with the archbishop; while, rapidly advancing, Egiza placed himself at the side of Cava, and led the way to an adjoining apartment. Pelayo, musing to himself, followed at a slow pace.

"We came for succour," he said, "but shall go hence with loss. I see it in his eyes. Well—let him but palter with us, and brother though he be—"

"Pelayo," exclaimed the archbishop, looking behind him.

"Ay, ay, good uncle—I come."

XIV.

Thus moving, Count Julian in close discourse with the Archbishop Oppas, and the elder prince, Egiza, not less closely in converse with the Lady Cava, they took their way into the banqueting-room; the young prince, Pelayo, following at a little distance, musing upon his various distresses, soliloquizing sometimes, as thus he went, in that form of humour which to him was most natural, though to others strange enough. And now when they were entered within that noble apartment, which, in every castle, the Gothic nobles assigned to the social purposes of the banquet, their noble entertainer, the Count Julian, with a lofty but gracious cordiality, pressed them to the board, and assigned them honourable places, either beside himself or his fair daughter, who presided with a natural grace, no less winning and becoming in her than the same cordiality was frank and manly in her sire. The board was amply provided with all the most acceptable viands of the time; and nothing was wanting, save the perfect appetite, which could do justice to the hospitable feast. But the guests were in no mood for animal indulgence, and they partook but sparingly of the banquet. The minds of the archbishop and the Prince Pelayo were but too full of the object for which they came to feel hunger or to desire the tempting food which was before them; while Egiza was but too busy gazing upon the beautiful Cava, and in feasting upon her charms, to give heed to any other less heavenly refreshment. Vainly did Count Julian endeavour to tempt them to a greater indulgence; they ate but sparingly, and the repast went off in com-

parative silence. When, after a while, the Lady Cava rose, and, bringing a napkin to each of her guests, took her departure to another room, into which she was quickly followed by the amorous Egiza. Meanwhile the archbishop and Count Julian resumed their discourse; while Pelayo, who sat by them in silence, chafed within himself momently, to listen to the compromising propositions of his uncle, and, as he esteemed them, the evasive replies of the count. Fearing to trust himself to listen longer lest that he should again offend by an abrupt obtrusion of his thoughts, he finally arose and followed his brother into the neighbouring apartment, in which Cava and himself, in the dreamy illusions of their newborn love of each other, contrived to wile away the time in a most perfect and sweet unconsciousness of its flight. Their eyes were too much given to each other to behold his entrance; and gazing upon them sadly and in silence, Pelayo heard the idle but fond discourse in which they indulged.

"Alas! sweet lady!" exclaimed Egiza, taking her hand while he spoke—a liberty which she only slightly resisted, and to which she yielded in the end; "how hast thou come between me and my purpose. Thy beauty hath misled me from my own thoughts as from the fixed resolve of my duty. Thou hast unmanned me, lady; and, in the happiness of my heart's visions, I forget the toils to which my body is devoted."

"And wherefore these toils, my lord? Wherefore, if they comport not with the heart's happiness; though truly, I believe not, as thou sayst, that these visions, which give thee such pleasure, have their spring in me? I am but a silly maiden. I have but little knowledge of the gayeties and gallantries of the court; and how should a life spent among these mountains give me skill to move one that hath always been a dweller within it? Trust me, sweet prince, thou canst not deceive me with

thy speech. My father hath but too well forewarned me against the glozing wiles of the Toledan nobles."

"He hath done them wrong, sweet Cava, or thou dost me wrong to rank me with such as these. By my soul, I swear to thee—"

"Nay, if thou swearest, my lord, I cannot believe thee. I will trust not the oath which is so ready to thy lips."

"A wise girl," murmured Pelayo, as he heard her; "she had better not; for if he doth not forswear her he will yet forswear himself; and if he keep truth with her he were but basely false to his people. True or false, he were yet a traitor, or in the one behalf or in the other; but he speaks again. She hath blinded him, and his very soul seems sapless. Here he prates with a silly maiden, when he should grapple with Julian in argument, if he seeks his sword. Shallow trifler! that cannot maintain a noble purpose, pledged in a calm moment, and pressing upon his honour for its instant execution. And here, I doubt not, will he linger conning love ditties to idle ears, and giving idle ears to love ditties in return, till he grows puny as the bird he would emulate, and falls an easy victim to the cunning fowler."

Meanwhile the fond Egiza, whose want of character was but too well known to the penetrating mind of Pelayo, continued to pour his flatteries into the ears of the credulous maiden, who, kept for so long a time in seclusion, and now just budding into womanhood, was but too susceptible to such subduing music.

"Till this hour I have not lived, sweet Cava. Thou hast given me life in the new feelings which possess me. Nay, turn not from me thus. Look not coldly, but believe me what I say. Thou hast inspired me with life —thou hast brought a new joy to my heart—thou hast given to my eyes a vision of heaven."

Love at first sight, or love at any sight, was something new to the thought of Pelayo, who gave little heed

to such idle influences. He listened with curious anxiety to hear the answer of the maiden to such a rapturous declaration.

"Ah, my lord, thou dost make sport of me, I fear. Thy compliment is too reaching for my belief. I will not hear thee longer, and were foolish to hold thy flattery as truth."

"Stick to that damsel, I pray thee," muttered Pelayo. "Believe him not; for, if true to thee, he is still false; and though thou give him all faith, he will rob his faith from others if he requite thee. But—hear him."

"Nay, Cava, thou art no less unjust to thy own beauties than to my heart which adores them. Trust them and me, and believe me not wild or wilful when I tell thee that I love thee."

"Ha! What will she say to that?" murmured Pelayo, gloomily.

"Oh, sir—my lord, I were wrong to heed thee longer. Let me leave thee. Nay, sir, but I must. Thy speech hath a tone of artifice, and it becomes not me to hear thee. Thou art rash to speak to me thus; thou hast but seen me; and I were more rash to hearken thee, who may not see thee again."

"Cunningly ended," said Pelayo, while Cava, retreating, or seeming to retreat, moved away towards a long gallery, to which her froward lover did not scruple to pursue her. Pelayo came on as they disappeared.

"Now, should I not follow him?" he exclaimed. "Should I not follow him, and stay this folly? It were well for both were I to do so. It were well for the cause, which this folly mocks, and his vain spirit seems to forget. All's lost that hangs on him. It must not be thus! What right hath he to throw away our hope, and cripple the cause which needs every arm, and will brook no delay for such pastime? 'Tis no season for love when the tyrant rages—the bird sings not in the tempest. I'll go between them; I will disturb their

music; an they will parley after this fashion, they shall have grave counsel. They shall not fall into folly without warning, though I preach to them after a favourite text with the Archbishop of Seville, and cry 'patience' as a charm against too much vigour of blood. There they palm it in the gallery. I'll follow them."

XV.

FULL of his newborn admiration for the beauties of the Lady Cava, Egiza, with that flexibility of soul which was his prevailing defect, now pressed his love upon her in another apartment. Even as he spoke, his younger brother, Pelayo, whose spirit had no such mood within him, and whose only thought now was the rescue of his people from the despotic Roderick and the revenging of his father's death, walked forward gloomily to where the two held their discourse. The eyes of Egiza were too much with his heart to behold his coming, and those of the Lady Cava looked not up once from the floor as she listened to a strain of profession which she readily drank in from the lips uttering it.

"Now will they curse me in their souls for an intruder upon their pleasures," murmured Pelayo, as he beheld the two. He paused in his progress and hesitated. While he did so, the urgent and persuasive tones of his brother's voice came to his ears.

"Nay, chide me not, sweetest Cava, that I thus fondly pursue thee with my love. Hear me plead, dearest lady, with sufficient reason for my prayer. The times are wild, full of images of danger, full of strife and apprehensions. Should I now forego the blessed chance which has yielded me thy hearing, I were not sure that like good fortune should be mine hereafter. The next

hour may lose me the opportunity of which I now seek to avail myself."

"Oh, sir—my noble lord—do not, I pray you, look upon me, and implore me after this pressing fashion. You do wrong to a timid maiden by such prayer. Mine eye hath only seen you; it were rash, and worthy of a long sorrow and a heavy judgment, were I so quickly to incline a willing ear to your soliciting. Let me go free, my lord, and I will think of what thou hast spoken."

"He is no man if this answer baffles him," murmured Pelayo; "it is a denial very like a consenting. A pretty hypocrite—she does it well. Her eyelids point to the floor which her eyes see not; her arms hang idly, as if they felt it wrong to be without employ; and, do but behold her feet, how they peep out and play apart upon the floor. There is a strife between the tongue that speaks and the heart which speaks not, which these pretty feet do show, and which the soft warrior watches. Stay—he speaks—he hath paused for memory. Belike the flowers of his fancy need to be looked after; he hath not tended them lately."

"Nay, sweetest Cava, wouldst thou then leave me? and whence this fear? What though your eyes have not until this day beheld me, it makes not against your taking the homage of the heart which their first glances have won."

"It were a weakness, noble lord," she murmured in reply.

"And the weakness of love, sweetest Cava, is the very strength of nature, and may not be gainsaid by reproach. It is no weakness such as makes the heart ashamed. It is none to bring shame to thee."

"But sorrow, perchance, my lord—much sorrow."

"Wherefore? The decree of love is from Heaven, and the destiny is but a sad one in which its pleasant law is not written. To deny love's prayer is to defy

Heaven's destiny, and set at naught the duty which, if obeyed, were not less for our pleasure than our good. Hear me, then, dearest Cava; be not stern, be not cold, lest that thou wrong Heaven's own laws by withholding thy obedience."

"Thou dost press me too closely, my lord; I am too young to answer thee."

The reply was uttered in broken murmurs, and Pelayo well saw that the words which she spoke were foreign to her meaning. His sarcastic humour noted well the contradiction.

"And yet, by the distaff of Hercules the Slumberer, even as she speaks there is a warm wish in her heart that he had pressed her more closely yet. The old snake again; and our Adam may well beware, since the hypocrite that counselled Eve hath not withheld his lessons from her daughter. See, her head bends towards him, though her lip prays him to keep his distance. Well —Heaven keep us, we shall know some day what we need, or would have, at least, for we do not often say it for ourselves."

Egiza did not mistake the true nature of Cava's feelings. Her words misled him as little as they did his brother, and his prayer became more earnest.

"Oh, be not thus chary of thy charms, sweet Cava. Look up, dear lady, and hearken to love's argument not less than to his prayer."

"Love's argument!" said Pelayo. "Well, that's new. He'll give it her, I trust."

"Thou dost object the briefness of our knowledge —our discourse; thou sayst that 'twere a weakness, having seen but once, to dispose ourselves in love, and might bring sorrow upon our hearts."

"In truth, I fear it much, my lord. We were but rash—it were a child's weakness to yield us up to such sudden passion."

"The girl has sense enough in her head if her heart were out of the way!" exclaimed Pelayo. But the answer of Egiza was in another mood.

"And yet how else, my sweetest Cava, are spirits to be won and wedded, if not thus? Love is no sober student — he needs no long study — no books — no schools—no teaching. He moves to his purpose by no measures, no scales, no weights. He gains not his conquest by a ten years' siege, which, sovereign though it may be for patience, were but a death to him who, in an instant, leaps to his possession when we least note his movement. 'Tis an instinct, sweet Cava, and not a study. It is the first instinct of the heart; for, until it loves, the heart has no consciousness of life. My heart has not lived till within this hour — ah, may it be that thine has taken life in the same sweet consciousness with mine. This is my prayer, sweet Cava—this my hope. Hast thou not an answer for me, dearest? If thou hast not—if the heart which mine own seeks feels not now, with an instinct quickening into life, like mine, then am I lost. I hope not from other pleading. Is it thus, Cava? Tell me—art thou unfeeling? art thou cold? wilt thou deny me? shall I pray to thee in vain?"

The respiration of the maiden seemed checked, and the broken words which followed were a full answer, had the excited feelings of Egiza suffered him to note their emphasis.

"Oh no—not unfeeling—not cold, my lord."

"Tell me then, dearest Cava, that the instinct of my heart is thine. Say to me that thou lovest me."

"The game is too close hunted—I'll give it reprieve —come in at the death, but not see it."

Speaking thus, Pelayo advanced; and, ere the lady could frame her answer, the heavy tread of his step reached the ears of the lovers, and arrested their dialogue.

"Ah, lady," he exclaimed to her as he approached,

" thou hast made but little count of thy guests, since thou hast left them to seek thee out as they might. I had hoped to find thee ere my brother; but, as he has the birthright, so, it seems, he has the good fortune. I have but stumbled upon thee without guidance, since he has had thine eyes to himself."

With the instant readiness of the woman, the confusion which a moment before overspread every feature of the maiden's countenance now utterly departed; and she replied with ease by saying, what, indeed, was the truth, that she had left him and his brother alike under the guidance and in the company of her father.

" Why, true, fair lady; and yet my brother, you see, could escape to seek out a better guide; and a like passion beset me, the more, indeed, as I left the good count under my uncle's homily, and he in the highest heaven of his self-esteem while he bestowed it upon him. I had no wish to rob your father of the blessing, and, I fear me, have stolen here upon devotions even more urgent than those I fled from. My brother has a most priestlike visage, and you, Lady Cava—nay, you look not like one who could well guide either of us now to the fine prospects of this noble castle."

Egiza now beheld the renewed confusion of the damsel at these words, and interposed for her relief.

" Nay, nay, brother—we did but step aside that our uncle should speak securely to Count Julian on the subject which, as thou well knowst, he has so much at heart. It were not well in us to meddle with the better arguments with which it is his hope to move him to our aid."

" And hop'st thou aught," demanded Pelayo, in a side whisper, of his brother, " and hop'st thou aught from this appeal? If thou dost so far deceive thyself, good brother, thou canst not deceive me. The damsel's father will do nothing for us—I say the damsel's father, Egiza."

"A moment, fairest lady," said Egiza, as he turned from Cava to Pelayo; "I will but speak a moment—'tis an urgent matter—with my brother."

The maiden bowed, and turned from the speaker to the corner of the gallery.

"How know you — wherefore think you thus, Pelayo?"

"See—the Lord Oppas comes with Julian. Behold the brows of your uncle, and take your answer from them. 'Tis written there legibly enough; but I knew it long before, from the face of Julian himself. See *his* brow, how smooth; he has had his response ready ere he heard our uncle's argument, of which you thought so greatly, and which, from the beginning, I held of but little account; and now go, if it so please you, and prattle your gay conceits in the ears of the maiden whose sire denies you justice, denies you the due of his life and good sword, both of which, as his proper sovereign, you have the right to challenge. But, ere you go, hear me. Prepare to give up the crown and kingdom of our father, or go with me with the dawn for the Asturias."

When he had ended these words, Pelayo turned from his brother to where the two of whom he spoke were approaching, and with a scornful composure of countenance awaited their coming. Count Julian, who beheld and understood the glance, did not, however, suffer it to move him, but continued to speak of the topic between himself and his companion, which, from his remarks, seemed about to be brought to a full though not a favourable conclusion.

"You have my thought, my Lord Oppas, without restraint. I have spared nothing and strained nothing in my judgment on this subject. It would glad me much that these young men should have the station to which they assert a right, for I cannot forget the many and

great kindnesses bestowed upon me by their father. But I cannot hold the cause of Roderick to be less just than is theirs. The right of election is with the people, and they have raised him upon the shield; and I hold that whatever might be the blood within his veins, whether it sprang from the heart of the Goth or the Roman, or from the base puddle of the Iberian or the Bascone, it were still in the power of the Gothic people to lift it to such honourable estimation as now crowns the ambition of Roderick."

"It grieves me that you think so, Count Julian; and no less great is my sorrow that you have proved yourself insensible to the other arguments of force which I had deemed it useful to urge upon you. You will not esteem it an obtrusion, Count Julian, if I pray you still to consider them. There is yet time."

The count smiled as he replied gently, but with sufficient firmness of air to show that he was inflexible in the resolve which he had made.

"The arguments, as you are pleased to style them, my lord bishop, move me not. Were it wise in me, at my years, to seek for place and power beyond that within my present possession, this commission just received from King Roderick, giving me the highest subordinate power in the kingdom, without prayer or service from me, would reasonably encourage me to hope for more at his hands, were I moved to wish such gain. But I desire no greater honours, as I desire no additional toils and responsibilities. I take not my present charge, which I had thought to have yielded up to some fitting successor, but that the Moor threatens at our gates, and the soldiers who are accustomed to defend them are no less accustomed to me as their captain in such defence. To this effect is the answer which I have prepared for Roderick, in acknowledging the trust which he has been pleased to confirm in my hands."

Pelayo joined them at this moment, and, speaking abruptly, arrested the courteous response which the archbishop was preparing for the ears of Julian.

"Soh, good uncle, now that you have your answer, let us be gone. Let us give our gratitude and our thanks—words, words, all—and then away. We need make but little pause, and may make great speed in our progress, since we carry no burden, unless it be my brother's impatience. We have come hither hoping much; what we bear hence will diminish our hope, and so lessen the weight we bear away. We do not leave our host in such good fortune, since thy homily, Lord Oppas, has made him reasonably grave."

"And what need of such haste, my friend? give yourselves leave to-night, and enjoy our couches. Do me grace, my young lord, whose speech is more sharp than needful, and wrong me not in your thought that I adventure not with you. If my prayer and reason might avail, I would have you forbear your purpose also, as it were but desperation to lift an arm against Roderick. He is too firmly seated in the throne for any force, such as yours to overthrow."

"Perhaps, perhaps my lord;—but my lessons have not taught me this heedful policy. That rule of narrow selfishness which determines of its duty by its chance was not among my lessons. I measure no virtue by expediency. My duty must be done, though Count Julian counsels against it; I must strive at the work which is given me, though I perish in the labour. I know there is a more sleek sort of virtue in the world which takes easier roads of duty; I gainsay not him who prefers it; and well I know that such have always fine arguments for its defence. Let it pass. Yet I thank you, my lord count, for your courtesy; nor, though I use it not, am I less grateful for your good counsel. It might profit others, but would only beggar me; and

I leave it, therefore, my lord, for those goodlier persons whom it would better stead than myself. Shall we not depart, good uncle?"

"Ay, my son, if it please you. Yet a moment."

He turned to Count Julian as he thus replied to Pelayo, and in tones which were audible only to the two, and were meant only for the ears of the former, he thus spoke.

"What we have spoken, my lord count, I hold to be in sacred trust between us."

Julian put his hand on his heart as he replied—

"You are safe with me, my lord bishop; for though the officer of King Roderick, my honour is in my own keeping. If I betray not my own trust, he cannot demand of me to betray the trust of another."

"And if you did, my lord," exclaimed Pelayo, misunderstanding the import of Julian's reply, and striking the hilt of his weapon as he spoke—"and if you did, my lord, you would not find us willing victims. There are swords to be bared and blows to be struck ere the betrayed fall at the mercy of the betrayer in sacrifice to his tyrant."

"There needs not this display of valour, young man," replied the count, calmly. "I mean you no wrong. You have sought me trusting to my faith, and you shall not suffer by your confidence. Yet it were well to say that I would not have you again seek me on such mission. It is enough for you to know that I shall this day accept the trust of King Roderick; such trust will be incompatible with your purpose; and I must not know of it. From this moment, what has already passed is forgotten. You are free to depart without interruption when you please, though it were no wrong to my honour to give you honourable tendance and fresh couches for the night. Let me pray you, then, to remain."

"I *know*, my lord count, that we *are* free to depart

—I, at least, am free. I carry my freedom here," touching the hilt of his sword. "Hold me not unthankful for your courtesy, my lord, when I decline it; but I must be soon a traveller if I would not that my head should keep countenance with that of my father—the King Witiza—your friend, Count Julian—upon the gates of Toledo."

There was much in this speech that pained and offended Count Julian; but, with the subdued superiority of age, he freely allowed for the warmth and impetuosity of youth, angered as it was, in the case of Pelayo, by his late and painful losses. Still, he could scarce forbear stern reply; yet he turned away, and bit his lip in silence. Meanwhile the three prepared to depart; and, while they bade their adieus to their host and his lovely daughter, Pelayo addressed himself to the latter with more freedom than he had before shown in his approaches to her.

"Lady, by your leave," he said, taking her hand and carrying it to his lips, an action which not a little annoyed the jealous Egiza, who was engaged in speech with Julian. "Oh, you shall be my queen, sweetest lady, and no subject in your realm should be so true to you as I, if you can but persuade my brother here to rid himself of a certain damsel whom he wills for ever to ride in his train."

"A damsel, my lord?" demanded Cava, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Ay, lady, a damsel—not so fair as thou art, but one he would keep with no less."

"I pray you, what is she?" inquired the maiden.

"Ask you for her name or quality?"

"Oh, both, my lord."

"Well, then, her name is Patience—a goodly scripture name. Our uncle, the archbishop here, taught it him, with her choice qualities, in sundry exhortations;

until now, he takes her to his bosom instead of many virtues. She is now, indeed, my brother's mistress. She rides with him, nor trusts him at any time from her sight. If he would move, she plucks him by the sleeve, and counsels him against rash riding and youthful venturesomeness; and when other youth not so counselled would urge him on to greater daring, she quarrels with them in a mood too spiteful to keep faith with the name she bears. Truly, Lady Cava, would I rejoice that my brother should ride with any damsel but this, for she drives better spirits from his side, and keeps him in a sad lonesomeness, and all the bondage of the solitude she makes. Couldst thou help him, sweet lady—"

The approach of the jealous Egiza enabled him to hear much of what his brother had said, and to interrupt him at this moment—

"He jests, sweet lady. He hath a stray spirit, which moves him ever to such speech of his friends. Heed him not, I pray you."

"I jest!" exclaimed Pelayo. "I tell thee not to believe me, sweet Lady Cava, for I know thou wilt. I cannot jest. I can understand no jest. When I jest teeth are broken—ay, and heads too. He knows I do not jest, and jests when he tells thee thus. I leave you, lady."

"Farewell, farewell, sweet Cava," was the parting whisper of Egiza. "You are in my heart—its substance and its soul, dear lady."

"And in mine too, sweet lady," said Pelayo, whose keen ear caught the whisper, "if thou wilt but do as I have prayed thee. Teach him to rid himself of that damsel of whom I told thee, so that he shall awaken into the life that is his duty, and the rough speech of Pelayo shall take a goodlier tone, and shape your praises even into sounds of music."

"You overrate my power, Prince Pelayo."

"Not a whit—I would that thou shouldst use it for his good. I pray thee, lady, if again he seeks thee, that thou wilt do so."

Egiza murmured over these words as he passed from the threshold:—

"If he seeks thee? Can I else than seek her? I have no thought now but to remain; and if my power serve but with my will, I cannot help but return."

"You grow impatient, brother," exclaimed Pelayo, after he had bidden farewell to the count. "Why do you linger? The fair damsel, Love, has departed, and the other damsel, who is not so fair, Dame Patience, grows chill with waiting."

XVI.

THERE was no hope from Julian. He was firm in his refusal to take part with those, whose cause, however rightful at first, was, in truth, unlawful now—inasmuch as the Goths, according to ancient usage, had duly elected the usurper Roderick. The usurpation had been legalized by the strongest faction, and there was little doubt but that the greater portion of the people were with the tyrant. In this condition of things, his rejection of the arguments of the Lord Bishop Oppas was peremptory, and that ambitious and intriguing churchman was compelled to forego all hope from the quarter to which his eyes had been directed far too much. Leaving the palace of the count, the mood of each had in it much of disappointment. That of the archbishop arose, naturally enough, from the refusal of Julian. Pelayo, only chafed with the delay, as at no period did he look to have aid against the usurper from one who consented to hold office under him. The disappointment of Egiza was soothed by the passages of

love which had taken place between the Lady Cava and himself, and his regret arose rather from the necessity compelling him to leave her presence, than from any great sense of mortification following the refusal of Julian to take part in the conspiracy. The several moods of the parties resulted in a falling off from each other of their usual sympathies, and, with but small show of cordiality, the two young princes listened to new suggestions from Oppas.

"Heed it not now, Pelayo. It is a sad chance—but we have friends left—many, glad to serve us, and not less willing to bring down the usurper. To-morrow night we meet. There you will see them—hear their advice, accept their pledges, and prepare, at all points, to gain the vantage ground in the commotion which must come ere long. Think not of the Asturias yet. The peasants there may be true, but they are too remote. To bring them here, on his own ground, to fight with Roderick, it were only to destroy them. We must strike here, and suddenly. You will come to-night?"

"I will, good uncle, though I look for other defeat from thy ministry. Thou art too subtle to be certain—too skeptical of man's honesty properly to believe, and considerately to serve, the people. With no faith in others, they will not wisely do to believe in thee; and it is the nature of thy practice to scorn the direct, in a fond search after the pathway which is hidden. Go to —this policy may seize but will not secure—it may win, but is not worthy to win—it may conquer in battle, but the strife is without honour, and would tarnish the spurs of the good knight, though he conquer by it. Thou wilt say I dream in this, as it is the wont always with the cunning to say of those who hold man higher than he holds himself. But, if my thought were the world's thought, then wouldst thou lose thy bishopric, for then would men be far more Christian than all thy teachings could make them, or approve thyself. Of thy

holy practices, good uncle, I speak not—I will not do thee so much unkindness."

"Thou art most considerate, Pelayo, but thou endest thy speech where it were better to have begun. Take a better mood to thee, and be prudent to be wise. I forgive thee all thou sayst, for the cause we hold is ours in common. Thou hast thy venture along with thy brother's and mine, and I can well understand the rash words which the peril of its loss may prompt thy lips in their utterance." The bishop spoke soothingly, and to him Pelayo replied without the pause of an instant—

"I have no cause such as thou claimest in this, lord bishop. Speak not of mine, or of thine, or of my brother's cause, when the beautiful country of our fathers is trodden by an accursed tyrant. That is my cause—I aim at no crown, either for Egiza or myself."

"This is our cause as well," promptly responded the archbishop, who felt the necessity of conciliating one already renowned for his valour, and possessing a wonderful influence over the few knights of their party, who admired his courage and conduct, and were secure in the knowledge which they possessed of his virtue and patriotism. "This is our cause, as well as thine, Pelayo, and the cause of all who feel with us; as thou shalt see to-night, at thy coming. Thou wilt come?"

"I will."

"Where goest thou now, Pelayo?" inquired his brother, seeing him about to depart. The person addressed turned abruptly upon the speaker, and with eyes that seemed to pierce him through, after a moment's hesitation, thus addressed him in reply:

"Thou hast known me long, Egiza. Shall I say to thee that Pelayo has no thought but of his duty—his duty to the living—his duty to the dead. The good of the one—the just homage to the other. I go upon these duties. I work through all the hours in our labour—yet think not that I work for thee. My dream by night—my thought by day—my hope, through all seasons the

same, is, that the creature who has limbs such as mine should have thoughts such as mine. There was a dream of freedom among the nobles of ancient Rome, while they rode over the necks of their barbarian captives. Thou hast thy dream of freedom too, Egiza, when thou hast supped plentifully. The dream of Pelayo is not like thine, nor yet like that of ancient Rome—yet it is also a dream of freedom. His dream of liberty shows it all alike—a principle like truth, such as no season can change, no condition magnify or depress, no rule subjugate, no soul avoid; whose temple is of universal adoration, and whose light, like that of the sun, is seen from all the nations."

"Why, thou dost dream, surely. What meanest thou by this freedom?" asked Egiza, wondering.

"The freedom of man."

"And what is that?"

"The absence of that necessity which imposes a condition upon man adverse to the nature within him. He is no slave whose intellect is not beyond his condition. He is a slave whose ambition, guided by a just impulse from truth, is restrained by a will hostile to his own, and defrauding him of his right, while defeating the purposes of the God who made him."

"Oh, this is idle, my son; and such words, which mean nothing or little, are out of place in the mouth of a noble and a prince. Thou art, indeed, dreaming, Pelayo," said the archbishop.

"Thou wilt see—thou wilt see. Oh, would thou couldst dream with me, Lord Oppas—but it is not for the sleek churchman to learn how godlike is the sacrifice which the noble heart can make—how vast the labour the high mind can compass—how great the trial the nerved form may overcome and defy, when cheered by such a vision which that dream affords of the future. I see what thou canst not. I hear sounds which reach thee not. Know, my lord bishop, that he who labours for mankind has already begun his immortality."

"Very good—but my thoughts are not so foreign, my son; and such as thou hast were better discarded. They will profit not thy cause."

"My cause!—would I could teach it thee. Thou wouldst use me for thine. I purpose to do the same with thee—not for my cause, not for thine, save only, as we both make a part of that condition which can only be happy when officered by the truth. My cause is not the cause of to-day, but of time. The labour of to-day is only useful to my cause, as it belongs to man, and holds a portion of the hours which are his; and the individuals who work in it are of no import in its progress, only as they precede countless generations yet to come, having their feelings and thoughts, and subject to the same necessities. The error of all thy thought is, that thou thinkest only of to-day."

"Well—and enough too. But then thou wilt be here to the time?"

"I have said."

"Shall I go with thee, brother?"

"Stay, and keep counsel with our uncle, Egiza. Win him to give thee some new homily, which shall serve thee in lieu of good works, when thou comest to the throne."

Pelayo left them, and Egiza, with Oppas, proceeded to the palace of the latter, where arrangements were to be made for the secret reception of the conspirators.

XVII.

After leaving them, Pelayo went forth into the country, having a secret object and without a thought, save only of the duty he had before him. He now rambled along a narrow valley, on either hand of which rose the towering sierras, dark, steep, and lonely. The solemn silence of the scene suited well with his musing temperament; but his meditations were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a steed, bounding with head-

long course along the narrow gorge, and making directly towards the spot on which he stood. As he approached, Pelayo saw that he had been recently mounted, and most probably had thrown his rider, for the saddle was upon his back, and the housings were all in order, as for a journey. Down, as the steed came forward, Pelayo leaped from the little crag, and throwing himself directly upon the path of the fugitive, spoke to him in a voice of authority. The animal stopped at the instant, even as if he had known the voice, then half receded, and lifted his head in air, but without other motion. Pelayo advanced and seized upon his bridle. Another instant found him upon the back of the now completely docile animal, and turning his head again upon the path which he had overrun, the prince now sought with him to find his owner.

XVIII.

He soon came to the place from whence the fugitive had fled—a little hollow of the hills, about a mile from the spot where Pelayo had arrested him, near which bubbled up a pure fountain of water, to which travellers in that wild country usually bend their steps. There, close by the fountain, lay a man at length, his head resting upon the arm of a slender page that knelt beside him. A little palfrey, upon which the boy had probably ridden, stood fastened to a neighbouring shrub. As Pelayo came near, he saw that the man was aged—his beard was venerably long and white, and his face was marked with the deep lines of thought and experience. He seemed to suffer pain, and the boy was busied in binding up a wound upon his head with a sleeve of his garment. He had been greatly bruised by his fall, for the horse had thrown him; but his hurts were not dangerous, though the concussion which his head had sustained, coming suddenly upon the rock, for a time had stunned

him. As Pelayo approached, the boy spoke—the eyes of the old man were fixed knowingly upon him, while his face assumed a quick expression, and he half-raised himself from the ground. The boy continued to hold his head, with a tenderness which Pelayo saw even more fully expressed in his pale countenance and quivering lip, than in the solicitous care exhibited by his actions.

"Thou art not much hurt, father, I hope?" said Pelayo, speaking kindly, while fastening the fugitive steed to a shrub.

The old man paused a few seconds before he answered—all the while surveying the young prince with an earnest penetration of glance, which at length became unpleasant to Pelayo, who now repeated the inquiry.

"Not much, not much, my son, I thank thee—but who art thou, and how hast thou chided that vicious beast into subjection? He hath a spirit that is wrathful and vexing."

"Not so, father, thou errest in thy thought of this fine-eyed Deserter. He is a true Barbary, and is not less gentle than fleet and forward."

"Ah, he knows his master. It is with thee he is gentle—not with me. Thou hast a strange power, my son, to do that which none might hope to do before. See, he looks to thee as a tame thing of thy household. Who art thou? I gaze on thee again, and thy features grow full in memory. Art thou not—"

"Nothing!"

"The prince, the Prince Pelayo—son of King Witiza!"

"The same, old man. A name not oversafe to him who utters—or to him who hears. I am the Prince Pelayo!"

The old man looked at the speaker again, then groaning audibly, turned his face, and buried it for a moment in the arms of the boy, whose looks expressed more than usual solicitude. Pelayo, who suffered none of this

to escape him, now asked, with some curiosity, "Who art thou?"

"Ask not—ask not, Pelayo. To thee, I should be nameless, even as thou wouldst have thyself to me."

"And wherefore, father?" inquired Pelayo, with increasing curiosity.

"Ay, wherefore—wherefore should I dread my fate? Why should I longer hold life a thing to strive for? I will tell it thee."

"Oh no, no, no! Speak it not, I pray thee, my father, speak it not to him." Thus interposing, the boy threw his arms affectionately, and with great earnestness, around the neck of the old man, and sought to stay his words; but the sudden determination which he seemed to have made was invincible, and he shook off the boy, addressing him at the same time in language, which, if not ungracious, was at least stern.

"How now, boy—hast thou forgotten? Go to thy place, and meddle not with the doings of thy betters. Thou wilt mar, where I would make thee."

Meekly, at the rebuke, the boy sunk back behind the speaker, and, with arms folded upon his bosom, awaited in silence the progress of the scene. But his interruption had led Pelayo to look more narrowly than he had done before to the features of the attendant, and he now saw that the tearful eyes were of a most glorious and glowing black, and the hair, which was confined by the close folds of a cap, not unlike the turban of the Moors, was glossy and dark as that masking the wing of the full-fledged raven. The figure, too, though exceedingly slight, was distinguished by an eminent grace, and, as he sank down upon the earth with humility, Pelayo thought his attitude and expression such as would have delighted Erzelias, the sweet painter of the Gothic court, in the time of Witiza. The old man went on with his speech where the boy had interrupted it.

"I will tell thee all, my prince, though I should be but loath to tell thee any thing, if I had not long since

learned to compute life—the life not ready for quick sacrifice—as a poor labour for a profitless spoil. Thou shalt know me. My name is Melchior. Thou hast heard of me before."

"What! Melchior the Hebrew?—Melchior, as thy people call thee, of the Desert?"

"He—Melchior of the Desert—Melchior the Hebrew!"

The boy clasped his hands, and threw himself forward to the old man, but said nothing. Pelayo recoiled, as if in horror, for a moment, then suddenly and fiercely exclaimed, as he bared his dagger—

"And what if I slay thee on the spot!"

"Oh, strike not, strike not, mighty prince, strike not the old father! See his white hair, and the blood on it! His limbs totter—he is weak and old! Strike him not, strike him not, I pray thee!"

Thus pleading, the boy rushed in between, and, with uplifted hands, and a cheek flushed over with excitement, while his eyes flowed with tears, he prayed for mercy for the aged chief of a despised and persecuted sect. Pelayo regarded the old man and boy alternately, and though possessed of many of the prejudices common among the Christians of the time, which held the Jews an odious race on many accounts, as well of trade as of religion, his mind was too superior to the prejudices of the period, too noble and truly chivalric, not to forbear. He covered up his steel, and, in a calmer tone, thus addressed him—

"Melchior of the Desert, enemy of my father, of my country, and of me, I should do thee but faint justice were I to slay thee, even on the ground where thou liest."

"I am not thy enemy, Pelayo. Thou wrong'st me much to say so. Thou art as one sacred in the sight of Melchior of the Desert."

"What! thou wouldst lie for life, too, at thy years? For shame, old man! This is to be a Hebrew. Why

shouldst thou hold for me a gentle thought, when thou didst hate my father?"

"Hear me, my son. I say, as I have said to thee, thou, Pelayo, art sacred in the sight of Melchior of the Desert. Even as thou approached to me, leading that fierce steed, which thy one word had tamed—then, though a thick film was before mine eyes, and all my senses swam in a dull stupor, from my many hurts—even then I saw it."

"Saw what?" inquired the prince.

"Yes, even then, I saw the green wing of the humma, the sacred bird of Heaven—such as the Arab sees—such as I saw once, many years ago, in a far vision of a spring, vouchsafed me in the desert—I saw it thrice sweep closely round thy head, and straightway I knew thee for a mighty prince. I saw, and could not doubt. Then I knew thou wert the chosen of the God of Abraham, to be the king of thy people. Thou art their king, and whether thou strik'st or spar'st me, still Melchior of the Desert must call thee king. I cannot be thy enemy."

"He is my enemy who is the enemy of my people."

"Am I not one of thy people? Do I not own thee for my king?"

"Ay, the king whom thou wouldst betray to death, even as thou didst league thy accursed sect with the Saracen, to destroy my father and my people."

"I did league with the Saracen—I would league with the Saracen again, that the enemies of man should not make a dog of him. But I will not league against thee."

"I am my country's—so wouldst thou be, were the ties of country aught to a spirit so base as marks thy tribe."

"My country!" exclaimed the Jew, bitterly—"and what is my country? what is the country of the Hebrew? This is not his country. The ties with which thou wouldst bind him to it are the scourge and the chain, the cruel

taunt and the unlimited exaction. These are the ties of country to my tribe. How should they be true and faithful to the rule which yields them for sympathy the stroke, and for security and peace all manner of persecution? I have leagued with the Saracen against the tyranny of the land—the tyranny that was death unto my people."

"And didst thou hope for a kinder sway from the children of the accursed Mahound?"

"Hear me, Prince Pelayo. Melchior of the Desert has wandered with the Saracen in his tents, as his captive and his slave: and though cruel is captivity by whatever name, and softened by whatever indulgence, yet was it with the Saracen a gentle providence, when compared with the intolerance of the Christian rule. I speak to thee as one who may soon be gathered to his fathers, having no hope from the judgment of Jehovah, but from his justice. My words are those of truth, even though the grave were open before me. The practice of the Saracen was the Christian faith—the Christian practice to the Hebrew were worthy of the name of terror and of cruelty thou hast given to the Saracen."

"I fear me, Melchior, much thou hast spoken of the Goth is sorely true, and sadly do our people now bear testimony to the error which overreaches the land. The Jew is hardly dealt with, and I know there can be no faith where there is no trust. To hold thee bound in honour to thy country, thou shouldst possess thy country's confidence."

"Thou hast spoken, Prince Pelayo, as a prince should speak—with the thought of a father for his people. Thou lookest, with me, beyond the high hills, and through the thick clouds that keep other men from the distant truth. Thy thought is the true wisdom. All that the Hebrew claims—all that is claimed by Melchior of the Desert—from the land that asks his service, is, its confidence. But give it him—keep it not back from

him—let him but know he has a country, by her trust, her love, her care in his concern, and not, as now, by scorn, wrong, and all manner of oppression—let him know this, my prince, and not a Christian dwells throughout Spain shall better serve her—with a truer love, or a more perfect fidelity. He will not shrink from her battles—he will glory that he may range under her banner. Her pride shall be his own—her fortune as much his care, and as well worthy preserving, in his thought, as they may seem to any of the proud nobles, who now cry aloud against him."

"Could I think this, Melchior, as thou hast said it," replied Pelayo, musingly, to the old man, who had grown warmed by his feelings, and now hastily answered, half rising from the ground—

"Believe me—I will swear. The great God of Israel shall hear the solemn promise that I now make thee for my whole tribe. Not a Jew of Toledo that will not move at Melchior's bidding. Thou shalt see —I swear for them. Thou little know'st my people, Prince Pelayo. How glad were they to learn they had a country—how glad to die for it."

"And for a rule that brings them to this knowledge—for one which gives them the same freedom with the rest, to hold their faith and wealth—their several thoughts—to shape themselves in life—pursue their venture, whether in worship, or in toil, or trade, each with his single mood, with no restraint, save of the wholesome laws that all obey—for this thou'lt pledge thyself?"

"Ay! I swear it all! My arm, my wealth, my people—all shall swear. Say but this word to them, and be their king."

"Not I, their king. My brother holds the right. 'Tis he shall promise this."

"Ha! not thou? I tell thee, Prince Pelayo, thou art he—thou only can'st do this. Thou shalt be king of thy people. Have I not seen it? I may not doubt the promise which has shown it me, when, at thy first

coming, the green wing of that bird of Heaven shadowed thy rising forehead with its glory. Thou wilt be king of Spain."

Pelayo searched the venerable speaker narrowly with his eyes, and plainly saw that he spoke in all sincerity. The wild oriental faith in the crown-giving wing of the humma, the fabulous bird of the desert, was strong in the soul of him who had dwelt for so long a season in the tents of the Arab; nor was the belief of the Christians, at that time, much less certain on the same subject. The Prince Pelayo, however, was superior to the superstition, and he calmly enough replied to the speaker, whose manner had become rapt in due correspondence with the strain of enthusiasm which had fallen from his lips.

"No, Melchior, none of this. My brother Egiza shall ascend the throne, and his power shall do for thee and thy people as I have said. It will be to thee and them the same, if thou wilt make the same pledge to his rule as thou profferest to mine. What force mightst thou array?"

"Three thousand men. Not practised, as thou know'st—not skilled in arms. The stern sway of thy father took greatly from the ancient valour of the Hebrew. But they will follow and fight for thee, so thou wilt lead them."

"Will they not for my brother?"

"Ay, for the king who does as thou hast promised."

"Thyself shall lead them. They will follow thee. I know thy power over them of old, when thy rash call unto the Saracen brought them to that peril which attends thee now."

"Yes, even now I fly—a fugitive. My head is forfeit. But if thou, my prince, wilt move thy brother to the thought thou speak'st, old Melchior will not fear the foes that hunt him. My beard is white, but look upon mine arm. The cimeter is pleasant in my grasp, and

let me know the country I may strike for—I shall grow young again."

"Thou shalt know this, and grasp the cimeter against the bloody-minded Roderick. Egiza shall requite thee with a pledge. Come, go with me. Give me thy arm —I'll help thee to thy horse, which is now gentle. What means the boy?"

Thus Pelayo spoke, and the old man was about to accept the proffered assistance, when the page, who had all the while been a silent but attentive listener, now arose hurriedly, and pressing between the prince and Melchior, sought, by the substitution of his arm, to render unnecessary that of Pelayo. At the movement, the old man seemed to be conscious, too, of the impropriety of which he should be guilty, were he to task the aid of a Christian, in contact with one of a people, at that period regarded in a light the most offensively odious.

"Now what means this?" inquired Pelayo, with some surprise. "The boy is weak, Melchior, and cannot help thee."

"Pardon me, prince—'twould not beseem thy name, thy race, thy Christian blood—thou'dst vex at what thou hadst done."

The boy spoke hurriedly, but with an appearance of gratification still in his countenance, which sufficiently proved that the fear of impropriety, and not a feeling of aversion, prompted his interposition.

"Thou little know'st Pelayo, boy. Thou'lt learn in time. Come, Melchior—there—thy page is forward though. Is he thy son?"

"He is—he is, my lord. He is a gentle lad. A good—back, Lamech, back."

The old man answered confusedly, and the boy, as he spoke, proceeded to mount his own palfrey. In the mean time Melchior was firmly seated, with the aid of Pelayo, and his majestic and venerable form, at its fullest height, seemed to have been greatly inspirited by

the prospect held forth to his ears of his people's redemption. He now proceeded to describe the place of his concealment in the neighbouring city of Cordova, so that Pelayo should not fail to find him; and having promised to go with the prince, that night, to a meeting of the conspirators arranged to take place at the palace of the Archbishop Oppas, they separated—Melchior, with Lamech, proceeding in the direction of the city, and Pelayo taking a path leading from it.

XIX.

With the approach of night, the Prince Pelayo, as had been agreed upon, proceeded to the dwelling of Melchior of the Desert, under the guidance of the page Lamech, who had been despatched by his father to the prince for this purpose. The boy was now differently attired from what he was when Pelayo had first seen him; and the prince could not help remarking the exceeding and effeminate beauty of his face and person. His eyes were dark—dark and glittering. His hair was smooth, like that of a girl, and of a rich black—glossy beside, and fine as the most delicate silk. His figure was so slender, it might have been thought almost too ethereal for mortality, and so symmetrical that the eye always looked for it again, as if for a thing that was necessary.

"Thou art but a child, Lamech," said the prince, kindly, "to engage in toil like this. Are not thy limbs weary?"

"Oh no, my lord, they never weary when my heart goes along with them," was the gentle response, uttered by the lips of a childish innocence.

"'Tis a right spirit thou hast, and God hold thee in it, boy; but these are dangerous seasons for the mild. Thy meekness will put thee at the feet of bad men, who will ever trample upon thee, if thy ready weapon teaches

them not to fear. Thou wilt find it wise to lift steel when thou get'st more years."

"And so I have learned already, my lord. See—my arm is weak, I know, but I am strong in heart; and with this dagger, methinks I could teach the insolent man a goodly lesson."

He disengaged from his tunic, as he spoke, a small and richly-ornamented poniard, which had been hitherto concealed within its folds, and nothing could have looked more pretty or more amusing in the sight of Pelayo, than the glow of valour in the eyes of one so exceedingly effeminate and slight of form. The prince smiled slightly as he replied—

"It is well that thou'rt provided, boy; but hold it no slight to thy valour, if I counsel thee to a greater gain of strength than thou hast. Why, what would thy arm do in a stroke with mine, even though mine carried no weapon, and thou wert ready with thy steel?"

The boy looked at the extended arm with a glance expressive of innocent admiration, as he surveyed the knotted muscles, that, swelling here and there into hills, indicated the great strength of the owner. But his features underwent a change corresponding with the active movement of his thought.

"Why is thine eye sorrowful?—thou weepest, boy," said the prince, curiously.

"It is a child's weakness, my lord—when I thought of thy strength, I thought how thou wouldst use it. Thou wilt go into the battle, where the spear strikes, and the sword cleaves; and what were thy strength then?"

"All, boy! It is then that I will strike—then will my strength avail for conquest."

"Ah, but my father. It is thus Melchior speaks to—to Lamech. Thus went he in fight against the Saracen, when they made him captive, and he led the camels in the long march of the desert. I was but a child then, but I remember."

"Thou hast had an ill chance of fortune, boy. Wert thou a captive, too, with thy father?"

"For three long years; but I chafed not in my captivity, for the Saracen was tender, and had pity on my youth. They gave me no task which was not a pleasure, and they taught me much that they knew. I learned to read the stars in their teaching, and to heed their language; and many a song they taught me, when we lay, at the warm noon, in the camel's shadow, made my heart soften so that I forgot—shame on me that I did—that my father was a captive."

"And thou hast always been with Melchior?"

"Ever since I knew him. They were kind—the Saracen—when they made us captive, for they did not part the father from his child."

"How old art thou now, Lamech?"

"Sixteen, my father tells me. But I am much older than that, I know."

"How! What dost thou mean?"

"Oh, sometimes I have lived two days at a time, and then I learned all that I know."

"Indeed!—but art sure thou knowest where thou lead'st me? I know not this place. It looks strange to me."

"Quite sure, my lord. I know it by day and night, the same. It is the suburb of the Hebrews."

"Ha! Well, I am pledged for this, and must go on." As he spoke, Pelayo crossed himself with an air of strict devotion; then continued, "And the Christian does not often come to this quarter of Cordova?"

"Only when he seeks for money," was the reply, uttered in a tone of deep emotion, and with a subdued sternness of accent, which showed a larger share of character in the speaker than his previous language had led Pelayo to anticipate. The prince gazed on him earnestly, but the eyes of the boy were busy in his progress.

The two now pursued their way through a strangely

clustering assemblage of small and uncouth dwellings. The owners had been studious, it would seem, to avoid any show of external splendour in their habitations. The assessor came too frequently, and was satisfied with too much difficulty, not to compel a due forbearance on the part of the wretched Israelites, of all those exhibitions of wealth, which, as it was, they could not often conceal. No one not familiar with that people would have looked for its possession in the quarter of the city through which Pelayo now made his way. Silence and an air of unnatural repose was over all; and the occasional light, shining stealthily through the crevice of the household, was hurriedly obscured with the consciousness of approaching feet. Thus moving, they came at length to a long low dwelling, crowded in by others, all larger and more imposing to the eye, yet all around, in some way or other, connected with that to which they now advanced. A slight tap upon the door, by the hand of Lamech, obtained for them admittance, and passing through a long and dimly-lighted gallery, they entered a spacious court, over which they moved in a direct line, and Pelayo then found himself in another passage, equally dark and narrow with that which he had just left. He might have thought the boy had mistaken his way, but for the unhesitating progress which he made, and the knowledge which he had then in his memory of the exceeding necessity for caution on the part of one so much in danger, and whose arrest was so desirable, as that of the man he sought. Pressing on, therefore, with a speed that still at times left him short of his conductor, he at length ascended a flight of winding stairs, which carried him into a small chamber. Here he paused while the boy tapped upon an inner door. He heard a hum of retiring voices before it was opened, but in the next moment he was ushered into the apartment.

XX.

THE eyes of Pelayo were almost dazzled by the gay lights and the gorgeous shows around him. Costly drapery, splendid mirrors of polished steel, and furniture of inlaid work, such as the eye of the Moor loved to rest upon, were clustering in every form beneath his sight. Rich ornaments of massive gold, sparkling gems, and a thousand glowing forms of luxury, which, however natural to the view of one born and once living as a prince, were yet altogether unanticipated in the spot where he now found them. It was thus that the persecuted Jew endeavoured to indulge his own eyes in those luxuries which he might not dare to expose to the eyes of others. It was thus that he strove to satisfy himself, by an extravagant crowding of his wealth around him, for the thousand privations he was compelled to undergo in his commerce with the world.

"Thou art gloriously provided, Melchior, and may not repine for thy losses," said the prince.

The old man sighed as he answered, "These are vanities, my prince, pleasant to the eyes, and grateful to the thoughts of children only. The wealth of gold and of gems—of the rich robe and the glowing wines—what are these to the sad heart? to the fettered spirit? to the soul denied its exercise? to the form denied its freedom? Thou hast never known this bondage of the spirit, my prince: thou hast not felt this denial—this worst doom that can fall upon the nation or the man. This wealth is none of mine. Melchior of the Desert has only its wilderness and the privilege to roam in it, in momentary fear of the Saracen's sabre—yet is it dearer to him, this condition, than all the enjoyment of the wealth thou seest. Thou shalt judge how the Jew values the freedom thou hast promised Melchior, when I tell thee that all this wealth is subject to thy word in the war

thou shalt wage with the tyrant Roderick. Nor is this all. The Jew shall bring from every city in Spain—from Toledo, from Seville, from mountain and valley—he shall bring thee his vessels of gold and of silver, his rich silks, and the carefully-hidden jewels so dear, as the Christians think them, to his best affection. Thou seest. They are thine! Now am I ready to go with thee where they talk of strife against the enslaver of my people."

"Father, shall I go with thee?" spoke the boy, coming forward.

"Thou wilt stay, Lamech. It is men alone that can go with the Prince Pelayo. Stay!"

The boy pressed his hand, and shrunk back hurriedly; but an instant after, coming forward, whispered thus, in a language unknown to Pelayo:

"The prince is a sweet noble, and speaks kindly. He will not chide that I go."

"But others will, my child, Lamech—others will. Stay, and fear not. I will not keep from thee long."

The boy followed them to the door, and watched their forms until the turn of the long avenue took them out of his sight.

XXI.

From the dwelling of Melchior, they proceeded at once to that of the archbishop, where, by this time, generally assembled, the conspirators awaited the princes. Taking a route less indirect than that by which he had come, Pelayo followed his conductor into the street, and it was not long before they reached the palace of Oppas.

In a secluded and low-vaulted chamber, the enemies of the usurper, each having his own peculiar wrong to avenge, not less than that of his country, were crowded together. They were a small, but trustworthy band—fierce in the assertion and faithful in the maintenance

of their rights. A mean lamp, suspended from the ceiling, gave a sufficient degree of light to enable the eye to take in the dim outline of their several persons, and possibly the darker expression of their faces, but little more; and this, perhaps, is quite as much as conspiracy at any time calls for, however laudable its object. Here, half impatient that the leaders of their enterprise had not as yet made their appearance, they discussed their plans of conduct and their resources, uttered their several causes of complaint, and spared not their threats of vengeance. From group to group, among them, the archbishop moved continually, studiously infusing into their minds, so far as he could, his own particular thoughts. He was a dark, cold, designing man—a restless malignant. With a thirst of power, which had always engaged him in mischief, he was now earnest rather to promote his own than the interest of the princes. The honourable spirit which was their prompter was not his, and he rather feared that of Pelayo in particular. He had no love for them, and little cared for their father's, his brother's, memory; but he professed much, for their name and cause were essential to his purpose. He dared not offend them; and with a spirit of hypocrisy, which was his nature, while seeking to excuse or to account for their absence, took care to urge upon the attending nobles his own views of what would be their best course of proceeding. He was interrupted in this work by the entrance of Pelayo, whose appearance was instantly hailed with a murmur of applause, which well testified the favourable opinion of those around him.

"Thanks, noble gentlemen, thanks. Your love is much to us in our humility. We are too poor now to offer more than this; but there will come a time, when, with your own good arms to aid us, we shall work out a better estate for all. How, my Lord Oppas, where is Egiza?"

"Has he not been with thee, my son?"

"Not since the morning. You took note of him. I left him with you, and looked to find him here."

"He staid not with me long; but, as if impatient for other tasks, he broke away, and gave no word, save that the night should find him at our meeting. Yet is he not."

"Laggard! but we must on. What is our purpose, uncle?—have you spoken?"

"Yes—but most briefly. Some of them are firm—all of them with us. But who have you here, my son?"

Oppas, as he spoke, pointed to Melchior, and Pelayo then turned to the spot where the old man stood behind him in waiting, and motioned his advance, while replying to the inquiry—Melchior, as he spoke, advancing sufficiently forward to stand, at the moment of his reply, in the fullest glare of the lamp.

"Look on him, my Lord Oppas—gentlemen. Do ye know this man?"

"We do not," was the reply.

"Know him from me. This man, once the deadly enemy of my father and of our country, I have made bold to bring among you as our friend. I look to have you hail him so. This is Melchior of the Desert!"

"Ha!" was the exclamation of the nobles, and the greater number shrunk away as from a polluted and polluting presence. The high, dark brow of the Hebrew gathered into a momentary scowl, while his lips curled into something like scorn; but the expression passed off in an instant, and in another he had resumed the habitual, calm, almost melancholy look of benevolence, which he commonly wore.

"How!—son Pelayo, is it the Hebrew—the slayer of his God—the foul and beastly infidel, thou wouldst bring into the presence of Christian nobles—even in close neighbourhood with the humble servant of Christ? Is this thy pride of lineage, my son? What scorn is this that thou wouldst put upon thy friends and people?"

The archbishop, as he spoke, crossed himself with an air of the profoundest devotion.

"No scorn—my lord bishop, and most Christian uncle—no scorn, but rather good service. I bring Melchior of the Desert to your knowledge, and to the knowledge of the friends I see around me, as one willing and able to do much for our cause. He, too, is a sufferer by the tyrant who now sways the land—he is here to strike with us that Roderick shall fall from his usurped throne; and it is something new to me, good uncle, that thy Christian spirit, which has not shamed ere this to employ many unchristian and unworthy agents in the doing of works we may not always consider good, should scruple now to achieve a good and glorious work with the unworthy instrument, if he be such, whom I now bring you."

"It is an unholy agent thou wouldst give us, Pelayo, and as an humble follower of Christ, I am not free to counsel that we accept it," replied Oppas, who, unscrupulous enough in almost every thing else, yet felt that his profession, at that period, derived its chief importance by earnestly encouraging a most bigoted hatred to all forms of infidelity. To do murder for his cause was legitimate enough, but it was grossly unbecoming in a Christian to employ a Jew for that purpose.

"I ask not for thy counsel, my Lord Oppas. It is to these nobles I submit—"

"And they will refuse," cried the archbishop, interrupting him—"they will refuse all hand in a strife, if the Jew be there."

"Let me speak, I pray you," was the deliberate and calm reply of the prince, as he turned to the nobles, many of whom showed quite as much reluctance to accept the aid of the Hebrew as did the archbishop, and were indeed, most probably, influenced by his expressed determination.

"Speak on, Pelayo," said one; "let us hear thy thought, and why thou bring'st us a Hebrew for a fellow,

and he too one of our land's enemies. Did he not betray Auria to the Moor? owe we not to him the rise in battle of five thousand of his base tribe? and how should we trust in one who has been so false before?"

"Count Eudon, you speak fairly. Hear to me. This morning did I meet with Melchior first, and my first thought was to slay him, as the enemy of my father and my country—"

"A good thought—Heaven had given thee bliss, Pelayo, hadst thou but done it." And as he spoke, the archbishop again devoutly crossed himself, and muttered a prayer half audible to the crowd. This was one of the thousand arts of the venerable superstition.

"Thou wilt not break upon me thus again, my Lord Oppas, unless thou seek'st for rude answer in acknowledgment. My mood is something stern to-night already, and thy chafings make it not smoother. I proceed, Count Eudon. My thought was harsh like thine, and in my first feeling I would have slain him, but that he made his proffer of good faith."

"Did you believe him, prince?" was the inquiry of one of the nobles.

"I am not moved to this warfare against Roderick by my own loss of right or that of Egiza; but by a sense of wrong that, in my own feeling, tells of my country's suffering. The men of Spain are men—I hold them so—the rich and poor alike—and, more than this, I care not for their creed. Let them pray or not—believe or not, if that they wrong no law that's based on reason—if that they keep their faith unto their country—the country that protects and watches for them—they are alike to me. In this I speak for Melchior—for the Jew—so does my brother speak. I speak for him; and, strange as it may sound unto your sense, I freely say, Lord Oppas, that you, not less than this old Hebrew, are no Christian. The faith of Christ is that of liberty. It teaches that the religion of mankind must spring from each man's reason—it so requires that he

shall have free thought, and no restraint to make his reason yours, save as he comes to it of his free will and unimpeded conscience. Thinking thus, the Jew shall be a fellow with the Goth, held equally in estimation of Pelayo. So, too, my brother speaks."

"Strange thought, indeed, Pelayo; but if you make the Hebrew thus secure, how will you make him true—how bind him to you?"

"Your's is a narrow spirit, good mine uncle. We elevate the soul when we do trust it, degrading when we doubt. But now apart. In your ear, good gentlemen, I pray leave to whisper more."

Then taking aside a few of the leading nobles, together with the bishop, he whispered to them as follows, urging more selfish considerations upon them.

"Hear to my reason, gentlemen, for this confidence we give the Hebrew. He may not choose but be Roderick's foe, for Roderick has proscribed him. A price is set upon his head—makes him a common mark—and by the decree of the usurper, whoso shall keep him safe shall suffer death and forfeiture of goods. This makes him ours. To be true to us is to be true to himself, for we are the enemies of his enemy. It were his policy to strike for us. Thus we may trust him. Then he brings us the gold which otherwise our coffers would lack knowledge of. Smacks not such promise sweetly to your sense? To me, more than all this, he proffers in our battle a strong force—three thousand fighting men—good subjects we shall make them—ready to follow as his will may guide. He is a leader too. His battles were well fought; and if he strikes for us, as once before he struck against my father at Alpuxarra, I shall approve him, Hebrew though he be. These are my arguments, and strong enough to me, though my uncle's conscience receive them not."

"I wash my hands of it—I'll none of the Jew, Pelayo," exclaimed the bishop aloud.

"Could you but wash them clean, uncle, it were

better. Tut—but you lead not here as 'twere your own. The cause is for my brother and his people. The Jew is of his people; and, I swear it, he shall be free to lift his arm in this great service. So take a wiser thought to your mind, and reject not the instrument Heaven sends us in our need."

"Could he embrace the church—put on the sign of the cross, as a badge of honour and of glory? Say, Jew, couldst thou do this it were all well."

"Never! the heart of the Jew clings more firmly to the faith of his fathers as thou seek'st to degrade it. Even chains and the scourge are sweet, when they tell him of the ancient altars of his nation: the sacred ark of the temple; the temple itself, hallowed by a thousand glories—by the awful front of Jehovah, and the song of the monarch minstrel. Shall I put off the joys of my spirit—the pleasant thoughts of my boyhood—the old fancies that came with the mighty Jerusalem, and of the parent God of the patriarchs? Thou know'st not the Jew that asks it. Thou canst not feel his thought—thou canst not grasp the glory in his imagining. It is not the spoil and the suffering of to-day that shall make him renounce the bright promise in the future for his nation. He knows that the scattered people shall be united—that there shall come one who is to lead them, so that they meet again, the world's master, and there shall be no oppression."

"He is come!—the prophecy is fulfilled!" cried the archbishop triumphantly.

"So thou say'st—so doubtless thou think'st—but, if he is come, the prophecy is still incomplete. Where is the gathering of the nations shown? where is the security of the flock? where is the shepherd that is to protect and give them peace? Dost thou behold its image in the tyranny which makes wretched this thy own land and people? which denies all peace to mine, while robbing them of their substance? Is this thy fulfilment of the glorious prophecy which promised to man the king-

dom full of good-will and endless joy, of a time unbroken of security, when the good angels, as of old, may again walk beside us in the quiet valleys, and from the hill-top at evening the fine sense may catch the faint notes of that spirit-born minstrelsy which trickles from the thousand-stringed harp at the golden gate of heaven? Has thy Saviour brought thee all this? for such is the blessed promise of that sacred prophecy."

"Strike down the impious wretch!—he blasphemes!" was the sanguinary cry of the archbishop, as the warmly roused Melchior, whose spirit was deeply impregnated with the wildest fancies of the desert, poured himself forth in the most fearless strains of enthusiasm. The old man stood firm, and his dark eye was fired like that of the eagle fresh descending from the sun. One or two of the crowd moved towards him as if in compliance with the call of Oppas, but Pelayo passed calmly between.

"Go to, lords, this is my guest—under my protection, and, to silence all further coil, one for whom my honour stands pledged to yours. I answer for his faith to us—let the God we all worship see to his own rights. He is a better judge than either you or I, uncle, and quite as able to avenge his wrongs. Have done, and now to counsel."

XXII.

THE opposition of Oppas and the nobles ceased, rather in deference to the expressed will of Pelayo than because of any diminution in their minds of the ground of scruple. Still, cautiously avoiding all show of connection with Melchior, they began their deliberations freely, each suggesting his own view of the course which should be taken. It happened here, as in most cases where the counsellors are numerous, that much difference prevailed among them. One party was for

secret corruption, the other proclaimed its sentiments fearlessly in favour of an open warfare. The leader of the former was Oppas—and this was by far the most numerous body. Pelayo counselled the other. Many were the reasons given by the archbishop in behalf of his suggestions—reasons all highly politic had the cause been less just and honourable than it was—reasons wisely framed for the rebel, but not so moving for him who claimed rightfully his throne from the hands of a usurper. Pelayo saw through the designs of Oppas—he saw that the plan suggested by his uncle would have the effect of binding his followers to the guidance of a secret and irresponsible authority, which, should the fate of Egiza or himself prove unfortunate, would vest the power in the hands of one, not less a usurper than was he who now swayed the empire. He, therefore, resolutely opposed it.

"My brother," said he, "has a right in this, a sacred right, left him by a thousand sires, each having it the same. 'Tis not for him to hide it in a cloak, but, with good argument, he well may lift his banner, and declare his full resolve to make it good or perish."

"'Tis not wise, my son—'twere better policy to move in quiet. Let us not offend the eyes that watch us, until we may defy them."

"We may do so now, my Lord Oppas—we may do so now. The people chafe already under the rule of Roderick, and, with their wonted impulse, they will gather to the banner of Egiza, when once they see it waving. They love the change, for they are the creatures of the common nature, and her element is change. Give them a new cry—'Egiza, and close ranks for Spain!'—and they will peal it from each sierra under the blue arch of heaven."

"Such is my thought," cried Count Eudon. "And mine," "and mine," cried others of the more daring and restless—those in particular who had personal wrongs to avenge at the hands of Roderick.

"I thank you, friends—I thank you. This is good service, true. I love not this same cunning—this concealment. Truth needs no bush for cover, and the good cause has in itself a strength which virtue gives, shall always make it mightiest in the end. What is your force, Lord Aylor?"

"Twice two hundred—men good at spear and axe."

"Bowmen, too?"

"But few—too few for note."

"And you, Count Eudon?"

"As many more—some thirty bowmen—good at close strife too. Stout, ready, daring."

"Wherefore this, Pelayo?" cried the bishop, now approaching. "Sure you press not the strife until your brother speaks?"

"I speak for him, my Lord Oppas, even as I speak for Spain and these assembled nobles. It is not more the cause of Egiza than yours, and yours, and mine. He but imbodies, in the name he bears, the rights of those who make him. He is their king, 'tis true—king for their good—no king for them, if not."

"True—true! Our king, and not his own," was the ready cry, in response, of the nobles generally. Such an expression had the effect of silencing Oppas for the present, and the council then proceeded to deliberate upon the farther action of the conspiracy. By careful computation it was found that a force of six thousand men or more, not including the three thousand promised by Melchior, was at command—scattered, however, at various and remote points, and requiring some time for assembling. In addition to this difficulty, the present want of money was suggested; and it was then that Melchior again spoke, pledging the necessary sum. This was one of the greatest obstacles to the enterprise, for the nobles thus gathered were many of them destitute, and hence much of their discontent. A small party was designated for the purpose of procuring the amount needed, by attending Melchior to his abode;

and the Hebrew, with a smiling scorn, which he did not seek to hide, beheld the ready spirit with which they now consented, having such an object, to seek the habitation of one whose very contact, but a little before, they had been so shocked to think upon. Having arranged their next meeting, as a national council, to take place in the Cave of Wamba—a huge cavern in one of the neighbouring mountains, where they proposed to elevate Egiza to the throne of the Goths—the assembly was dissolved; Pelayo, with the small body of nobles appointed to go with Melchior, moving off with him to his secluded dwelling-place.

XXIII.

They reached it, after a while, by the same indirect route which Pelayo had pursued at first with Lamech, and the boy awaited him at the door of an inner apartment. Pelayo looked with surprise and some dissatisfaction upon the fondness which he showed his father upon entering. He thought it unbecoming in one who, however young, might be required, before long, to engage in strife and bloodshed. But when he saw the eyes of the boy, the next moment, fixed upon himself, with a gaze, seemingly, of admiring emulation, while a fire of unusual expression rushed into and kindled them up, he did not doubt but that he also possessed a fine spirit which would sustain him nobly in every form of trial.

Melchior led the way for the nobles into a gorgeously decorated chamber. They threw themselves upon cushions of the richest covering; and Lamech soon appeared, as they spoke, with a pitcher of the finest wine. When they were well served and refreshed, the Hebrew brought forth his gold, in large sacks, and such a supply as more than met the expectations of the most voracious of the discontented nobles. Pelayo

alone forbore providing himself with the rest, and having reminded Melchior of the meeting at the Cave of Wamba, for a future and appointed day, he took his departure with his company. Soon as they had gone, and the doors were secured, the boy Lamech went to his chamber, and after a brief space returned—a boy no longer—but a woman—a tall, beautiful, dark-eyed Arabian maiden—the daughter, and not the son, of the venerable Hebrew.

"Oh, my father, how I love to return, though but once in the long day, to the garb of my mother. I feel so unhappy—so awkward in that foreign dress—when shall I be released from the task of wearing it?"

"Ay, when, my Thyrza, when? The garment of the boy is now thy security; and though I love not to see thee in it, yet, as it keeps thee from harm, I must even love it too. Perhaps, my child, if the God of our fathers turn not again from us, the time is but short in which thy present servitude, and mine, and our people's, shall continue."

"Ah! I understand thee, father. Thou art again about to lift the spear and the sword; and thine eyes look forward to the fight with an old kindling. Thou art leagued with the princes of the Goth, who now cry war against Roderick."

"It is even as thou say'st it, Thyrza. I am sworn with the battle of the princes, and, God help me, I shall strike fairly with them against the bloody ruler of my people. It cannot be that Jehovah will always look dark on Israel—it cannot be that Judah will always be a dweller in the tents of the stranger, beaten with stripes, and born to do his bidding. So long as this bondage is his, so long must Melchior battle for him, and against his oppressor."

"And yet, my father, what hope is for the Hebrew?—the despised, the persecuted Hebrew? How wilt thou confide in him whose pleasure and whose pride it is to scorn and to abuse thy people? Thou didst league,

having this hope, with the savage Count Generic, and with Witebrode, yet what was thy fortune? When came the peril, they shrunk from thee—when came the triumph, they trampled upon thee, needing thy service no longer. Ah me, my father, wherefore shouldst thou strive, when Israel himself lies down like a beaten dog, and howls only when he should hurt—when the lion of Judah sleeps under the foot, even as the imaged stone, at the doorway of his oppressors. Why shouldst thou toil in battle for such as these? why pray to them, when they hear thee with but half an ear, and turn to thee with an unwilling spirit?"

"Thyrza, my child, thou speakest melancholy things—most sad, as they are most true. But the spirit which labours for man is a spirit from heaven, and the sacrifice is not idle, though the victim appears to bleed in vain. It must be that the prophet shall speak to unheeding ears—it must be that the patriot will strike for hearts that merit not freedom. Yet must the prophet speak on, and the patriot strike. They do not this for a race, nor for a generation—they do it for God and for man; and the glorious principle which men flout and deride to-day, shall, to-morrow, when the blood of the good hath been poured forth in attestation of its truth, become a sacred thing which all the world shall delight to behold and worship. Think, my child, if Melchior, the wanderer with the Saracen, the beaten slave of the Roman, the persecuted and hunted outlaw among the Goths—think what would have been the blessing of life to him had his spirit lived only for the day of its exercise. Thou knowest not how high, how stretching were his thoughts, when his eye counted the blessed stars of heaven, from the wide and cheerless bosom of the desert. They taught him that so numerous and so scattered were the myriad families of man; and even as he borrowed light from glories so remote as theirs, so to the immeasurable worlds of man should be his various thoughts, all coming from the great Jehovah,

and all going forth to bless and illumine his divided people. Melchior, my child, has had but one selfish thought since the departure of thy blessed mother, and that thought has been of thee."

"My father!" and as she spoke she threw her white arm around his neck, while her head rested upon his shoulder.

"Thou wert that thought—and sometimes it has prompted, even as thou hast counselled; and I would have given up this struggle for the Hebrew, leaving him the trampled and beaten dog that I have found him, but that a spirit, like that which came to Job at midnight, has filled me with a chill and a trembling, that seemed a punishment for mine error. I must labour for my people, let me love them as I may—ay, my child, even though thou art the sacrifice. I have leagued with the sons of my enemy Witiza, in a cause full of hope for the Hebrew."

"And yet, my father, in what can be thy trust—thou so much wronged, and so much misguided as thou hast been before?"

"My trust is in God—he who gave the lion-spirit to Judah, and whose promise yet stands for my people, in the thousand prophecies of our fathers. Yet not altogether do I withhold my confidence from man. I hold much to the faith in this noble youth, the Prince Pelayo. Did not my eyes, even when I lay half stunned and insensible upon the rocks, open into consciousness as he came? did they not behold, above his head, the thrice circling wing of the sacred bird the Arabian worships, with its green glory, promising him a crown? And then, his speech is noble—his thought is wise, far beyond his years and people; and he loves truth as a thing for high spirits, and the becoming language of a God. I believed him when I saw him first—I believed him when he spoke—I cannot but believe him."

"And I believe him too, my father—I do—" and, with a strange emotion, the cheeks of the Hebrew

maiden glowed like fire, and she buried her face upon the bosom of her father, while her young heart beat audibly.

"And now, Thyrza, thy harp, my child. Tell me of that solemn march of our people from the bondage of the Egyptian, when the prophet of God led them through the waters, and the hosts of Pharaoh were buried in their depths." And with a slow, sweet accent, the maiden sang to her harp the story he required.

XXIV.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Then Thyrza took the harp,
And, with a strange sweet sorrow in her voice,
That won the tear to come,
She straight began the strain that Miriam sang—
Miriam the Prophetess, old Aaron's sister—
As, when, the Red Sea passed,
She, with the maidens pleasantly about her,
Sat by the bitter waters of Marah,
And sweetly struck the timbrel while she told
Of Israel's triumph—of the sea o'erpassed
In safety by the Hebrew, while its waves
Went o'er the Egyptian host—chariot and horse—
Monarch and subject—banner and array.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

Oh, wherefore hast thou led us forth to die
Amid the desert, with a cruel death?
Were there no graves in Egypt?

MOSES.

Lift your eye,
Nor murmur, for the Lord, with sacred breath,
Hath spoken—and this day, that ye deplore,

For that the Egyptian warriors pursue,
Your eye that sees them now, shall see no more:
They shall all perish.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

Be your promise true,
Then shall we still the blessed Lord adore.

MOSES.

Adore, adore—the blessed Lord adore—
For look, where now behind us, like a shroud,
Solemn and vast, has gone that mighty cloud,
With face of fire to us, that guides our way,
And, though the night hours come, still yields us day;
While black, upon the host of Pharaoh glooming,
It speaks for God—those cruel warriors dooming
Who shall all perish.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

With a mighty voice,
In thy great honour, Lord, we now rejoice—
Thou art the God of Israel, and hast kept
Thy holy watch above him when he slept.

MOSES.

Yea, borne him out of bondage, made him strong,
And taught his lips a triumph and a song;
And now, ev'n now, when murm'ring, ye repine,
Because he left ye not as dogs and swine,
To your Egyptian lords, hath led ye forth
To be a mighty people of the earth—
He builds ye up a holy habitation.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

Great is the Lord—the Lord is great—he builds,
He builds us up a holy habitation—
So ran the prophecy when Abraham's fields
Had but a hundred shepherds with their flocks,

Scatter'd and lonely, on the inclining rocks—
And Israel shall become a mighty nation.

MOSES.

Praise ye the Lord! Oh, praise—'tis now the hour,
When the Egyptian comes in all his pow'r—
Ye hear his rolling chariots, and the tramp
Of his fierce horsemen crowding on our camp—
He comes with an exulting thought to slay,
And bear us in captivity away;
But God is with his people, and this day,
Shall honour win from Pharaoh by his deed.
Follow ye to the waters when I lead,
And fear not, though I leave ye now to pray.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

They come, they come—oh, whither shall we flee!

MOSES (*apart*)

To thee, to thee, O Lord of Hosts, to thee,
This day be all the glory. Leave us not,
But keep thy people from the evil lot
Of blows and bondage. Let them not prevail,
Thy foes and Israel's, who, with rude assail,
And a fierce cry that mocks our heart's distress,
Press on us in our infant feebleness.
And now they come—be with us—lift thine arm,
Strike down the foe, thy children keep from harm,
And turn aside this peril.

THE VOICE.

Wherefore cry
In anguish to me? I am ever nigh
To thee and Israel. To thy people speak;
Bid them go forward. Let them not grow weak,
But teach them what thou know'st. Then lift thy rod
Above the waters.

MOSES.

Lord, I adore and tremble. Mighty God!
'Tis done as thou hast said.

THE VOICE.

Look and see,
The waters are divided. Thou art free
To lead thy people over the dry land.

MOSES.

Oh, great and wonderful. On either hand
The heaping seas are broken—a high wall
Towers around us. Praise ye, Israel, all,
Advance, and praise the Lord—a mighty song
Shall speak his mercy that endureth long—
His justice is for ever. Onward press,
While the high waters, mute and motionless,
Look down upon us. Is the Lord not nigh?
He keeps their walls apart, he builds them high,
So that ye pass in safety. Praise, oh, praise,
Lift high your hearts, oh Israel, in his praise—
By his hand's strength the Lord hath brought ye forth
From bondage—and shall make ye of the earth
The greatest, building ye a habitation
Holy and high.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

And raising Israel to a mighty nation,
As promised unto Abraham, when the Lord,
While he lay sleeping in his Chaldee tent,
Said to him in sweet vision, angel-sent,
"I am thy shield—I am thy great reward,"
And bade him count the thick'ning stars and see,
Many, like them, should his own people be.
Praise ye the Lord—oh, praise!

MOSES.

Now Pharaoh's host
Advances on us, with a cruel boast,
And a fierce cry; but fear ye not his pow'r,
For God is with us in the darkest hour,
And ye shall see this day his triumph vast
Over our foe. Rejoice, the sea is passed,
Lift ye your hearts in song! I speak to God,
While ye do praise him.

THE VOICE.

Moses, lift thy rod
Once more above the waters.

MOSES.

It is done!
O, thou eternal and all-powerful One!
The waters roll above them. Israel, see,
And sing, the Lord hath triumphed gloriously.
The rider and his horse are overthrown,
And Pharaoh's chariots and himself are down—
All crushed and buried in the gathering sea.
His mighty captains—what are they to thee,
O mightiest Captain! Thou'rt the man of war,
And all the valiant else but children are!
Lord is thy name, and, glorious in its pow'r,
Thy right hand dashest into naught thy foe!
Thou speakest, and the winds begin to blow,
The floods stand upright, till thou bidst them go,
And then they rush in overwhelming show'r,
Swallowing their thousands. Mighty art thou, Lord,
Most mighty! Be thy name for aye adored,
In Israel, by thy people. Lo! they stand
Trembling, to see the wonders of thy hand.
Rejoice, rejoice, oh Israel! For He brings
His children out from bondage. With His arm,
Above their enemies, the sea He flings,

And keeps His chosen people from all harm!
He doth set free the captive, and He builds
For Israel now a holy habitation.
Sorrow shall fill the Palestinian fields,
He gives them up a spoil unto our nation.
Edom shall be amazed—the mighty men
That dwell in Moab shall all tremble, when
Our march is on them; and beneath our sway
Canaan's people shall all melt away.
Thine is their land, and thither we advance,
Now, Israel, to thy great inheritance!

XXV.

THE solemn strain was finished, and in a style of beauty not more remarkable for its exquisite simplicity than for its exquisite harmony. Thyrza had been educated chiefly by her father, and had acquired, as much from his as from her own spirit, no small portion of that lofty and high-souled enthusiasm which made up so much of his character. Glowing with the rich exuberance of excited religious feeling, when the performer turned from her seat to look upon the old man, she beheld him upon his knees—his eyes lifted to heaven, and the sentiment of prayer deeply written upon every feature of his face. She glided to him softly, and knelt down quietly, without a word, beside him. He acknowledged her presence with a start, then clasping her to his arms, thanked her for her performance, and gave her his parting blessing for the night.

"Now go to thy chamber, my child—take thy sleep, and may the God of Abraham watch over and keep thee from harm. Good-night!"

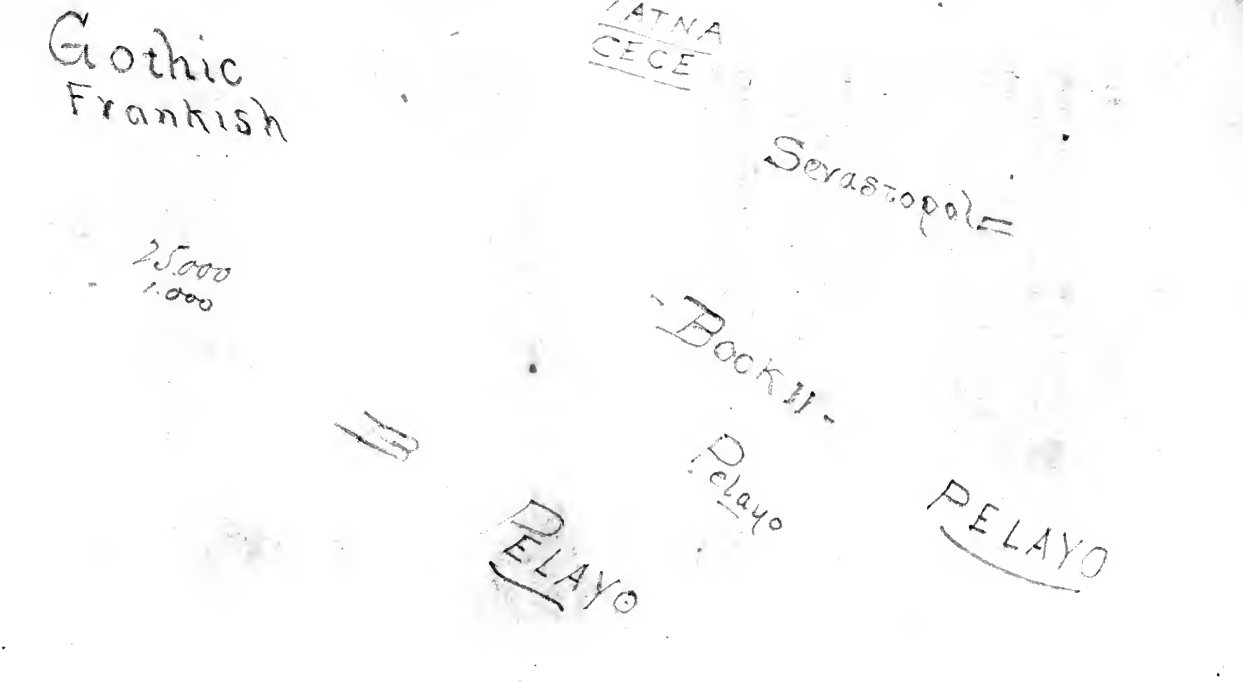
She murmured a similar aspiration, and left him. The old man again sank back into prayerful musing, for his mood was eminently devotional, though his pur-

suits all his life had been wild, and many of his more vigorous years had been spent in unprofitable strife.

"When, oh, when shall Thy people now pass out from their bondage? When wilt Thou come to their aid, O Thou, whose arm shook the waters over Pharaoh, and humbled the hosts of the Philistines! Oh, wouldst thou endow me, for their good, in this great service—wouldst thou smile upon my hope—wouldst thou give strength to our warriors, and fortune to this our enterprise, then would thy servant gladly lay down his own life, happy in the sacrifice that brought with it so great a profit."

He arose at length from his knees, placed a keen dagger in his girdle, and wrapping himself closely in his mantle, went forth into the city.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.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BOOK II.

I.

Age had not diminished, nor could defeat and disappointment discourage, the energies of Melchior. Desert-born, he had been taught to endure trial and to love adventure. Enthusiastic and resolute by nature, the life which he had led had early tutored him in a habit of mental concentration, which made him equally tenacious and fearless in the pursuit of his object. Vicissitudes had taught him religion, and its ennobling sentiments, linked with his natural enthusiasm of character, had made him zealous in the prosecution of what he deemed his duties. The dangers which surrounded him in that strange city, full of his enemies,—the darkness of the night,—his own fatigues of frame in the long travel of the day, and the excitements through which he had gone,—were all as nothing to the aged man. Filled with the cheering hope which the conversation with Pelayo had imparted, of improving the condition of his people, he thought neither of danger nor fatigue. His spirit was aroused, and he suffered no sleep to visit his eyelids until he had done something towards the great object with which his bosom laboured. His purpose now was an immediate conference with such of his people as had power over the rest, and could be relied upon in a scheme so perilous as that in view. This was a work of caution, and well did Melchior know that there were few, even among his own tribe, who could

well be trusted. There were but few, indeed, to whom he could dare confide the secret of his own presence in that city of his foe; and this was one of the reasons which prompted him to go forth, at that late hour, under the shelter of the night. Moving through the gloomy city like one long familiar with all its haunts, he made his way to a yet more secluded portion of the Hebrew suburb than that which he had left. At length he reached a dwelling that stood at a little distance from all other buildings. It was a poor and mean-looking fabric, and nothing in its external appearance could possibly have spoken for wealth or affluence within. Melchior tapped lightly at a little low, arched entrance, and was instantly admitted. A few words, uttered in a strange language to him who waited, were soon understood, and the visiter at once followed the porter into the body of the dwelling.

If the outward aspect of this fabric was base and unassuming, such certainly was not the character of the interior. The apartment into which Melchior was conducted amply compensated, by its exquisite beauty and richness of ornament, for the humility of its outward show. It was a chamber of surpassing grandeur of decoration and arrangement. All things familiar to the luxurious tastes of that period and country, for the gratification of the eye and the pleasure of the senses, seemed here to have been studiously and profusely drawn together. Roman luxury and Saracen voluptuousness were made to vie in the wealth and multiplicity of their productions. The oriental storehouse had been ransacked, and a foretaste of the future glories of the "Alhambra" might have been found, like so much hidden treasure, awaiting the hour of its delivery from the mine, in the humble home of a trembling father to a degraded and derided people.

II.

But the eye of Melchior rested not upon the wealth and splendour which were clustered around him. The glitter of the mine, the glow of the palace, the pomp of aught save Heaven, were as nothing in his contemplation. He turned away from the glare and the tinsel in his glance, and his eyes rested thoughtfully upon a couch disposed after the fashion of the Moor, and richly habited with a profuse drapery of fine silks, fretted and inwrought with gold. On this couch a youth lay fast sleeping. His dark skin, his thick, black, glossy hair, the lightness and symmetry of his limbs,—all told of his oriental origin; while the narrow face, the finely oval cheek, impaired, however, by the sudden and enfeebling sharpness of his chin, as certainly determined him to be of Hebrew parentage. He was richly habited, and not seemingly for slumber. He appeared rather to have thrown himself casually upon the couch, and to have fallen unconsciously into that luxurious repose which, in the summer, steals so insidiously and with such lulling sweetness upon the unwary or exhausted senses. His tunic was of a thick purple silk, and a long sash encircled his waist. Gems of value glittered upon his fingers, and a heavy chain of Moorish workmanship, even more valuable for the exquisite taste and delicacy of its construction than for the intrinsic weight of the metal, hung loosely around his neck.

Melchior, while his guide departed as if in quest of another, drew nigh and seated himself upon the couch at the foot of the sleeper. The slumbers of the youth were uneven and disturbed, though his sleep was unbroken. His limbs were tossed about at moments, from side to side, as if his blood was in fever; and Melchior pressed the pulse of his extended arm with his

finger, as if to satisfy himself that such was not the case. Long and earnestly did the aged man contemplate the person of the youth before him with a look full of melancholy dissatisfaction. While he gazed, muttered words broke forth from the lips of the sleeper,—words of anger and defiance; and now an oath, a bitter, blasphemous oath, startled the venerable man with the atrocious impiety that seemed to be dwelling, as if at home, in a bosom so very young—in a form, to the eye, so promising. He turned away as if sickening at the survey, and the painful thoughts which it had forced upon him.

III.

In a few moments, and a door curiously wrought in the tapestry of the chamber, for the purposes of flight and concealment, was silently thrown open; and a venerable man, not less aged than Melchior, though without any appearance of his elasticity and strength, now entered the apartment. He came forward with a slow and stealthy movement, as if fearing to break the slumbers of the sleeping youth. In silence he approached his guest, and the two, as if long and dearly known, embraced each other without uttering a word. In a whisper, the new-comer instructed Melchior to resume his seat upon the edge of the couch from which he had arisen. The other occupied a place beside him, giving, as he did so, a glance to the sleeping youth, which, to the eye of Melchior, was full of an unadvised and mistaken fondness. The thought of his mind at that moment gave to the venerable man occasion for a remark, which, though strong, and delivered with emphasis, was yet uttered in a whisper.

"The boy is a boy no longer, Adoniakim: he has advanced in growth and strength, and is a goodly youth to look upon."

"Very—very goodly, indeed, to look upon," said the other, with a sigh, at the same time that his eye dwelt with fondness upon the features of the youth. Melchior proceeded:

"Goodly to the sight is he, but I fear me, Adoniakim, that the evil spirit of self is still the master within him. He heeds thee not, Adoniakim, as a child should heed his father. The stubbornness of boyhood, of which I warned thee, has grown stronger in his years, and, with his growth, has become too vigorous for thee now to restrain. Alas! brother, thou hast been erringly and sadly fond of thy firstborn."

"My only one, Melchior. True,—thou hast said but truly. I have greatly erred in my teaching. The boy is wilful, and heeds not much the commands of his father or the counsels of his friends: he inclines but too much to serve the devices and desires of his own heart."

"I knew it, Adoniakim. I knew that the nature within him was wayward and wilful from the first, and greatly did I fear that thine was not the spirit to subdue the evil temper. Thou hast smiled when thou shouldst have looked sadly, and been but sad when thou shouldst have been stern. He has been too dear to thee in thy loneliness, and thou hast been too much a dependant upon him to do him and thyself that justice which would have reproved his error and punished his disobedience. I fear me thou wilt have much sorrow yet from his wild nature and vicious mood."

"And yet, Melchior, I have not forborne to punish and restrain. Many stripes have I given him while he was yet a boy; and, since he has grown up, as thou seest, into a youth seemly to look upon, much sage and solemn counsel have I bestowed upon him."

"Alas, Adoniakim, I fear me thou hast not punished wisely nor counselled prudently. The guidance must be habitual, and the punishment in season, or they are equally bestowed in vain. Thou hast punished

when too much provocation has chafed thy heart, and not because thou wouldst chasten to improve. Thy stripes have been given in thy anger, and not for his good; it was thy passion, and not his deserts, that prompted thee to punish; and we may not wonder that thou hast pacified thyself without improving him. It is a sad thing for the young and erring spirit when the father loves unwisely, for then the strong feelings of the heart rise up against the sober thoughts of the head, and the eyes of a calm reflection are blinded by the rushing impulses from within. I warned thee of this danger, Adoniakim, when last we took counsel of the youth. He is soon to be a man,—goodly to the sight, my brother, but greatly I fear me, Adoniakim, not goodly to the thought. He will vex thy old heart sadly ere thou goest down to the tomb of thy fathers."

"Alas, Melchior, I tremble at what thou sayest. Tell me, whence come these apprehensions?—what hast thou heard?—what hast thou seen? Thou hast not spoken with the boy,—thou hast only beheld him as he slept. Thou hast had no word with him or with me that could teach thee of his erring. What, then, is the art that so informs thee? How is it that thou so quickly dost dive into the deep soul for its secrets?"

And, as he spoke, the aged parent turned fondly and gazed upon the sleeping subject of their deliberations.

"Even while he slept I judged him," said Melchior, solemnly. "Even while he slept, my brother, evil thoughts were busy in his mind, and a foul oath and many dark threats gathered upon his lips. Behold, even now, the big, swollen vein upon the ruffled brow! —see to the lips which are now compressed as if in strife, only to part in bitterness!"

"Stay—he wakes!" said the other, and his hand rested upon that of Melchior while he spoke, and they both paused from speech, as a repeated movement of the youth's person led them to apprehend his awakening.

But the limbs were once more composed, as if in slumber, and the youth lay again in silence as before.

"Thou misjudgest him, Melchior," said the father, deprecatingly: "the boy is rash and wilful, but thou errest when thou thinkest him vicious. The spirit is wild, but, I trust, not evil. There is, indeed, much truth in what thou sayest, but it is not all truth,—not all —not all: it would be a dreadful sorrow, Melchior, could I think it so."

"Is it not now thy sorrow, Adoniakim?" demanded Melchior. "Dost thou not even now mourn ever with fears of thy son's wilfulness,—fears that come to thee unbidden? Deceive not thyself, my brother. This is always the error of the father. Declare to thyself—to me—what is thy thought, and thou wilt say that what I have said to thee of the boy has been long thy sorrow—thy deep sorrow. Hast thou any care on thy heart but this, unless it be for thy trodden and thy trampled people? Does not the boy afflict thee by his profligacy and his profusion—by his wilfulness and scorn of all the checks thou wouldst put upon him? Is he not licentious and wanton? Does he not debauch after the fashion of the Gothic nobles, and ape their miserable vices, not having even their freedom? I have heard no one speak of this—I have seen none of it myself; and yet, Adoniakim, from thy heart unfold to me, speak I not the truth?"

"No more, Melchior, I pray thee. Spare me: thou hast said enough. Let us now speak of our people, for, if I err not, this is the concern upon which thou comest. Thou hast been waited for. Tell me of thy hope—of thy success among the tribes."

"Not here, Adoniakim—the youth sleeps not soundly."

"But fear not for him,—is he not a Hebrew like ourselves?"

"No!" exclaimed the other, sternly. "He feels not

with us. He is not prepared to deny himself for the goodly cause of his people, and only such are with us. Leave the boy,—better that he should sleep on. He would but take thy thought from my tidings, for thou hast more pleasure in beholding him than in aught else."

And truly might Melchior say that the aged Adoniakim had more pleasure at such a moment, and in the survey of his son, than in any thing beside. The look was long and lingering which he cast behind him, as he led the way for Melchior from the apartment through the secret panel out of which he came at first.

Scarcely had the door been closed behind them when the youth leaped to his feet.

"I thank thee, good Melchior, for thy friendly thought, and thy brotherly labour to hurt me with Adoniakim. I will requite thee yet for thy toil, or I deserve to sleep. Now, what does the old goat seek with my father, that I must needs not hear? But I will hear. I love not to be shut out from the truth; and, by the beard of Samuel! I will share in this conference, though mayhap I say nothing myself. I will but give other ears to the eloquence of Melchior; and he who so loves to hear his own language may scarce complain of an addition to his audience. So!"

Thus did the youth mutter to himself, as he approached the aperture in the tapestry through which the aged men had gone. This he slightly unfastened, and, placing his ears upon the opening, the sounds of voices from within were borne distinctly to them. Gradually his knee sank to the floor; and it soon seemed that he heard and understood, for his action was quiet and patient, like that of a satisfied listener.

IV.

In the private apartment to which they had retired, Melchior narrated to Adoniakim the particulars of his far travel and adventures during all the long period of his absence from Cordova. In this narrative there was much that does not affect ours. When the traveller had spoken generally of the things which he had seen, and of his own fortunes in the time mentioned, he proceeded to confer with his friend upon the condition of their people, to the improvement and melioration of which both of them had long before devoted themselves. It was at the close of a survey of the recent deposition of Witiza by Roderick, and the dispersion of the troops led by Egiza and Pelayo, the two sons of the former, that the dialogue thus proceeded—

"Thou hast seen Moussa Ben Nassir?"

"At Tangier. It was my counsel that moved the Saracen to the conquest of that city."

"Wherefore did he not advance upon Ceuta? Now, when two factions rage—when the children of the Goth and the descendants of the Roman struggle against each other, and when the people of the soil, hating both and fearing both, are not unwilling to join with any power which may give battle to their double tyrannies—now is the time for the Saracen—now is the time, Melchior, for the Hebrew."

"Such was my counsel. In Moussa's private ear I unfolded the history of our people, and of the people who oppress them, and strongly urged his march upon the Rock of Calpe, whose fortress then was but meanly defended."

"Why did he refuse?"

"He dared not, for he had been summoned back to Syria by the calif, who demanded from him an account

of his expedition; but my counsel was not forgotten, for, as thou knowest, when he came back from Syria, he laid siege to Ceuta."

"But failed."

"He came too late. Julian, the Count of Consuegra, who is generalissimo of the coasts of Andalusia, came to its defence, and so severe was the defeat of the Saracen, that it will be long before he is prepared to renew the invasion."

"But he will renew it?"

"I fear it."

"How! Thou fearest it, Melchior?"

"I do fear it, Adoniakim; since I sorrow to think the Hebrew has not more to gain from the success of the Saracen, than he has to fear from the continued power of the Goth. The Hebrew will be too feeble to give weight to either side when a new power comes into the field. With the contentions of the old we may do much. We may turn the scale to the party which shall most extend our privileges, and from which we may receive the best pledges of security."

"Could it be so," exclaimed the other, despondingly.

"Hear me!" said Melchior. "Don Roderick, the Goth, is now upon the throne, and has been proclaimed in all the cities. The sons of Witiza have dispersed their followers, but they are not overthrown. One of them I have conferred with on the part of the Hebrew. To him I have pledged our aid—from him I have had pledges in return, which shall give us the privileges we demand—security in our religion, property, and persons, upon the payment of a regular and certain tribute. For this security we will give him the aid and treasure we should else have given to the Saracen; and strong is my hope, and confident my faith, that we shall be at last successful in obtaining the end that we desire: for never, oh, Adoniakim, have mine eyes looked upon a youth more noble to the sight, more like a prince after the

fashion of the ancient kings of Jerusalem, than Pelayo. With a brow that is high and commanding, and an eye that is bright with unwavering fires—with a cheek that does not blanch, and a lip whose form is full of a sweet majesty, the face and air of that noble prince are a guarantee for all that is high in mind and noble in soul. He will not do us wrong; he will keep his faith with us, I am fond to believe, for I have had signs and tokens which tell me to confide in the promise which he brings us."

"Wisest among us, as thou art, Melchior, will it not be rash too readily to confide in any of these Gothic princes? Thou hast not forgotten the false Witebrode, and the base Count Genseric? Did they not promise freely till they possessed themselves of our substance, and did they not then scorn and desert us?"

"Pelayo is a prince not after the make of these," said Melchior, hastily. "But thou shalt see and confer with him thyself. To-morrow night he will seek me at my dwelling. Thither shalt thou go also."

"Hast thou the treasure from the Hebrews at Merida?"

"It is safe with me."

"And the weapons of war—are they out of sight in secure places?"

"They are ready, yet remote. All this has been cared for."

"And Thyrza?—thou hast said nothing of thy child, Melchior. Thou hast not left her still in the tents of the Saracen?"

"She is with me; but the guise of a boy, after the Roman fashion, conceals the person of my child. It were not well that the eye of a Gothic noble should look upon one so lovely."

"Thou art right. It were but a dove's plea to the kite, the prayer of womanly innocence in the relentless ear of the Goth. Ah, Melchior, the brute vices walk at

noonday through the land, and none so pure as to feel offence at their presence. A weak hold has virtue here against the vice of the nobles, to whom goodness is a thing of mock, and debauchery and sin the practice and the credit which give command, and are the decoration and the attribute of power. There should be a fearful hour at hand, my brother, if the wrath of Jehovah be not forgotten eternally."

"It is a bolt suspended only, Adoniakim. The punishment is at hand, and it may be that, at this very hour, we, humble and aged as we are, are the chosen instruments for bearing the red vengeance into the courts and palaces of this Gothic tyranny. May Jehovah gird up our loins, and give us strength and heart to perform his wishes. Let us strive to be ready for the call, Adoniakim, that the goodly purpose fail not through lack of ours."

"Amen!" exclaimed the other, solemnly; and they both arose from their place of conference, and turned towards the apartment which they had left. Heedful of their movements, the unhappy youth, who had been meanly hearkening to their speech the while, rose from his place of watch, and, stealing cautiously to the couch where he had before been lying, resumed once more the show of those slumbers which had been partially feigned before. The two looked upon him, but without seeking to disturb him; and regarding his sleep as real, the aged Melchior took leave of his friend in a whisper and with a cautious footstep.

When he was gone a while, the youth seemed to awaken.

"Thou hast slept long, Amri, my son," said Adoniakim, in a tone of ill-suppressed fondness, "but thy sleep has been troubled, and thy limbs were tossed about unquietly, as if the fever-plague had fallen upon thee. The veins in thy brow, even now, are swollen greatly, and

there is a red flush upon thy cheek, which is a token that thy sleep hath availed thee little."

"Is it not enough, my father, that my sleep should be troubled, when thine eye is turned upon me in anger?"

"Alas! my son, and wherefore should my anger disturb thy slumbers, when thou dost give it so little heed in thy wakening? Thou hast too little thought of me to make it a matter of concern to thee whether my looks be those of love or anger. Would it were otherwise, my son."

"It is otherwise, my father—thou dost me wrong. Surely I seek thy love—surely I grieve at thy displeasure; but my mood is wild, and the youthful, like myself, do not often think the grave thoughts which make propriety in the estimation of the aged. It is not reason, but rather a harsh injustice, when the blood is quick in the veins, and the heart beats high with young life, to ask that the step be slow like that of age and wisdom, and that all the movements of youth do wait for a directing reason."

"There is truth in what thou sayest, Amri," responded the father, solicitous to excuse in his weakness the errors of a character which his calm judgment could not forbear to see. Amri was cunning enough to know his father's foible, and of this knowledge he availed himself whenever he had a suit to present.

"There is truth in what thou sayest, Amri; and, could I deem that such were thy nature,—that thou didst only err from quick blood, and with the natural fondness of youth—"

"Believe it, father—" and he put his arms about the neck of his doting sire, while he continued thus:

"Believe it. I know that I have erred; but I have erred through youth, and not from a wilful love of error. I will strive to amend it; only be not wroth with me,—look not again in anger upon me."

"Yet, these moneys, Amri?" said the old man, sternly, and withdrawing himself from the youth's embrace.

"It was my folly, my father,—my madness. The young Lord Astigia—"

"A vicious youth, Amri,—a debauched and dishonest youth! A poor noble; and such are the worst. What has he to do with a Jew?—one of a people whom he scorns? What, but to gather means for the profligacy which he loves. And what shouldst thou, a Hebrew,—one of a different and a singular people,—what shouldst thou do with him? What hast thou in common with a Gothic noble? Thou shalt give him up—thou shalt fly from him—thou shalt leave his haunts, Amri, or I give thee not these moneys."

"I will, my father, even as thou sayest," was the docile reply.

"That is well, Amri; forgive me if I have spoken thus harsh to thee, my son; but it is for thy good that I have spoken."

"Do I not know it, my father?"

"Thou shalt have the money, Amri; thou shalt pay thy debt to this noble,—to all of those that have claims upon thee."

"Thanks, dear father."

"They shall not say that the Jew is mean and dishonest, as it is their wont to say. Thou shalt pay thy debts to them in honour, though they have won them, as thou sayest, in dishonour."

"By trick, father—by cheat—as I live."

"Thou shalt pay them, nevertheless, my son; but as thou knowest them, thou wilt seek them no more when thou hast done so. Here are purses. This for the Lord Astigia. It is even more than thou sayest is his demand; but give it him all; he shall know that thou hast no meanness, even if such be the failing of thy people. This for Edacer,—another spendthrift,—a debauched and decayed noble,—another of those who have

nothing of nobility but the name, and stink in poverty even as they stink in vice. Thou wilt leave his gatherings also: thou wilt quit their walks. Thou shalt promise me this, Amri."

"I will—I do, my father."

"God bless thee, my son, that thou speakest me so fair! Truly do I think thou wilt keep thy word to me—that thou wilt go out from among these vicious and debauched youth that have so led thee astray, my son, from thy God, thy people, thy own duty, and thy father's love. Keep thy faith to me, Amri, and my heart is thine, and my wealth is thine, and I will bless thee with a father's blessing when the death angel waits."

"Believe me, father, thou wilt not need to rebuke me again. I will but rid me of these dues to Astigia and to Edacer, and see them no more."

"Go not to them; send them the moneys; avoid them and the places which they haunt. Their presence makes an atmosphere of death in the house, where they gather together for sin. It is a taint that is like a pestilence; it goeth in at the nostril, and thou knowest not of the dangers, my son, till thou art lost for ever. Keep away from the haunts of the wicked, I pray thee, Amri."

"As thou sayest, my father."

"Thou hast spoken, Amri, as I would have thee, my son. Thy ear is open to my word; thy heart is not leprous. No, no!" he muttered, half to himself,—"no, no! Melchior has done him injustice,—he sees not the heart of the youth as I behold it. He knows him only in the day of his wilful boyhood. No, no!—the eye is dark and sweet; it is too like that of his blessed mother to speak falsely now to my own. Go, my son!—go, Amri, to thy chamber, and may the wing of the good angel bend over thy slumbers!"

V.

THE youth retired, but not to his chamber—not, certainly, to his slumbers. With a stealthy step he withdrew from the dwelling, after such time had elapsed as he deemed sufficient to wrap his father in that sleep which he did not himself seek. A whispered word to the porter, who appeared to be in his confidence, procured him a free passage into the street; and it was not long before the youth, so earnest in his pledges to a too indulgent parent, was revelling with the most worthless comrades in scenes of the most degrading debauchery. His associates, as we have seen, were of another caste, and a higher condition than his own. They tolerated the despised Hebrew, not as an associate, but as a minister to their excesses. The money drawn from the coffers of his sire paid for their indulgences; and the unhappy and depraved youth was not unwilling to share their countenance and their excesses on terms so unequal.

"Thou art late, Amri," were the first words, uttered in a harsh tone by one of the dissolute young nobles, as he made his appearance.

"Too soon," cried another, "if he has not brought the money."

"He knows better than to come before us without it," said the former, and a harsh frown gathered upon his countenance as he spoke. "How now, Jew! thou hast not dared—"

"The money is here, my lord: be not impatient; I have brought thee all,—the whole sum, and even more."

"Good!—I knew thee, Amri, too well, to fear that thou wouldst play false," said Astigia, as he received the purse and proceeded to tell over the amount.

"And what hast thou to say to me?" demanded the brutal Edacer.

"Thou hast not been forgotten, my lord," replied the Jew, respectfully, yet with a tone of ease that showed how confident he was of favour when the bearer of such a burden as that which he now placed in the ready hands of his questioner.

Provided now with the means of indulgence, these hopeful youths sallied forth for the purposes of excess. They rushed like madmen through the streets, whooping, howling, assailing the peaceful whom they met, and disturbing the midnight quiet of the city. They then retired to a house allotted to the purposes of debauchery, where, with wine and profligate women, they passed the remainder of the night. By the dawn, half inebriated and quite exhausted, the son of Adoniakim stole silently to his chamber, having obtained a ready entrance to his father's dwelling from the porter, who was in his pay. When he awakened, his father was about to go forth. He watched the departure of the aged man; then, gliding down to the place where the porter stood in waiting, he thus counselled him:

"Go forth, Jared,—follow Adoniakim, and tell me where thou seest him enter. Note thou his movements, and suffer none to escape thee. I have gold for thee if thou reportest truly to me in this matter. Go!—meanwhile, I will wait for thee at the gate."

The subservient porter departed, as a spy upon his master; and the dishonourable son, throwing over his shoulder the rude cloak which the other had worn, now took the place of his watch at the entrance. His motives may in part be told, as we know them from himself.

"Adoniakim is gone to the dwelling of Melchior: I must find out the way thither also. I must see Thyrza, the maiden of whom they speak, and of whom I had sweet glimpses in my boyhood: she must now be a goodly woman, and my father has told me she is lovely."

While thus he addressed himself in soliloquy, a slight blow upon the gate over which he watched warned him

of his newly-assumed duties. When he opened it, a slender and handsome boy stood before him.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded Amri.

"This to Adoniakim," said the messenger, "from Namur of the Porch. It brings him tidings of the trade to Algeziras."

"Adoniakim is not within," responded the porter, as he received the packet which the boy brought, surveying curiously, as he replied, the smooth, soft, and harmonious features of his countenance, and the fine symmetry of his form.

"Namur of the Porch has a goodly page in thee," was the complaisant remark with which Amri continued his speech. "What is thy name, and where did he find thee? I will look to-morrow for one like thee in the same place."

"And what hast thou, a porter, to do with a page?" was the reply of the boy. "See to thy master's gate, sirrah, and keep thy speech for his ear. Give him the packet, as thou fearest the whip, the moment when he shall return."

And the boy turned away as he spoke, leaving Amri too much astounded to reply. When he was gone, Amri, after his usual practice, and by an art with which he was familiar, contrived to unfold the packet and possess himself of the contents without impairing the silk and seal which had secured it.

"Ha! Melchior!" he exclaimed, as he looked on the contents. "Melchior! he is the writer—and that boy—that page—beard of Samuel!—that boy must be Thyrza!"

With an oath he dashed open the wicket, and rushed into the open court—but he did so in vain. The page was gone, and he returned to his station cursing the dulness which had suffered him to misconceive one so lovely.

VI.

But the tidings which the letter contained were important. They ran as follows:—

"Adoniakim, my brother, the hunters are upon my path. They have pursued me to destroy, even from the country of Algeziras; and they bear the commands of the tyrant to take no slumber to their eyelids, and no rest to their feet, until they have secured the worthless but persecuted Melchior. This, from a true friend, compels me to fly the dwelling which had received me, and to seek for another yet more secure. I am now with Namur of the Porch, where thou wilt find me at evening."

There were other matters in this epistle which Amri could not so well comprehend. That which he understood was sufficient, however, for his purpose. While he read, he conceived a plan in his mind which he was impatient to execute; and he scarcely waited for the porter, Jared, to resume his place, so anxious was he to prosecute his new purpose.

"Thou hast seen him in the way he went, Jared?" was his question to the spy. The latter told him of the route taken by his father.

"It is well—here is gold—thou hast served me ably, and thou shalt have yet more. Take thy cloak now, and resume thy place, Jared, for Adoniakim will soon be here."

It was not his purpose to await the coming of his father.

"He would not tell me of Melchior—of his place of dwelling. I care not now. He shall find that I needed not his aid to bring me to a sight of the maiden:—and Melchior, too—wherefore should I care for him, whose thought and word of me are so unfriendly? He shall see."

Thus speaking, he hurried from the dwelling, while yet Adoniakim was absent. He proceeded at once to the dwelling of Edacer.

"Why art thou here?" demanded the fierce and brutal Goth. "Why comest thou to me at this hour, Jew? Dost thou not apprehend blows for thy intrusion?"

"Pardon me, my good lord, but I came upon thy service. Wouldst thou not have moneys?"

"Dost thou ask, Amri?—look at the purse which but last night I got from thy hands."

It lay almost exhausted upon the table.

"There is more in thy hands already, if thou wilt avail thyself of it," said Amri to the now complaisant Goth.

"Speak."

"Thou hast heard of Melchior of the Desert?"

"Have I not? The traitor!—he who gave Auria into the hands of the Saracen infidel."

"The same."

"What of him?" demanded the Goth.

"Thou knowest that a great price is put upon his head by Don Roderick?"

"Ay, I know it. But what does this concern me? Speak out—I am impatient."

"Melchior is in Cordova."

"Sayest thou!" exclaimed Edacer, starting to his feet from the couch on which he had been lying. "Where?"

"Thou shalt know after thou hast prepared thyself. Thou shalt get the soldiers in readiness for him, and at midnight thou shalt lead them to a place which I shall name to thee hereafter."

"Do this, Amri, and thou shalt have good share of the reward."

"What share?" asked the Hebrew, with something like a sneer of scorn upon his lips. The noble saw not the expression as he replied—

"A goodly share, be satisfied. Come to me at evening, and direct our way."

"I may not guide thee," said the Jew, abruptly. "I will tell thee of thy route, but I may not guide thee to the spot. Melchior is a Jew like myself—he is one of the tribe of my father."

The noble laughed loudly and scornfully at the distinction which Amri made.

"Be it so," said he. "Let thy words teach us the way, we shall not ask thy finger to point it out. Thou wilt be here at evening with thy tidings?"

"I will," was the reply, and the traitorous youth departed on the prosecution of his own schemes. At evening, punctual to his appointment, he came to Edacer. The Goth had made his preparations, and his dwelling contained the soldiers who were to arrest the outlaw.

"At midnight, seek the Porch of Namur," said the Jew. "The wicket on the right hand of the court leads to an ancient dwelling of stone. Behind that is another of greater size, and around it many, but none so large. A tower leans, as if about to fall, on one side of the greater dwelling. In that tower will Melchior be found."

"If thou liest, Amri—if thou leadest us falsely," said Edacer, "thy father's gold shall pay for thy insolence."

"Be it so," said the Jew. "It is there that Melchior has pledged another to be at midnight."

"And thou wilt not go with us, Amri?" demanded the Goth.

"He is of my father's tribe," said Amri, as he left the apartment.

VII.

The design of Amri was a deep one. He desired, in the first place, to obtain access to the presence of Melchior and of his daughter. This, at present, seemed impossible. His father had kept him from the knowledge of Melchior's visit, and exhibited no sort of disposition to extend his confidence. In no way could he have shown the possession of the secret, unless by an exposure of the dishonourable means which he had taken to procure it. He adopted means yet more dishonourable to effect his purpose. Having prepared the enemies of Melchior, it was now his purpose to defeat their aim. Such a service must commend him, as he thought, to the person he had betrayed, and procure him a degree of confidence which he well perceived he was not likely to obtain otherwise. He cared but little for the annoyance which such a proceeding must bring to the aged man,—he thought still less of the degrading falsehoods and dishonourable means through which he would have to wade to effect his object. These were no considerations to one so base of heart as Amri.

An hour before the time at which the proposed visit of the officers was to be made in search of the outlaw, at the Porch of Namur, Amri hurried to the spot. He pressed his way, by a cunning story and the utterance of his own name, through the persons appointed to admit the visiters, and, to the surprise of Adoniakim, his father, who was present, not less than of all the rest, he stood suddenly before them.

"What brings you here, my son?" cried Adoniakim, with alarm, seeing the well-feigned apprehensions of the youth.

"Your safety—your safety, my father. Melchior,

your enemies—the guards of the Goth—they will be soon upon thee."

"How!—speak, my son," cried Adoniakim, in terror; but Melchior said nothing, and looked calmly upon the youth.

"The officer of Don Roderick, with many soldiers, even now bend their way in search of Melchior."

"How knowest thou this, Amri?" asked Melchior; "how didst thou thyself learn so readily to seek me out in my dwelling?"

"Ay, tell me, Amri, how didst thou learn the abiding-place of Melchior?"

"From Edacer, the Goth, my father," replied the youth, with unexampled effrontery: "thou knowest, my father, of the moneys I had in trust for him?"

"I do—I do,—speak nothing of that, my son."

"I sought him out but a little since, that I might deliver them into his hands. There were persons with him, and they bade me wait at the entrance. It was then that I heard loud talking from within concerning Melchior, and I strove to hear what they should say of thee. It was by this means that I came to know of thy dwelling, for the soldier who spoke pointed it out with great exactness in the Porch of Namur, and I found that they awaited but the hour of midnight to approach in search of thee. When I heard this, my father, I did not scruple to seek out Melchior in his seclusion, though it was not my thought to find thee here also, and exposed to the same danger."

"Now, bless thee, my son!" cried the delighted father; "thou hast done rightly and well. Said I not, Melchior,—said I not, that the heart was right,—that the warm blood and the giddy head, and not a vicious spirit, led the boy erring?"

"Amri has done us good service, Adoniakim, and I give him thanks for the good disposition and the ready speed which have brought him here to-night; and yet I

would not that he had listened secretly to the language of the Gothic noble whom he had styled his friend. It was not the right part for the noble spirit; and while we acknowledge the good service, Adoniakim, we must chide the means, even for the good of the youth, by which he was led to perform it."

"Now out upon the preacher!" said Amri to himself, as he heard this rebuke; but he bore it with seeming humility, for he well perceived the necessity of moving cautiously in all that he did under the piercing eye of Melchior.

"We must provide against this danger, Namur. Thou must prepare the secret passage, while I send one to preserve the young prince, so that he fall not into the hands of his enemies."

This was said by Melchior, in a whisper, to the aged man called Namur of the Porch—a man of substance and of great repute among his tribe. He then called to him Lamech. As the features of the boy, whom he had seen in his assumed capacity of porter, met his eye, a strange emotion ran through the veins of Amri. He scarce could withdraw his glance from the rich, clear loveliness of her countenance; and the capricious fancy which prompted him curiously to seek her at the first, now grew into a strong and passionate desire to possess her. Melchior led her, still in the garb of a boy, and still known by the name of Lamech, into an adjoining closet.

"Thyrza, thou dost not fear to go forth into the city?"

"Father, I fear nothing which thou believest right."

"Go, then, my child, to the outer lodge at the Porch of Namur, and watch for the coming of the Prince Pelayo. Thou wilt know him well, methinks?"

"Well I know him, father."

"Guide him from this spot, and seek me in the dwelling of Barzelius. At the eastern gate I myself will be in waiting to receive you; and thither we shall now

retire. Thou fearest not to trust thyself with the prince? —he will protect thee if there be need."

"I fear nothing with him, father. He is a noble,—he—"

She paused, and her words became confused. The old man did not observe the interruption, but led her forth, saying,

"Thou hast thy dagger? Leave it not; it may serve thee, my child, in some dreadful strait, as once before it served thy blessed mother, whom yet it could not save. Heaven keep thee, my child!"

He led her forth from the apartment where the rest were in waiting, and long after she had gone did the eyes of Amri bend towards the dark passageway through which she had departed.

VIII.

When she had gone, a secret door in the wall was thrown open, through which Melchior, Adoniakim, and Amri passed, leaving Namur, the proprietor of the porch, to meet the approaching enemy,—a task to which, in the persecuted condition of the Jews in that time and country, he had long before been familiar.

Meanwhile the Jewish maiden, with a heart that trembled with various emotions, but with a step as confident as if she were really of the sex whose habiliments she wore, made her way, as she had been directed by her father, to the lodge which stood at the entrance of the porch. Here, concealed in a dark recess of the wall, she took her station, and patiently awaited the coming of the person she had been sent to guide. An hour, probably, had elapsed, when her ears distinguished the sound as of many persons approaching. There was a hum of voices, the tread of several following feet, and once she distinguished a rattling noise, as of the heavy

iron head of a lance clashing against the solid wall. Cautiously, and trembling all the while, she stole forth to the entrance of the little recess where she had stationed herself, and her eye discerned, moving down a dim lane that stretched away into the distance on her right, a group as of armed men. She saw in the starlight the glittering of steel; and she plainly saw one shining helmet, towering brightly in advance of the rest. At that moment a light but firm footfall, near at hand, also reached her ears. She turned; and, though the approaching person was enveloped in a cloak, she could not doubt that it was him she sought. The erect and elevated form, the free, unhesitating tread, all spoke for Pelayo; and, perhaps, there was an instinct in her own bosom that needed no aid from her senses to speak for his presence.

He, too, seemed to have discerned the coming enemy; for once he paused, and his head was turned, as if inquiringly, in the direction of the intruders. At that moment she emerged lightly from the recess, and her slight hand and trembling fingers plucked him by the skirts of his cloak. He started, and his ready hand clutched his dagger.

"Lamech," said the maiden, in a whisper, "Lamech —I come from Melchior."

"Ha! where is he?"

She motioned him to follow her, and led the way into the recess from which she had just emerged. He followed her promptly, and a few words told him all, and accounted for her presence.

"These are the soldiers now, sir—my lord. We must keep in silence here till they have passed."

"Get thy dagger ready in the meanwhile, Lamech, for they may think it well to look into this alley. How now—wherefore dost thou tremble? Thy fears will not make them blind, nor better thy own strength. Pluck up thy spirits, and fear nothing."

Well might she tremble. She stood beside the Prince Pelayo, and his hand rested upon her shoulder while he spoke. The voices of the soldiers were now distinctly heard, and it could be distinguished by the two that they spoke of Melchior and of the promised reward. Lamech trembled like a leaf in the October winds, as he heard their fell threatenings. Pelayo felt distinctly the beatings of that fluttering heart, and, in a whisper, endeavoured to reassure it.

"Thy father is safe now, Lamech, and we are safe, I doubt not, since, in their great thirst to pursue him, they will not pause to search out other places of which they have no suspicion. Why dost thou withdraw from me, boy, and bend forward as if thou wouldst go forth? Move not; thy weight is nothing against my arm. I could bear thee like a child in flight."

A voice was heard at the entrance of the alley.

"Here is a dark hole—dark enough to hide a dozen outlaws. Shall we not look in here?"

Pelayo thrust the trembling boy, as he heard these words, behind him, dropped his cumbrous cloak from his shoulders, and stood in the centre of the alley, prepared for the intruders. But the words of the fierce Edacer in reply rendered his preparations unnecessary.

"No—we have no time for this. I know where the outlaw is. Let us haste, and we shall find him. We have already wasted too much time with that drunken Astigia. On!"

Their heavy tread was heard passing before the entrance, and Pelayo resumed his cloak.

"Come, boy—come, Lamech," he said, in gentle tones to the maiden. "Thou hast nothing to fear now, and canst lead me to the place thy father appointed. Thou art but a frail ally, Lamech, and wouldst not stand well the assault of thine enemy. Thy people have too long been wanting to the strife, and may not lift sword with cool hand and reckless spirit."

"Yet Judah was a lion once, my lord," was the response of the person addressed.

"Thou art not Judah, then, Lamech. The dove's spirit is thine rather than the lion's. But lead on, Lamech—lead on, and fear nothing. Thy hand yet trembles under mine."

This was true, and as strange, in the thought of the maiden, as it was true. Why should her hand always tremble when it met that of Pelayo? Why should her heart tremble when she heard him speak? Why should she fear him? Did she fear him, and wherefore her emotions? Vainly did she ask herself these questions. Her thoughts could not give her back an answer, and her heart dared not!

IX.

Edacer found no victim. The bird had flown. Old Namur received the intruders with as little emotion as if the visit had been expected, and the disappointed Goth led his myrmidons away, swearing vengeance upon Amri, whom he supposed to have deceived him. Meanwhile the fugitives sought another place of retreat in the Hebrew suburb—a region at no time deficient in secret passages and haunts. At the gate of the dwelling Melchior received his daughter and the prince. The latter he conducted into an apartment removed from the rest. He had his purpose in this. He was unwilling that Amri should know that Prince Pelayo was committed with them, and in the city. With a something of divine prescience, he suspected the honesty of the son of Adoniakim, and prudently resolved to keep from his knowledge as much as he could of the designs and progress of the conspirators. In this determination he had a stout opponent in the person of Adoniakim, to whom Amri had greatly recommended himself by what he had unfolded

of his doings of the night. Fond and confiding, the aged man was easily assured of his son's discretion and patriotism. Of his integrity he never seemed to have had a doubt. It was after a warm struggle, therefore, that Melchior succeeded in impressing on him the necessity of confiding nothing to the youth.

"We must have more proof of his discretion. When he has given up these profligate associates and these idle habits, we shall confide to him all; but now—not yet, Adoniakim. There is too much at risk, and we must not forget that the lives and fortunes of others—of the young Prince Pelayo, and of the brave men who are pledged with him, are at stake. We have not the right to unfold our knowledge of these to the youth, however much we esteem him, and however able he may be to maintain the trust."

Accustomed to yield to Melchior, Adoniakim at length forbore to press the matter; and, returning to the chamber in which, during this brief conference, they had left Amri, the task devolved upon the old man of sending his son away. The duty was a hard one, fond as the father was, and esteeming the youth worthy, as he did, to partake of their great enterprise.

"Go now, my son—go back to the dwelling, and leave it not again, I pray thee, till my return."

"What! leave thee here, my father, and wherefore? Why shouldst thou grope thy way home again through the gloomy streets at so late an hour, when thou hast a son able, like myself, to succour and attend thee?"

"Nay, Amri, I shall not leave the dwelling of Melchior in the dark hours. It will be bright noonday when I return, and then there can be no danger. I have much of grave business to consult upon here with Melchior, and I need not, though much I should love, thy tendance. Thou must go."

"I see it, I see it, my father," said Amri, impatiently, for he longed once more to behold the maiden, whom he

now knew as such, in the guise of the page, and was reluctant, therefore, to depart.

"I see that I am not trusted by Melchior or by thee. Thou thinkest me a rash and thoughtless boy—mayhap—and the smile of Abraham be on me, for it is sad to think so—mayhap, a vicious one, and that thou mayst not confide to me thy secrets. But I know them—I know them without thy words. Thinkest thou I am blind, not to see that thou art toiling for Israel—that thou aimest for his freedom from the bondage of the Goth?"

"Oh, my son—Amri—where gottest thou this knowledge?" exclaimed the astounded father. But the son did not answer the inquiry, though he continued to speak.

"I know thy purpose, and I know thou dost not desire to trust me. I, thy son—I, the son of Israel, and bound to thy people, and loving them no less than thou and Melchior."

Melchior, to whose ears the last words had come as he was entering the apartment, now spoke in a rebuke which silenced the voluble declamation of the presuming youth.

"Thou dost prove thyself deserving of thy father's confidence when thou dost refuse to obey his commands. Go to, Amri,—thou hast yet much to learn. If, as thou sayest, thou knowest thy father's purpose, and the labour that is between us, thou wilt prove to us the strength of thy faith and wisdom by putting a seal on thy lips henceforward, heavy like that of Solomon. When we behold thee having sealed lips, we shall know thee to be prudent, and esteem thee to be wise: we shall then come to thee for counsel. Go now, seek thy father's dwelling, and maintain its quiet, as a good son, while he remains abroad. Adoniakim is now waited for, and, if thou goest not, thy stay will be but tedious, for thou wilt linger here alone."

"Let the page Lamech but keep with me, and I care not for the night: I will remain in waiting for my father," was the suggestion of the youth.

"The boy has gone to his repose," was the quiet answer of Melchior; but his eye searched narrowly the features of the rash youth who stood before him. The thought of Melchior was troubled. Was the daughter of his heart known through her disguise to Amri? He knew not, for the countenance of Amri stood the close scrutiny of his glance, and betrayed none of the secret thoughts labouring then in the mind of the profligate. In a moment after, hopeless to gain his object, Amri departed from the dwelling.

X.

The three, Melchior, Pelayo, and Adoniakim, met in secret conference.

"Thy brother—the young Prince Egiza," said Melchior to Pelayo,—"thou shouldst have brought him; thou didst promise it."

"I did," was the reply of Pelayo; and his brow was gloomy as he spoke, and the words came sternly through his clinched teeth: "I did promise thee his presence, Melchior, yet have brought him not. Speak not of him now, I pray thee."

"He does not shrink from us?—he doth not refuse?"

"He doth not, but he loiters: he hath been a laggard—too much a laggard, in this matter, Melchior; it chafes me when I speak it."

"Wherefore this,—doth he avoid connexion with the Hebrew?"

"No!"

"Perhaps he will not hold himself bound to the pledge which thou hast made—"

"He shall!" was the stern response of Pelayo, inter-

rupting the speech of Melchior,—"he shall! It is not this that keeps him from our councils: it is his weakness, an evil weakness. Thou shalt know all hereafter: to other business now."

"'Tis well,—even as thou sayest, Pelayo."

Pelayo then spoke:—

"I have done much since the last night, and my captains meet with me to-morrow, at this hour, in the Cave of Wamba. Thou shouldst be there."

"I will."

"Who wilt thou bring else?" demanded Pelayo.

"But two: a brave youth of Merida—a strong and fearless spirit, who will lead a chosen band of Israelites to the battle, and with a heart brave as any in thy service."

"A Hebrew, he?" inquired Pelayo.

"Of my own tribe. I know him well, my prince. Do not misdoubt the Hebrew valour always. He will fight nobly."

"Thou shouldst know, Melchior. Thy valour, like thy judgment, is approved. I know it. What other comes with thee?"

"But this old man, Adoniakim—a father of the Hebrew. His word is a power among our people which shall move them like a tempest."

"What name does the youth bear of whose valour thou hast spoken?"

"Abimelech."

"Forget not that he comes. My soul rejoices in the brave spirit; and, let him but approve himself, Pelayo will not know he is a Hebrew. I will leave thee now, since, before morning, I must seek the Lord Oppas."

"What of the weapons of war, Prince Pelayo?"

"Convey them as thou canst, in secrecy, to the Cave of Wamba: then shall we distribute them to the chiefs who meet with us. But be not rash,—move them not all at once, but in small number."

Much more was said, between the parties, needful to the preparations and purposes of the conspiracy, before Pelayo left the conference. When he did so, he found the boy Lamech, who preceded him to them entrance, which he opened for the departure of the prince. The hand of Pelayo rested gently on the head of the youth, as he spoke to him thus:

"Thy limbs should be at rest now, on a soft couch, Lamech,—they are too feeble and too slender to sustain thee in a watch and labours like to these. Thou wilt grow weary, and then sickness will come to thee; for even mine, which are stronger and older, might not bear with such toils, but that a sleepless feeling within my heart sustains and impels them thus."

Pelayo little knew how strong was the feeling in that boy's heart also, which sustained and strengthened his otherwise feeble limbs.

"Go now to thy rest, Lamech; and, though a Jew, I will not chide if thou namest Pelayo in thy prayers to the Hebrew God whom thou servest. The prayers must be of avail from a young and faithful heart such as thine."

He pressed the hand of the maiden-page as he bade her good-night, and the touch went like so much spirit-fire into the veins, even to the very core, of her young and devoted heart. She watched from the door along the path upon which he had gone, and her eye seemed endued with a strength beyond humanity to see him, far, far away in the dim street, though but few stars shone out from the heavens. She turned away and closed the door when she could no longer behold him; and then, for the first time, did her limbs feel weary for sleep.

XI.

"WHEREFORE hast thou lingered from thy couch so long, Thyrza, my beloved? Why hast thou not gone to thy slumbers?"

"Thou didst not bid me, my father; but I will go now. Thy blessing, father."

And she sank upon her knee before him as she spoke; and fervently and fondly, though in silence, did the aged Hebrew invoke God's blessing on his child.

"And thine, Adoniakim," said the maiden.

"May the God of Israel be thy God, Thyrza,—may his good angels watch thee, beloved one!" was the kind prayer of Adoniakim, and the maid retired with no other word from the presence. Her absence gave an opportunity, as her appearance had furnished an occasion, to Adoniakim, which the good old man earnestly desired.

"Melchior," said he, "thou hast a blessed and a blessing creature in that child of thine."

The eyes of Melchior were full of tears, and he replied in no other language.

"Thou mayst well love her, for she is worthy of all love in herself; and to thee, Melchior, she must bring ever back the memory of a time when life was a thing of love, and all its creatures, and all its objects and desires, were sought for and beloved. How like is she, even in my eye, to her gracious mother."

"Speak not of this, Adoniakim. I would not, my brother, that the weakness of my heart should be beheld, even by thee."

"It is the strength, and not the weakness of the heart, Melchior, which I behold in these tears of thine eyes. Weep on, my brother, for the tears that flow from affection are sweet, even though they fall only upon its grave. They hallow love, they embalm memory, they consecrate

mortal things, and make them eternal as thought, and lovely as the first look of innocence. They are blessed, my brother, and sweetly do they bless the heart from whose deep and silent fountains they flow."

"Truly hast thou spoken, Adoniakim. The tears of mine eyes are grateful to my heart. Yet I would not that men should see me weep; for it is the wont always with men to scorn the suffering which they do not feel."

"I have spoken to thee of Thyrza, my brother, as of one dear to thee from old memories, and not less dear to thee from her own loveliness and worth. She is dear to me the same, and it has been my thought and prayer, Melchior, that our own hearts should be more closely joined together in the pleasant bonds which we might behold our two children weave around the hearts of one another. Amri—"

"Say not, Adoniakim. I know thy thought and thy prayer, but speak not again of this."

"The youth is erring, but not vicious."

"I pray thee, Adoniakim, forbear. What is it to us —we who are toiling for Israel—for our people, and our people's liberties—to bend ourselves to the fruitless employ of teaching young hearts to commune in love? Thy son is dear to thee, and my daughter is dear; but what to us should be their mortal happiness at a season of trial and storm like that which is impending? The bird sings not a love-ditty when the tempest clamours in the air, but sinks secure into his cover, and waits the moment of repose."

"I speak not of the present season, Melchior, when I speak to thee of these hopes upon which my heart has been set. There will come a time when the storm is ended—when the strife is over—when the danger is gone by;—there will come the time, and then, my brother, how greatly would it rejoice my spirit to behold thy Thyrza the beloved wife of Amri."

"Never—never!" was the energetic response of

Melchior. "Amri the lord of Thyrza—the master of her fate—the dictator of her movements—the arbiter of her affections and her hopes? Never—never! Speak to me no more of this, Adoniakim, for I may not hear thee with patience. God crush me with a bolt when I give my child up to a tyranny like that of Amri! She, the dependant, the humble, the uncomplaining, the gentle—meek as the night-dews—fond like her blessed mother—giving all her heart, and devoted to the death for him she is bound to:—shall I give such as she to Amri? To Amri, the impatient, the capricious, the wanton profligate—having his own will and vicious mood for his master, and owning no authority besides! I tell thee, Adoniakim, I will not hear thee speak of this. Thou knowest not my daughter, or thou lovest her not; and still less dost thou know thy son, however thou lovest him. I know him better than thou. I see into his heart—I trace his thoughts—and I tell thee, Adoniakim—in grief but in truth I tell thee—thy tenderness is blindness, and thy misused love is a very madness of the heart, which will one day wither it as with fire. Forgive me, Adoniakim, that I speak thus of one that is so dear to thee; but I may not speak else. He honours thee not, Adoniakim, and his days in the land will be short; and he will scatter sorrow and evil, like a pernicious and fast-growing seed, all around him. Let us part now, for we have both much to do ere the gray light of morning shall cheer us."

The language of Melchior fell chillingly upon the heart of Adoniakim. He had been wont to regard the Hebrew of the Desert as one wise beyond men, and a reader of the stars. He bowed his head in acquiescence, and without a murmur, to the words of his companion, even as to an oracle; but his eyes were full of tears, and there was a heavy sadness upon his spirit. They parted for the night, and the gray dawn streamed through the casement ere Melchior sought his couch.

XII.

THE gloomy Cave of Wamba received the conspirators. A hundred armed and brave knights were present. Melchior came also, and the valiant Hebrew, Abimelech. There also came the venerable Adoniakim, who was too much devoted to the cause of his people to heed the fatigue of such a journey. The enthusiasm of his heart gave strength to his limbs, and made them light to bear the toil, so unusual at such an age as his, which he now put upon them. When they were all assembled, there was but one voice in the assembly, and that was addressed to Pelayo in a tone of thunder.

"Where is the Prince Egiza?—where is thy brother?"

Pelayo looked sternly around upon the assembly in silence, for a few moments, as if disdaining their inquiry. Then he spoke—

"My lords and gentlemen,—noble knights and men of Spain,—if Egiza toils, as he should, in the good cause, which is thine and his alike, it may be well looked for that he is sometimes absent and afar. I had thought to find my brother here with the Lord Oppas. That he is not, and this business so much his, should prove him more profitably labouring elsewhere."

"This was thy speech to us before, Pelayo," replied Count Aylor. "We know that thou hast been busy, ay, without sleeping, prince, and so have others of our band; yet thou canst come, and they can come, when our pledges so demand it, fearless to meet with those pledged along with us, and doubting, as they well may, the brother who forbears to come. Thy brother must have wrought nobly, indeed, to excuse him for this slight upon us."

"No slight, Count Aylor—no slight, gentlemen, as I

trust and know. The soul of Egiza goes with you," responded Pelayo. But his voice, though firm, had in it a something of self-reproach and sorrow, which did not escape the senses of the conspirators. Much did he misgive that his brother had forgotten or been heedless of his duties.

"How know we that he will bind himself to secure us in the privileges thou hast promised us, Pelayo?" was the farther demand.

"He shall speak for himself, my friends. I pledge myself—I, Pelayo—that Egiza meets with you three nights hence, and ratifies the bond which I have made you, or yields you release from all your pledges."

"How!—think you that he will forego the enterprise—that he will turn traitor to his people, and leave them to the tyranny of Roderick? We claim no release from our pledges, Pelayo—we are resolved to die, all, sooner than bear the iron sway of this Gothic usurper."

Thus exclaimed one and all of that fierce assembly. The spirit of Pelayo glowed with unquenchable delight as he listened to this language.

"Noble gentlemen, and brave knights of Spain," he cried to them, in a voice of pride, "yours is the true spirit, which is to secure you conquest. Think not, though Egiza prove recreant, that Pelayo falters in the enterprise. His soul is in it; and, if Egiza prove false or feeble, Pelayo is yours,—he will lead you to the usurper's palace,—he will be the first to strike for your freedom and his own."

Loud cheers rang through the vaulted chamber, and it was long before their clamours suffered him to proceed. When the applause was over, he thus continued—

"But I hope for better things from Egiza. He is not, he cannot be, forgetful of his trust. He will lift the sword—he will lead you on—and, as your crowned king, will give you the privileges and the liberty which I have promised, and which your valour so well deserves.

You shall hear this from his lips: you shall see him at our next assembling; when, God with us, we shall lift the banner of Spain, and do battle with the usurper. Living or dead, if Pelayo lives, ye shall behold Egiza then. I swear it on the blessed sign."

And fervently, as he spoke, he kissed the cross-handled weapon at his side.

XIII.

Ere the dawn of the ensuing day Pelayo entered the secret door leading to the chamber of his uncle. The Lord Oppas was even then awake, and busied with the toils of the conspiracy. Not limited was the share which he had assigned himself in the enterprise. He had his own ambition, and it was reckless beyond belief, to gratify in these labours. But he was prudent in his measures; and, so cunningly did he play the part of the rebel, that his practices were hitherto unsuspected by the most watchful emissaries of King Roderick. His thoughts, ere the approach of Pelayo, found their way to his lips in broken and almost unconscious soliloquy:

"This boldness which Pelayo meditates," he exclaimed, "is but sheer folly. He has but to speak aloud, and show himself with the feeble numbers which we now command, to be crushed for ever. He must not be suffered to risk everything of our cause—of *my* cause—to his insane valour. And yet, unless we move Julian, the day of our best hope is distant. He is strong—stronger than any noble in the realm; and, but for this strength, had surely never received the favour of Roderick, confirming in his rule the command of Andalusia. He can move the natives with a word; and but little less is the power which he holds among the Gothic nobles. They notefully regard his word, favour his course, hearken his direction, nor strive to assail his

power. We must win him to win our way. The crown, the kingdom, my hope, all rest upon his favour; and to rise in arms ere we have won him to our purpose were but to bring down all his power upon us, and defeat, by an idle rashness, not the present plan alone, but all the rich hopes of the future. Yet how to move him now? He hath heard my proffers, and in calm thought rejected them. The gold which had tempted any Gothic noble is valueless in the sight of Julian; and for the power which pleaded with his ambition, he hath all from Roderick which he could ever hope to gain from us. His love of the old king moves him not to revenge his murder, since he holds the election of Roderick to be not less legal than that of Witiza. What then—what then? How move him, when these things, which had wrought madness in other minds, fall fruitlessly upon his? Through her—through her—his daughter. Through her alone—there is no other argument. She is the idol of his soul, and he loves the ground upon which she treads. His heart is wound up in her charms, and she restores to him the beauties of her whom he had else lost for ever. He will dare in her behalf all danger; and the wrong done to her will arouse him to that unwitting vengeance and wild treason to which no temptation may win him now. Through her, then—through the devoted love which he bears her, I have a power to move him. He shall be ours; he shall be *mine!*"

The archbishop paced the room hastily as, with increased emphasis, he uttered these words and came to this conclusion. His project, but half conceived in his mind, in the mean time underwent closer analysis. He spoke at length, though in a more subdued tone, as if he had reached a desired result.

"I know this Roderick well. A wild profligate; passionate and voluptuous; reckless of right or reason when his blood quickens—he will but need to hear of the beauties of Cava to madden for their enjoyment.

He shall hear of them; and the choice phrases which teach him where to look for his pleasure will not fail to heighten their excellence. He shall become wise in all her charms, and his daring arm will rest not till he has them in his power. Let him but gain his purpose, and we gain ours, and I gain mine. He will rouse the stern old father to vengeance, and secure for us the succour which our prayers and promises have alike failed to compass. It must be so. 'Tis a wild design, without fair defence, but that it helps to the right, and thus becomes a virtue. Ha! who comes? Pelayo."

"The same, good uncle," was the reply of the youth, who entered the room at this moment. A red spot was upon his brow, and the closely compressed lips, and the quick and fire-darting eye of the speaker, betokened a degree of anger which had not yet appeared in his language.

"Well, my son," said the archbishop.

"It is not well, mine uncle," was the sudden reply. "It goes not well. Where's Egiza?"

"Nay, I know not. Is he not with you?"

"With me! The red curses seize him," passionately exclaimed his brother. "His lukewarmness will ruin us, as it already dampens the spirits of our men. A hundred good knights gathered at my summons at the Cave of Wamba, and he was pledged to meet them. They were true, but he failed them. They waited long, and, with reason, grew impatient. 'Twere cause enough that he should claim their duty while utterly heedless of his own."

"They were not angered, I trust, Pelayo," said the archbishop.

"Your trust is profligate, my lord bishop," replied the youth, quickly; "they were angered, and rightly. I have soothed them as I could with such lessons as I got from thee. I prated to them of patience and deliberation, of reason and caution, and other stuff of the sort.

By my faith, if they think as little of the counsel as does the counsellor, they would eat up their own swords through vexation."

"And where, think you, my son, can be your brother? Sure—I hope not—no harm has befallen him."

"Thy hope is late, and, like thy trust, profligate. Harm hath come to him, mine uncle."

"What harm, Pelayo?" demanded the archbishop, with great anxiety.

"He is in fetters—in bondage—in villain bondage," replied the other.

"In bondage, son?"

"Ay—a witch hath fettered him. He hath eyes—amorous eyes—and he loves beauty. He is in a woman's bondage—worst bondage of all; since the soul slackens in its purpose and sleeps in the chain, which, if the bonds were other, the strong limb would rend with a bound. The tyrant's bonds were but flaxen cords to such fetters as now wrap the feeble spirit of Egiza. He can no longer serve us with resolution; he hath no energy to serve or save himself. His truth is forfeit; his pledged faith denied; his duty to his country left undone; and all for a silly, simpering, painted plaything, such as tickle boys with amorous fancies to their ruin. But, though he be my brother, I shall slay him, even as a dog, if he fulfil not his pledges."

"Nay, do nothing rashly, Pelayo," said the archbishop. "You are but too ready to strike, and your promptness is no less an evil than is the lukewarmness of Egiza. But where do you conceive him, and of what woman do you speak?"

"Julian's daughter, the Lady Cava. He is in her web—a long-legged butterfly in a gray spider's house. Would she feast on him now, the game were at rest. 'Tis she that hath dammed up the proper tides of manhood in him, and made him what he is—a soulless murmurer by the silly brook that prattles away the hours

with as little purpose as himself. Well I saw, what time we sought her father's castle for his succour, that Egiza grew her slave. I warned him then, and dreaded this same chance."

"What would you do, Pelayo?"

"What I have sworn, good uncle. I am pledged to bring him to our council; living or dead, Lord Oppas, I have sworn to bring him—and I will do it. Living or dead, Egiza shall meet our friends at the Cave of Wamba, as he has promised them, and as I have sworn."

"When seek you him?"

"To-morrow."

"Should you find him at the castle of Julian?"

"Well?"

"What will you do?"

"What should I do, good uncle, but make all effort for his liberty? Try to break his bonds, and lead him out from his captivity. Entreat him by his honour, by our father's memory, by his country's sufferings, to return to his duties—to the pledges sworn to his people—the ghosts of Witiza and his murdered followers being by the while."

"What if he refuse you? Should the witcheries of Cava still more effectually persuade him? What then?"

"What then should I do but stab him to death, and vindicate our name, and the oath which I have taken before our men?" responded the fierce warrior, whose height, already majestic, seemed to rise still higher, and to expand in majesty, with the angry answer of his lips.

"That were too rash, too bloody a deed, my son," rejoined the archbishop. "It were unholy, and most horrible, that in any cause thy hand should spill the blood of thy brother. Wouldst thou have the curse of Cain upon thee, Pelayo?"

"I slay him at no altar," replied the youth. "It is to that I would bring him. It is because of his desertion from the altar of his God and his country that I would slay him."

"'Twere not well—not wise, Pelayo," replied the archbishop, "to do this rash and cruel act. Hear me, my son; I have a better plan of counsel, which shall break this bondage; nor break the bondage of Egiza alone. It will break our bonds also, if it succeeds; it will help us to our battle with the usurper."

"Thou'lt pleasure me to speak it, uncle," was the more temperate reply of Pelayo. "I would not wrong a lock of Egiza's hair if he would do his duty, and confirm me in the pledges I have made in his behalf."

"He will do this, be sure," was the promise of Oppas. "We shall help him to break these bonds, escape from this bondage of which thou hast such dread, my son, and, by the same art with which we achieve his rescue, compel Julian himself to choose his side with ours."

"I grow impatient, uncle," said Pelayo, as the archbishop appeared to pause.

"You're full grown, Pelayo, and if we measure your manhood by your impatience, my son, 'tis long, very long, since you have been a child. But hear me out. I have a little scheme."

"Another?"

"Yes, another. But hear me. The father of this maiden, whom you now regard as your brother's mistress or his fate, loves her to so earnest a degree, that she stands in his thought as one worthy of heaven's own worship. He doth little less than worship her himself on earth. He hath kept her from the court, as he feared its license—"

"He did wisely," said Pelayo, interrupting the speaker, who continued thus, after a moment's pause.

"And in his own castle retreats he hath provided her with attendance and delights which amply supply the loss of such pleasures as the court might bring, without its infirmities. In this devotion of the father to his daughter, my scheme hath its birth. Upon his exceeding fondness I build all my hope, as well of Egiza's

rescue as of the succour to our cause which the arms of Count Julian can ably give us."

"I am dull, good uncle."

"Thou wilt grow wiser ere I am done. Well, then —thou hast seen her beauty—she is beautiful, thou knowst."

"Ay, she hath glances that warm, and she walks daintily. Wouldst have me chronicle and number them in order?"

"No—enough of that. She is beautiful; but, as her beauty doth not work upon either thee or me, it needs not that we speak farther of it here. But should this beauty be unveiled to Roderick—thou knowst his lustful nature—dwelt on in free and speaking words until his fancy becomes fired with desire for its enjoyment, then shall he madden, and his heart grow wanton like thy brother's."

"Well?"

"With a bolder spirit than Egiza will he then labour for her possession."

"What of this?" responded Pelayo, coldly. "How will it help our cause, or rid Egiza of his bonds, even should the lustful tyrant aim, as thou sayst, and as I doubt not he will, at this foul measure?"

"Hear me. He will pursue her with unholy fires. He will contrive means to elude the father; and, when he hath achieved his purpose, the sword of Julian will be ours for revenge, that hath been heretofore withheld. The insolence of Roderick will provoke his anger even to fury, and the personal wrong of the tyrant will prompt the rebellion which his usurpation provoked not. Julian will join his ten thousand soldiers to our cause, and—"

"Ay—I see it now," replied Pelayo. "And you have taught all this to Roderick?"

Deceived by the calm and subdued manner of Pelayo, the subtle priest did not scruple to proceed in the development of his foul project.

"Not yet, my son," he replied; "but we have time enough to do it. In a secret missive which I shall contrive to fall into his hands, or into those of his minion Edeco, I will arouse him to this knowledge of the damsel. I will urge him on by a warm portrait of her charms, and counsel him how best to succeed in their attainment. This done, I will, with no less diligence, send tidings of his disaster to her father, and counsel how best to revenge the wrong of the tyrant to his child. See'st thou not how this works for us? The appeal will then be from Julian unto us, and the vengeance which he seeks upon Roderick will make him a true soldier to our cause."

"'Tis a hopeful scheme," said Pelayo, his eyes resting with keen gaze upon those of the archbishop; "'tis a hopeful scheme, my lord; and this poor maiden—this just budding child, whose bosom hath not yet well throbbed with its own virgin consciousness, who is just breathing into life—she thou hast decreed as the victim, whose sacrifice is to give us the justice and the victory we seek."

"'Tis her fate, my son," was the calm reply of the archbishop, who was still deceived by the unusually subdued and quiet manner of the prince. But the next moment, and the indignant burst of expression which fell from the lips of the noble-minded Pelayo, soon convinced the archbishop of his error, and taught him how greatly he had mistaken the moral sense of his nephew.

"God help thee to a heart, my Lord Oppas. God help thee, I say, to that which thou seemst to have not —a heart. Thou art cursed, and wouldst curse others, with its lack; and I pray Heaven to supply thee soon, ere the curse grows too heavy for cure, and the doom beyond all endurance."

The astounded archbishop could only reply—

"What mean you, my son?"

Without heeding his involuntary inquiry, the prince proceeded thus in the same strain of indignant apostrophe—

"Thou hadst a mother once—thou shouldst have had—"

"Dost doubt, Pelayo? Beware that thou sayst nothing unjustly—she was thy father's mother, my son, no less than mine."

"Ay, ay! I hear thee; yet, if thou hadst, my Lord Oppas, and if she were not dishonest to thy father, and sinful ere thy birth, her curse is on thee for thy damnable thought to this poor maiden. She will come to thee at midnight and will affright thee, not less with her presence than with the hell which she will promise thee for the foul practice which thou meditatest against a weak creature of her sex. Thou toilest madly for such doom, my Lord Oppas, and I bid thee, churchman as thou art, beware of it. How should thy cross protect thee in the perilous moment, when thou hast not suffered its presence to protect the frail maiden who wears it? How should thy prayer avail thee before Heaven, when thou hast taught the monster the hiding-place of his victim, and counselled him to be deaf to all her prayers? Thy thought is damnable, my Lord Oppas, and I pray thee vex not my ears by more speech upon it."

"Thou art harsh in thine, Pelayo," said the archbishop, half stunned by the vehemence of his nephew. The latter instantly continued:

"I could be, my Lord Oppas, if my feeling, and not my lips, had language. Words are frigid and feeble to the indignation in my soul. No—thou shouldst know—thou, whose duty it is that virtue and not vice should have spread among mankind—that I am not harsh in my present speech; not half so harsh as thy cruel purpose should deserve. Once more, then, I pray that God may help thee to a heart. Thou needst some better teaching than thy head affords thee. Nothing of

this scheme of thine shall my hand grapple. Our cause is too true to suffer me to give it up to shame, and stain it, through hope of human and temporary aid, by such polluted purpose. Rather than this, let the crown of Spain settle for ever upon the head of the usurper; let Egiza forget his name and his duties; let my father's ghost—his bloody murder unavenged—go howling to the furies; and let Pelayo live on with his present sleepless discontent of soul—impatient, yet hopeless—clamouring, yet achieving nothing, to the end. I'll none of thy scheme, my Lord Oppas."

The young prince was not to be misunderstood. There had been no hesitancy in his reply, no doubt, no pause, leaving it still a hope with the archbishop that he might be won by plausible argument to the adoption of the foul plan which the latter had meditated. The direct mind despises all insinuation, and pierces with a single glance to the core of its subject. Had Pelayo suffered argument from the archbishop, he had probably yielded. It was now left for the latter to do so.

"As you deem wisest, Pelayo. It is for Egiza and yourself to resolve upon your plans of action. I do but counsel."

"Sad counsel, uncle," was the prompt reply, "and thou wilt be wise to drive its recollection from thy thought, as I would fain drive it for ever from mine. Its very consideration taints, as we do soil ourselves even when we spurn the vile, and trample upon the unworthy, object. Let us look to means not less noble than the end which prompts them. It may be that we must move secretly. That I love not! I would that we could move boldly, and challenge daylight and the eyes of men for our actions; but, if we may not, secresy, though it may help the work of crime among the pliant and the weak, is not crime itself. It shall be my care that it becomes not so in our progress. My purpose still remains. To-morrow will I seek Egiza, and chide

his misdoings, implore him to his duties, obey him as truly as a subject should, if he will keep his pledges and share the perils to which he has brought our friends; and if he will not—if he denies me, and seeks again to make me his creature with our men—speaking promises through my lips, which he has made false in the moment of their utterance, as he has done already—if he does this, I say, uncle! but no! he will not—I think he will not—he dare not—he dare not."

"But should he, Pelayo?" was the suggestion of the archbishop, who, knowing the temper of Pelayo, spoke with no little anxiety.

"I have said!" was the prompt reply. "Then will I slay him, my lord bishop, though he prayed with a tongue which proved him at every syllable to be the firstborn of our father. I will slay him as a dog that wears a badge he dares not fight for."

"Be not so rash, Pelayo."

"I've sworn it—'tis an oath in Heaven, uncle, and I will keep it."

"A rash oath, Pelayo."

"Rash or reasonable, uncle, I care not. Living or dead, I tell thee, he goes with me to counsel with our men, as he pledged them through me, and as I have pledged them for myself. I leave thee now, uncle—yet, a word—a prayer—before I go. No more of that dark scheme, that foul thought touching the silly maiden. Set not the foul lust of Roderick to spoil her innocence. Rather let us lose all that we love, and all that we would live for—my brother's strength, his honour, his kingdom—than do aught shall make these things less worthy in our hearts. Spare the poor maiden—God forgive thee the thought—the thought, no less foolish than foul, which thou didst breathe to me, I trust, with little thought. He should howl in fearfullest doom that toils in such practice; and little good can ever befall the throne built up upon the ruins of innocence."

"Whither goest thou now?" demanded Oppas, whose lips shrank from all speech on the guilty subject of his thoughts.

"To seek Suintilla," replied Pelayo, naming one of the best warriors of his faction. "He, with other nobles, await me at the Gate of the Tribune. I must meet them ere the falling of the sun."

"Dost thou not risk much, Pelayo, by such meeting?" was the question of the archbishop. "The Gate of the Tribune is a thoroughfare, and thou art known to many in Cordova."

"I risk not more than they whom I am pledged to meet; I must not shrink to keep my pledges when my brother proves himself so heedless of his. Whatever be the risk, I cannot heed it. I must teach them a better thought in his behalf than they hold of him now. His late default hath roused them, and justly, unto anger. When I have appeased them, I will seek him. I will arouse him to his duties, or thrust him out of the way, which he does but choke."

"It must be as thou sayst, my son, and yet, let me pray thee to be patient."

"Ha! the old strain, uncle—I wonder thou hast kept from it so long. Thou hast taught me that song of patience until I have it in memory, if not by heart. I con it without a consciousness, and think some day to have it sung. Wouldst thou could teach it to Roderick, uncle; it would better serve us if he should practice it."

Thus, with a playful scorn of the favourite counsel which it had been the practice of the archbishop to bestow upon the youths, Pelayo took his departure, leaving him to meditate upon the interview—a task which yielded him but little real satisfaction.

"I will teach him a better song, Pelayo, spite of thy silly scruples," were the muttered words of the archbishop after the departure of the youth; "I will not

bind myself to the silence thou wouldst impose, when so much may be secured for our cause by a breath. I will speed the letter to Roderick: he shall know wherefore Julian keeps from the court. He shall hear of the loveliness of Cava. I will set his lustful soul on fire by the praises of her beauty, and nothing question of the coil which is to follow; a happy coil for us, since it must break the ranks of the usurper, and force Julian into ours."

Thus saying, Oppas retired to a secret chamber to prepare the cruel scheme which his dark policy and vicious soul had engendered for the destruction of the innocent and unconscious maiden who had enslaved the young Prince Egiza. Pelayo, on the contrary, with a better purpose, though with the same great end in view, —the overthrow of the usurper Roderick—proceeded to seek the conspirators, many of whom were chafed at the seeming indifference manifested by the elder of the two princes. Throughout the day, and not unsuccessfully, did he toil with this object. He soothed, entreated, argued, and reassured, by turns, the doubtful, the suspicious, and the timid. To one he painted the triumphs of successful strife, to another the security which would follow in the elevation of a just monarch to the throne. Some he stimulated by the love of glory, others by the thirst for gain. To each he brought an argument of strength, and, with all his earnestness, spoke for his sincerity while securing theirs. It was only when the exhaustion of his frame rendered it scarcely possible for him to labour longer and to live, that he retired to an obscure dwelling, which he had chosen for his temporary abiding-place in the city's suburbs, to snatch from care and exercise a few brief hours of refreshing slumber.

XIV.

Let us now return to Amri, the son of Adoniakim. We have seen his anxiety to remain in the dwelling of Melchior, accompanied only by Thyrza, during the conference of her father with his. As yet, she was only supposed to be known to him as a boy. But Melchior's suspicions had been much aroused by the pertinacity of the youth, and hence, in part, his inflexible opposition to his wish of remaining. Hurried away from the place of retreat to which the aged man had retired under the hot pursuit urged by his enemies, Amri had sought the dwelling of his father with a mind breathing nothing but vengeance upon Melchior, yet full of a wild passion for his daughter. Accustomed to the full indulgence of his desires, he could ill bear restraint or opposition; and the necessity of concealing so much while in Melchior's presence, and of subduing for the present a temper so irascible and so little subject to control, aroused him, when alone, to a degree of excitement and irritation little short of absolute fury. He resolved upon the possession of Thyrza, and meditated, if he did not resolve, upon the sacrifice of her father. The sympathies of kindred alone restrained the activity of his thoughts and feelings in reference to the latter subject; but these sympathies grew fewer and weaker in due proportion to the increase of that lust for the maiden, which he felt persuaded he could not so readily satisfy while the father lived. To this matter he gave all his thoughts, so far as one might do so who was the creature of changing impulses, and who seldom referred to a deliberative reason the regulation of a most imperious will.

Before he came to any conclusion on this matter, he felt that it was necessary to see the Gothic noble, whose

successless pursuit of the night he felt sure must greatly annoy and irritate him. It was necessary that he should seek him out soon and account for his failure. This was no difficult task to one so habitually cunning, and so versed in all the arts of deception, as Amri. He knew the fierce but obtuse nature of the Goth, and as he had done frequently before, he did not despair of being able again readily to deceive him. Taking due care to carry with him a well-filled purse which his father had previously given him, and which he well knew would satisfy, for the time, the rapacity of one even more avaricious and vicious than Edacer, he hurried away to the dwelling of the latter, preparing, as he proceeded, the fabrication which was to account for the failure of his purposes.

XV.

The fierce noble gave him but little time to deliberate after his arrival. His lodgings were in confusion. The half-drunken soldiers whom he had employed were yet clamorous around him for their promised pay, which he could not so easily provide; when the presence of Amri, if it did not at once relieve him from this difficulty, furnished him, at least, with a victim upon whom to vent his indignation.

"Dog of a Jew!" he cried, as the youth appeared before him; "dog of a Jew, am I thy sport—thy plaything? Dost thou think to serve me at thy pleasure—to lead me into the haunts of thy accursed tribe on a profitless quest for that which it holds not? Speak! ere I bid the spears of these men search thy bosom for their prey. They shall have it freely an they find it there!"

He grappled the throat of the Jew with a grasp of iron as he spoke these words. But Amri was nothing

dismayed. He well knew where the power lay to manage his superior.

"My lord—" He began to speak when Edacer interrupted him.

"Hast thou money? I ask not for thy words yet! Thy gold—the men must be paid. I have none."

"I have but little, my lord, and—"

"Give it, and think not long, whatever thou dost; for it is easier with these spears to search to thy very heart for thy wealth, than to wait for thy slow hands to pluck it forth from thy vestments!"

"It is here; thou hast all."

The Jew gave forth his purse freely, since he well knew that it was idle to oppose a demand made in a form so unequivocal. But he had previously abducted from the purse a goodly portion of the precious pieces, which he had elsewhere hidden about him. With these the Goth paid his retainers, whom he at once dismissed from his presence, but he bade them keep at hand in the event of other employment. When they had gone he again addressed Amri in the wonted language of extortion.

"Thou seest! All that I got from thee have I given among them. Not a piece remains."

"Truly thou hast paid them freely, my lord, seeing that they have done thee but little service," responded Amri.

"And have I let thee to my company, Jew,—and held thee fit for my friends, in their moments of mirth and freedom, to be requited after this fashion. Shalt thou pay nothing for this privilege?"

"Do I not pay? Have I not paid, even now, my lord?"

"Hast thou not seen? Have I thy moneys? Thou hast paid but the base agents of thy own scheme, which yet has failed us. For that thou shalt answer. Wherefore is it so? Wherefore hast thou led me into the

vile quarter where thy tribe harbours—amid its sinks and filthy corners—in an idle search after that which it holds not? Am I thy thing of sport?—the instrument from which thy base fingers shall bring forth whatever sound shall offer to thy mood? Answer me! for I meditate for thee a shrewd penalty unless thou showest me wherefore thou hast done this."

"I told thee truth, my lord."

"Thou liest!—I sought the Quarter of the Jew—I sought the dwelling of Namur of the Porch. I searched it narrowly, both high and low. Melchior was not there—nor had he been,—else how should he have escaped?"

"He was there, my lord. He had been. It was thy own fault and my misfortune that thou foundest him not. He heard of thy approach."

"Traitor! By thee—"

The Jew started. The reply of the Goth, uttered at random, and without a purpose, save that of anger on his part, had touched truly. But he recovered himself instantly, and replied—

"No! by the creatures thou didst have with thee."

"What creatures, Jew?"

"The drunken Lord Astigia!" was the bold reply. "He it was that defeated thy pursuit. He it was,—and those with him,—that forced Melchior to escape. What! shall the hunter clamour aloud to warn the game he seeks? Shall he who seeks the conspirator, in his place of watch and hiding, bid the trumpets bray to make his coming known? Yet such was the clamour of Astigia, as he came upon the Hebrew Quarter."

"How knowest thou?—wast thou nigh?" demanded the Goth.

"Not I. But from one who saw it all I heard it truly. The Lord Astigia grew drunken, and then furious, and fought with thee. This was the story brought me."

"He did—'tis true," was the reply.

"He clamoured much, and all the quarter was aroused to hear his howlings, and the clash of swords in fierce strife even came to my ears that were distant. But I thought not that it came from thee. I thought not that thou wouldst go on a quest so secret and so full of trial with a besotted train who must defeat thee."

"Thou art right, Jew; though thy speech does not beseem thy lips to speak, nor my ears to hear—thou art right nevertheless. Astigia did as thou sayest, though I thought not that his clamour had reached the Jewish Quarter. Indeed, I think not so now. How knowest it?"

"Thinkest thou a hunted man, like Melchior of the Desert, will adventure himself among his enemies keeping no watch? His friends are all about him, and they heed the public ways. The quick ears that heard the clamour ere thou reachedst the quarter, had ready feet that soon bore their intelligence."

"'Tis like," said the Goth.

"'Tis certain," boldly pursued the Hebrew; "'tis certain. Had he not been so warned thou hadst entrapped him, even in the dwelling of Namur."

"We must do it yet. The prize is great. Thou must search out his hiding-place again, Amri,—we must share the treasure."

"Shall I?" responded the Hebrew, assuming an expression of sullenness as he spoke; "shall I pursue again—find where the game sleeps, to have the hunter lose him?"

"It shall not be again, Amri," replied the Goth, in gentler language.

The Hebrew continued in the same strain.

"Then, if it fail through the mischance of others, shall I have the lifted spear to my breast, and a fierce threat, and a foul oath of scorn in my ears, until I give money? Such is the share of Amri."

"It shall not hap again," said the other, soothingly; for without the aid of the Hebrew he felt that he could do nothing. "Thou hast had wrong, Amri,—thou shalt have justice. Seek out the man again—find where he lies, then come to me. The reward will then be ours, and then thou shalt have a goodly part of it."

The Hebrew promised, and was about to go, but Edacer detained him.

"Thy purse was but scantily filled. I must have more. Thou hast it—thou must give it!"

"Thou wilt take all I have," gloomily answered the youth.

"What! dost thou murmur? Have I not made thee free with the Lady Urraca?—does she not love thee, and let thee to her affections?"

"For money! She hath an affection for gold, my lord, like all thy nobles."

"Well—what of that? Thou hast her."

"'Tis true," said the Hebrew, giving up his money, even to the last piece, to the unglutted noble.

"'Tis true," he muttered to himself on leaving him, "I have Urraca—a Gothic dame, not too noble to sell herself to the Jew she despises for the gold he brings. I have her—but I hate her. I have been her slave—I will be so no longer. The loveliness of Thyrza has freed me from that bondage. I loathe the very thought of Urraca when I think of the loveliness of the child of Melchior."

And he hurried away, as he mused thus, with more rapidity to the dwelling of his father. His aim was now once more to gain access to the abode and presence of the damsel.

XVI.

When he reached the dwelling of Adoniakim, he was told by the porter, who was in his pay, that Melchior was even at that moment in the private apartment of his father. The design of his mind was strengthened by this intelligence. His decision was immediate; and he was only too ready to put his plan in execution to scruple at the impropriety or the difficulties which were yet before him.

"Bring me another garment—a disguise, which shall conceal me quite," he said, to a favourite attendant. In a few moments he had altered his whole appearance. He then sallied forth without seeking his father or Melchior, or suffering them to know that he was at hand. His thought was full only of the image of the lovely Thyrza. The warm fancy had superseded every thing in his mind, unless it breathed of her.

"She is in the dwelling of Barzelius. 'Twas thence my father came at morning. He thought to have deceived me—the old fool! He little knows how close a watch I keep on all his movements."

He hurried on through the deepest haunts of the Hebrew Quarter, till he came near the dwelling of Barzelius. He then paused, and arranged his farther progress in his mind before proceeding upon it. He anticipated some difficulty in entering the dwelling in which Melchior had taken up his retreat, but trusted to his own ingenuity to carry him through successfully. Nor did he rely too much upon himself. He succeeded, after some effort, in procuring admission, and his way now lay through certain intricate chambers of the dwelling; though he was bewildered, and knew not in what direction to turn in order to find the apartment of her he sought. While he paused, the sound of a sweet voice, linking itself

naturally with the rich tones of the harp, came suddenly upon his senses, sweet, soft, and delicious, as an evening zephyr floating through the precious gardens of Yemen, bringing music to their flowers, and taking in return their tribute of perfume. The strain ravished his senses, and he lingered on the spot where he first heard it, even to its conclusion. The words were sweet to his ears, though the sense seemed singular and foreign—because he knew not yet of the native hopelessness of the true love, and he could conceive of no reason why Thyrza should repine and doubt. The song was evidently hers—who else, that he knew, could make so sweet a harmony?

THYRZA'S SONG.

I.

If thou wert in the desert, oh, my heart,
Watching its stars, and watching them alone,
Thou wert far happier than even now thou art,
Watching but one!

II.

What though it be the loveliest to thine eye,
The desert yields to thee a better sign,
Since, of its millions shining in the sky,
One must be thine!

III.

Yet 'tis not less thy joy and happiness,
Hopeless, to watch that single glory on,
Without one cloud to make its lustre less—
Till life be gone!

IV.

Let the life go—be the poor heart denied,
An humble, hopleess worshipper afar—
'Tis still a joy that love has deified
So pure a star!

XVII.

THE air seemed to be charmed at the close of the song, and the feet of Amri were fastened where he stood. Was it fancy that made him think that a breathing sound in the air around him was the renewed respiration of spirit forms, that had heretofore been listening? His own breathing was still suppressed. But he heard a movement below, and he went forward. The song had guided him in the direction he should take. He reached a little gallery that overlooked a small but richly-decorated apartment. He gazed wistfully down upon it. Thyrza knelt—her arm clasping the harp, while her head was bent down, and resting upon the golden image which crowned the instrument. One hand hung at her side, while her long black hair, which had become unfastened, now fell loosely, and mingled in lovely contrast with the bright strings, which it equalled in length. She looked up as she heard him, and he saw that the dark eyes of the maiden glistened with their tears. But the sentiment of her face was so holy—so subdued—so like that of one crowned with the joys and filled with the spirit of heaven, that the intruder was awed while he surveyed her. She knew him not in his disguise, and for the first time, for many years, he beheld her in her woman vestments.

"Who art thou?—what wouldst thou?" she demanded hurriedly, as she beheld him.

"What! thou knowest me not, Thyrza?" he exclaimed, forgetting his disguise.

"How should I know thee?" she replied. "Tell me thy name, stranger, for I remember not to have seen thee before."

He leaped boldly down into the chamber, and threw aside the garment which disguised him.

"Amri!" she exclaimed, with astonishment, as she looked upon him.

"The same, sweet Thyrza—the same. Amri, the son of Adoniakim—thy father's friend, and thine."

"Does my father know of thy coming here, Amri?" she demanded.

"He does not," was the answer.

"And wherefore hast thou come?" she asked.

"Wherefore not?" he replied. "I came to see thee—to hear thee—to look upon thy loveliness—to know thee well—and, if thou wilt, sweetest Thyrza, to love thee."

"Leave me, Amri," was the calm response of the maiden. "Leave me! Thou hast done wrong in coming hither without the presence or the permission of Melchior. I fear me that he will chide."

"The fault is mine, dear Thyrza—he cannot complain of thee."

"I should be guilty of thy fault too, Amri, if I did not urge thee to depart," replied the maiden, with some show of annoyance in her manner, but still with a degree of calmness and decision which altogether surprised the intruder.

"Nay," he replied, "I have but seen thee, beautiful Thyrza—I would know thee—I would have thee know me."

"I do know thee, Amri," was the quiet answer—and she seemed unconscious of the sarcasm of her speech, though Amri was not.

"Thou dost not—thou canst not know me, Thyrza. Thou hast heard of me from those only who know me not, or speak falsely of their knowledge. Thou shalt know me better. I would have thee know me, Thyrza, as I know thee."

She looked at him with inquiring eyes, but spoke nothing. He continued—

"I know thee to love thee, Thyrza—I would have

thee know me until thou hast learned to love me in return."

"Love thee!" she exclaimed, sadly, and her eyes, still tearful, looked upward, as if seeking the glance of that one single star, for worship, of which her song had spoken.

"Yes, love me, Thyrza—canst thou not, dearest Thyrza? Believe me when I tell thee that I love thee much."

"Speak not thus, Amri, I pray thee. Leave me now. My father will chide that thou art here."

"Wilt thou not answer me, Thyrza? Speak to my prayer. I came to thee for this. Thou hast won my heart till it hath no self-mastery, and it comes to thee in devotion, and it seeks for thee in hope. Tell me, then, dearest Thyrza, that thou holdest me not in scorn."

"I do not hold thee in scorn, Amri," said the maiden, meekly.

"Tell me, then, that thou wilt love me—that thou wilt strive to love me;—that I may hope for thy heart in season."

"I cannot—I dare not, Amri. I should speak falsely to thee if I did so."

"Now, out upon thy cruelty," exclaimed the passionate youth; "thou hast but seen me, yet thou tellest me thou canst not love."

"Be not angry with me, Amri," said the maiden, gently; "be not angry with me, I pray thee, that I tell thee so. But it is truth—I cannot give thee such hope as thou desirest."

"Thou lovest another," he furiously spoke.

She did not reply; but her lip quivered, and the tear rose, like a brilliant jewel, upon her long lashes. He repeated the words. She raised her head and looked steadfastly upon him ere she replied. When she did so, he remarked that the tones of her voice were no longer

tremulous, and he thought that they were now rather stern than sad.

"Wilt thou not leave me, Amri, when I pray thee?"

"And why dost thou pray me to leave thee, when I have but a moment come? Dost thou hate me, Thyrza?"

"It is not for me to hate; I hate thee not."

"Thou wilt love me, then?—thou wilt strive to love me?"

"Leave me, Amri."

"Not till thou hast promised."

"Thou dost wrong,—and my father will chide when he cometh."

She spoke so gently that her manner deceived the youth, whose eyes had seldom seen resolution expressed except when associated with stern words and every show of violence.

"I will leave thee if thou sayest it; but first, dearest Thyrza—"

He paused in his speech and approached her. She retreated a pace.

"Fly me not, lovely Thyrza; but, as a sign that thou wilt strive to love me,—as a promise which shall give me to hope, let my lips—"

"Away—touch me not, Amri," and her eye kindled, and her hand was uplifted as he advanced.

"But one embrace—one kiss, sweet Thyrza."

"Leave me, sir, I command you."

But Amri was not accustomed to be controlled or commanded when no power stronger than that of a gentle woman stood in opposition to his will. Blunt in his own sensibilities, and with appetites that defeated his finer feelings, he regarded her objections as those only of form and artifice. He continued to advance, therefore, and she to retreat, until farther retreat was impossible. She leaned against the wall of the apartment, and bade him desist. He heeded her not, and his arms

were stretched forth to embrace her, when her own arm was uplifted. He started back when he beheld, glittering in her hand, the poniard which she always wore.

"Go!" she exclaimed; "leave me—thou hast done wrong, and I will tell my father all of thy intrusion when he returns. Thou wilt do well not to see him, for he is quick to strike when there is a wrong purposed to his child. I would not that he should harm thee, Amri, and I pray thee to keep from his presence."

The base soul of the youth cowered before the majestic person of the maiden. Her eye was fixed upon him in the unmoved calmness of a conscious and fearless superiority. She kept her position, and, with the point of the lifted dagger, she indicated the entrance to the chamber. Ashamed and shrinking, he obeyed its direction and left the apartment. The maiden remained alone. When he had gone she fastened the door carefully, and restored the poniard to the sheath at her side. But it was long before her limbs resumed their firmness, though they trembled not, in the slightest degree, while Amri stood before her. When Melchior returned, she communicated to him the particulars of the interview which she had had with the intruder, though she dwelt not harshly upon the more unfavourable features of his behaviour. Melchior heard her with grief and annoyance, but he approved of her conduct.

"Thou art like thy mother, my child,—thou art sweet and true. Thou hast done rightly—thou art not in fault. But this boy—unhappy Adoniakim! what a curse thou hast made of a blessing sent thee from God. Much I fear me this boy will work thee the bitterest sorrow. We must strive, my Thyrza, that we are not made to partake of it."

"Shall I bring thee wine, my father?—thy cheek is pale with thy toils of the morning—"

"A cup, my child, and then get thee to thy harp. I would forget—I would remember. Give me an old

memory—a lay of the desert—that, in looking back, I may not see the gloom and the trial which are before me."

"The Hymn to the Departed, dear father,—shall I sing thee that?"

"It is solemn,—it is sweet,—it looks to the past and to the future,—it may well hide the present from my sight. Sing, Thyrza, as thou sayest."

THE HYMN TO THE DEPARTED.

I.

Oh! ever thus, in earnest prayer,
My spirit claims and clings to thine,
And longs to fly and seek thee, where
All things, for ever blessed, shine,
All being—not less than thee—divine;
And, in the silent hours, I pray
The Huma's sweeping wing were mine,
That I might soar and be away.

II.

And in that high and bright abode,
Where, in eternal anthems dressed,
The prayers of millions seek their God,
For ever blessing, ever blessed,—
I know thy song above the rest;
The purest strain of music, where
Eternal gladness is the guest,
And love's own spirit speaks in prayer.

III.

The heavy earth is on my wing,
And human fears and pains are mine;
Panting, I seek the gushing spring,
Its waters teem, and taste of brine.
Oh! for one genial draught from thine—
Thy quiet home, those blessed airs,
Enough for love, nor less divine,
Though full of dreams, that move our tears.

How holy were both hearts when Thyrza had finished this hymn! How upward-looking their eyes! How upward-lifted their souls! Though the thought of Melchior was of war—yet it was a war for the people

and the God of his love; and if, in the heart of Thyrza, a more earthly flame and feeling had a home, it was sublimed by a sweet unselfishness, which would not have been unwilling, if, like the daughter of Jephthah, the God of her worship or the father of her love had required it, to offer herself up in sacrifice for the cause and at the requisition of either.

XVIII.

But Amri was not to be baffled. He had set his thought upon the possession of Thyrza; and, with that persevering fixedness of purpose which, in a good pursuit, would command circumstances and achieve greatness, he concentrated all the forces of his mind upon the attainment of an evil object. He saw all the difficulties before him at a glance, and he felt that his entire prospect of success must lie in his perpetual watch over the movements of Melchior. Without a knowledge of these movements, he could hope for none of the opportunities which he desired with the daughter. He mused his plan aloud in his chamber.

"Melchior will change his abode after this. By night he will be gone. His steps must be regarded closely. What then? Shall I deliver him yet to Edacer? Why should I keep terms with him? True, he is of my tribe, but he regards me not as one of it. He doubts my faith,—he distrusts my honour,—there need be no terms between us."

An agent, whom he had called, now entered the apartment. Mahlon was a creature in his pay, and partially in his confidence.

"Mahlon, hast thou prepared thyself as I bade thee?" was the question of Amri.

"The habit is ready, Amri; and I can now conceal

myself within it so that Adoniakim himself could not distinguish me, even if I stood before him."

"It is well. Go then, as I bade thee, and watch the dwelling of Barzelius in front. Barzai keeps watch upon the inner court. Watch closely when Melchior comes forth, and the page—do not fail to note if the page goes with him;—follow them so that they escape not an instant from thine eyes, then come to me, to the dwelling of the Lord Edacer, and report to me the truth. Away!"

The spy departed, and the youth resumed his musings aloud.

"I owe him no love—nothing but hate; and, though of my own tribe, wherefore should I be held by that to keep from destruction one who hates and distrusts me? He shall perish! Melchior shall perish for his scorn of me!"

He paused, and strode his chamber as if in troubled thought. He spoke again after a slight interval.

"Yet his sacrifice brings me no step nearer to her, unless by taking from her one protector. That is nothing, unless, in the same moment which gives him to the soldiers of Edacer, I can secure her person. I must think on that. There would be no hope to win her by persuasion, if she dreamed that I had part in the sacrifice of her father. I must keep her from that knowledge—from that thought."

This latter suggestion, as it exhibited a new form of difficulty in his progress, produced a farther pause in his speech, which he gave up to meditation. The result of his deliberation was soon shown in his uttered musings. He resolved that Melchior should not yet be given up to the fierce Edacer. It would be time enough, he thought, for his sacrifice, which he yet resolved upon, when he should either have entirely succeeded with Thyrza, or when he had discovered that success with her, during her father's life, would be hopeless. His

plans were soon fixed and finished in his mind; and, towards evening, he proceeded to the lodgings of the dissolute Edacer.

XIX.

MEANWHILE, as Amri predicted, Melchior had resolved on changing his habitation. Such were the toils and trials, the dangers and necessities, to which the persecuted have been ever subject.

"We must leave this place," said the old man to his daughter, as the declining sunset warned him of the approaching season of shelter and cover to the hunted man. "We must now to the last place of retreat secure to us in this weary city—the house of thy kinsman Samuel. Thither with the sunset will I go, while thou shalt seek for me the young Prince Pelayo."

"Where seek him, father? Thou knowest that he hast left the—"

"Yes; but thou wilt seek him at the Gate of the Tribune—thou knowest the place?"

"I do, my father."

"Bear him this packet, then. Let no one behold thee give it him. It were dangerous. But watch thy time to call upon his ear. There will be some who are to meet him there; let them not see thee look on them. Pass them by as if thou didst not heed them—as if thou sawest them not. When they have left the prince, then make the sign—he will come to thee. Give him the packet then, and heed well the words that he shall say to thee. They will have meaning. Forget not aught, my child, that his lip tells thee."

"Fear me not, father,—I will heed closely,—I will forget nothing."

Well and securely might she give such an assurance. The smallest accents from Pelayo's lips,—the slightest

movement of his form,—the most passing glance of his eye,—or the most transient play of expression upon his noble countenance, once perceptible to her, became from that moment a strong memory in her mind, and an imbedded and growing feeling in her soul. The warning of Melchior for her observance was indeed idle.

XX.

Amri proceeded to the dwelling of Edacer according to previous appointment. It was now almost night, and Edacer had gone forth from his lodgings. A slave directed Amri where to find him, having a command from his master to that effect. Edacer had gone to visit the Lady Urraca;—a lady of evil repute, and of whom we have already spoken. Amri was, or rather had been, attached to her, and even now there was some show of regard between them. Of this we shall see more. She was a lady of the Gothic stock: and, though vicious, such was the degraded character of the Jew, that it had been a condescension with her to smile upon Amri, and a favour bestowed by Edacer to procure him her knowledge. The gold of Adoniakim procured indulgences for the Jewish youth from the prostitute of a race which considered him, even while bestowing upon him the utmost favours of a seeming affection, degraded even below humanity, and sometimes treated him accordingly.

Amri received the message with some chagrin.

"Now would I not see her!" he muttered to himself; "I hate her now as once—Psha! she loves me not,—it is but a stale fetch,—the trick of the trade;—love, indeed! To think of love with her,—to think I should once have been so foolish—so blinded—so besotted—as to fall into her bonds,—and such accursed bonds. But I must meet her,—I must seem to meet her joyfully, too, as if I did not hate, and fear her, and despise."

He left the dwelling of Edacer, and moved onward to that of Urraca; but his thoughts were bitter in the extreme as he proceeded.

"Now will they clamour for the Jew's money,—the eternal cry! And I must bear abuse and every scorn meekly, as if I found some pleasure in it. Would I were free of her. I fear her now. She doth suspect my coldness. She has doubts. I must seem fond, for she is passionate. She would not scruple at my blood, if she but thought that I strayed from her."

Soliloquizing thus, he entered the dwelling of the Lady Urraca. A richly-decorated chamber received him, at the farthest end of which a pile of cushions sustained the majestic and symmetrical person of this princely dame. She wore her most imposing look and expression of loveliness. Her whole figure was one to fix the eye—splendidly formed, yet exquisitely and nicely elaborated. Her skin was darker than that of the Gothic damsels usually, and a bright Moorish teint might almost have persuaded the spectator to conceive her a daughter of that nation. Her eye was black, and suited to her complexion, while her hair, streaming in rich volumes of flowing silk down her neck and shoulders, was raven-like and glossy. Her glance was bright and piercing, like that of a young eagle for the first time challenging the sun; and, at the first view, none might seem to be more innocent, as certainly none could have been more beautiful, than the Lady Urraca. A second look, however, would better advise the observer. Quick passions, sudden moods, impetuous emotions, irresistible impulses, were momently shown to be in her heart, by the changing colour on her cheeks, by the violent and rapid rush of blood through her veins, by the flickering and uncertain expression of her keen and restless eyes. Her brow, too, was full of action, and therefore of speech. It had a power of contraction which threw together a series of muscular folds just between the eyes, when-

ever she became excited, which formed a complete cloud above them, while they darted forth perpetual lightning from below. This cloud was partially formed upon her brow as the young Hebrew came into her presence. She motioned him with her finger, and he approached. Edacer sat upon a low cushion by her side. To Amri she assigned one at her feet. When he had seated himself, without addressing him with any word, the dame turned to Edacer and thus spoke:

"My lord Edacer, think you that I am less beautiful to-night than I was last night, or the night before—or the past nights for a goodly and long year? Speak, I pray thee,—have I grown ugly in this time?"

"Truly, Urraca, I were a false lord to think so. Thou hast lost no beauties, but hast rather acquired many. I see thee not, but to see in thee each day some newer loveliness—some better sweetness—some dearer and more exquisite charm."

"Mine eyes are yet bright, my lips sweet, my person has lost nothing, dost thou say?"

"Nothing!—to me, if thou hast changed in any wise, it has been a better change, if it be that one so lovely as thyself may change to lovelier and yet continue mortal."

"And there is no other beauty to vie and mate with mine, newly come into the city?"

"None—none!" was the still flattering answer.

"Then wherefore is it, I ask thee, that Amri seeks me not of late? He has beheld the change which has escaped thine eyes, Lord Edacer—he has noted the absence of some charm which won him once—or else he hath seen the newly-arrived beauty, which thy glances have not yet distinguished." And, as the vain lady spoke, with a mixed expression of pride and vexation, she fixed her keen eyes upon the changing features of Amri. The Hebrew started; he trembled for his secret, but a second glance at Urraca reassured him. He saw

from the fickle gaze that her charge was vague and conjectural, and simply spoke for the natural jealousy of the woman, having no aim but for the devotion of her creatures, and apprehensive at all times of new and rival influences. Recovering himself, therefore, from the momentary confusion which his own consciousness rather than her charge of falsehood had induced, he replied promptly, and with as much show of earnestness and passion as he could well assume under the emergency,

"Thou dost me wrong, Lady Urraca—thou dost thine own beauty and surpassing excellence no less a wrong, when thou sayest I have not willed to seek thee of late. I have suffered that I have seen thee not. Thou canst not know the pain I have felt when away from thee."

"And wherefore didst thou keep away? Do I not know that thou hadst no occasion?"

"Ay, lady, but I had! The Lord Edacer will do me justice, and tell thee that we had a serious task together, which kept me from thee."

Edacer, thus appealed to, leaned over to where Amri sat, and whispered him,

"Hast thou brought the jewels—the gold?"

Amri whispered him in return,

"Thou wilt find the gold in the silk mantle which is behind thee."

"What say ye to each other?" demanded Urraca, impatiently.

"We spoke of that same business, Urraca, which hath kept Amri from thy presence;" and, while he spoke, the mercenary Edacer assured himself that the mantle and gold were behind him.

"Thou answerest for him, then?" she asked.

"I do—I know what cares have kept him from thee. He hath spoken but the truth, Urraca, and thou must forgive him."

"And for my forgiveness, fair Lady Urraca, I pray thee to wear this;" and, as he spoke, Amri arose, and

drawing from his vest a glittering ornament of precious gems, making a rich tiara, was about to place it upon her head, when, suddenly grasping his arm, she tore the jewels from his hand, and dashed them upon the floor.

"It buys no forgiveness from me, Amri! Thou knowest me not,—neither thou nor the Lord Edacer. Leave me, my lord, I pray thee, for a while. I would be alone with Amri. Leave me with him. I have that to say which is for his ears only. Go to the other chamber till I call."

In silence and astonishment the Gothic noble withdrew, leaving the no less astounded Hebrew with the now deeply-excited woman. But he preserved his composure, and prepared himself, as well as he might, for the anticipated outbreak.

XXI.

Rising quickly from her cushions after the departure of Edacer, she carefully fastened the door behind him. She then turned, and slowly approached her companion. He had risen, meanwhile, from the stool on which he had first been seated, and now stood in the centre of the apartment, awaiting her speech. She approached—she stood before him. Her eye was fixed upon him as if it would look him through, and the heavy muscular folds of her brow lay, one upon another, like piled clouds full of storm and thunder. Her finger was uplifted as she addressed him in low, half-suppressed tones.

"Thou art false to me, Amri!"

He was about to speak, but she interrupted him.

"Speak not! I know it—thou art false to me—thou canst not deceive me. I see through thee. I know thy heart."

"It is thine, Urraca."

"Thou liest! I am no longer sought of thee—thou

carest for me no longer—thou art indifferent to me now, and thy indifference is worse far than thy hate! Thou hast deceived me—thou, only, hast deceived me. I have trusted thee only."

"Thy words have a dread meaning in my ears, Urraca, and they do me a sad injustice! Tell me by what thou judgest so unkindly of thine own Amri."

She looked on him with scornful countenance as she replied—

"Thou seekest me not now,—thine eye no longer dwells upon me in fondness—and thou heedest not now that Edacer should be with me for long hours alone. Why is this now? Once it was not so. There was a time when thou wouldst chafe and madden, Amri, to find another with me in secret."

"It pains me now, dear Urraca."

"Dear me not, Amri—for again thou liest! Hear me. Once, when I did rebuke thee, thou cam'st to me with fond words and devoted looks—thou wert then all fondness—all devotion,—thy very heart seemed flowing like some full stream into my own, and thine eyes—they took their light, their very life, from mine! For this I loved thee, Amri. What else? Was't for thy gold, thy jewels, that I let thee—a Jew—one of a people whom my own hold accursed—was it for these that I let thee to my love?—I, the proud, the beautiful, the sought Urraca—the sought of nobles and of princes! Did thy gold tempt me to this kindness to thee? No! 'Twas that I thought thou lovedst me—'twas with that lie in thy mouth thou camest to me,—'twas for thy love, Amri—not for thy gold and gifts. Gold and gifts I had from mine own people in profusion—they bought my smiles with them—not my heart. I gave thee that,—not for such gifts as theirs, Amri, but for that which none of them could give me—for thy love!"

"Thou hadst it, sweet Urraca."

"Hadst it, dost thou say? Hadst it!" Her whole

frame was in convulsion, and she darted towards him.

"And hast it still, Urraca," he replied quickly, shrinking back at her approach.

"That I believe not. Thou canst not now deceive me. Thou art false—ay, false as hell, Amri!"

"Wherefore thinkest thou so?" he asked. "Who hath belied me to thee?"

"No one. Thou thyself hast told me. Hear me," she continued, impetuously; "when we met first, if then I chided thee for coldness or neglect, thou didst persuade me to believe thee then, with fond words—with constant devotion—with unwearied efforts to behold and seek me—"

"Do I not now?" he asked.

"No! thou dost not. Break not my speech till I have said it all. It is soon said. Now, when I chide thee for thy absence or indifference, thou strivest to bribe me with a pauper-boon. Thou bringest me gold and jewels. Need I these? Is not my state most rich? Have I not wealth and splendour? What are these chambers?—are they beggarly?—seem they not well provided? Thou givest me what I lack not—what I ask not—what I require not from thee. I would have thy love, which thou deniest me."

Her whole features seemed now to be convulsed—her breast heaved with passion—and Amri, who had all the time preserved his composure, perceived that the moment of exhaustion was at hand, and that tears must relieve the excited bosom of the voluptuous woman. He led her unresistingly once more to the cushions where she had lain, and seated himself beside her.

"Thou dost wrong me, Urraca—dear Urraca,—I take from thee no love,—thou hast it all."

"I should have it, Amri, but I believe not thy words." She turned from him and gazed upon the wall—her paroxysm seemed almost subdued.

"Thou must believe—thou hast my heart."

"I've let thee to my embraces," she spoke incoherently; "thy lip hath pressed my own—thou hast lain close to this heart, till thou hast known all its beatings—and I let thee to all this because I thought thou lovedst me."

Amri could not forbear a sarcasm, or something that sounded to her ears like one.

"But others fared as well, Urraca. Edacer—"

"No!" she exclaimed, almost fiercely, and the words of Amri seemed once more to arouse her fury in all its strength—"they bought my embraces with gold. But thou hadst more. I thought I had thy love, and, thinking so, I swear I gave thee mine. I joyed in thy embrace—theirs I but suffered. But no more of this. I feel thou lovest me not. Away!"

The tears now flowed freely from her eyes, and she sank back upon the cushions exhausted. He leaned over her, and employed those arts of soothing which he had previously practised with no little success, but which he had quite too much neglected of late, not properly to create in her bosom a doubt of his continued regard. He bent over her, and—first symptom of returning regard—she submitted for a moment to his attentions. But for a moment, however. She started in another instant from his contact—she thrust him from her with all her strength, and the sternest expression of her scorn.

"Take thy hands from my neck!" she cried, almost fiercely. "Thy embrace is like that of the serpent; it is to deceive and sting."

"Urraca!"

"Ay, Amri, it is spoken—it is true. Why should I—a Gothic lady—erring, but desired—sought by the proudest,—honoured, too, in spite of mine own life of dishonour,—why should I care for thee?"

"For my love, Urraca."

"Ay—but for that—for nothing else, I swear. And

wherefore should I value that from thee, but that I was destitute of all love? The nobles seeking me brought wealth; but none brought love. My poverty in that, and not thy worth, made me to seek thy love as something worthy; and thus I learned to love thee in return. Why should I else have suffered thee, thou so degraded in thy sect,—so much the slave even of the vile associates that thou bringest me here?"

"Art thou now done, Urraca? Wilt thou hear me?"

"Take off thy hands from my neck!" He obeyed her quietly, as he asked—

"May I speak to thee in answer?"

"Speak on, I hear thee,—but bend not over me."

"I've loved thee but too well, Urraca. I have forfeited much for thee:—the friendship of my people,—the affection of my father,—his esteem. Does the Jew love gold beyond life?—I've brought thee gold. Had I aught by which to show thee that I loved thee?—I brought thee all. Shall it be strange to thee that, when I beheld others winning thy favour by such gifts, I should bring thee like gifts to win like favour too? 'Twere strange if I had not done so."

"Accursed be thy gifts!—thy gold!—thy jewels! I ask them not. It was not gold from thee that I desired!"

"They were but gifts of my heart. I gave thee love."

"Thou sayest it."

"I mean it. But, when I suffered in the displeasure of my father,—the outcast from his favour,—could I be fond, Urraca? Could I come to thee, and look happy, and be devoted, an exile from the heart and the home of my sire?"

"Thou didst not tell me that. I knew not this."

"No, I did not deem it well to vex thee with my sorrows, and—"

Edacer came to the door at this moment, and de-

manded admission. When he entered he called Amri aside.

"Mahlon awaits thee,—he has tidings for thee,—something, I deem, of Melchior—though he speaks not."

XXII.

Amri descended at once to meet the spy.

"Well—hast thou seen aught, Mahlon?" he asked of the slave.

"They have gone forth, Amri—the old man and the page."

"Ha! on what course?"

"The old man to the house of the Father Samuel."

"And—the boy?"

"Him I followed close, even to the Gate of the Tribune—"

"And there—"

"My comrade Barzai still watches him there. He saunters by the gate."

"'Tis well,—thou shalt wait here to guide my steps. I'll be with thee again immediately."

He returned to the chamber where sat Edacer and Urraca.

"I must leave thee," were his brief words. "Pardon me, Lady Urraca, that I fly from thee so soon,—but the Lord Edacer will answer for me that I go on a most serious business."

"What business is't, Edacer?" demanded Urraca.

"Is't of Melchior?—hearest thou aught of him?" was the inquiry which Edacer proposed to Amri, as they stood apart.

"It is—Mahlon has tracked the page that waits on him. I must pursue and follow up the track. Bid thy two followers with me, Lord Edacer. They wear thy

badge,—none will dispute their progress,—and we shall get the page in custody. The game is then our own."

"Sayest thou? It shall be so. Go you below and tutor them a while. I'll speak to Urraca. She shall be satisfied."

They turned to the lady, and her glance was fixed upon the countenance of Amri.

"Must he go? And is it thy business, Edacer?" she demanded.

"It is, fair lady,—give him thy leave of absence. The toil is heavy,—'tis for me he toils—but he will soon return to thee."

"Amri," she simply spoke his name. He approached her. She whispered him,

"I will not take thy jewels. It would seem as if I sold to thee my love for them. Had I believed thee true, I would have worn them in pride and pleasure,—still misdoubting thee, I cannot take them. Give them elsewhere. I will not chide that thou shouldst thus requite some other for the love she gives to thee. My love thou buyest with love—or not at all! Give them to her!"

"There is no other, dearest Urraca."

"Well, as thou sayest it. Thou art free to go. But take the jewels hence."

XXIII.

When Amri had left the apartment, Edacer resumed his seat beside Urraca; and though he saw that her feelings were yet excited and her spirit greatly aroused, he did not scruple to ask an explanation of the scene which he had partially witnessed.

"What is there in these jewels, Urraca? Is there some spell of danger that made thee fear them? Why didst thou refuse them?"

"There was a spell, there was a danger in them, Edacer. Thou hast said it. But thou hast no fears such as mine. The spell will not harm thee. Do thou take them. There—they lie beside thee!"

"What! wilt thou not wear them?" he asked, in no little astonishment.

"Never! as I live. Take them,—they are thine."

"What is't with thee and Amri?"

"I'll tell thee some time hence; but answer me, what is this business of thine upon which he goes? Is it some coil of state, or some fool affray,—or goes he but to get moneys for thy pleasures? May I not hear it?"

"I cannot tell thee yet,—but thou wilt hear it if he prospers in it. Let it suffice, then, that 'tis something as thou sayest,—thou almost hittest it."

"How?—what?—speak on."

"'Tis business of the state he goes upon."

"Psha! thou dost mock,—thou mockest either him or me. He is a Hebrew! what has he to do with the state, or the state with him, unless to rob him?"

"I mock thee not—'tis strange, but true. On the state's business goes he."

"In what form?"

"He aims to trap a secret enemy, and leads two followers of mine for that object."

"An enemy—ah!—who—what enemy?"

"A page—he has a secret we would gain—a glorious secret, Urraca, which promises us a goodly sum of gold if we can win it. Let him but take the page, and force him to disgorge, and we are made."

"Well, it is strange—a page!"

Urraca seemed to muse, and a sudden change passed visibly over her features as she uttered the exclamation. They seemed full of strange conjecture and intelligence:

"A page, didst thou say, Edacer?"

The Goth answered her with some little surprise—

"Ay, to be sure,—a page—a boy—a brat—a little, long-legged, bashful thing—an urchin, sixteen years or so—not more."

"Intrusted with a secret of the state! Why, this is madness, if 't be true,—rank folly!"

"Why?—how, Urraca?"

"There's more in this, Edacer, than thou tellest me."

"No—as I live—no more—save in the secret, which now I cannot tell thee."

"But this page,—it cannot be a page that has this secret."

"He said a page,—I know not."

"And lacks he strength to take a page? Wherefore thy followers?"

"The boy may struggle—"

"I've been a page myself!" she exclaimed, interrupting him suddenly, though still without seeming to address him. "I'll be once more. Hear me, Edacer."

She beckoned him with her finger.

"It will nothing affect thy secret if I go and see this page. I'll go as one of thy followers,—wearing thy badge—"

"But—"

"Nay,—thou canst nothing plead in opposition. Thou canst trust me not less than they. I'll go as one of them."

"But the disguise—"

"Is ready—all. I should not have my freedom, but that I can wear all shapes that take my choice. I have a garb will suit me."

"And thou wilt—"

"Follow in Amri's steps as one of thine. Hear me: I do suspect him that he pursues another with the love which he has promised me."

"And what carest thou, Urraca, for his love? What is his love to thee?"

"Nothing—if love be only valued by the worth of him who gives it. Every thing—if she who claims it is in want of it—if she has none beside."

"But this is not thy state, Urraca."

"It is!—it is!" she exclaimed, mournfully, with a degree of feeling, which, before this, her own sense had never permitted her to expose to one so callous and coarse as Edacer.

"But, whether it is or not," she continued, "is nothing now. Go—teach thy followers to receive me as one of them. Get me a spear. Be sudden, and say nothing."

Edacer did as she required; and it was not long before Urraca, habited like a follower of the Gothic lord, proceeded, with another, after the direction and the lead of Amri, who was also disguised almost beyond detection.

XXIV.

At the Tribune's Gate, according to appointment, Pelayo, meanwhile, had met with many of the nobles of his party,—Goths and natives alike. The place was a thoroughfare; but Pelayo had designated it for the purposes of meeting, as he well knew that no privacy was so secret as that of the crowd, and no assemblage so little liable to suspicion. The plot was ripening fast. The money of the Hebrew had procured both arms and men, and every circumstance persuaded Pelayo the more to a rapid concentration of all his plans for the approaching moment of revolution. He knew the danger of a secret intrusted to so many, when the various parties were not kept frequently together. He knew the necessity of excitement—the excitement of

continued strife—to keep the mixed multitude as one. More than this, alarming intelligence had reached him of the suspicions of Don Roderick, the usurper, with regard to the conspiracy, and he had just received a missive from the Archbishop Oppas, advising him that he had been summoned by Roderick to attend a general council of the nation at the royal city of Toledo. Other accounts informed him that Count Julian had been ordered suddenly to proceed to his command at Ceuta, in order to oppose an unlooked-for irruption of the Moors. This movement would necessarily employ the army of Roderick in a remote quarter, leaving free room and a fine opportunity for the success of a sudden and strong blow, struck in the chief cities, by a simultaneous movement of the conspirators; who, meanwhile, had been briskly engaged in bringing their followers together, and, by means of the gold which they had freely distributed, had secured converts everywhere to their cause. All the arguments spoke for the propriety of an early effort, and the conspirators separated, leaving the Prince Pelayo, who remained in waiting for another agent of his cause. Nor did he wait long after their departure. The page of Melchior, true, and vigilant as true, approached him as soon as they were out of sight. Pelayo received his packet, and pressed the boy's hand while he took it.

"Thou art a noble servant to thy father, Lamech,—thou art a page among a thousand;—would that thou wert mine, Lamech. Wouldst thou be faithful to me, as thou art to him?"

"Faithful—faithful to thee, my lord?" was the stammering response of the messenger.

"Ay, faithful, Lamech. But I know thou wouldst. Thou wouldst love me as truly as thou lovest thy father, if thy lips would promise it."

"Love thee, my lord—"

"Ay, love me, Lamech. I love thee, boy, though

thou art not of my kin, and of another and a hated blood. Thou hast grown upon my love from thy good service and thy fidelity, and thy clear, true love for thy father."

The tears stole into the eyes of the page, but no word was uttered. Pelayo spoke to him of other topics.

"Tell thy father that thou hast seen me,—that the Lord Eudon has already brought his men together,—that the arms have been delivered to Aylor by the Hebrew warrior Abimelech, who has mustered a goodly troop along the Pass of Wallia. Say yet more, and forget not this, Lamech, that we hold to our purpose of assemblage at the Cave of Wamba. Melchior must be there, to speak after his own fashion to the Jews who will gather with us. His words are much to them. Hast thou heard me, Lamech?"

"I have, my lord."

"Thou wilt remember all that I have said to thee, so that Melchior will hear it as from my own lips?"

"He shall hear all, my lord."

"Then thou must go now, Lamech. The night grows, and thou hast a long path before thee. But thou fearest nothing, Lamech?"

"Nothing, my lord."

"Would thou wert son of mine, Lamech, Jew though thou art. Would thou wert son of mine. But go thy ways,—give me thy hand—"

The soft fingers trembled in the gentle grasp of the warrior—

"Go thy ways, and hurry fast to thy dwelling. These hands are not formed for strife, and would little avail thee if lifted against an enemy. Good-night, boy."

She faltered forth a good-night in return, and her heart died away in a sweet sadness within her rapidly-heaving bosom, as she turned from him to pursue her homeward progress.

XXV.

"STAND by, and when I speak—" were the words of Amri to his followers.

"Stay—he comes! Be ready with thy aid when I shall call thee."

The three took shelter in the shadow of a jutting wall, awaiting the approach of the page. Unconscious of danger, and with thoughts rather too full of the image of Pelayo to think of herself, Thyrza moved slowly along beside the wall. On a sudden the arms of Amri were thrown around her. She shrieked aloud in the extremity of her terror.

"A woman's voice—I knew it," was the half-muttered exclamation of Urraca, as she came forward with her companion.

"Give me thy cloak!" was the hurried demand of Amri; "thy handkerchief,—help me to bind his mouth."

The shrieks of the captive maiden in the meanwhile rang through the otherwise silent streets. The tread of a heavy and hurrying footstep was heard approaching them.

"Hasten!" cried Amri,—"there!"

The maiden struggled, and strove vainly to cry aloud. Her mouth was now effectually bandaged. But she struggled still; and Amri, hearing the approaching footsteps, bade the followers of Edacer stand between them while he bore off the captive. One of them did so, but the new-comer thrust aside the presented spear, with a single stroke from a heavy mace which he bore, with the ease of a giant. Urraca had prudently darted aside without offering opposition. Before the foiled spearsman could recover, Pelayo—for it was he—had approached the seizer of the maiden, who continued to struggle desperately in his grasp.

"What ho!" cried Amri; "approach not, whoever thou art,—we serve the Lord Edacer. Behold his badge."

"Be paid for thy service, whomsoever thou callest thy master," cried the impetuous prince, for he had recognised the voice of the page Lamech at the first alarm—"thou hast claim for such pay:" and, as he spoke, with one blow of his heavy mace, he smote the treacherous Hebrew to the earth. Thyrza fell with him, as he still retained her in his grasp, but she was unhurt. The baffled spearsman, having recovered from the impetuosity of the first attack, now rushed upon the prince; but his thrust was unavailing, in opposition to one possessed of the great skill and power of Pelayo. The spear of the soldier was shivered in his hands by a single blow of the mace, and he must in another instant have fared like Amri, but that he prudently gave back, and left the path of the victor unobstructed. Pelayo paused not an instant to complete the rescue which he had so manfully begun. He lifted the only half-animated form of Thyrza in his arms, tore the handkerchief away with which Amri had bandaged her mouth, and with as much ease as if she had been an infant, he hurried off from the scene of the affray without any farther interruption from the soldier. The heavy mace being still vigorously brandished by its owner, with an ease and adroitness which warned him of the utter hopelessness and imprudence of any second effort in a conflict with one so superior to himself both in skill and prowess, he wisely refrained from offering any farther resistance to his progress.

XXVI.

THE sturdy follower of Edacer, mortified at his defeat, now turned upon the disguised Urraca, who, by this time, was busy in examining the hurts of her Hebrew lover.

"Why didst thou not set upon him from behind when thou sawest that I had crossed weapons with him in front? Thou art—"

Urraca silenced his speech by addressing him in her natural tone of voice.

"Waste not the moments in idle words, but take him up in thy arms—gently and with care—see that thou hurt him not, as thou valuest thy good. Bear him along with me."

He did as she commanded, and, unconscious all the while, for the blow of Pelayo had completely stunned him, Amri was carried by the soldier to the dwelling of Urraca.

Meanwhile, but little more conscious than the wounded Hebrew, Thyrza was borne by the vigorous Pelayo, quickly, and in silence, through the now deserted streets. Once or twice during their flight she made a feeble effort to resume her feet, but he gently bade her desist; and her head, half in stupor and half in consciousness, sank at length upon his shoulders, while the tears of an aroused apprehension and deeply-excited sensibilities poured unrestrainedly forth from the clear fountains of her lovely eyes.

XXVII.

In the quiet chambers of the lowly dwelling in which Pelayo found temporary security, he at length arrived with his precious burden. He laid her down upon his own humble couch, and watched her, as slowly she recovered her consciousness. She started up as she beheld the earnestness of his gaze—a deep blush overspread her cheek, and with averted eyes she rose from the couch, and was about to move away from the apartment, though evidently without any distinct purpose in her mind, when Pelayo restrained her.

"Where am I?" she demanded. "My father—prince—I must go now—I must go to my father."

These were the hurried and brief words which fell from her lips when she came to a full consciousness of her situation. She looked round upon the bare walls of the mean and cheerless apartment as she spoke, and wondered where she found herself. Could so base a dwelling be the place of safety and retreat of one so noble, and so highly-born and nurtured, as Pelayo? The dwelling of the persecuted Hebrew was superior. It was usually proudly furnished, though the exterior was low and uninviting. She was confused by her thoughts, which yet dwelt earnestly on the objects around her.

"Be no longer apprehensive, Lamech," said Pelayo, soothingly, as he laid his hand upon the arm of the maiden, and gently restrained her movement. "Be no longer apprehensive. There is now no danger. You are here safe with me, and the villains who had seized upon you have forborne to pursue us."

But the maiden trembled more than ever, even after his assurances. The slight pressure of his hand upon her arm had been electrical in its consequences. A thrill of flame seemed to rush at that moment through

all her veins, and, as his dark and searching eye was riveted upon her face, her cheek glowed with all the intensity of fire. Yet, as he still addressed her by the name of Lamech, she was happy to believe that her secret—the secret of her sex—was yet safe hidden from his knowledge. That belief restored her. She felt how dreadful it would be if Pelayo should know the truth. But, though something strengthened with this conviction, she did not readily trust her lips to reply. She felt that she must falter in her speech. Her heart was full, and she trembled with the rush of its tumultuous and conflicting feelings. He beheld her emotion, and ascribed it to any but the proper cause.

"Fear nothing, Lamech. The danger is now over. Thou art yet but a child. I warned thee that thou didst too greatly overtask thy strength; and, though I would not pain thee, boy, by such a thought, yet I very much fear thou dost overrate thy courage. Thou wert not made for strife,—thy nation is enfeebled by its petty toils, and hath been too long restrained from all free and noble exercises. They know not, and thou hast not often shared in, warlike arts, though thou sayest that thou hast dwelt in a land, and moved among the incidents of a time of peril. Thou hast not the soul for strife; and, if thy father will heed my counsel, he will keep thee in a quiet spot, and afar from his own toils, which are full of danger. After this night, Lamech, thou wilt seek me out no more. I will not suffer thee to harm thyself by exposure of thy youth to such rude assaults as that to which thou hast been subjected, and to which neither thy heart nor thy strength is equal. After this night thou shalt forego these labours."

"But—I must return now, Prince Pelayo, to my father. Let me go, my prince, since there is no more danger. Let me return, I pray thee."

"There is no danger here, Lamech—but there is danger in the paths of the city. There were cries of

alarm even as I fled with thee upon my shoulders, and the soldiers of the governor parade all the public passages."

The answer of Pelayo seemed only to inspire her with a new resolution and strength. She rose in spite of his restraints, though he still stood in the way of her progress.

"I must go, my prince. There is no danger to me I can pass through the passages unseen."

"This was thy thought, Lamech, when leaving me at the Gate of the Tribune,—and the thought is idle, Lamech, and thou wert rash and wrong then to go, and I were not less rash and wrong to suffer it. Thou shalt not go—"

"My father—my father—prince; I must fly to him. He will sorrow after me as if I had come to some dreadful evil."

"And better that he should sorrow thus, without reason, than that thou shouldst go forth to danger and give him good occasion for such sorrows."

"I must go, my prince," she said, doggedly; "I dare not remain longer."

"Go to, boy—am I a child, that thou shouldst lesson me after this fashion? Thou shalt not go! I am resolved thou shalt not! I were no friend to thy father, and still less a friend to thee, if I suffered thee to go forth at this hour, when the slaves and soldiers of the tyrant traverse all the paths of the city."

She wrung her hands, and sank upon her knee, imploring permission to depart. Pelayo frowned heavily upon the seeming boy as he looked upon this weakness.

"Go to, boy;—though I had deemed thee to be weak, I had not thought thee wilful. What dost thou fear with me? What hast thou to fear? This apprehension shows basely in thee, even beyond the reproach which speaks of the cowardice of thy people. I held thee better taught. I looked upon thee as one possessed

of more courage and heart than thy present wilfulness approves to be in thee."

How had he mistaken her! It was only because of her possessing so much heart and courage that she exhibited so much seeming weakness. But of this Pelayo dreamed not. He continued—

"Thou shalt not leave me till dawning, Lamech. Thou art safe with me."

She almost shrieked aloud, as she cried out in her terror—

"But I must, my lord, although I perish for it! Alas! alas! my father,—I must go to him at once, my lord."

"Why this is wilful madness, boy. What dost thou mean?—am I thine enemy?"

"Oh, no—no! But I must go, my prince. Upon my knees I pray thee, let me go! I will risk all the danger—all, all—and will not deem it such. Let me but go. There is no danger—"

"There is danger, Lamech—great danger,—and I will not suffer thee to depart till early dawning. Then thou mayst go to thy father, not before."

She buried her face in her hands while she entreated him, but he remained inflexible; and, though evidently chafed by what he deemed the perverse weakness of the boy, he yet spoke him kindly while denying him his prayer.

"No, Lamech—thou shalt stay with me this night,—thou shalt share with me my couch, and I will protect thee from every harm until the morning, when thou shalt go home to Melchior."

"Kill me rather, my lord," she cried aloud, in seeming desperation. "Kill me rather, or let me go this night to my father."

"Thou art but a foolish boy Lamech, and sinfully wilful, when I but deemed thee childishly weak. I am no boy like thee, and thou hast much mistaken me if

thou thinkest I will let thee go forth at this mad hour of the night. I have said, and thou pleadest and prayest vainly! I am resolute. Here shalt thou keep till morning—here, in this chamber. Thou dost not fear to sleep with me—with thy prince, Lamech?"

Her head was prone to the ground, and she replied not. He stooped to lift her from his feet. His arm encircled her slender waist—but she clung to the ground as if she sought for it to conceal and cover her.

"What means this strange passion, Lamech?" he cried, as with a strong arm he lifted her to her feet. She averted her head, and wept in a paroxysm of tears;—then desperately seeking release from his firm hold, she cried—

"Thou art a Christian, my prince,—it will shame thee that one of my race should linger long in thy dwelling."

"I heed not of thy race, Lamech. Thou art a sweet and a good youth; though this night thou hast erred grievously in the weakness which thou hast shown to me, and in the wilfulness to which thou still keepest most strangely."

"Pardon me, oh gracious prince—pardon me, I pray thee, that I have so offended, but let me depart from thee at once to my father. I will not again offend thee. I will pray for thee to the God of Israel. I will—"

"When thou knowest me better, Lamech," said Pelayo, sternly, "thou wilt know that I trifle not with my resolves. I have declared that, as it would be danger, and may be death, for thee to go forth this night, thou shalt here remain and partake of my couch with me—"

"My lord, I cannot—I dare not—I will not! I must go, though I perish."

"Thou shalt not, Lamech."

"Hear me, my prince—I am not the son of Melchior."

He released her from his grasp as she spoke these

words. Her eyes were uplifted for an instant; and, as they encountered the intense gaze of his, she sank again upon her knees before him.

"Not the son of Melchior!—who art thou?" he demanded.

"The child of Melchior. The child, but not the son," was the desperate answer. "Look!—behold, my prince."

And, as she spoke, undoing a nice piece of network which was artfully wound in with, and secured her hair, she let the thick, glossy, and beautiful volume fall down upon her shoulders. In the next instant she herself fell prostrate along the floor, and her long tresses swept the dark pavement even to the feet of Pelayo.

XXVIII.

He lifted her from the ground in spite of all her resistance, though he lifted her with the utmost tenderness. He bore her once more to the couch, and laid her exhausted form upon it.

"Thou hast done rightly, maiden," he spoke, after a brief interval given to astonishment, in which his eyes perused her with a singular interest—"thou hast done rightly, maiden, whosoever thou art, in speaking out the truth. Be calm!—be not doubtful nor afraid,—thou art as safe from harm in the chamber of Pelayo, as, in his heart, he beholds thee without one ungenerous thought—one dishonourable feeling."

"Oh, my lord—I thank thee—I thank thee! From the bottom of my soul I thank thee! I knew that thou wert noble—forgive me that I did not confide to thee at the first."

"Better as thou hast done, maiden. Thy secret was no less thy father's than thine, and if he confided not to

Pelayo, it was not for thee to do so. But give me to know thy name."

She faltered out the word in a trembling emotion that was not without its pleasure. He spoke the name as if musingly to himself.

"Thyrza!"—and, thus speaking it, he paced to and fro three several times across the chamber before he again addressed her. When he did so, his thought was one of manly and gentle, yet, with him, of natural consideration.

"And for me, and in my cause, maiden, thou hast adventured thy young and tender limbs—thy life and thy honour, at midnight and in strange places—"

"I feared not, my prince,—it was my father bade me, —and I—I knew that I was serving thee—serving thee and him."

"Thou hast served nobly and well, maiden—Thyrza, —but thy father has exposed thee to toils beyond thy strength, and such as are foreign to thy gentle sex—"

"I have had neither pain nor fatigue in their performance," she cried, interrupting him.

"But a dreadful peril, Thyrza. Thinkest thou the villain who assailed thee knew what thou wast? Thinkest thou he knew of thy sex?"

"I know not," was the trembling response, as the recollection came over her of what she had suffered and might have suffered, but for the timely assistance of Pelayo.

"May I now depart, my lord?" was the timid address of the maiden, as she saw that he was engaged in thought.

He did not seem to heed for a moment. More earnestly and anxiously she again addressed him—

"Have I my lord's permission to depart now?"

He turned to her instantly, and took her hand within his. She strove to withdraw it from his grasp, and, as she strove, he released it, and then she feared that she

had offended him, and, unconsciously, the lately-withdrawn hand was extended towards him. He did not seem to remark upon the act, though he resumed its possession; and he spoke thus immediately after—

"Thou hast hitherto had no wrong, Thyrza, at the hand of Pelayo. Believe me when I tell thee thou hast none to fear. Confide in me—in my strength—not less than in thine own. It is not less, believe me, than thine. That strength is thy security. If it can protect thee, by the strong arm, from the robber of the night, it can also, of itself, forbear thy injury. I must be this night thy keeper and guardian, and hold the place of thy father. Thou canst not go hence now. It were madness,—and I could not go with thee unless into the very den of danger. Here, then—in this chamber—shalt thou sleep,—nay, interrupt me not, and fear not,—here shalt thou sleep, and sleep securely, even from any danger of my intrusion. I have another chamber in the court without. Behold this bar,—when I am gone, and thou hast closed the door behind me, thrust it into these cavities which thou seest on either side of the wall, and thou mayst sleep as securely as if thy own father watched over thee, with a strength boundless as his love, and as sleepless. Thou wilt be as safe from my approach, Thyrza, as from the enemy from whose brutal outrage I rescued thee. Sleep, maiden, without fear. I leave thee, with God's blessing upon thy slumbers."

He waited not for any answer which she could make, but at once hurried out of the apartment. Long did her eyes strain after his departing form, and sweetly that night did she think and dream of all the events of the evening. Was it sinful that, in her sleep, her dreams brought to her a renewal of his embrace, and that she joyed to linger in the folding fondness of his manly arms? Was it sinful that she sighed at morning when she awakened, looking round upon the pillow, to feel that she had but dreamed? Ah, if her thoughts and

dreams that night were sinful, what heart is innocent? —What maiden is without a blemish?

Wrapping his mantle around him, Pelayo threw himself down in the court before the door of the apartment which he had given up to Thyrza, and many new thoughts in his mind kept him wakeful; and, when he slept, many strange, sweet fancies made him sad when the night was so soon over, and when the bright glances of the day aroused him.

XXIX.

It was yet early morning when the agonized and greatly apprehensive Melchior appeared before the prince, in the court where the latter had been sleeping.

"Lamech—my son?" cried the venerable and anxious parent.

"Thy child sleeps yet, Melchior,—she is in the chamber!" was the calm reply of Pelayo.

"She!—Ha!—Speak to me, Prince Pelayo—my child,—thou knowest her sex—her secret. She is safe? —She has had no wrong?"

"She is as thou wouldst have her, Melchior—a pure and virtuous maiden. But go in to her, and she will tell thee all. Let her hear thy voice at the entrance, that she may unbar for thee the fastenings. I will, meanwhile, look round upon the court, that we may not be vexed with prying glances."

"Thyrza!" exclaimed the old man at the door, after Pelayo had gone.

"My father!" was the sweet response from within. The door opened in the next instant, and fond and holy was the embrace taken between the doting father and his dutiful and lovely child. She told him all her adventures of the night—of the wrong which she had partially sustained, and from the dangers of which Pelayo had

rescued her, and of the forbearance and nobleness of the prince in all which had taken place between them. When Pelayo returned to the court, the gratitude of the father and daughter was spoken in the warmest language of acknowledgment and devotion, though it remained unspoken in words.

END OF BOOK II. AND VOL. I