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CALLCOTT # SUPERNATURAL IN EARLY
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THE SUPERNATURAL *in* EARLY SPANISH

F. CALLCOTT



INSTITUTO DE LAS ESPAÑAS
EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS



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THE SUPERNATURAL IN EARLY SPANISH LITERATURE

STUDIED IN THE WORKS OF THE COURT
OF ALFONSO X, EL SABIO

By

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EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

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To
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P R E F A C E

It has been the aim of the author in the following study to collect, classify, and analyze the various references made in the works of Alfonso X, el Sabio, to the beliefs and superstitions, of the Spaniard of that day, with reference to the supernatural. It is hoped that it will be possible in this way to reach a better understanding of the attitude of the Spanish people toward the supernatural in general and thus to acquire a more complete appreciation of that early period of the nation's life.

No attempt has been made here to trace the origins of these early Spanish traditions (many of which were common thruout Europe during the Middle Ages), and the comparison of what has been found with the supernatural in the early literature of other European countries has been left for a later study.

The works of Alfonso el Sabio have been chosen because, to a large extent, they represent not only their own period but all that had gone before them, as recorded not only in Castillian but in Latin and to a greater or less degree in Arabic and Hebrew also. Alfonso gathered to his court a select group of scholars versed in these

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languages; and under his direction they produced or collected a representative library of works dealing with their respective subjects. It is the accessible books of this collection that have furnished the material for the present study.

The author wishes to express sincere thanks to Professor Federico de Onís of Columbia University for sympathetic encouragement and valuable suggestions thruout the entire period of study; to Professor Antonio G. Solalinde, of the *Centro de Estudios Históricos*, Madrid, for helpful suggestions and criticism of the manuscript as well as for the privilege of consulting the proof-sheets of the *Antología de Alfonso X, el Sabio*, which has recently issued from the press; to Professor Raymond Weeks, of Columbia University, for his sympathetic interpretation of the Middle Ages and for actually introducing the writer to the true spirit of that period; to his wife, thru whose timely assistance solely it has been possible to complete the study without undue delay; and especially to Professor Henry Alfred Todd, of Columbia, for his painstaking aid and expert criticism while this work was taking form and being put thru the press.

F. C.

Columbia University, January, 1923.

INTRODUCTORY

The human mind is always interested in those things that it can not understand; as soon, however, as the problem has been solved it is no longer an absorbing subject of attention. When a sleight-of-hand feat has been explained we turn with renewed zest to something else and revive our former interest only to mystify or amuse some friend. The unsolved problem, on the other hand, will grip our undivided interest for an indefinite length of time; our minds will revert continually to the unelucidated trick of legerdemain until we learn how it was accomplished. And so we might continue our illustrations thru the whole range of human knowledge.

Furthermore, we are not content to limit our curiosity to the comprehension of what others have understood before us, but push our way in quest of the answer to the eternal and ever haunting *how?* and *why?* We climb the mountains, we crouch beneath a shelter while the storm beats, we gaze into space on a starlight night, and these compelling queries become ever more insistent. This element of inexhaustible curiosity is, and has been as far back as the existence of society can be traced, present in all human nature; the leaders of mankind have not

been slow to utilize it for the attainment of their own lofty or ignoble aims. The warrior has employed it to inspire his soldiers; the priest to exalt his followers; the minstrel to entrance his auditors.

In the introduction to her Columbia doctoral dissertation, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*,¹ Dr. Dorothy Scarborough has discussed in a very engaging manner the inherent need of the supernatural in fiction. In real life as well it plays a highly important part. It is a demonstrated fact that when a man faces a supreme crisis — when face to face with death — not only will he turn instinctively to the supernatural powers in that moment but all that is extraneous to his real self will disappear and the true man will stand forth revealed. What is true of the individual in this respect applies also to the race. It is in recognition of this universal truth that the following study has been undertaken, in the hope that a careful examination of the supernatural aspect of the beliefs and practices of Spain as reflected in the literature of a given period will contribute to a better understanding of the questions involved.

Naturally there is a wide difference between the method of thinking of the average person in the Middle Ages and that of the average person of to-day. In the 20th century every peculiar or remarkable phenomenon of nature is subjected to the scrutiny of scientific study, while with the medieval man it was accepted at its face value as being the manifestation of unseen powers, of

¹ Columbia University Press, 1917.

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gods or of devils. It would seem that consciously or otherwise they attempted to make everything appear supernatural whether they could explain it or not. We of today demand that the God of the universe should work thru well defined natural laws; they, on the other hand, expected that "el milagro sea contra natura".² It is true nevertheless that the "call" of the supernatural in one form or another has continued to exert a powerful influence even down to our own time. Some of its forms of manifestation may have changed, but the belief is almost everywhere present. Instead of forecasting the future by Astrology many today seek aid in the *séance*; miraculous cures are still being sought for as of old not only in many cases abroad but also in communities nearer home — even in the city of New York, during the Novena of St. Ann; while only recently it was reported in the daily press that a young girl in a convent on the banks of the Hudson showed the marks of the *stigmata* so prominently associated with the history of St. Francis of Assisi.

Before entering upon the study proper of the early Spanish period it will be well to review rapidly some of the important facts in the "supernatural" history of the Iberians since the time when the Goths invaded Spain.^{2a}

When they came they brought with them their songs and legends, which were peculiarly Germanic. The writer

² See p. 53.

^{2a} It has not been deemed necessary (since this is not a study of the sources but rather of the material itself) to begin with a more remote period. The purposes of this résumé is to give the reader a general idea of the people and their immediate environment. For studies on the earlier invasion see the appended Bibliography.

Jordanes, about the middle of the 6th century, states that stories of sunken cities, subterranean voices, etc., were common in the region of the Vistula, the river which separated Scythia from Germany.³ But we find no trace of this in the early Spanish literature owing to the fact that when the Goths conquered the Iberians they did not blend readily with the people of the newly acquired territory. Nor did they, as the Romans had done, encourage the vanquished to continue their established customs and religion giving to their own traditions an opportunity, thru friendly intercourse, to become adopted by their new subjects. On the other hand, in their effort to make assimilation still more impossible they forbade intermarriage. The result of this was, to use the words of Amador de los Ríos, that

“La Iglesia, que durante el Imperio visigodo procuró desterrar del pueblo católico las reprobadas prácticas del gentilismo, limpiándole al propio tiempo de las torpes é inmundas aberraciones á que le arrastraban los magos, encantadores, sortilegos y adivinos que plagaban la nación española, vióse forzada á condenar una y otra vez tamaños abusos, trasmitidos de edad en edad, con el auxilio de los cantos populares.”⁴

It seems, however, that in this struggle the Church was not always successful. Often the result was a compromise in which the pagan customs were remodeled and made to conform to the requirements of the Church instead of being completely abolished. For instance, according to

³ R. Menéndez Pidal *L'Épopée Castellane à travers la littérature espagnole*. Paris, Colin, 1910, p. 15.

⁴ Amador de los Ríos, *Historia Crítica de la literatura española*, Madrid, 1865, Vol. 2, p. 193.

J. A. MacCulloch, the ancient Celtic warriors used to advance dancing and singing to the fray;^{4a} and É Philipon says:

“Lorsqu’ ils marchaient au combat, les guerriers ibères entonnaient à pleine voix leur chants nationaux, leur *péans*, comme disaient les Romains.”^{4b}

In the early Middle Ages this custom of the ancient inhabitants of Spain still continued under the Christian domination; and into these war cries and songs had slowly crept the names of the Christian Deity and of the Christian saints.

This habit of consciously directing the minds of the soldiers to things spiritual in such a moment may have been an important factor in the development of the numerous legends of visions seen by soldiers during battle.⁵

One would naturally expect to encounter a marked Arabic influence in the early monuments of the language, considering the fact that the Moslems with all their wealth of magic and other arts peculiar to the East, entered Spain in the early years of the 8th century, but this is not the case. When the Moslems entered Spain those who were able retreated before them, but a large part of the population, unable to do this, remained under Mohammedan rule. These *mozárabes*, as the conquered

^{4a} *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, Edinburgh, 1911, p. 246.

^{4b} *Les Ibères*, Paris, 1909, p. 202.

⁵ Among the many interesting magazine articles on a recent widely discussed phase of this phenomenon in the World War are *Phantom Armies Seen in France* by Mrs. S. Mildmay, *North American*, 202: 207-12, August, 1915, and *On the Supernatural Element in History with Two Examples from the Present Day*, by Mr. H. Temperley, *Contemporary Review*, 110: 188-98, August, 1916.

Christians were called, struggled bravely to keep themselves and their children free from the heresies of their conquerors and for some time were successful, but by the 9th century the Mohammendans were rapidly instilling their teachings into their captives.⁶

A reaction against this began under Abderrahman II. The Christians, becoming obsessed with a desire to be martyrs, began rashly to expose themselves everywhere. So serious did this movement become that in 852 Abderrahman constrained the bishops to call a council, presided over by Recafredo, instructing them to condemn this zeal for martyrdom, which they did, but only in a half-hearted manner. This movement was the last serious attempt on the part of the *mozárabes* to rebel against the teachings of the Moors. From this time on they were rapidly merged into the nation of the conquerors and it is a question whether any of them remained true to the Catholic Church at the time Spain was reclaimed by the Christians, all of which explains the lack of a very noticeable Arabic influence in the early Castillian writings.

We have therefore (at the time the early Castillian literature began to appear) a nation from which the clergy had attempted to remove everything that could not be remodeled to conform to their interpretation of Christian Scriptures — an endeavor in which they had been signally successful. At this time, so far as the vernacular was concerned, there had been little influence from the out-

⁶ Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, Madrid, 1911-18, Vol. 2, Chap. 2.

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side world (since the time of the Gothic invasion) other than that which had been imported from Rome. But this isolation was not to last long. When the Christians reconquered the cities from the Moors they made a practice of killing the men but of enslaving the women and children.⁷ These women as nurses naturally told the children in their care the stories of their people. In addition to this, Paschal II, Pope from 1099-1118, issued a bull declaring sacred the war in Spain against the Moors as well as that in the Holy Land. This gradually brought into Spain Christian knights from all Europe with their traditions. Likewise, in the earlier part of the 12th century a school of clerical writers appeared in Spain who sought to win the favor of the people thru making their versions of the traditions of the Church more attractive by mixing freely sacred history and profane. They sought inspiration in the Moorish and the Classic traditions; they confused the legends of the past by transferring to them the customs of their own day.⁸ It was they who sought out the mysterious legends of the East common among the Moors who lived in the South, incorporating them into their sermons and poems and mingling them with the Christian mythology. All this prepared the way for the great efflorescence of the supernatural which began with Alfonso X and continued in full sway until the 17th century.

⁷ *Chronicon* of Sebastian, No. 27.

⁸ Amador de los Ríos, *Historia crítica de la literatura española*, Vol. 3, p. 233.

CHAPTER I

ALFONSO EL SABIO AS KING AND SCHOLAR

Alfonso X is one of those unfortunate men who have been — sometimes unconsciously but in many cases purposely — maligned in history. The *Libro de las Querellas*, (a 17th century work until recently attributed to Alfonso); the dictum of Mariana, “Dumque coelum considerat observatque astra, terram amisit”; and the popular verse from the romances “De tanto mirar al cielo se le cayó la corona” which inspired Marquina’s poem on that theme, all express the exaggerated and perverted idea which was generally prevalent concerning this monarch. Those who knew his works of science, especially of astronomy, were amazed at the wealth of knowledge displayed therein, and this, together with the fact that his last years were taken up with rebellions on the part not only of his vassals but even of his own sons, seem to have been enough to create the impression just mentioned.

Recent criticism has also brought to light the fact that the almost blasphemous quotation so long attributed to this king, “Si Dios me hubiera consultado, habría hecho el mundo de otra manera,” is not his at all, but rather

was invented later in Catalonia by a certain king Pedro IV, or perhaps by his chronicler Bernat Descoll. Some have attributed it to Fernando IV.¹

Altho these conceptions may contain some modicum of truth, they are only a part of the truth. Alfonso took an active part in the politics of his day and the surprising thing is that amid all the strife and trouble that surrounded him he found any time at all to give to literary production.

Alfonso was born on November 23, 1221, according to the findings of his biographer, the Marqués de Mondéjar² (whose deductions have been confirmed by documents discovered later) and was named for his grandfather Alfonso IX of Leon and his great-grandfather Alfonso VIII of Castile. Practically nothing is known of his early childhood except that he was associated with certain of the nobility, viz., García Fernández and Doña Mayor Arias of the province of Burgos. Of his early training nothing is known. He was probably reared in Toledo, his father's capital, and as Sr. Solalinde suggests, much might be inferred from the rules for the training of princes given in the *Siete Partidas*, a collection of the laws of the time, provided the reader does not take these too literally. At the age of sixteen he began his career as a soldier under his father, Fernando III, el Santo, in

¹ Antonio G. Solalinde, *Antología de Alfonso X, el Sabio*, p. 21.

² The following brief résumé of the life of Alfonso X is based for the most part on the Marqués de Mondejar's *Memorias históricas del Rei D. Alfonso, el Sabio, i observaciones a su chrónica*, Madrid, 1845, and the introduction to Sr. Solalinde's *Antología de Alfonso X, el Sabio*.

the conquest of Andalucía. He himself added to his father's crown the kingdom of Murcia and took an active part in the conquest of Sevilla in 1248. The next year he married Doña Violante of Aragón, daughter of Jaime el Conquistador, hoping in this way to effect an alliance between the two kingdoms, but it seems as tho Fate had decreed that from the very first his should be a life of disappointments and trouble. The frontier warfare between these two nations continued, growing even more sharp later when Alfonso aspired to the crown of Navarra. It was not until much later that the friendship of Alfonso and Don Jaime became firmly established.

Aside from his legal wife, whom he married by way of securing a political asset—a mode of procedure not unknown even in later times—he really loved a certain beautiful lady, Doña Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, who bore to him his daughter Doña Beatriz, later married by her father to Alfonso III of Portugal. The sepulcher and also the body of Doña Mayor in a remarkable state of preservation are still to be seen in Alcocer. One of the hands still wears the glove with which it was clothed at the time of the burial.

In May, 1252, Alfonso ascended the throne, after receiving his father's solemn charge: "Fijo, ricas fincas et tierra et de muchos buenos vasallos más que rey que en la cristianidad sea; pugna en facer bien e ser bueno, ca bien has con qué."

Alfonso, the king, was undoubtedly an indefatigable worker and a man of the highest intentions. He knew what ought to be done but apparently did not have the

power of will or the personality to insure the execution of his purpose. When he ascended the throne the war with the Moors had been reduced to operations of minor importance and they recognized the Castillian monarch as their master. But here as elsewhere history repeats itself. Each Christian king on the peninsula was dominated by the desire to extend his territories; and, since there was no longer the necessity of standing together against the common foe, a series of petty quarrels soon arose followed by attempted conquests. As time went on, not only Alfonso's own nobles, but his brothers and even his own son became involved against their king. It was precisely here that Alfonso was unable to hold the reins of power in as firm a hand as his father before him had done. It was because of internal troubles that he failed, at the critical moment, to bring the wars in Italy to a decisive conclusion, and to terminate successfully with the popes and others, the diplomatic controversies in which the throne of the Holy Roman Empire was at stake. To this throne he had been legally elected at the death of William of Holland in 1256, when he received four of the seven votes. He was opposed by Richard of Cornwall. The long contest which followed was in reality a political battle with the popes, from Alexander IV to Gregory X, in which Richard usually had the upper hand. At Richard's death Rudolph of Hapsburg under the pontifical protection was elected to take his place, and it was only after nineteen years that Alfonso finally succeeded, in 1275, in obtaining an audience with Gregory in France. The unfortunate outcome

of this interview was that Alfonso was persuaded to give up all pretensions to the imperial crown and to forego his custom of signing international papers with the title of "rey de romanos." In this manner ended Alfonso's vain attempt at external territorial expansion.

At home, in contests with his own nobles, he had been hardly more successful. Indeed, with all the accumulated expenses of his long-continued attempts to obtain the imperial crown it would have required a man of almost superhuman force to keep his powerful vassals under control and at the same time subject them to the excessive taxation necessarily involved. This, as we have seen, Alfonso did not possess. The Infante Don Enrique was the first to rebel. His outbreak was followed by a more serious uprising of the nobles under the ostensible leadership of the king's brother, the Infante Don Felipe, but was really fostered and maintained by Nuño de Lara, the boldest and most favored noble of the court. To restore harmony the king surrendered many of his own prescriptive rights, but even then the nobles were not satisfied and Nuño de Lara, inspired by this recently acquired power, objected to the royal decision to require no further payments of tribute from the king of Portugal. Alfonso, in anger, demanded that Nuño withdraw from the council; this he did but in open rebellion, successfully drawing with him a large number of the nobles. Many of these, apparently faithful to Alfonso, followed an intimation given them by Nuño and outwardly supported their sovereign while privately plotting with some of his power-

ful enemies, the king of Navarre and even the emir of Granada.

In an endeavor to adjust matters Alfonso summoned a general convocation, which the aggrieved nobles, in an attitude of open affront, attended fully armed while their sovereign wore only civilian dress. At this meeting the monarch ceded still further privileges; but, pursuing their advantage, they finally came out in open rebellion and, gathering their army, marched away from Castile to the kingdom of Granada, burning and plundering as they went. Meanwhile Alfonso, by means of his eldest son and heir, Fernando de la Cerda, still endeavored to negotiate with them.

In spite of all these internal troubles the crown of the Holy Roman Empire still held the uppermost place in the mind of the monarch and it was just at this juncture that he succeeded in arranging for his above mentioned visit to France and left his oldest son, Fernando de la Cerda, to govern in his stead. The latter altho only a boy of twenty years was already showing great ability as his father's representative, when suddenly he died. Fate seemed determined that not one bright lingering hope should be permitted to relieve Alfonso's long, unhappy reign.

This unfortunate death was the cause of additional troubles. Don Sancho, Alfonso's second son, immediately took up the reins of government where his brother had let them fall. War having been declared on the Moors, no time was to be lost. Alfonso returned to find his son and heir dead, his father-in-law, Don Jaime,

—that valiant warrior who had now become his devoted friend—just killed by the unbelievers, and his second son, Sancho, self-established as heir-apparent. Altho this was contrary to what the king himself had ordered in *Las Siete Partidas*,³ he confirmed Sancho as his successor, whereas the crown should have gone to Fernando's eldest son. This brought more trouble. Queen Violante left him and sought refuge with her brother, Pedro III of Aragon, in order to defend the rights of her grandsons. The wife of the deceased prince hastened to her father, king of France, and war was about to be declared between the two kingdoms, when Rome interfered. Violante returned to her lord upon receiving his promise to cede the kingdom of Jaén to his grandson; but this angered Don Sancho, who rebelled against his father. Alfonso publicly disinherited his son, and incontinently set out to crush him. The other Infantes who had previously supported their brother now forsook him and came to the aid of their father. Sancho himself, with a kind of religious respect for his royal father, avoided battle and finally implored pardon. Such was the condition of affairs when, after an exceedingly turbulent reign of thirty-two years, Alfonso X died in Seville on the 4th of April, 1284.

During all these years Alfonso had cherished the fond hope of carrying on an ever broadening war against the Moors and finally of extending it into Africa and there

³ *Las Siete Partidas*—Partida II, Título XV, Ley II. Hereafter references to this work will be expressed thus: *Partidas* 2-15-2.

dealing a death blow to the power of the Crescent. This purpose of his, like a will-o'-the-wisp, fluttered constantly just beyond his power of execution. He did succeed in carrying out minor conquests, but the ruler of Granada was always quick to take advantage of the civil strife in the kingdom to the north of him to recover his lost territory. The final net result was that Alfonso succeeded in adding to his crown the cities of Jerez de la Frontera, Medina-Sidonia, Lebrija, Niebla, Cádiz, and a few other towns of little importance.

From the foregoing it is easy to see that Alfonso was not a mere theorizing star-gazer. It is surprising that a man with his hands so full of terrestrial affairs could ever have found time to turn his eyes heavenward or could ever find the leisure and the quiet necessary for the careful editing of the lengthy works produced at his command.

In speaking of these works and discussing their chronological order Sr. Ramón Menéndez Pidal says:

“La actividad literaria de la corte de Alfonso X—que se había iniciado con las *Tablas Alfonsíes* y el *Septenario*—había producido ya las obras legales, coronadas por las *Partidas*; había dado a luz la primera edición de las *Cantigas* y gran parte de los *Libros Astronómicos*. Posteriormente a esa actividad desarrollada en las materias astronómicas, jurídicas y poéticas, sólo a partir del año 1270, debemos colocar el comienzo de la actividad histórica antes no representada. Primero se trabaja en la *Crónica General*, y, después, se interrumpe la obra para impulsar la *Grande Estoria*; los redactores de ésta, como luego indicaremos, conocieron noticias referentes a la historia de España que la *Crónica General* no aprovechó. En fin,

después de la iniciación de las obras históricas se siguió trabajando en los *Libros Astronómicos* y en las *Cantigas*, y se empezaron las últimas obras del reinado, como el *Lapidario* y el *Ajedrez*.”⁴

Of the above I have been able to consult only those printed or reproduced in facsimile, which are the following:

Las Siete Partidas, (the best edition of which is the large three volume work published in 1807 by the Real Academia) is the result of Alfonso's successful attempt to complete the work begun by his father in collecting, codifying and standardizing the various laws of the numerous regions of the kingdom, and it has been used as the basis of Spanish jurisprudence ever since. This work has proved of very great value because of the ample comments (made, it seems, either by the compilers or by Alfonso himself) on the laws contained and the customs referred to.

Las Cantigas is a collection of 422 lyric or narrative poems in the Gallego-portugués dialect, many of which were probably written by the monarch. Of these 353 are narrations of miracles attributed to the Blessed Virgin. The edition used in this study is that of the Real Academia, 1889, 2 Vols., 33 cm. edited with a critical introduction by Leopoldo Augusto de Cueto, Marqués de Valmar. A third volume of this work by J. Ribera treating of the music of *Las Cantigas* has just appeared.

Los Libros del Saber de Astronomía, contain a large number of drawings of the heavens, various astronomical

⁴ *Estudios Literarios*, Madrid, 1920, p. 184-185.

instruments, etc., as well as a compendium of what was then known relating to this science. In the introduction to the edition which consists of five 45 x 33 cm. volumes by Manuel Rico y Sinobas, Madrid, 1868, the editor states that among the compilers were 8 Christians and 6 Jews; while the works of more than 17 Arabs were consulted (p. XCII).

La Primera Crónica General (edition of Ramón Menéndez Pidal in Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, vol. 5, 1906) is an account of the history of Spain from the time of Moses to the death of Fernando III, el Santo. This, says Sr. Pidal in his *Estudios Literarios* (p. 208 ff.), is the first chronicle written in Spain which considers the Spaniards as a Roman instead of a Gothic people. Being guided by the results of his research, the latest and most authoritative on the subject, I have included in this study only the first part of the *Crónica*, i. e., chapters 1-566, as the remaining part is probably the work of Alfonso's successor.

La General Estoria is still unedited. It is a work of five parts, each of which is in size equal to the *Primera Crónica General*. It purports to be a history of the world from the creation to the time of Alfonso and is based primarily on the Bible, altho other authorities, both sacred and profane, are freely drawn upon. For this study I have been able to consult only those extracts that appear in the *Antología* of Sr. Antonio G. Solalinde.

El Lapidario treats of 360 stones, dividing them into twelve groups describes their appearance and the country or locality in which they are found, bringing in in this way

interesting comments on manners and customs, scraps of folk-lore, etc., as well as discussing the medicinal and supernatural properties of the various stones introduced. The edition used was that of José T. Montaña, Antonio Selfa, and Hippólito Rodrigáñez, Madrid, 1881.

El Libro de Ajedrez. A two volume photographic edition of this work was brought out in Leipzig in 1913 by J. G. White under the title of *A Spanish Treatise of Chess written by the order of King Alfonso, the Sage, in 1283.* It is a careful discussion of the game and description of the various moves. As well as chess, the games of dice and backgammon are included.

In this study have been included only those works which may, without reasonable doubt, be considered to be the productions of Alfonso el Sabio or works in whose composition he took part in the manner indicated below. Those which may have been more or less plausibly attributed to him but whose authorship still remains in doubt, have been purposely omitted. Of these latter the most important is *Calila y Dimna*, which many still maintain was translated by the order of Alfonso.⁵ But even if this be correct the book is a purely allegorical one, entirely foreign to the spirit and manner of Spain, and can in no way aid us in understanding the superstitions and religious beliefs of the Spanish nation.

⁵ For a discussion of the date of the translation of this work into Spanish see the following editions of *Calil y Dimna*; Pascual de Gayangos, in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Vol. 51, Madrid, 1860; José Alemany, Madrid, 1915; and Antonio G. Solalinde, Madrid, 1917. In *Bulletin Hispanique*. Vol. 24, page 167-171 is to be found an interesting review by G. Cirot of the last named work.

While it is true that Alfonso did not with his own hands write out the works included in our study, nevertheless the compilers themselves bear witness to the fact that he did carefully edit them, scrutinizing the contents, eliminating the non-essential and perfecting the language. In the *General Estoria* is found this significant statement:

“Assi como dixiemos nos muchas uezes: el rey face un libro, non por quel el escriua con sus manos, mas porque compone las razones del, e las enmienda et yegua e enderesça, e muestra la manera de cómo se deuen fazer, e desi escriue las qui él manda, pero dezimos por esta razon que el rey faze el libro”.⁶

Small wonder then that the king realized the value of quietude and specified as one of the essentials for the making of good laws that

“Otrosi deben guardar que quando las fecieren no haya ni ruido nin otra cosa que les estorbe, et que lo fagan con consejo de homes entendidos et sabidores, et leales et sin codicia.”⁷

⁶ Antonio G. Solalinde, *Intervención de Alfonso X en la redacción de sus obras*, *Revista de Filología Española*, 1915, Vol. 2, p. 286.

⁷ *Partidas*, 1-1-9.

CHAPTER II

MIRACLES PERFORMED BY THE VIRGIN IN RESPONSE TO PRAYER

When it is considered that in *Las Cantigas* alone there are narrated 353 separate miracles, it is obvious that it will be impossible to give here even a brief résumé of all the instances in which the supernatural appears. What I have attempted to do is to give a synopsis of the most representative legends and stories, hoping in this way to present a correct, if succinct, idea of the beliefs, superstitions and religious practices of medieval Spain. The various occurrences of the supernatural found in the writings of Alfonso X, have been grouped, as far as possible, under the headings commonly employed in classifications of this kind.

Since all the extant works of this period, with the exception of *Las Cantigas* and a few *cantigas de amor et de maldecir*, were written for the erudite and were in no sense popular in their origins, it is apparent that the popular beliefs in regard to the supernatural will be found mentioned in them only incidentally. Occasionally, as in the *Crónica General* for example, the traditions of the com-

mon people had firmly established themselves in the *Cantares de Gesta* and other sources which were drawn upon by the compilers. In such scientific works as *El Lapidario* and *Los Libros del Saber de Astronomía*, the effect of the various heavenly bodies upon things terrestrial is mentioned, but these reflect the beliefs of the learned, not of the ignorant. While these beliefs of the intellectual classes are interesting and useful in themselves, they are by no means as important for our study as the superstitions of the man of the street. *Las Siete Partidas* has furnished much pertinent information because of the laws concerning practices involving the supernatural which were forbidden, or which, as in the case of conjuring, were permitted only under certain circumstances. But from such sources we can get only a very small proportion of the great mass of popular conceptions and traditions which must have existed, as is forcibly illustrated by the fact that in all the other works excepting *Las Cantigas* only nine miracles are narrated. On the other hand the term "milagro" was considered important enough to merit a lengthy definition in the laws of the times.¹ According to this definition a "milagro" is a divine intervention in the regular course of nature the purpose of which is, among other things, to reward the faithful and to bear witness to the veracity of the Christian faith.

But when we consider *Las Cantigas*, a work whose avowed purpose is to gather together all the current stories of miracles attributed to the Virgin either directly

¹ *Partidas* 1-4-123 and 124 which is given in full on p. 53-54.

or indirectly, we have a collection of 353 accounts drawn both from the writings of the saints and from popular tradition. It is to be noticed too that all of these are performed either directly or indirectly *by the Virgin* and do not include any of those attributed to the various other saints, to the Child nor to the Man Jesus, etc. If such a host of legends and stories could be gathered with the facilities of that time dealing with only *one* phase of supernatural lore and with only *one* saint how great must have been the entire store!

Another interesting fact in connection with this collection is that, altho according to the Church authorities, the Virgin could perform miracles only when especially empowered to do so, she is represented here as performing them of her own accord. Only seldom does she go to her Son or to God the Father for aid or permission.

Such a procedure can not be attributed to ignorance on the part of one so well versed in ecclesiastical law and customs as Alfonso. It is probably a conscious reflection of the general belief of the common people who knew little of Theology.

In a period of such absolute and naïve faith it is not at all surprising that the same miracle, with a few minor alterations perhaps, should be attributed at one time to the Virgin and at another to God,² or at one time to the crucifix and at another to the image of the Virgin, etc.³ The result of this customary promiscuous

² See p. 66. The miracle of the restoration of the tongue, and notes.

³ See p. 80. The bleeding image, and notes.

attribution of benevolent deeds to various divine forces and personages was that the counterpart of every miracle mentioned in any of the writings of king Alfonso X is found in *Las Cantigas*. Therefore our study of this topic will be based on this collection with appropriate notes of any variations of interest in the legends as found in his other works.

A large number of the miracles in the beginning of the collection of *Las Cantigas* are taken, as usually stated in the poem itself, from some other accessible book.⁴ But as legends from these sources grew scarce the store of oral tradition was drawn upon, and occasionally, as in apprehension that the veracity of the story might be challenged, some such strengthening line as "mui bien sey que

⁴ Sr. Antonio G. Solalinde, in speaking of this, says: Según los datos de Mussafia, existen 64 milagros, de los más difundidos en el mundo cristiano, en las 100 primeras cantigas, 17 en las 100 cantigas siguientes, 11 en el tercer centenar y 2 en el cuarto. Seguramente se podría rectificar en detalle esta estadística, pero ello exigiría un estudio minucioso de las fuentes de las cantigas y de la historicidad de sus asuntos, tarea que sólo en parte se realizó en la edición monumental. Creo que el pensamiento de Mussafia estaría mejor expresado si dijera que aquellos asuntos universales abundan principalmente en la primera edición de la obra, o sea en el ms. TOL (Ms. de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Núm. 10069, procedente de la catedral de Toledo) cuyas cantigas se reparten, como hemos visto, casi exclusivamente en los dos primeros centenares de la edición definitiva, E (Ms. escurialense j. b. 2). Los continuadores de la obra primitiva tuvieron que recurrir a los milagros acaecidos en España, y aun a los que tienen por protagonistas a Alfonso X y otros personajes de la corte, sin que falten tampoco en las nuevas colecciones asuntos universales más o menos difundidos en la literatura marial, ni milagros sin indicación de lugar, y que tanto pueden ser españoles como extranjeros. *El códice florentino de las "Cantigas"*, *Revista de Filología Española*, Vol. 5, 1918, p. 175-176.

foi e é gran uerdade”⁵ was added. So personal is the tone of the whole collection that there is no hesitation whatever in recounting the miraculous experience of some member of the royal family or of the king himself.⁶ Constant search in the manuscripts at hand was apparently continued however during the entire time of composition and as late as No. 362 occurs the expression “achei escrito.”⁷

The cult of the Virgin became very popular during the 13th century and when we consider the influence it had all thru the period we are studying it is natural to expect, that in a group of miracles dedicated expressly to her, that Jesus, the Son of Mary, and even God the Father would be but seldom mentioned.⁸ But when they are they are recognized as being supreme. The Virgin herself often has to ask a favor of the Son, as in Nos. 14, 45, etc. At times we are privileged to catch a glimpse of the court of heaven resembling greatly a medieval court with God the

⁵ *Las Cantigas* No. 361. Hereafter the number, written thus (No. 361), will be inserted in the body of the text. As mentioned above, *Las Cantigas* are written in the Gallego-Portugués dialect, the favorite of the lyric poets of the time, and not in Castillian as are the prose works of Alfonso.

⁶ I have found 23 which relate miracles experienced by the king himself or some of his kinsmen or friends: Nos. 122, 142, 209, 215, 221, 235, 243, 256, 257, 279, 292, 324, 328, 345, 348, 358, 366, 367, 376, 377, 379, 382, 386. Aside from these are a few others as Nos. 295, 349, 354, 375, etc., in which apparently the king is Alfonso himself tho this is not specifically stated.

⁷ For a discussion of the probable method of composition of *Las Cantigas* see Antonio G. Solalinde, *El códice florentino de las “Cantigas” y su relación con los demás manuscritos*, *Revista de Filología Española*, Vol. 5, 1918, p. 169 ff.

⁸ References to Deus, seu Fillo, are constantly recurring but only in No. 75, 71, 309, and 353 have I found references to Deus Padre.

Father and His Son as the supreme rulers and below them the saints in the order of their various ranks.

On one occasion, No. 14 for instance, Saint Peter pleads without success for the soul of a licentious monk who during life was especially devoted to him. After invoking the aid of the other saints to no avail he finally appeals to the Virgin and in answer to her God permits the return of the soul to the body for the benefit of another chance. The details here are such that one might easily imagine the scene to be that of any court of 13th century Europe.

Naturally in so large a collection⁹ any classification has to be arbitrary, and however the division is made there will be a number which may be placed under two or more headings. The present classification, tabulated in detail on page 135 has been made to suit the needs of this study exclusively. In what here follows I shall summarize only the typical examples of each class.

The group of miracles studied especially in this chapter, those performed by the Virgin in response to prayer,

⁹ This collection consists of 402 *Cantigas* under the heading of "Las Cantigas de Santa María" every tenth one of which is a "cantiga de loor" and does not narrate a miracle. No. 1 also is a "cantiga de loor". No. 279 does not narrate a miracle but is a song of thanks. Nos. 373, 387, 388, 394, 395, 396, 397, are repetitions of previous cantigas. Nos. 401 and 402 are not miracles. This leaves a total of 351 in this group. Neither are there any to be found in the two groups entitled "Cantigas de las fiestas de Santa María" and "Cantigas de las fiestas de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo." The group of five miscellaneous cantigas not found in the *códice escorialense* contains two miracles making a total of 353.

Miracles Performed by the Virgin in Response to Prayer

includes almost every conceivable form of aid, all the way from restoring life to the dead down to helping a man find his lost falcon. They suffice to give us a rare conception of the beliefs and faith, often almost childlike in their simplicity, of that time.

The greatest of all miracles, the restoration of life, is performed in all over 30 times in answer to prayer and for a great variety of reasons. In one instance (No. 182) a certain robber who had the redeeming quality of always giving to those in need when asked in the name of Santa María, died suddenly. In answer to a mother's prayer and to afford an opportunity for repentance his soul was restored and from that moment he observed faithfully all the commandments "da Uírgen." In another, to aid a faithful follower in his work on earth the Holy Mother sends to Santo Domingo as a helper a well-educated, zealous young man who kills himself by overwork. In answer to the supplication of the saint she descends from heaven with a chorus of virgins and together they read from their books and annoint the corpse, head, body and feet, thus restoring the life of the young man that he might continue in the service of his worthy master (No. 204).¹⁰ In No. 84 a wife becomes ignorantly jealous of the Holy Mother because her husband slips away mysteriously every night and when asked the reason for his absence

¹⁰ The mysterious ceremony performed here is quite similar to the incantations used when Amadis was being brought out from under the spell of the enchanter Arcalaus by the strange and almost fairy-like damsels. Cf. *Amadis de Gaula*, in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Vol. 40, p. 50, Madrid, 1880.

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he answers that he loves his wife as much as ever but admits to her, almost in jest, that he loves another woman more. This proved too much and in a fit of anger she stabbed herself, but in answer to her husband's prayers her life was restored. No. 241 is particularly interesting because of its details and of its really lifelike setting. Two mothers, one having a son and the other a daughter, decided that a marriage of the young couple would be advantageous. All went well until the day of the wedding, when the boy, being in a very happy and buoyant mood, leaned too far out of the window as he wiped out a glass, lost his balance, fell and was killed. All were overcome with grief except his mother who confidently took him to the altar of the Virgin, where his life was restored. As life returned his first words were "What a beautiful mansion you took me from." The two young people were so impressed they decided to devote themselves to religion. At another time Alfonso's immediate family were concerned for the daughter of "o bon rei Don Fernando", who after being carefully reared for the convent at Las Huelgas died. Her mother took her to the foot of the image and putting everyone out of the church, determined to remain until her daughter revived. Her faith was rewarded, and later in life the princess held an important place in the convent (No. 122).¹¹

¹¹ As is so often the case with the writers of the Middle Ages, we cannot always take our poet too literally, for in this poem he says: "D'esto direi un miragre *que ui*" and only a few stanzas later in describing the acts of the mother he says: "*A todos da capela fez sayr*". But doubtless since he was so closely related to the mother concerned

Miracles Performed by the Virgin in Response to Prayer

When we come to consider the various kinds of *bodily ailments* cured by the Holy Mother we are presented with a formidable list. An arrow striking a man in the face stuck in the bone in such a manner that none could remove it. He requested to be taken to the altar of the Virgin and there confessed, implored aid, and the arrow came out of its own accord (No. 126). Seven separate times do lepers appeal to her and are healed.¹² The blind have their sight restored; but one clerk, apparently thru lack of faith, asked only that his sight be given him while Mass was being said. She took him at his word and allowed him the privilege of seeing every day *only during the time of Mass* (No. 92). Swellings disappear (No. 346); while often Alfonso sings of the cures he himself has experienced. After leprosy the most common ailment to incite the pity of the Blessed Mother is rabies, which is mentioned in no less than five separate cantigas;¹³ reason is also restored to those who have been deprived of it (No. 331). No. 69 is the legend of a deaf mute who presented himself before the altar of the Virgin in Toledo. While there he saw Saint Mary in the form of a beautiful girl approach him as in a vision, put her finger in his ear and take out a worm which had

he did not consider "*que ui*" too strong a statement especially when it fitted the meter and the rhyme.

¹² Nos. 37, 53, 81, 91, 93, 105, and 134.

¹³ Nos. 223, 275, 319, 372, 393. Note that the miracles narrating cures of leprosy are all (with the exception of No. 259 not mentioned in the above note because the cure was not in response to prayer to the Virgin) in the first half of the collection, while the cures of rabies are all in the latter half.

“...a semella
d'estes de sirgo, mais come ouella
era ueloss' e coberto de lãa.”

Later Santa María ordered a monk well versed in the art to aid the man recover his voice. Another pretty story is that of a little girl with deformed feet who was taken to the altar of Santa María del Puerto, where, falling asleep, she suddenly cried out with a sharp pain. In answer to the questions of her father and those near her she said the Virgin came down from the altar, broke her feet, and then returned. They hastily examined them only to find them in perfect condition.

As well as curing the ordinary ills of nature to which the human body is subject, the Blessed Mother may also cure those due to acts of man if they are unjustly inflicted, as in the case of the servant whose master put out his eyes because of false accusation. The servant, knowing he was innocent, procured his eye-balls, had a surgeon put them back in their sockets, and then went to Santa María de Salas, where his sight was restored (No. 177). A miracle showing a strong trace of mysticism—another instance of the relief of suffering due to no conscious fault of the victim—is No. 315. [A laboring woman went into the field to work and left her child—with a prayer for its safety—tied to a sheaf of wheat. While she was gone the child swallowed a head of the grain and became very ill. The mother, thinking it had swallowed some insect or had been bitten hastened with it to Madrid where after many days of unsuccessful treatment she was advised to take it to the Church of Atocha. On arriving she undressed the

child before the altar for examination and to the great
 ment of all present the head of wheat, intact, came felt
 thru the *left* side of the child, who recovered immediately.
 No. 146 shows the influence of a well-known legend of the
 Middle Ages of a father who cut off the hands of his
 daughter because she insisted on being true to her new
 faith, Christianity. Later in life, when, because of mis-
 fortunes and persecutions, her hands were necessary for
 the care of her child, they were miraculously restored,
 growing out of the old stumps.¹⁴ In the cantiga the
 object of the miracle is a boy who wished to go on a
 pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin of Albeza. His
 mother hesitated because of his enemies but at last he
 was permitted to go. He did, indeed, fall into their
 power and they put out his eyes as well as cut off his
 hands. He was found, however, by some fellow-pilgrims,
 taken to the shrine, and there, upon his praying the

“Madre de Deus Emanüel,
 fez-ll’ ollos come de perdiz
 pequennos a aquel donzel
 muy fremosos, et de raiz
 crecéron-ll’ as mãos enton.”

Altho the Virgin did alleviate bodily ills for good cause
 she was not alway a saint of mercy. At times she was
 a saint of vengeance. Even more, her devotees were
 sometimes given the privilege of seeing this vengeance
 brought down at their own request upon the enemies

¹⁴ Francisco Guillén Robles, in *Leyendas Moriscas*, Madrid, 1885-6.
 Vol. 1, p. 181 ff. cites this as a legend of eastern origin.

faith because of some impious act. One Christian kneeling at prayer before her shrine was bitten by a large dog that happened to pass that way. As he arose to pick up a stone to drive the animal away he was greatly incensed at seeing two Jews laughing at him. Not being able to restrain his anger he called upon the Virgin to avenge herself of such an affront with the result that the wall by which they were standing fell upon the unbelievers (No. 286).

Such vengeance as this is usually only meted out to infidels and, even tho Saint Mary loves vengeance and desires to please her followers, more than once has she to temper this very human desire on their part. One woman asked that the one who had stolen her husband's affections be stricken with some serious illness, but the Virgin, considering the punishment too severe, by a vision caused the unlawful rival to repent and ask forgiveness of the wife, which the latter finally granted (No. 68).

In many respects more important, tho perhaps making a less lasting impression, are those miracles of prevention from harm. These are almost as numerous as the above, tho they offer less variety and less opportunity for dramatic effect. Among the most common are rescues from the sea, and in No. 236 there is the added element of walking on the water. A pious woman and her child are in a boat that sinks. She cries out to the Virgin who appears, takes her by the hand, and together they walk on the water as tho it were land until they arrive at Marseilles.

Those engaged in making objects for the glory of the Virgin, together with the products of their art, receive

special protection. A stone mason working at a great height in the church of Santa María de Castrogeriz felt his legs weaken and began to fall. Calling on the local saint he miraculously caught on an edge of one of the stones and altho a very large man his fingers were strengthened, enabling him to hold on a greater part of the day until aid came (No. 242). At another time a painter who habitually drew the Devil as ugly as possible and the Virgin as beautifully as he was able received a visit from his satanic majesty in person complaining of the treatment, but the artist refused to change his pictures. The Devil, greatly offended, set loose a terrible hurricane, which entered the church; but, appealing to the Virgin, both the painter and his work escaped unharmed (No. 74). Ten instances, most of which bear a striking resemblance to similar stories in the New Testament, are told of miraculous release from prison.¹⁵ In one of these (No. 227) Saint Mary appeared surrounded by a bright light and led the captive, invisible to his captors, from the dungeon. In nearly all such releases the victim had been unjustly imprisoned.

Those who are especially devout are saved even tho at times it is necessary to bring down the heavenly hosts. One good knight (No. 233) fleeing on a swift horse before his enemies arrives at the church of the Virgin of Pena Cova. His pursuers, unbelievers, on arriving at the church, see a battalion of heavenly soldiers drawn up in front of it and, thus admonished, they repent and naturally

¹⁵ Nos. 83, 106, 158, 176, 227, 291, 301, 325, 359, 363.

no longer desire his life.¹⁶ When Bondoudar, the Sultan of Egypt, laid siege to Tortosa de Ultramar there were but few defenders within its walls, but when the Sultan arrived he saw a great host in the city. One of his advisers told him:

“...Per mandado
da Uirgen Madre d’ Ica
uéeron, que un eigreia
dentro en a uila á,
que está preto dos muros
da parte do aréal”.

On hearing this the Sultan withdrew, saying he would not fight against the Virgin and later even sent much money to those in the city (No. 165). No. 49 reads almost like a fairy tale. A band of pilgrims journeying to Santa María de Soissons lose their way in the mountains and in answer to their prayers she appears to them *with a shining wand* in her hand and leads them safely to their destination.

The idea of *bargaining*, one of the fundamental elements of all primitive religions,¹⁷ and one which even yet has by no means disappeared, was present in a very striking manner. In this respect, indeed, the people were so naïve at times that they made the Blessed Mother human in the

¹⁶ This motif of the appearance of the heavenly host is well developed in the second part of the *Primera Crónica General* in the account of the battle with Abenbut, in which Alfonso himself took part, p. 727 and also in the later work, *La Gran Conquista del Ultramar*, p. 321, *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Vol. 44, Madrid, 1880, which belongs to the period of Alfonso's successor.

¹⁷ See Allan Menzie, *History of Religion*, New York, 1913, p. 66 ff.

Miracles Performed by the Virgin in Response to Prayer

extreme and sometimes they seemed almost to lose sight entirely of her divinity. In no less than nineteen¹⁸ cantigas is the record of wax being offered in exchange for divine favors and in ten of these the wax was promised in the prayer of supplication; and altho this may not at all times have been consciously offered as a bribe or as a kind of barter yet there is no doubt that unconsciously the feeling was there.] Wax was by far the most popular of all offerings. It was offered in bulk, or in the form of an image of the Virgin or of the object desired, or often in candles. One account which is very interesting because of the well-known historical personages involved is No. 376. During a conversation with the Infante Don Manuel, Alfonso showed him a beautiful ring and offered it to him as a gift. The king sent a servant to deliver it to the house of the Infante, but on the way he lost it. He immediately appealed to Santa María del Puerto; offering her six pounds of wax for her church if she would help him recover the ring. A little later a man voluntarily handed it to the messenger saying he had found it on the street.

Altho we might consider wax a suitable offering for a miracle of the type just mentioned, it does cause some surprise to find it accepted in return for even such an important act as the restoration of life. But there was a woman of Zaragoza whose children were always still-born, so after the third sad experience she offered a child

¹⁸ Nos. 43, 44, 118, 166, 167, 176, 177, 178, 232, 247, 298, 333, 352, 357, 366, 375, 376, 382, 385.

of wax to the Virgin. The fourth child was also born dead but, confident now, she implored Santa María de Salas, and even while the prayer continued the child came to life. In addition to wax many other kinds of gifts were acceptable such as a garland of roses; or when roses were unavailable an "Ave María" might be substituted for each rose in the bouquet (No. 121); or nails were offered for a temple (No. 106); or a promise was made of the most beautiful thing captured from the enemy during a battle, which in No. 374 was a beautiful cloth of gold and scarlet.

More curious than these, and a miracle in which the moral lesson is not to be considered, is No. 214, in which two men, one very rich while the other possessed only a church building, were rolling dice. The wealthy man played high stakes, the poor man, having only the church, played it. The rich one rolled and three sixes fell. His companion, trembling, in his turn rolled. As he did so he offered the church to the Virgin should he win. To his astonishment, and to the wonder of the bystanders, one of the dice fell in two, three sixes and one ace appearing.

Aside from material gifts such as the above, offers of service such as the promise to go on a pilgrimage to some shrine are also very effective.¹⁹

The naïve elements become almost startling at times in their childishness. For instance in No. 8 a singer, after singing a "lais" to Santa María, asked that one of the

¹⁹ Nos. 171, 172, 197, 398, etc.

candles of her shrine light him while he ate. The candle was miraculously placed on his instrument, but a monk seeing it out of place became angry, thinking it bewitched, and put it back where it belonged. This was repeated three times until the people witnessing this repetition intervened, while the monk, convinced he had witnessed a miracle, repented.²⁰ Again, at Rocamador, nine pilgrims ordered nine pieces of meat prepared for their meal. When they drew near the table only eight pieces were brought in, the servant having stolen one. They prayed Santa María to show them where the ninth piece was and at once heard a noise in a chest. It was the piece of meat jumping around to attract their attention (No. 159). Even more peculiar were the actions of a paralyzed mule which was ordered killed and skinned by its master. The servant boy before beginning the task stopped to eat and upon finishing his meal was astonished to find the mule healed and going toward the shrine of the Virgin of Torená. On reaching the church it ran around it three times rapidly, entered and kneeled before the altar, then returned home with the servant (No. 228).

It is to be remarked also that while the miracles usually do contain a moral lesson—in fact some have no other purpose than to teach a moral, No. 155,—occasionally they are much less concerned with the moral than with the really important fact, the miracle, which shows the goodness, power and mercy of Santa María. Bent on

²⁰ In Nos. 272 and 162 are found similar instances of the mysterious movement of objects, only here it is an image of the Virgin that changes its location.

emphasizing this they become at times realistic in the extreme. We must remember also that the conception of what is moral and what is immoral changes constantly and that therefore it is impossible to measure the 13th century by the standards of the 20th. But even so, we can say this for Alfonso el Sabio; whenever he does include such accounts in his collection he handles them with his accustomed brevity and never dwells upon the immoral act nor enlarges upon it. With a few strokes he paints the picture and then comes to what, for him, is the all important part, the miracle. One such, very popular throughout all Europe in the Middle Ages, is the legend of an abbess, accused by those under her of being with child, who was called to account before the authorities. She prayed earnestly to the Virgin, who during her sleep brought the child and spirited him away to Saussonna. She was then examined and found innocent.

No. 201 is even more interesting, being the story of a beautiful young woman who vowed eternal chastity and then, falling in love with a young gallant, became the mother of three of his children and killed each one soon after its birth. Later in life she repented and tried to kill herself with a knife but did not die; she then swallowed two poisonous spiders²¹ and still she could not

²¹ This spider motif is the dominant feature in Nos. 222 and 225. In the former the Capellán of La Señora de Achela was saying mass when just as he raised the sacred cup to his lips he saw a big spider fall into the wine. He hesitated for a moment not knowing what to do for under no circumstances can the ceremony of Mass be interrupted. Only a moment did he pause, then trusting in the Virgin he drank it, spider and all. The prioress learning of it ordered him to

die. Finally she prayed the Holy Mother, who appeared to her and with her own divine hand cured her. The sinner obtained forgiveness by a long life of penance. In this case the immoral element of protecting the sinner from just punishment has entirely disappeared, for while the Virgin shows mercy toward her and cures her ills—the result of a self-imposed penance—yet she does not forgive her terrible sin. All she can do is to change the form of the penance.

One of the phases of the belief of the time which at first glance seems to us today to be sacrilegious, or to say the least quite startling, is the part that the breasts of the Virgin and her sacred milk played in the religion of Medieval Spain. In this belief can be seen how very real and how very human the Mother of Christ was to the people. This race, which has produced some of the greatest mystics of the world, to whom everything had a mystical meaning, saw in the sacred milk of the Virgin the symbol of healing and of life, and the breasts which had nourished the Christ-child were to them the symbol of the fountain of life.

In No. 138 Alfonso tells how San Juan Boca de Oro, exiled by the Gentiles, was first blinded and then put out on the highway and told to leave the country. Wandering,

be bled. As the surgeon's lance pierced the arm not blood but the spider, alive, came out and the clergyman was unharmed. No 225, probably simply a variant, differs in that after drinking it the spider moved about between the skin and the flesh while the poor man implored relief thru divine aid. Finally, one day while in the sun the spider passed from the back and breast to his arm and after much of scratching came out under the nail.

he soon fell into brambles, when, calling on "á Rëynna esperital" for aid, she came, restored his sight and led him out into the road again. In the conversation which ensued he asked her what was the thing that Jesus loved most when He came into the world. She left without answering, but appeared to him again that night with the child Jesus playing with her breasts. Turning to the him she said,

"...D' esto se pagou
meu Fillo máis d'ál, et con mui gran razón.
Ca estas tetas lo criaron tan ben
como a sa carne mui nobre conuen;
et porende as amou máis d' outra ren,
porque d' estas tetas ouu' él criaçon."

The milk poured by the Blessed Virgin herself from her sacred breasts cured an infirmity of the face and neck which had caused long years of suffering to one of her faithful monks (No. 54). Similar to this is No. 93, an account of how God chastened a man of Burgos with leprosy for three years because of his sins. After he had recited a good thousand "Ave Mariás" Saint Mary at last took pity on him, and bathed him in her own milk, which cured him immediately.

And after all, when considered reverently, and in the light of the fact that the Virgin was the most important and most beloved personage in the religion of the period, what more beautiful and sublime symbol could there be than this!

Possessions are constantly being restored thru the agency of the Holy Mother, who is never unmindful of

the needs of her children, and who is just as quick to respond to the needs of the rich, if they are real needs, as to those of the poor. Altho such service is quite often performed in return for some gift, as indicated in the discussion of Bargaining,²² it is by no means limited to this. Often the simple faith and earnest prayer are sufficient.

A certain Don Domingo of Santa María del Puerto lost thirty sheep in the mountains. His devout wife appealed to the local Saint to save them from the wolves. Three days later they were found surrounded by wolves, which instead of harming them were *guarding* them from harm (No. 398). In the incident of a woman of Toledo (No. 212) we catch a glimpse of some of the customs of the times as well as find an entertaining story. This woman had the habit of loaning a lovely string of pearls to the poor girls of her acquaintance for their wedding ceremony, because

“En Toled’ á un costume
que foi de longa sazon,
que quando y casar queren
as donas que pobres son,
peden aas ricas donas
de suas dõas enton,
que possan en suas uodas
máis ricas aparecer.”

But her husband for some reason forbade her to do so any longer. Soon after this another poor woman came begging for the pearls, and because she asked “in the

²² See p. 40.

name of the Virgin" the lady could not withstand the plea and loaned them surreptitiously. While the girl was bathing, a servant stole them, but note—

“Ela deu-o a sa filla
el leuou-a a bannar,
com' é costum' en Toledo
de quantas queren casar.”²³

The bride was heartbroken and the lady, very much grieved but still more frightened, went to the church of the Virgin, where from sheer weakness caused by her anxiety she fell asleep before the altar. While there still asleep, the woman who had stolen the jewels passed thru the church with them hidden in her bosom. The sleeping woman awoke at that moment and, miraculously given to know that this one had her pearls, forcibly recovered them.

Legends of necessities being miraculously supplied are not lacking. There is one concerning a church in Jerusalem built under the guidance of the Virgin that reminds us of the widow's cruse of oil. The community was about to have to leave owing to a severe famine. As a last resort they met and prayed all night, and when morning came they found all the bread boxes full. Later a similar famine occurred and again they prayed all night, and this time they found a large sum of pure gold on the altar. (No. 187). Miracles similar to the one performed by Jesus at the wedding feast in Canaan of Galilee (John 2: 1-11) are Nos. 23 and 351. The first is the simple

²³ The Italics are mine.

Miracles Performed by the Virgin in Response to Prayer

story of a woman who was out of wine when the King came to visit her, so she asked the Virgin to help her in her perplexity, and immediately the wine casks in the cellar were filled. The second, on a larger scale and with an element of humor, maintains that at the great annual feast in honor of the Virgen de Agosto one year a great hogshead of wine was supplied for the public, but, sad to relate, it did not last long. After it became exhausted the crowd was slow to go away and someone suggested that they look again to see whether it was entirely empty. To their surprise they found it was full of miraculous wine supplied by the Saint, and it had the quality not only of delighting those who partook of it but also of curing ills.

Altho such benefits and protection are usually bestowed only upon Christians, and more especially upon those who are particularly devoted to the Mother of Christ, occasionally she will hear the requests of those who belong to another faith provided they are ready to accept Christianity. A vagrant Jewess was cast from a high rock in punishment for her misconduct, but, on appealing to the Virgin, she fell harmlessly beside a fig tree. In gratitude she was baptised and remained constant to the faith thru life (No. 107). The Virgin's mercy was also great enough to restore life to the child of a Moorish woman who, because she had heard of the miraculous power of Santa María de Salas, took the dead body of her little one to the shrine. After the mother had remained there all night in prayer the child was brought back to life altho it had been dead three days (No. 167).

There is another small group of miracles recorded in

which the response is not to prayers but to threats—cases in which the believer loses control of himself and defies both God and man. No reason is given why the threats are effective after prayers and requests have been of no avail. Does it imply that the Holy Mother was to them such a human personality that, like an earthly lord, she might be susceptible to fear?

One case in point (No. 76) is that of a devout woman, the mother of a criminal, who became desperate when her son was hanged. Snatching the form of the child Jesus from the arms of the image in the church she threatened to keep it as a hostage. The Virgin became merciful—(or fearful)—and brought from the other world to the distracted mother her criminal son, who, now truly penitent, reprimands his mother for her sacrilegious act. So greatly was she impressed by the experience that she became a nun.

The most surprising miracle of the entire collection so far as the behavior of Saint Mary is concerned and her show of fear is the following, from which I shall quote freely. The young son of a baron fell with his horse from a high bridge. The father saw the accident and cried out aloud to the Virgin:

“Dizend’ a mui grandes uozes:
‘Ual-me, Rëynna Sennor.’
Enton a Vírgen bêeita
que seu fillo Salvador
tijnna ontre seus braços,
ouue da uoz tal pauor

como quando Rei Herodes
lle quis seu fillo matar.

E mandou a esses santos
que o fossen acorrer,
que y estauan, *et ela*
foi o seu Fill' asconder,
con medo d'aquel braado,
que o non podes' auer
Rei Herodes; *et porende*
foi logo passar o mar.

D'esta guisa con seu Fillo
fugiú a Jerussalem ²⁴
a Uírgen Santa María,
et guariú acá mui ben
o menyyn' e o caualo
que se non feríron ren:
et o padr', a bouc' aberta,
fillou-see Deus a loar." (No. 337).

This is the first and only reference I have found to this peculiar fear on the part of the Virgin.

²⁴ The Italics are mine.

CHAPTER III

MIRACLES PERFORMED VOLUNTARILY BY THE VIRGIN

Altho at times this study of Miracles may have the appearance of an examination of the character of the Virgin, which indeed it is in a certain sense, nevertheless it is such only in order that we may, by studying her acts as recorded in these miracles, come to a better understanding of what was considered supernatural in that period and what was not. Perhaps it will help in arriving at this result if, before beginning the study of the next group, we stop at this point to see what was Alfonso's own judicial definition of "miraglo", as the term is used in his *Siete Partidas*.¹ It reads as follows:

"Miraglo tanto quiere decir como obra de Dios maravillosa que es sobre la natura usada de cada dia: et por ende acaesce pocas veces. Et para ser tenido por verdadero ha menester que haya en él quatro cosas: la primera que venga por poder de Dios et non por arte: la segunda que el miraglo sea contra natura, ca de otra guisa non se maravillarien los homes dél: la tercera que venga por merescimiento de santidad et de bondat que haya en sí aquel

¹ 1-4-124.

por quien Dios lo face: la quarta que aquel miraglo acaesca sobre cosa que sea á confirmamiento de la fe.”²

Next in extent after the group of miracles performed in answer to *direct appeal* is that in which Santa María

² A still fuller definition is as follows: 1-4-123.

“Natura es fecho de Dios, et él es el señor et el facedor della: onde todo lo que puede ser fecho por natura fácelo Dios, et demas otras cosas á que non comple el poder della. Ca nature non puede dexar nin desviarse de obrar segunt la órden cierta quel puso Dios porque obrase asi como facer noche et dia, et frio et calentura: otrosi que los tiempos non recudan á sus sazones segun el movimiento cierto del cielo et de las estrellas en quien puso Dios poder de ordenar la natura, nin puede facer otrosi que lo pesado non decenda, et lo liviano non suba. Et desto dixo Aristóteles que la natura non se face a obrar en contrario: et esto tanto quiera decir como que siempre guarda una manera et una órden cierta por que obra. Otrosi non puede facer algo de nada, mas todo lo que se face por ella conviene que se faga de alguna cosa, asi como un elemento dotro ó de todos los quatro elementos, de que se engendran todas las cosas naturales et compuestas; mas Dios face todo esto, et puede facer demas contra este ordenamiento, asi como facer que el sol que nace al oriente et va á occidente, que se torna á oriente por aquella mesma carrera ante que se ponga, segunt fizo por ruego de Ezequias quando tornó el sol quince grados atras. Et aun puede facer eclipse estando el sol et la luna en oposición, así como fue el dia de la pasion de Iesu Cristo: et puede facer del muerto vivo, et del que nunca vió que vea, asi como quando resucitó a Lázaro et fizo ver al que nació ciego. Otrosi puede facer las cosas de nimigaja (*sic*) asi como fizo el mundo et los ángeles, et los cielos et las estrellas, que non fueron fechos de elementos nin de otra materia, et face cada día las almas de entendimiento que son en los homes. Et este poder es apartadamente de Dios; et quando obra por él á lo que dícenle miraglo, porque quando acaesce es cosa maravillosa a las gentes et esto es porque los homes caten todavía los fechos de natura. Et por onde quando alguna cosa se face contra ella maravillanse onde viene, mayormiente quando acaesce pocas veces; ca estonces han de maravillarse como de cosa nueva et extraña. Et desto fabló el Sabio con razon et dixo, miraglo es cosa que vemos, mas non sabemos onde viene: et esto se entiende quanto al pueble comunalmiente: mas los sabios et entendudos bien entienden que la cosa que non puede facer natura nin artificio de home, del poder de Dios viene solamente et non de otri.”

comes to the aid of her followers *voluntarily*, owing, perhaps indirectly, to their prayers, but if so this is not so stated and the dominating thought is not that the act was in answer to prayer but rather it is to emphasize the kindness, care and eternal vigilance she ever has for those who have commended themselves to her keeping.

In our study of this division we shall follow the same classification as we did in the last, but shall cite examples only in cases where they differ materially in one particular or another from those mentioned above. Altho the actual number of miracles is less, here divine aid is manifested in an even greater variety of ways. These new elements will be considered under additional appropriate headings beginning on page 65. On the whole the general tone of the miracles is the same, and sometimes it seems as tho the poet merely forgot, or perhaps it was not convenient for him, to work into his verse the statement that a given case was one of direct answer to prayer. At other times, however, it seems that the prayer was answered in a manner entirely unlooked for, or again that the miracle was performed without supplication whatever on the part of the recipient.

Beginning again with the group composed of the greatest of all miracles, the restoration of life, it is noticed that here instead of being in response to a direct appeal on the part of some faithful servant, the miracle seems to be performed as a reward, without the bereaved person having thought such a thing possible. The fact that the soul of the person whose life is thus restored may be brought back from the regions of eternal happiness seems of minor im-

portance. One of the most beautiful of these miracles is said to have taken place in "Inglaterra." A widow had a young son who sang, as no one else could, the "Gaude Virgo María". A jealous Jew killed him and put his body in a cellar, thinking that would be the end of it. The mother, not knowing what had become of her son, went thru the street calling "Where are you?". As she passed the house of the Jew she was answered by her resurrected child singing more beautifully than ever "Gaude María". The Jew was put to death for his crime (No. 6).

The new element of temporary restoration is found in No. 311. A pious man and his friend set out on a pilgrimage to Nuestra Señora de Monserrat. His friend does not seem to be very well confirmed in the faith, and when, as they are passing thru Barcelona, a flash of lightning kills his devout companion, he curses the Virgin and taunts his dead fellow pilgrim with the worthlessness of his devotion. The next day at the burial the dead man rises in his coffin and vindicates his faith by saying that all is well now.

The Virgin plays an even more important part in the miracle (No. 323) which happened when Aben Yusef crossed the straits of Algeciras and made damaging raids into the territory of Seville. A poor man's only son died, and, as the Moors were already in sight, all the father could do was to commend the body and his worldly possessions to the Blessed Mother as he hastily fled before the enemy. When the land was recaptured the old man, to his great astonishment, found his son alive and all his possessions safe. The boy told him that a lady had come

to accompany him and for some reason the Moors had respected her.

Very close akin to these are those of life miraculously sustained when according to all laws of nature death was inevitable, as was the case (No. 131) when Emperor Alexius of Constantinople, while on a tour of inspection, was imprisoned in a caving mine along with many workers. All were killed except the emperor who was saved by a large rock which formed a protection for him. The empress and all at court gave him up for lost and spent much time in Masses for his soul. At the end of one year the Patriarch of the city dreamed the emperor was still alive and immediately took workmen and had the mine opened. Thereupon they found the emperor unharmed and learned that he had been fed and solaced by angels during the entire interval.

Even more dramatic is the experience of a German and his son on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Santiago, who while lodging in the house of a heretic fall victims unawares to the old trick of having silver put in the boy's bag in order to accuse him of theft. The boy is hanged, and the heart-broken father, still faithful, continues on his way and fulfills his vow. On his return he is impelled to pass by the gallows. To his surprise he finds his son still alive, having been sustained by the Virgin for three months. Hastening to the bailiff, the father secure the release of his boy and has the heretic duly burned (No. 175).

There are no new elements presented in the various miracles in this group dealing with the curing of bodily ailments, beyond those already indicted on page 35. No

206 however describes the interesting spectacle of Pope Leo, very devout and austere, who became so much perturbed at being kissed on the hand by a beautiful woman at Mass that he could not forget the sensation nor concentrate on his work until he had his hand cut off. This did not give him peace because he was no longer qualified to say Mass. The Virgin, seeing his grief and having mercy on him, descended from heaven and applied a marvellous ointment to the stump with the result that the hand was restored.

In the methods by which the Blessed Mother prevents harm from befalling her devotees there is nothing new. The only difference being that here the act is performed more as tho it were the reward for faithful service while previously it was in answer to prayer.

As is to be expected the idea of bargaining is almost entirely absent from this group. The bargain idea found its birth on the part of man and not of the Deity. One legend only in the entire collection represents the Virgin as taking the initiative in a bargain (No. 307). This is when she appears to a virtuous man after an eruption of Mount Etna which had caused great damage and had lasted forty days. She told him if he wanted the eruption to cease to compose a hymn to her. This he did with the desired effect.

The number of the unmoral, in fact in some cases distinctly immoral, miracles here is greater than before. We must not forget, however, that, as mentioned above, often there was no very close connection between religious observances and morals in Medieval Europe.

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

On one occasion (No. 24) we are told that a very wicked man, a robber and a gambler, died and was refused a Christian burial, but during his life he had been devoted to the Virgin, so she appeared to the priest and demanded that his body be taken up and buried in sacred ground. When they opened the grave they found a rose in the mouth of the corpse³. No. 11 is the story of a licentious monk who was drowned one night while crossing a river on the way to visit his amour. The Devil appeared for his soul but two angels contested his claim. He convinced them of his right and they were about to retire when the Virgin arrived, routed the Devil, and ordered the soul to return to the body in order that the monk might repent and do penance. In this instance, it will be noted, the soul is simply restored to the body and given another chance, while in No. 24 above, the indication is that the soul of the evil doer is saved.

Then there are five quite similar, Nos. 55, 58, 59, 94 and 285, tho the moral lesson differs somewhat. In the first a young nun elopes with a monk to Lisbon where when she finds herself about to become a mother she is cruelly deserted. Not knowing what else to do she returns penitent to the convent. Angels attend her at the birth of the son during the night and no one suspects her. None had missed her during the absence because the

³ This legend of flowers being found in the mouth of the dead was quite common in the Middle Ages as was also that of the body of a dead person giving off delightful odors. This miracle is quite similar to that to be found in Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* No. 3.

Virgin had taken her place and it is not until one day in her old age when her son, now a handsome young man, appears in the choir singing "Salve Regina" that all is discovered because the worthy nun recognizes him publicly. No. 94 is apparently the same legend more fully developed. The nun, the treasurer of the convent, falls in love with a knight and on leaving the convent gives the keys into the keeping of the Virgin. She and her husband live together happily for years, being blessed with many children, and it is only in later years that she repents and returns to the convent, confessing all. To her astonishment, she found that the Virgin had taken her place during her absence and no one had ever known the difference. When it is learned that the Blessed Mother had performed such an act of kindness, all burst into a hymn of praise to her. In No. 285 we have the same setting of a young nun falling in love, this time with the nephew of the abbess, but the actions of the Virgin are quite different. On the first attempt to leave the convent Saint Mary stopped her. The next day she sent word to her lover that she had failed to keep her appointment because she had been ill but promised to meet him the next night, which she did, and the two made their escape successfully. They married and had children but even then she was not able to get away from the Holy Mother, who appeared to her in a dream and severely reprimanded her. This was too much. She at last told her husband and in repentance they both decided to enter the monastic life. In this legend the immoral element has disappeared, the Virgin no longer protecting the guilty. No. 59 is still another

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

story with the same theme, but the punishment is still more severe. As the young girl was about to depart she went to take leave of the Saint. At the parting her image began to shed tears. The girl then drew near the crucifix, which, loosing one of its hands from the cross, struck her in the face, leaving the mark of the nail as a stigma. In No. 58 the girl concerned was about to elope, but two dreams of Hell and of eternal punishment were sufficient to make the heroine send for her lover and tell him that their union would be impossible.

Of the three instances in which the sacred breast or milk of the Virgin play a part, all involve an answer to direct appeals. See page 45.

While there is only one account of possessions being restored without request (No. 228, which contains no new elements) there are several which tell of rare materials, or of materials delayed by storms at sea, etc., being miraculously supplied; or perhaps, as in the case of Emperor Constantine (No. 231), Santa María would help in the erection of buildings. The emperor had brought huge blocks of marble from Roumania for the altar and columns of a church to be dedicated to her. When they arrived they were so large no means could be found to hoist them into position. At last she appeared to the architect and told him to do away with all apparatus and use only three small boys to do the work. He did as he was bidden and they placed the blocks in position with ease.

These, however, do not give us as intimate a picture of the life of the common people as do other accounts,

such as No. 273. In it we get a glimpse of the privations of the home life of the peasants and at the same time an idea of their innate pride in their local church. At Ayamonte there was a small and poor church erected to Santa María but in spite of the poverty of its communicants the altar decorations were rich. So great were their privations that even the Host was scarce. At the feast of the Virgen de Agosto some of the altar cloths needed mending and one of the devout men of the congregation offered to do it. He had a needle but no thread, and no one could provide him with it. While before the altar considering what he should do, he glanced up and saw two threads on his shoulder obviously supplied by the Saint. It is in such apparently incidental allusions as this — and the one, No. 211, where bees come into the church of their own accord and supply the wax for the candles because the congregation could not furnish any — that we can, from time to time, form an idea of how “the other half,” which did not consist of knights and nobles, really lived.

Following the same order as in the first group we now come to those accounts in which the Virgin comes to the aid of the enemies of the faith. Quite modern in tone is the story (No. 335) of a poor man who, altho entirely ignorant of Christianity and its teachings, gave even the little he had to the poor. The Holy Mother, knowing of his goodness, appeared to him as a poor woman with her child in her arms and asked him for a morsel of bread. Fearing he had none he went, nevertheless, to see if he could not scrape out just a little more flour from

the barrel. When he returned with the last of his flour made into bread for her, she had gone. He made inquiry thruout the neighborhood describing her, and was finally advised to go and inquire of the Christians. There he recognized the Virgin and Child from her image and became a Christian. From the day she appeared to him the flour never failed in the bin.

Not only was mercy extended to those good at heart and living model lives and to those who did not believe simply because of ignorance, but opportunities for proselyting were quickly taken advantage of. A certain Jewess, (No. 89) dangerously ill at childbirth, was about to despair. Naturally she did not believe in the Virgin but she heard a mysterious voice bidding her call on Santa María, which she did. When those attending her heard this awful name they fled, calling her a heretic and a renegade, but she was cured. The mother and child both became Christians.

The Blessed Mother, however, knew mankind and did not use the same method with every one. With some, more persuasion was necessary than with others, and so when dealing with one hardened Jew, who had been robbed and beaten by Christians and was still being kept on a diet of bread and water in the hope of extorting even more from him, it was not enough that she should merely appear to him and bid him forsake his religion; she tells him that altho he is of the evil race she will show him what his people have missed. With that she takes him from prison to a high mountain where she shows him how the Jews are being tortured and then to another from

where he can see the Christians surrounded with angels, and thence to a monastery, where, taking the hint, he gladly becomes a Christian (No. 85).⁴

The Christians themselves used rather persuasive methods of proselyting at times if we may trust the account of a Christian of Consuegra who disputed much with a Moorish captive of his concerning the Virgin. When he could not make the man believe by arguing he put him in prison, where his efforts were supplemented by the intervention of supernatural beings. The Devil tormented him for two nights and on the third the Virgin appeared to him and told him if he wished to be free from the Devil he would have to forsake the "dog" Mohammed. He told this vision to his master, was baptised, and from that time on was a faithful believer (No. 192).

In another (No. 205) we again find both human and divine persons interested in the unbeliever, but this time it is physical safety they are concerned about. The miracle was witnessed by two nobles mentioned by name, Don Alfonso Tellez and Don Gonzalo Eanes, Maestre de Cala, and their followers. They were attacking a Moorish castle and had set fire to it. On one of the towers they saw a Moorish woman with her child who by her pose reminded them of the Virgin and Child. The sight filled them with pity and inspired them to pray for the safety of the two. In answer the flames respected them, while

⁴ It is interesting to compare this journey with the discussion of Sr. Asin of the various legends of journeys to Hell and also maritime journeys of the early Middle Ages. *Escatología musulmana en la "Divina Comedia"*, p. 229 ff.

the tower fell gently to the ground, allowing them alone of all those in the castle to escape unharmed. The mother out of gratitude asked for baptism for herself and her child.

After examining these classes, which coincide more or less with similar ones of the first group, there still remain a number of other miracles which present entirely new elements. First we shall examine those in which Saint Mary aids her devotees in acts of worship or in restraining evil passions which prevent their undivided service.

A person sincerely trying to do his religious duty could always count upon aid from heaven when his temptations were becoming too great for him or when worldly cares caused him temporarily to neglect his regular worship. A very devout woman (No. 246) used to pray every Saturday evening at the shrine of Santa María de Mártires. Once she forgot, owing to household duties, until very late. On her arrival, altho the church doors were already closed they opened of their own accord, after she had begun her devotions before the portal. She entered and deposited her gift, and as she left the doors closed of themselves. Astonished, she returned to the city where the closed gates of the wall opened without the touch of a human hand. Just then a beautiful woman appeared and when the peasant asked her who she was she acknowledged herself to be the Virgin. The poor wretch tried to kiss her feet, but as she did so the Holy One disappeared.

Again, we learn (No. 156) of a clerk who persisted in chanting Mass in honor of the Virgin, thereby angering

some heretics who cut out his tongue. Some time later the good man entered the church of Santa María de Cunnegro while the congregation were singing vespers. As he attempted to join in the song a new tongue was given him.⁵

Of the numerous legends having as the dominant theme the inability of the person concerned to restrain his animal passions the best developed is the story of the clerk who was much given to women. One night while in the room with one he suddenly saw thru the window the lights of a church of the Virgin. Never having seen them there before he left to investigate, but finding nothing returned. This time the woman herself closed the window fast but almost immediately a strong gust of wind blew it open, and again the church was seen. With this he recognized his error, repented, and became a monk. A little later, when his former conduct was criticized and he was brought to account for it before the church council, the Virgin cleared him of all charges (No. 151).

It will be noted that often in the foregoing miracles, and often in those that are to follow, the Virgin appears in dreams or visions, but the feature of the vision has usually been only incidental. In all we have only two examples (Nos. 261 and 288) of a true mystical vision

⁵ This is very similar to the account in the *Primera Crónica General*, p. 252 column b, line 42. (Hereafter such references will be indicated in the usual manner thus: *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 252 b 42.) Here, however, the scene is in Africa and, after losing his tongue, the bishop could sing and preach louder and more clearly than ever before. The heretics who ridiculed him were, in this instance, the ones who lost the power of speech.

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

granted for the sake of the experience alone. One of these (No. 261) recounts how a very devout woman was desirous of seeing a perfectly virtuous man and woman. Communicating her desire to the priest, he told her to return home and to remain alone in fasting and prayer. This she did and after nine days she saw a bright light followed by those who said they were saints. These in turn were followed by the Virgin and her Son. Upon seeing them she had no further desire to live and prayed to be taken with them, which request was granted. When the priest was told of her death, and undertook to prepare her body for burial, he found it giving off an odor more delicate and pleasing to the senses than the perfumes of the Orient.

The usual purpose of the vision is to give commands, or to strengthen the weakhearted or discouraged.⁶ There are one or two accounts, however, in which the vision itself is enlarged upon and the cure or command or lesson, as the case may be, sinks into minor importance. The scene is that of a deeply grieved mother sitting beside the bed of her very religious son, a deaf mute, who was dying of a serious illness. His mother saw him suddenly rise up in his bed and begin to talk to some person unseen and unheard by her. It was the Blessed Mother who had visited him in a vision and healed him (No. 269).

At other times the vision seems to be a kind of clairvoyance thru which the recipient sees what is happening at a distant place at that very moment. In relating one of his own experiences Alfonso declares (No. 345) that

⁶ See table on p. 136 for numbers.

when D. Nuño de Lara abandoned Jérez, in spite of the fact that reinforcements had been sent him, the Moors entered, destroyed the chapel, and tried to burn the image of the Virgin but could not. At that particular time both the king and the queen were taking their siesta at Seville and each dreamed of the Virgin and her Child fleeing from the burning chapel of Jérez. On awaking they learned of the disaster and hastened to retake the city, after which the royal couple, together with their children, restored the church.

Similar to this in so far as the character of the vision is concerned tho in an entirely different setting is No 15 in which Emperor Julian was the victim. In this particular case we are presented with two versions of the legend—one in *Las Cantigas*, originally told supposedly by an eye witness of the events as they happened at the tomb of the saint, and the other in the *Primera Crónica General*. In brief they are as follow:

(Version according to *Las Cantigas*, No. 15)

Emperor Julian had to pass thru Caesarea, where, angered by San Basilio, he promised to return and destroy the city after the conquest of Persia. After much prayer and fasting by the entire city San Basilio had a vision in which he saw the Virgin appear and order San Mercurio, whose tomb and armor were in that church, to avenge her and her son of the evil emperor. Upon awaking an excited fellow priest hastened to report that the arms of San Mercurio had disappeared. San Basilio then called together the people to tell them the news and together they went to examine the tomb. To their surprise the arms were again in their place red with blood. While they were still gazing, astonished, at the bloody weapons,

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

Libano de Sur rushed in and confirmed the news of the emperor's death.

(Version in the *Primera Crónica General*, p. 201)

Emperor Julian, on setting out to conquer Persia, promised to sacrifice to his gods if they would give him victory all the Christians, especially all the bishops, he should find. As he was returning victoriously from the East he was about to lose many of his host thru lack of water. Against the advice of his counselors he took as a guide one of the men of the country and, unaccompanied, went with him in search of water. Suddenly a strange knight appeared before the two, killed the emperor and instantly disappeared. As he expired the emperor took some of his blood in his hand and throwing it heavenward as tho throwing it in the face of someone cried out "Ya uenciste, Galileo, ya uenciste." (He always referred to Jesus as Galileo). The compilers add that some histories say the emperor was killed by one of the enemy knights but in reality it was San Mercurio, for in the church where his body lay it was noticed that his shield and sword disappeared that very day and hour and that they were back in place the next day stained with blood. Because of this it was known that the strange knight was none other than San Mercurio who had killed the great enemy of the faith.

In this last version the vision motif is entirely lacking.

At other times the vision takes on a kind of symbolic or mystic feature, its purpose being to strengthen the faith of the one concerned. One in which the acts of Saint Mary astonish us is that experienced by some nuns commissioned by a religious and devout king (probably Alfonso himself altho he was too modest to say so) to pray for him. They saw the Virgin calling for the king on Easter morn-

ing, saying she would grant anything he asked if he would come. He entered the church and as he did so the image kneeled before him and kissed his hand. He immediately fell on his face in humility. She, thru her image, bade him rise for, she said, "You have always honored me and my Son and when you die you will come to us." After witnessing such magnanimous acts the vision passed and the nuns hastened to tell the king what they had seen. He was devout before, but this greatly increased his devotion (No. 295).

The line between experiences having the mystical element usually considered essential in visions proper, or in dream-visions, and those experiences which some few persons undergo while in full control of all their faculties is so fine as to be at times almost undistinguishable. The following (No. 365) has, indeed, all the marks of a vision but on the other hand the friar manifests none of those emotions usually supposed to accompany such cases. This clerk, contaminated with the Albigensien heresy, did not believe in the immortality of the soul and therefore was about to flee from the convent to a life of pleasure, when he saw the Virgin descend from heaven with a host of angels and return with the soul of a poor, humble, but believing man. This convinced him of his error and he passed the rest of his life in the convent full of holy hope.

The rôle of a saint who admonishes and warns is quite common for the Blessed Mother. She is indeed in many respects like a mother who carefully watches over her children, ready to offer a word of comfort here or one of criticism there. Just like a school boy who tires of his

task and is ready to flee before its completion was a friar of Burgos who began a garment of prayers for the Virgin, but was persuaded by the Devil to leave the monastic life with his task half finished. She, however, appeared to him holding in her hand a dress far too short, and told him to return and finish the work, adding that she wanted him, too, for he was going to die within one year, but that she would come again before the final day. 364 days later she did return and he died on the day following (No. 274)⁷.

Another picture, so very human and so child-like, is that of a doctor who became a friar, but, not liking the poor food, complained considerably. To cure him of this the Virgin appeared with a dish of delicious food and, treating the whole community as so many children, gave some to each one except the complaining clerk. He acknowledged and accepted the lesson (No. 88).

Various methods besides that of the vision are employed to warn the delinquent. These can be best illustrated by giving a brief résumé of three miracles which need no comment.

A gambler, losing heavily (No. 154) curses God and the Virgin and in defiance of their power picks up a

⁷ A candle with healing power is mentioned in No. 259. St. Mary appeared to two men just before a duel and told them to go to her church at Arras. There she appeared to them again and inspired them with the spirit of forgiveness. She also gave them a taper that would cure leprosy. A bishop hearing of this wonderful instrument, took it and because of that contracted the disease; they, with the aid of the candle cured him, discovering that only in their hands did it have any effect.

bow and shoots an arrow into the sky, shouting "D'aquesta uegada ou a Deus ou a sa Madre darei mui gran saetada". Having thus given vent to his feelings he returns to play. A few moments later the arrow, wet with blood, falls on the table around which they are seated. Thinking someone has been wounded, each hastily examines himself. When each is found whole the true significance dawns on them and they become terrified indeed. So great is the effect that the blasphemer repents and enters an austere order—and, it is said, gained heaven.

In No. 196 a gentile^s priest who hated everything connected with Christianity prepared a mold for an image which he expected would answer all his questions. When it came out it had a form quite different from what he had anticipated, so he asked his fellows what it was. They could not help him. Finally some of his Christian acquaintances told him that it was the form of the Virgin, and to prove their assertion took him to the church where he could see for himself. This experience convinced him of his error and he was converted.

The Bishop of Siena (No. 219) had several images made for the church, all in white. Among them was one of the Devil and one of Santa María. As this color did not make Satan look as vile as he really was the Virgin turned the figure black. The prelate, hearing of the change, thought it was some trick and ordered the image washed and scraped, but without result. It was black

^s This peculiar use of the term "gentile" meaning "non-Christian" is quite common in the literature of the period.

thru and thru. He then recognized his sin and prayed for forgiveness.

The hope of reward has ever been one of the strongest arguments offered by any religion. The Mohammedans, the greatest rivals of the Christians at that time, offered thru their faith attractive rewards in the next life, as did Christianity also. But for the peasant and also for the man of the middle class as well as occasionally even for the noble, the future life was something afar off; reward in the present life was much more attractive and it was this that the Virgin granted from time to time to a chosen few. The first miracle recorded in the collection (No. 2) is the old and even then well-known legend of the mantle the Virgin gave to San Ildefonso for his service and which at his death his successor in office, Don Siagrio, dared to appropriate, dying as the result of his sacrilege⁹.

Usually the favor was in return for some special service. In No. 141 it is an answer to the eternal desire to grow young and is bestowed upon a certain very devout friar who always fell on his knees when he heard the name of the Virgin. When very old the abbot assigned two monks to accompany and care for him, but one day when left alone for a few moments he fell and could not rise. He called on the Saint, who appeared and led him by the hand before her altar, where she told him to kiss it and become young. To his great surprise he found himself again a young man of about twenty years.

⁹ There is some similarity between this one and No. 259 summarized on p. 71, note 7.

No. 63 is especially interesting, not only because of its contents but also of its similarity to the story found in the second part of *La Primera Crónica General* (p. 426). A knight, the constant companion of the Count D. García in his campaigns against the Moors, was extremely conscientious in his devotions and always stayed until Mass was entirely over before leaving. One day, due to this, he was late in arriving on the field of battle, tho no one had missed him. As he rode up the Count met and embraced him and bade him have his wounds dressed, congratulating him at the same time, saying that it had been his skill and valor that had saved the day. Shamefacedly the knight glanced at his armor and was surprised beyond words to see it full of holes and bloody. He then realized that some divine messenger had taken his place; and all rejoiced in the miracle.¹⁰

In another instance (No. 105) the reward is the gift of healing, tho this time it is not, as is so often the case, by means of a mantle. The Blessed Virgin appeared to a young girl early in life and told her if she wished to gain heaven she must remain a virgin. The child promised, but her parents married her against her will. She repelled her husband for over a year until, beside himself, he wounded her with a knife. About this time the people of the community began to fall ill with leprosy. She too took the disease and, still suffering from her wound, went to the altar of Santa María. While there, asleep

¹⁰ In the *Crónica* the knight is the son of Fernán González and the Virgin sends "un ángel". Otherwise the story is the same tho told in greater detail.

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

from exhaustion, she was visited in a dream by the Holy Mother who appeared in her dream, cured her, and gave her the power of healing all lepers with her kiss.

There are also a few accounts of the faithful being taken to heaven when life has become intolerable (Nos. 384, 56, etc.).

Just as Santa María, when answering prayer, is not limited in her power to curing bodily ills but may also protect from harm, so in bestowing rewards she does not confine her mercies to those who are suffering. In fact she much more frequently protects them from such harm. Naturally, miracles of this type, all in return for faithful service, cover a large variety of cases such as: the congregation miraculously saved from harm when a heavy beam fell during a sermon (No. 266), a pilgrim saved on falling into the sea (No. 33), a wife saved from an angry husband because she spent too much time at devotions (No. 314), a boy freed after capture by the Moors (No. 359), a clerk who lost his position because he could say only one Mass ordered reinstated (No. 32), and one that reminds us of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," the story of a hermit captured by pirates after they had sacked the surrounding country and were ready to sail away. They started with him on board but each night some mysterious power brought their ships back to where they had been the day before. At last the admiral decided to release the hermit, Count Abran of Germany, and in addition offered him great riches of which he selected only one glass to keep as a reminder of the favor he had received at divine hands (No. 95).

Quite often Saint Mary protects her own from unjust punishment. A confidential adviser of a certain lord was falsely accused by his enemies. Because of his devotion to Santa María she caused the truth to be brought out at the trial so that he was freed while his maligner was burned. She proves equal to the occasion when her followers are submitted to the ordeal of trial by fire¹¹. A married woman's mother-in-law accused her before her husband of unfaithfulness. The wife and the Moor with whom she was accused and who had agreed to act as an accomplice of the mother-in-law were taken to the public square to be burned. The Moor perished immediately but the woman was unharmed, and furthermore the Virgin was seen beside her in the fire (No. 186).

The motherly characteristic of Santa María again comes to the front in No. 47 when she rewards a good priest who has always been punctual in his duties but gives

¹¹ According to the laws the only ordeal allowed was that of combat and that was only encouraged between knights (*Partidas* 7-6-1). In speaking of ordeals in general the law reads: *Partidas* 3-14-8.

Et hay otra que se face por fama, ó por leyes ó por derechos que las partes muestran en juicio para averiguar et vencer sus pleytos asi como delante mostraremos; et aun acostumbraron antiguamente et úsanlo hoy en día, otra manera de prueba, asi como por lid de caballeros ó de peones que se face en razon de riego ó de otra manera: et como quier que en algunas tierras hayan (*sic*) esto por costumbre, pero los sabios antiguos que hicieron las leyes non lo tuvieron por derecha prueba: et esto por dos razones; la una porque muchas vegadas acaesce que en tales lides pierde la verdat et vence la mentira: la otra porque aquel que ha voluntad de se aventurar á esta prueba semeja que quiere tentar a Dios Nuestro Señor, que es cosa que él defendió por su palabra allí do dixo: ve a riedro satanas, non tentarás a Dios tu señor.—(The Italics are mine).

See also "Ordeal" in Hastings *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IX, page 508.

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

way once and, yielding to temptation, becomes thoroly drunk. This she does by caring for him on his way home, when the Devil in the form of a bull, a frightful black man, and a lion torments him. She protects him even to the point of striking the lion with a stick, then she tells him to go and sin no more.¹² At another time she rewards a faithful servant by keeping his wife from harm while he is away in the wars. During his absence a gallant courts her and sends her a pair of shoes. She puts one on to try it and to her dismay is unable to remove it. In fact no one could do so until her husband returned, when he took it off with ease (No. 64).

Santa María is particular about vows that have been made to her and is careful to see that they are conscientiously fulfilled. A woman (No. 117) promised never to work on Saturday, that day being dedicated to the Mother of Christ. When she forgot her vow she was stricken with paralysis. Another mother who forgot her vow made while praying that she might have a child, was punished by having it die before reaching maturity (No. 347).

The conception of "The Bride of Christ" on taking the vows of a nun remains even to the present time. In the Middle Ages, when the cult of the Virgin was at its zenith, the vow of celibacy on the part of men seems to have had a similar appeal with respect to consecration to the worship and love of the Virgin while

¹² In Berceo's *Miraglos de Nuestra Señora* No. 20, we find the same legend, but here the Devil takes the form of a bull, a dog and a lion. The Virgin takes the priest home and puts him to bed and then bids him go to confession next morning and do penance.

she is constantly represented as being extremely jealous of those who have thus dedicated themselves to her. One young man made the vow either under the inspiration of the moment or perhaps even partly in jest, but this did not make it any the less binding. As he was about to begin to play ball he removed the ring of his fiancée from his finger for fear of damaging it, and as he happened to be standing near an image of the Virgin he slipped it on its finger saying as he did so that he would never love another woman. To his surprise and great fear the image bent its finger so the ring could not be removed. His friends advised a monastic life but he did not heed them, shortly afterwards forgetting all about the incident and preparing to marry. But the Virgin appeared to him in two successive dreams and in her anger so disturbed the youth that he wandered aimlessly for a month and then entered a monastery (No. 42). She was a little more lenient at times with young nuns who violated their promise. In fact nearly all those miracles termed unmoral are cases where the Blessed Mother out of pity shielded these same girls from what was considered their just punishment.

As well as being jealous of those who have consecrated themselves to her, the Virgin guards with the greatest care her shrines, her own images and those of her Son, her feast days, and the special customs, etc., that grew up around her individual sanctuaries. She protected her church of Monsarás (Portugal) from an avalanche (No. 113), and the one in Murcia from the political wiles of man by making it impossible to remove as much as one nail (No. 169). Later she saved this same church

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

when even Alfonso X himself consented to its destruction, and still later against the ravages of the Moors. During this period of constant war she frequently had occasion to guard her images against the Mohammedans (Nos. 99, 183, etc.), or against sacrilegious acts of supposed Christians (Nos. 136, 293, etc.). This might be accomplished by causing the images to remain intact amid general destruction of all other objects (No. 99), or to pass thru a severe fire unharmed (No. 39). The occupation of the offenders might be brought to a standstill (No. 183), the offender himself might be physically harmed (No. 293), or the image might put up its arm to protect itself (No. 136). Santa María de Ribila would allow nothing but olive oil to be burned before her shrine (No. 304).

Neither will she tolerate the making and maltreatment of effigies of her Son.¹³ A heavenly voice at Mass warns the congregation, "The Jews who are killing my Son do not desire to be at peace with Him". The Christians rush to the Jewish quarter and find the Jews engaged in beating and spitting upon an effigy of Jesus which they are preparing to crucify. All the Jews perish on the rack for the deed (No. 12). In No. 215 in a little town near Martos a Moor attempts to stab an image but wounds himself instead; stones it but it remains unharmed; puts it in the fire for two days but it is not affected; ties a stone around its neck and then throws it in the river but it does not sink. The King of Granada then sends it to the king of Castile,

¹³ According to the law it was forbidden to make effigies while trying to produce or break the spell of love. *Partidas* 7-23-2.

who is at Segovia; he receives it with great joy and orders it put in his chapel.¹⁴

It is necessary to approach the church of the Virgin with due humility and in a penitent state of mind. Wilful sinners can not force an entry until they have duly and earnestly repented (Nos. 98, 217, etc.), neither are Moors allowed to enter for unholy purposes, but are struck blind and paralyzed, etc. (No. 229). Acts of violence committed in the church are always fittingly punished with disease, paralysis, or death. Sometimes such punishment is accompanied by significant acts by the image of María, sometimes not. In No. 164, because of the affront offered by the Infante D. Fernando in arresting a prior before the altar on the charge of counterfeiting money, the image of the Virgin separated itself from that of the Son and lost its color. After the repentance of the Infante the form of the mother went back to that of the Son but never regained its color.

No. 38 has the added element, by no means uncommon, of the Devil or of demons acting as the agents of God in killing the offenders. This time it was the Conde de Poitiers who with his men entered and desecrated the sanctuary, one going so far as to maltreat the image of the

¹⁴ The conception of wounding an image is developed further in the *Prim. Crón. Gral.* p. 258 a 52, where a Jew for spite enters a church and wounds the image with his knife and then, hiding it under his mantle, makes his way home, where he further mutilates it. When he reaches home he finds the mantle wet with blood but he does not notice that it has dripped on the ground, thus leaving his traces. When the Christians meet at the church they miss the image and trace it by its blood. When the Jew is found, due punishment is meted out to him.

Miracles Performed Voluntarily by the Virgin

Virgin with the Child in her arms by striking it, thereby breaking one of the arms. To his surprise and horror, blood flowed freely from the wound. Demons killed the guilty person, and hearing of it the Count vindicated himself by punishing all those implicated. So particular is the Virgin about the sacredness of her shrines that some pilgrims at Santa María de Terena after becoming engaged in a terrible fight among themselves during the night, were awe-struck, on going out to collect the dead and wounded, to find them all well and reconciled, altho their armor was battered and broken. The Blessed Mother would not tolerate Christian blood shed by Christians in front of her church (No. 198).

Those legends which have to do with the earthly life of the Mother of Jesus are very rare, and when we do find them it almost startles us to think she was ever considered as a person, human in all respects as they were and living on this earth. We learn, however (No. 27), that in the time of the apostles, the Christians had bought a synagogue intending to convert it into a church. When the Jews hear of their intention they reclaim it and carry the matter before Caesar. The Christians go to Mary, who is then living at Mount Sion and ask her advice. She tells them not to fear, for she will help them at the trial. When the day arrives the case is called in the church building. As Peter takes his place beside the altar an image of Mary appears on the altar cloth. This is too much for the Jews, who refuse to carry the trial further. Tradition has it that this was the first church dedicated to Santa María. Some time later Emperor

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Julian ordered the Jews to take away the image of the Virgin, but it frowned on them in such a manner that they feared to touch it.¹⁵

¹⁵ Compare this with the story of Jesus walking through the midst of the crowd that had gathered to throw him over the precipice (Luke 4:28-30).

CHAPTER IV

MIRACLES PERFORMED BY IMAGES

Since the image of the Virgin was intended to be a representation of the Divine Mother, it often, especially in the mind of the peasant, attracted to itself all her attributes. The result was that in a number of cases it was the image and not the Virgin that performed the deed. [Often, also when the miracle was attributed to Santa María it was not simply to the saint, Mary the mother of Jesus, who lived in the distant past, far away in the Holy Land, nor to Mary, the most powerful of all the saints in heaven, but it was to the very present, and very local saint, Santa María de Salas, or Santa María del Puerto, as the case might be.] There is little doubt that in the mind of the common folk there were as many different Saints Mary as there were shrines, and yet, at the same time, these all had a definite connection with the Mother of Christ in some mysterious way which the plain people did not trouble themselves to explain. Just as the mystery of the Trinity did not perturb them nearly as much as it did the Anglo-Saxons

of the North, so this particular problem caused them little concern.

As might be expected, most of the miracles attributed to the image of the Virgin are of the same nature as those performed by the saint herself. The image cures the diseased (No. 349), it bows over a man and thanks him for a hymn of praise he has composed (No. 202), saves a naughty child from punishment (No. 303), protects a man's property from threatened storm (No. 161), restores to health queen Beatriz, mother of Alfonso el Sabio, when the doctors had pronounced her illness incurable (No. 256), restrains a rich libertine knight of Catalonia from committing an immoral act in its presence (No. 312), protects a city from capture by the Moors even after the latter had learned from a prisoner that there were but fifteen men remaining to defend it (No. 185), protects its altar from fire by removing a veil from its head and spreading it over the fire, thereby instantly extinguishing the flames (No. 332), and lastly even pours milk from its sacred breasts as a final argument to convince and convert a Moor (No. 44). The story of No. 321 differs somewhat from this, reminding us of a similar cure attributed to the Child Jesus while on the flight into Egypt.¹ A child was suffering from a swelling in the neck and was pronounced incurable. A friend advised that the patient be taken to the king, adding that all Christian kings had the power of healing. This was done, but the king told them to take it before the image of the Virgin,

¹ Los Tres Reyes Magos.

Miracles Performed by Images

wash the image in pure water, and then give the child this water to drink for as many days as there are letters in the name *M-a-r-í-a*. On the fourth day the child was healed. In two instances the power is extended a little farther and in No. 123 a young friar on dying turned black and ugly. His brethren took a candle from the altar and put it in his hand, which caused his natural color to be restored. Later he returned and appearing to the two friars told them that the reason he became black at death was that he saw Devils, but that the light of the Virgin drove them promptly away. In No. 209 Alfonso was very ill and when the doctors could not give him relief he called for the unfinished manuscript² of *Las Cantigas* and by applying it to the affected part of his body he was healed.

Because of the very high esteem in which the Virgin was held it is common to find instances in which a person swears by her or by her name or image, while she on her part is rightly conscientious in seeing that such oaths are not taken lightly. One young shepherd developed the habit of stealing and was finally caught, but cleared himself by swearing by God *and the Virgin* that he was innocent. A little later he was caught again, and convicted. This time the Virgin allowed him to be hanged, because he had sworn by her falsely (No. 392). Another man (No. 239) perjured himself before her image by adjuring that he had never received a certain article in trust.

² Probably that containing the first one hundred *Cantigas*. See p. 30, note 4.

Even before leaving the church he was overtaken by a severe illness which caused his death within three days. So high and so sacred was this oath before the image of the Virgin held to be, that in one instance a wife, being accused of unfaithfulness by her jealous husband, offered to submit to the ordeal by fire to prove her innocence, but her husband demanded instead that she swear before the altar of Nuestra Señora. Then he added that she could further clear herself by jumping from a high rock. She passed both tests safely and her husband, penitent, begged forgiveness on his knees (No. 341). In other cases the image of the Virgin *speaks*, as, for example, when called upon to bear witness in a difference between a Jew and a Christian over the payment of a debt (No. 25).

The very name of María was one to conjure with.³ Two miracles (Nos. 194 and 254) are attributed to the power of the mere sound of the name; and once (No. 195) a girl is saved because her name is María. In No. 194 a villainous host sends in pursuit of his departing guests some thugs to rob them, but the bandits, on hearing their intended victims call on the name of Santa María for help, become powerless and speechless. In No. 254, the image of the Virgin saves some monks who, while recuperating on the banks of a river from the rigors of convent life, transgress the bounds of what is proper for men of their order. Seeing some devils in the form of

³ For a further study of conjuring, and the power of the names of the Deity see p. 113 ff.

Miracles Performed by Images

men, coming down the river in a boat, the monks, terrified, call on the Virgin for aid. "She alone has saved you," shout the devils as they continue on their way. A girl (No. 195) who had been sold by her father to a knight on his way to a tournament was saved from harm when she told him her name was Mary and that that particular day was one especially consecrated to the Saint's worship. On learning that, the knight sent her for safekeeping to an abbey, while he continued on his journey. At the tournament he was killed and buried in the open prairie.⁴ The Virgin appeared to the girl and told her of his fate demanding that she and the abbess go and give the man a worthy burial, telling them they would be able easily to identify the body, for it would have a rose in its mouth.

* * *

There now remains a group of fifteen poems that do not seem to have any particular purpose other than to produce an atmosphere of mystery; but this very sentiment of the mystical played an important part in the religious worship of the time. The very architecture of the churches tended to produce it, the processions, the ritual, all inspired the same feeling. Herewith are summarized only four poems of this group, which will give a sufficient idea of the emotions aroused by them.

A young girl, a religious fanatic, died very early in

⁴ According to *Las Siete Partidas*, it was prohibited to bury in holy ground those who died in tournaments, for the Church forbade such pastimes. *Partidas*, 1-13-10.

life as the result of self-imposed hardships. Her parents, suspecting poison, ordered an autopsy, and on the heart of the dead girl was found an image of the Virgin (No. 188). In No. 361, Alfonso is said to have given a beautiful image of the Virgin to the monastery of Las Huelgas de Burgos. On Christmas night the strange idea of putting the image to bed occurred to the pious nuns. Almost immediately they saw it change color and turn from side to side. No. 79, of the codex of Toledo (a poem which does not appear in the codex of the Escorial), relates an incident that took place weekly in the church at Constantinople. In this church was a beautiful image of the Holy Mother, covered with a veil. Every Friday an angel descended from heaven to lift the veil, which remained suspended in the air until Saturday evening, (the day on which the faithful came to worship), when the angel would return and lower the veil again. Cántiga No. 226 narrates a legend entirely foreign to Spanish thought and one which must have caused some surprise in its unwonted environment. The incident is said to have happened in "Gran Britaña". The account runs briefly as follows: A company of friars were in their convent saying Mass on Easter morning, when the entire monastery was swallowed up by the earth—the ground closing above it and leaving no trace whatever. For just a year the monks continued in this enforced seclusion, without lack of anything needful; they were even lighted by a marvellous sun. On the next Easter morning all was restored to its former natural state. It can be seen at a glance that this legend is entirely different from anything that has

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been mentioned in this collection; and I have found no parallel to it in anything else of the period.

In closing this chapter attention should be called to two miracles which emphasize the great importance attached to confession.⁵ No. 124 is the story of a man condemned to be stoned because he had broken a law of the Moors in whose land he was living. While undergoing this punishment, he begged permission of the Virgin to make his confession; from that moment his executioners could not harm him. Astonished that their missiles suddenly ceased to have any effect they allowed him to confess, after which he died praising the Blessed Mother. In No. 96 a sinner was unwilling to do penance, altho devoted to Santa María. He was beheaded by robbers, without opportunity for confession. Four days later two friars, on arriving at the spot, were surprised to hear the head plead for the privilege of confession. They summoned a crowd; the head attached itself to the body, confessed, and then became separated again from the body.⁶

⁵ Physicians were forbidden to give medicine until after confession under penalty of excommunication, because illness, it was claimed, was often due to sin. *Partidas*, 1-4-83.

⁶ In these three chapters, as stated above, I have summarized only a sufficient number of the miracles of this collection to illustrate the various types of supernatural phenomena presented. Some of the incidents, altho closely connected with Saint Mary, better illustrate some other phase of this study (such as the character of the Devil, the power of the Host, conjuring, etc.), and when this is the case they have been used in their appropriate place.



CHAPTER V

“THE DEVIL AND ALL HIS WORKS”

His Satanic Majesty is and always has been one of the most interesting of personages. The tracing of his development from the beginning of religion in the dim mythical past to his latest rôle as the prince of evil spirits and “controls” as depicted by Sir Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others of similar faith, is fascinating work. Satan as we find him in the period with which we are concerned is far from being a dull and lifeless character. He is referred to as one who had been as holy and perfect as any, but who, because of his sin and treason, became the lowest of all.¹ As such, having become the arch-enemy of God, it is his aim to drag down to Hell as many as possible. At the same time, the nearer he comes to localities especially dedicated to his Enemy, God, the more difficult it is for him to exercise his powers. In *Las Siete Partidas* it is stated as a fact that the Devil cannot

¹ Et quanto en síse todas las criaturas fizo buenas, mas cayeron algunas dellas en yerro; las unas por sí mesmas, así como el diablo se perdió por su orgullo et por su soberbia, et los otros por consejo de otri, así como Adan, etc. *Partidas*, 1-3.—Introduction p. 38.

harm the souls of those interred in holy ground as easily as of those buried elsewhere.² He is subject to conjuring³ and can never face the Virgin. In fact, the mere sound of her name is often sufficient to drive him away (No. 254). To our surprise he takes on one hellish attribute which we do not customarily connect with Spain of this period, but rather with the Orient. This is illustrated in *Las Cantigas* No. 82, where it is related that a monk on his bed saw some devils in the form of swine approach, but they dared not touch him because of his holiness. Shortly afterwards a black man appeared who said he was going to destroy the monk, whereupon the latter, in desperation, appealed to the Virgin. As she hastened to him the devils disappeared *in a cloud of smoke*.

Demonic possession is quite common and has only the well-known New Testament characteristics. The incidents as recorded could easily have taken place in the time of Jesus in the Holy Land. But the humorous element manifests itself at rare intervals even here, as we see in No. 343 of *Las Cantigas* where we find that a girl, possessed, is able, on seeing a person, to tell what his secret sin is and has a mania for divulging this in public. Needless to say, she is soon shunned by all. Even the priest to whom she was first taken was mocked by her, the holy water did not protect him, and he was not

² "Cerca de las eglesias tovieron por bien los santos padres que fuesen las sepolturas de los cristianos, et esto por quatro razones: . . . la quarta porque los diablos non han poder de se allegar tanto á los cuarpos de los muertos que son soterrados en los cementerios como á los que yacen de fuera:" *Partidas* 1-13-2.

³ See conjuring, p. 113.

able to face her. However she was finally cured before the altar at Rocamador.

The compilers of the *Primera Crónica General*⁴ saw nothing in the visions of Mohammed but demoniac possession.

Not infrequently Satan resorts to taking on other forms than his own to attain his ends. One story (well known long before Alfonso's time) which found its way into *Las Cantigas* is that the Devil, taking on the form of an apostle, ordered a pilgrim to so mutilate himself, as penance for his sin, that he died, after which Satan prepared to carry away his soul but was prevented by Santiago (St. James) who rescued it.⁵ At another time, when he wished to take vengeance on a philanthropic Christian who had established a hospital, he entered the corpse of a handsome young man, becoming the good man's servant, hoping thus to have an opportunity to assassinate him, but was prevented from doing so because his master prayed every day. At last, the bishop made a visit to the hospital and the Devil, fearing to appear before him, pleaded illness. The kind prelate, solicitous for his welfare, requests to be allowed to see him. Immediately upon coming into his presence he notes his actions and, suspecting something, conjures him in the name of God. The Devil confesses and flees leaving the dead body of the young man at the feet of the bishop and philanthropist (No. 67). While thus taking on other forms he is at times distinctly

⁴ p. 266. For a further discussion see "Visions", p. 107.

⁵ *Las Cantigas* No. 26, See also Berceo's *Miraglos de Nuestra Señora*, VIII.

mischievous, and we can see almost the sparkle of his eyes when, finding that the Virgin has made a certain innocent man invisible in order that he may escape his foes who accuse him falsely, Satan himself takes the form of this man and plays practical jokes with his pursuers (No. 213).

The familiar "Devil Pact" is to be found in its simplicity when a Jew sells his soul to the Devil, and later on repenting and praying most earnestly to the Virgin, finds that she hears his prayer and impels the Devil to return the contract.⁶

This simple, and even then conventional, plot does not seem to have satisfied the demands of the time, since we find it occasionally introduced with variations. One man (in No. 281) to gain his lost wealth promises the Devil he will deny God and the Church, but refuses to deny a certain one of the saints, and that is the Virgin. Diabolus hesitates, but remarks

". . .Pois negaste
Deus, non mi á ren que fazer
de esa Madre non negares."

Time passes and he prospers, until one day he is called upon to attend the king on a public function during which, accidentally, the monarch enters a church. The knight refuses to accompany him, saying it is forbidden him to do so. With that the image of the Virgin beckons to him, and upon being thus reassured he enters and confesses all. This act has such an effect on the king that

⁶ *Las Cantigas*, No. 3. Berceo: *Los Miraglos de Nuestra Señora*, No. 24, varies from this slightly.

"The Devil and all His Works"

he adds a fortune to the visible protection of Santa María (No. 281). Another illustration is that of the man who barter his wife to the Devil, but the Blessed Mother does not allow the bargain to be carried out.⁷

Aside from the above-mentioned traits, that are to be found almost wherever the Devil himself is present, we notice a few others that are rare.

There is the threat of bottling the imps later mentioned on page 116.

The *Primera Crónica General* contains a legend in which the devils appear almost like human beings holding a general conference. Antidio, archbishop of Vésentine, on crossing the bridge of the river of Duero, sees a group of devils in the field. Apparently without fear, the archbishop approaches to see what it is all about. As he draws near his attention is attracted by the report of one of the imps to the effect that after seven years he has been successful in making the Pope sin. The clergyman immediately demands as proof that the devil take him to the Vatican on his back that he may verify the statement. This is done and the report found to be correct. After making the Pope do penance, the archbishop, by conjuring in the name of God and Santa Cruz, now requires the diminutive devil, whom he has kept waiting all this time, to carry him back to his diocese.⁸

Very often the Devil appears as a servant of God—as a sort of scavenger whose business it is to do the disagreeable

⁷ *Idem* No. 216. Very interesting for its details is the devil-pact story in *El Arcipreste de Hita*, 1454 ff.

⁸ p. 206.

work. The Vandal king, Gunderico, after sacking Seville, attempts to enter the church by force to plunder it also. As he approaches the door he is met by the Devil and is killed for his sacrilege.⁹ In *Las Cantigas* No. 34 the Devil kills a Jew for robbing an image of the Virgin, while in No. 192 he so torments an imprisoned Moor for two nights in succession that the Moor is glad to become a Christian.¹⁰

Hell, the abode of the Devil, is miserably slighted by the pen of Alfonso el Sabio. Numerous references are made to "el fuego dell inferno"; a little more graphic is

"D' esto direy un miragre
que fezo a Uírgen santa,
Madre de Deus groriosa,
que nos faz mercée tanta,
que nos dá saud' e siso
et ão demo quebranta
*que nos quer ão inferno
leuar, en que nos afume.*" (No. 338.)

But no attempts are made to describe the familiar place.¹¹

Altho there can be no doubt that enchantment was known and practiced, as evidenced by the laws against it,¹² it is strange that there is but one instance of it in the

⁹ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 212.

¹⁰ See p. 63.

¹¹ In *El Libro de Alejandro* is a vivid description, 2180 ff. which was doubtless known by Alfonso. See also Sr. Miguel Asín Palacios' *La Escatología Musulmana en La Divina Comedia*, Madrid, 1919, for a discussion of the Mohammedan legends of Inferno and their influence on Europe in general and Spain and Italy in particular.

¹² See the laws cited under p. 101.

Primera Crónica General, and that, the story of Simon Magus, the enchanter, is in the narration of the history of events in the time of Christ. In *Las Cantigas*, where we would naturally look to find records of this nature, there are only such cases as the threat of the clerk to bottle the devils (No. 125), occasional accusations of the practice of enchantment (No. 8), or a reference to the fact that medicine, enchantment, and prayers were all of no avail in the attempt to cure a case of rabies until at last Santa María de Terena was approached (No. 319). The motif furnished by this practice was not developed, nor did it become popular in literature, until the Books of Chivalry.¹³

¹³ The best example of enchantment in Castillian prior to Alfonso is Berceo's *Miraglos de Nuestra Señora*, XXIV, *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Vol. 57. Madrid, 1883. In *El Libro de Alejandro* are to be found enchanted fountains, 1331 ff., enchanted armor, 615 ff., enchanted persons, 678 ff., and the magic knot no one can untie, 787 ff. See Samuel M. Waxman, *Chapters in Spanish Magic*, New York, 1916, for a study of this subject in the period immediately following Alfonso.

CHAPTER VI

DIVINATIONS—OMENS—AUGURIES

The love of the mysterious found its greatest development in Spain in the study of divination, in omens and in auguries. In the practice of this art Spain excelled all other countries of Europe in the Middle Ages. Gaston Paris makes the following significant statement in speaking of the episode of the journey of the seven sons of Lara going to visit their uncle Ruy Velázquez, the quarrel and reconciliation:

“Tout cet épisode est fort beau et d'un caractère bien original; il n'y a rien de pareil dans notre épopée; on sait au contraire le grand rôle que jouait, dans le haut moyen âge espagnol, et surtout dans la vie des aventuriers qui faisaient la force et la terreur de la Castille, l'inspection du vol des oiseaux; le Cid lui-même “vivait à augure.”¹

The Spanish at this time, in spite of the intermixtures of other races, were essentially a Roman people and this was one of the characteristics of the old Roman civilization

¹ La légende des infants de Lara, Paris, 1898, p. 5-6. (Extract from *Journal des savants*, mai et juin, 1898.)

that had not been materially changed by time or religion. It is true that such practices in all cases except by means of astrology, were forbidden by law,² but the fact that the law was so full and explicit implies that divination and the study of omens and auguries not only existed but must have been quite common. Such customs are usually mentioned merely in passing, as in the miracle of the Host mentioned on page 118 or in such statements as the one to the effect that king Herod died according to the prognostications of a Greek augur,³ or the simple statement that a certain person foretold that certain events would come to pass without giving any clue as to how this information was received⁴. Another indication that divining was quite common is that when Tiberius expelled from Rome all who practiced black magic the chronicler considered the event of such minor importance that he gives it only two lines:

“ . . . Echo de la
cibdat de Roma todos los adeuinos et los en-
cantadores;”⁵

Under the law in *Las Siete Partidas* treating of actions for which a person might be legally dishonored, is the following entry:

² See note 6, p. 101.

³ *Prim. Crón. Gral.* 120 b 30.

⁴ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 115 a 39 ff.

⁵ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 111 a 51-53.

“Como maguer el astrologo diga alguna cosa de otro por razón de su arte, non le puede ser desmandado por deshonra.

Pierden los homes á las vegadas algunas de sus cosas, et van á los astrólogos a rogar que caten por su arte quales son aquellos que las tienen, et los astrólogos usando de su sabiduria dicen ó señalan á algunos que las han: et en tal caso como este decimos que los que asi señalaren non pueden demandar que les fagan emienda desto asi como en manera de deshonra: et esto es porque lo que ellos dicen, fácenlo segunt su arte, et non con entención de los deshonrar. Pero como quier que non puedan demandar emienda dello como en manera de deshonra, con todo eso si el adevino fuese baratador que faga muestra de saber lo que non sabe, bien lo pueden acusar que reciba la pena que mandan las leyes del título de los adevinos et de los encantadores.”⁶

⁶ *Partidas*, 7-9-17. The very interesting Título *De los adevinos et de los encantadores* is as follows:

TITULO XXIII

De los Agoreros, et de los Sorteros, et de los otros Adevinos, et de los Hechiceros et de los Truhanes.

Adivinar las cosas que son por venir cobdician los homes naturalmente et porque algunos dellos prueban esto en manera que yerran ellos et meten á otros muchos en yerro, por ende pues que en el título ante deste fablamos de los alcahuetes que facen errar á los homes et á las mugeres en muchas maneras, queremos aqui decir otrosi destos que son muy dañosos á la tierra: et mostraremos qué quiere decir adivinanza: et cuántas maneras son della: et quién puede acusar a los facedores della: et ante quién: et qué pena merescen los que se trabajan a obrar della como non deben.

LEY I

Qué quiere decir Adivinanza, et cuántas maneras son della.

Adivinanza tanto quiere decir como querer tomar poder de Dios para saber las cosas que son por venir. Et son dos maneras de adivinanza: la primera es la que se face por arte de astronomía, que es una de

Very closely associated with the foregoing accounts, altho differing somewhat in nature, are a large number of legends mentioning wonderful signs that appear in the

las siete artes liberales: et esta segunt el fuero de las leyes non es defendida de usar á los que son ende maestros et la entienden verdaderamente, porque los juicios et los asmamientos que se dan por esta arte, son catados por el curso natural de los planetas et de las otras estrellas, et tomados de los libros de Tolomeo et de los otros sabidores que se trabajaron desta esciencia: mas las otros [sic] que non son ende sabidores, non deben obrar por ella, como quier que se puedan trabajar de aprenderla estudiando en los libros de los sabios. La segunda manera de adivinanza es de los agoreros, et de los sorteros et de los fechiceros que catan en aguero de aves, ó de estornudos ó de palabras, á que llaman proverbio, ó echan suertes, ó catan en agua, ó en cristal, ó en espejo, ó en espada ó en otra cosa luciente, ó facen fechizos de metal ó de otra cosa qualquier, o adivinan en cabeza de home muerto, ó de bestia, ó de perro, ó en palma de niño ó de muger vírgen. Et estos truhanes atales et todos los otros semejantes dellos porque son homes dañosos et engañadores, et nacen de sus fechos muy grandes daños et malos á la tierra, defendemos que ninguno dellos non more en nuestro señorío nin use hi destas cosas: et otrosi que ninguno non sea osado de acogerlos en sus casas nin de encobrirlos.

LEY II

De los que escantan (encantan ?) los Espíritus Malos ó facen imágenes ó otros fechizos, ó dan yerbas para enamoramiento de los homcs et de las mugeres.

Nigromancia dicen en Latin á un saber estraño que es para escantar los espíritus malos. Et porque de los homes que se trabajan á facer esto viene muy grant daño á la tierra et señaladamente á los que los creen et les demandan alguna cosa en esa razón, acaesciéndoles muchas ocasiones por el espanto que reciben andando de noche buscando estas cosas atales en los lugares extraños, de manera que algunos dellos mueren, ó fincan locos o demuniados; por ende defendemos que ninguno non sea osado de trabajarse de usar tal nemiga como esta, porque es cosa que pesa á Dios et viene ende muy grant daño a los homes. Otrosi defendemos que ninguno non sea osado de facer imágenes de cera, nin de metal nin de otros fechizos malos para enamorar los homes con las mugeres, nin para partir el amor que algunos hobiesen entre sí. Et aun defendemos que ninguno non sea osado de dar yerbas

heavens or on the earth at certain significant moments in the life of an individual or nation. These differ from omens and auguries because they are out-of-the-ordinary happenings, while with auguries and omens proper there is nothing whatever unusual in the event itself and all depends upon the interpretation. The wonderful signs usually require interpretation, but the person seeing them, even the uninitiated, knows immediately that they *have* a meaning. When Octavius Caesar ascended the throne there appeared a rainbow around a clear sun, and again, three suns appeared that merged into one, signifying first, that the Roman Empire, divided into three at the death of Caesar, would become one, and second, that Christ would

nin brebage á home ó á muger por razon de enamoramiento, porque acaesce a las vegadas que destos brebages atales vienen a muerte los que los toman, ó han muy grandes enfermedades de que fincan ocasionados para siempre.

LEY III

Quién puede acusar á los Truhanes, et á los Baratadores sobredichos et qué pena merescen.

Acusar pueda cada uno del pueblo delante del judgador á los agoreros, et á los sorteros et á los otros baratadores de que fablamos en las leyes deste título. Et si les fuere probado por testigos o por conciencia dellos mesmos que facen ó obran contra nuestro defendimiento algunos de los yerros sobredichos, deben morir por ende: et los que los encubieren en sus casas á sabiendas, deben seer echados de la tierra para siempre. Pero los que ficiensen encantamientos ó otras cosas con buena entención, así como para sacas demonios de los cuerpos de los homes o para deslegar a los que fuesen marido et muger que non pudiesen convenir en uno, o para desatar nube que echase granizo ó niebla porque non corrompiese los frutos de la tierra, ó para langosta ó pulgon que daña el pan ó las viñas, ó por alguna otra cosa provechosa semejante destas non debe haber pena, ante decimos que deben resebir gualardon por ello.

show the world the mystery of the Trinity⁷. More portentous still were the phenomena which appeared during the consulship of Sextus Julius Caesar and Lucius Marcus, when many signs, fire and noises occurred in the sky, blood flowed from bread as if it were meat when it was cut, real stones and earth were hailed upon the land, the earth opened and flames shot to the sky, a mountain of the color of gold descended from heaven and ascended again until it covered the sun, tame animals became wild, etc.⁸ Then, as we leave Roman history and come on down to the 7th century, a sign in the form of a sword appeared in the sky and remained for 30 days, which "demostraua el sennorio que los moros auien de auer."⁹

While usually quite distinct, the line between these marvelous signs, and omens and auguries proper, may at times

⁷ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 97 b 26 ff.

⁸ *Idem*, p. 55 a 4 ff.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 274 b 22 ff. On page 307 b 4 is to be found Alfonso's version of the legend of the last king of the Goths which is as follows: After opening the palace and finding the ark "el rey mando la abrir, et non fallaron en ella sinon un panno en que estauan escriptas letras ladinas que dizien assi: que quando aquellas cerraduras fuessen crebantadas et ell arca et el palacio fuessen abiertos et lo que y yazie fuesse uisto, que yentes de tal manera como en aquel panno estauan pintadas que entrarien en Espanna et la conueririen et serien ende sennores. El rei quando aquello oyo, pesol mucho por que el palacio fiziera abrir, e fizo cerrar ell arca et el palacio assi como estauan de primero. En aquel palacio estauan pintados omnes de caras et de parecer et de manera et de uestido assi como agora andan los alaraues, e tenien sus cabeças cubiertas de tocas, et seyen en cauillos, et los uestidos dellos eran de muchos colores, e tenian en las manos espadas et ballestas et sennas alcadas. E el rey et los altos omnes fueron mucho espendados por aquellas pinturas que uiran."

For a detailed study of this legend see Juan Menéndez Pidal, *Leyendas del último rey goda*.

become almost imperceptible; as, for instance, when queen Dido arrived in Africa she immediately prepared to build a city, and as the workmen set about digging the foundation for the walls they found the skull of a cow. This was taken to the augurs and they declared it signified that any city built there would always be one of toil and always under the power of others. They moved to another place and again began to dig, this time finding the skull of a horse, which, said the augurs, signified that a city built in that place would always be one of pride and of warriors.¹⁰

Incidents of this kind might conveniently be placed in either class, because, altho the event itself does not startle one, it does not take a soothsayer to tell a person of an imaginative turn of mind that a skull found under such circumstances probably has a significance.

The foregoing have been but signs which *indicated* the future, and no matter how striking the *form* an interpretation was necessary. But there are a few cases recorded where a person is apparently given to see into the future and somehow is permitted to know what is going to occur, without any medium whatsoever, and furthermore is impelled to speak out what he knows. We find that a Roman senator and his wife enter the temple of Jupiter and as they do so a priest who has all the symptoms of demoniac possession, cries out, "Aquest mugier trae en el uentre cosa que destruya de rayz aqueste grand templo et menuzara todos los dios que en el estan."¹¹ The event fore-

¹⁰ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 35 b 49 ff.

told did come to pass when the child referred to became a friend of the emperor and thereby succeeded in having the temple destroyed. Then is added the significant statement that this happened just 1000 years after Rome was founded.

The agent used to convey the message is usually a person, but it may be an animal. An ox tells his master of the future;¹² or even an idol in a heathen temple imparts the knowledge that the temple will stand only “*fasta que parriesse uirgen*”¹³. — The temple fell when Christ was born.

¹¹ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 164 a 13 ff.

¹² *Idem*, p. 98 a 8 ff.

¹³ *Idem*, p. 107 a 40.

CHAPTER VII

VISIONS

The two terms *dream* and *vision* seem to have been only vaguely differentiated in the period we are studying, just as even at the present time they are often used almost synonymously. In *las Cantigas* we find:

“.....et log’ o meninno
se fillou ben a *dormir*
et uiú en *uijon á Madre*” (No. 53),

and

“et *dormindo*, uiù en *uijon*
Santa María con grand’az (No. 68),

but in No. 336 the person certainly was not asleep, for:

“El aquest assí fazendo
e con o demo luitando,
non estand’ en un estado,
mais caend’e leuantando,
uiú en *uijon* a Reynna
dos cëos, et él chorando
lle disse.....”

A similar confusion of the two words is characteristic of the other works of Alfonso X.

Because they are thus synonymously employed it has not seemed desirable to treat the two separately. Also it must be remembered that in many instances, especially in *Las Cantigas*, some simple statement is made such as "The Virgin appeared to him," with no indication whether it was in a dream or a vision, or whether, in the form of an ordinary human being she appeared to the person concerned while he was in full possession of his faculties. It is to be regretted that there is no definition of either "dream" or "vision" in *Las Siete Partidas*. The only reference to dreams is one to the effect that in themselves they are not sufficient authority for the establishment of a church or an altar¹.

Visions and significant dreams² may conveniently be divided into three classes: (a) those which deal with what is to us the unknown fate of persons in whom we are interested; (b) those concerned with contemporary events at which we ourselves are not present; and (c) those associated with the future.

¹ *Partidas*, 1-10-10 and reads as follows:

*Que non deben facer eglesia nin altar por sueño nin por
antoianza de ninguno.*

Descubren o facen algunos homes engañosamente altares por los campos o por las villas, diciendo que ha en aquellos lugares reliquias de algunos santos asacando que facen miraglos; et por esta razon mueven las gentes de muchas partes que vengan alli como en romeria por llevar algo dellos: otros hi ha que por sueños o por vanas antoianzas que les aparescen facen altares et las descubren en los lugares sobredichos: . . .el obispo debe amonestar las gentes que non vayan a aquellos lugares en romeria, fueras ende si fallasen hi ciertamente cuerpo ó reliquias de algunt santo que hobiese hi fecho su morada, o fuese hi martrizado."

² Repetition will not be made here of what already has been said as the characteristics of the visions in *Las Cantigas*, Cf. pages 66 ff.

Visions

In the literature of Alfonso X, those pertaining to the first group deal exclusively with the fate of the soul in the other world. For instance, shortly after the death of king Dagobert of France a holy man had a vision in which he saw the devils contending for and almost successfully carrying off to Hell the soul of the deceased king³. Many good men desired this consummation, but Saint Denis, bishop of Paris, pleaded to God for Dagobert's soul and the bishop's prayer was granted.⁴

In reading other passages we can almost imagine ourselves in the presence of a clairvoyant medium. Alfonso X dreams of the destruction of the church of Jerez (No. 343), and in a similar manner the Emperor Justinian has a vision of the evil that Gilemer the Vandal is doing in Africa⁵; while the Emperor Heraclius dreams of the misfortunes of his troops in Africa.⁶ All of these visions are contemporary with the events involved.

By far the greater part of the visions and dreams have to do with the future of the individual to whom they are manifested; and of these visions by far the greater number are symbolic. Occasionally the messenger appears and gives a direct command, as San Fernando when he appeared to Maestro Jorge and bade him take a fine ring from the finger of a statue recently erected to the saint's memory by his son Alfonso X, and put it on the finger

³ Asín, in *La Escatalogía Musulmana*, p. 287 ff., and Guillén Robles in *Leyendas Moriscas*, Prólogo, Vol. I, discuss this type of legends and their origins.

⁴ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 276.

⁵ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 253 b 24.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 270 a 1.

of the image of the Virgin⁷; or as when the saints appeared to Taion who had gone on a seemingly hopeless task to Rome to find the famous book *Moralia in Job* and told him where it was to be found, even mentioning the exact position in the chest;⁸ or again, as when Aeneas, upon his landing on the shores of Africa, dreamed of his future meeting and love affair with Dido⁹. But it is the symbolic vision that was the most popular.

Usually this type of vision is quite simple in its elements, as when Our Lord appeared to Emperor Marcian and showed him the broken bow of Attila. The emperor was at a loss to understand the real import of this, but interpreted it as a favorable omen. Later he discovered that on the very night of the vision Attila had married, and had died as a result of the debauch that had accompanied the wedding.¹⁰ This is an example of the usual type, but at times such a vision is considerably elaborated, involving much symbolism and mysticism. One of the best introduces the Emperor Constantine. It is given here in the writer's words:

“Et (el emperador) morando y en una cibdat que auie nombre Bizancio, auinol assi una noche, que el yaziendo durmiendo en su lecho, uinol en uision quel parauan delante una muger uegezuela muy fea et much enatia et muerta; et diziel sant Siluestre: “Costantino, faz oracion et resuscitara esta muger”. Et el oraua luego, et resuscitaua la muger, et tornauasse sana et muy fermosa;

⁷ *Las Cantigas* No. 292.

⁸ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 279 b 1.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 38 b 11.

¹⁰ *Prim. Crón. Gal.*, p. 237 b 29.

et pagauasse Constantino della de buen amor et casto, et cubriela de su manto, et poniel su corona en la cabeça, et todo quanto bien ell auie. E Elina su madre diziel: "Fijo, tuya sera aquesta, et numqua morra fasta la fin del mundo."

On awaking, the Emperor fails to recognize the meaning of the dream, until after seven days of fasting on his part, the Pope Sylvester.

"apareciol otra uez et dizol: "la uieia que tu uiste es Bizancio, esta cipdat en que estas, que uees que a ya los muros todos caydos de uegedat. Et por ende sube en el cauallo en que andeste en Roma en las aluas el dia que fuste bateado, quando andeste por todas las yglesias de los apostoles et de los martires pintandolas et afeytandolas con oro et con plata et con piedras preciosas; et leuaras en tu mano la tu senna que a nombre *labaro*, et soltaras las riendas al cauallo, et iras por o quier que te ell angel guiar, et leuaras por tierra rastrando la punta del labaro, de guisa que fagas sennal que parezca. Et por o aquella sennal fuere, mandaras fazer muros muy altos et muy fuertes; et esta cibdat que es uieia, tornar la as nueua, et poner las nombre del tuyo, et sera en ella muy loado el nombre del Nuestro Sennor Ihesu Cristo, et aura y muchas yglesias a onra de todos los santos, et regnaran en ella tus fijos et tus nietos et todos los que de ti uinieren".¹¹

There is also quite a long account of the visions beheld by Mohammed while he was at Jerusalem, from which city he was permitted to ascend thru the seven heavens. The compilers preface the history of this arch-enemy of the Christian faith with the statement that Mohammed

¹¹ *Idem*, p. 195 a 16.

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suffered from epilepsy, because of which he saw visions that he thought were of God but in reality they were of the Devil.¹² The account ends also with a reminder to the same effect¹³.

¹² *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 266-274.

¹³ Asín, in *Escatología Musulmana*, has made a careful study of this and similar visions. See also the *Prólogo* to Guillén Robles', *Leyendas Moriscas*, p. 66 ff.

CHAPTER VIII

VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS

We now come to a group of miscellaneous elements which, altho some of them were doubtless quite common in the daily life of the people, have for one reason or another received comparatively slight attention at the hands of Alfonso. Some of these, as conjuring for instance, are usually now considered as a part of black magic, but it will be noted in the following paragraphs that it was freely practiced by the Church and in fact formed a part of the most sacred religious rites. In the discussion that follows, these various subjects are taken up in alphabetical order.

I.—CONJURING

Conjuring, says Alfonso in effect, is the art of using potent words in the right manner. Then he illustrates the point with naïve quaintness—as he does so often: “These words, just like a carpenter’s tool, may serve for many different purposes, but it is necessary, if they are to have the effect desired, that they be said by a person who

knows how. The fact that they do have effect is seen from the results of everyday life."¹ The fourth rank of the clergy was held by the Exorcist, and this title

“quier tanto decir en griego como conjurador, ca estos han poder a conjurar en el nombre de Dios á los demonios que salgan de los homes et que non tornen á ellos jamas: et por ende deben saber estas conjuraciones de cuer porque las sepan decir quando menester fuere: et esta órden fizo primeramente el rey Soloman.²

How much this short passage taken from a law book tells us of the current beliefs, and of the place held by conjuring! Note, however, that conjuring was limited, according to law, to dispossessing the Devil. This practice, like baptism, was in the hands of the clergy and could only be resorted to by the layman in cases of dire necessity. Enchantment and wizardry were strictly forbidden, and for the practice of such criminality a father was given the right to disinherit his son³. In thus combatting the Devil the sacred oil, or *crisma*, was one of the most powerful instruments. In setting forth its power and significance, the law reads:

“et por ende la crisma es asi como posadero de Ieso Cristo, que toma aquella posada para él, poniendo hi la su señal de la cruz et la entrega de quanto hi falla, echando de hi al diablo et todo lo que hi tiene.”⁴

¹ A summary of *Partidas*, 1-4-16.

² *Idem*, 1-6-11.

³ *Idem*, 6-7-4.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 1-4-49.

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The method by which the oil was to be prepared is expounded as follows:

“... halo él (obispo) de tomar, et exôrcizarlo et bendecirlo desta guisa, diciendo que conjura á Satanás, et á todos sus malos espíritus, et a toda manera de fantasma en el nombre del Padre, et del Fijo et del Espíritu santo que si está en aquel olio que se parta dél. . . etc.

After having been thus carefully prepared,

“Grande es la virtud que ha en este olio. . . Esta virtud es en tres maneras: La primera en la natura del olio, la segunda en las palabras que se dicen sobre él, la tercera en las obras que se facen con él.”⁵

Not only the *crisma*, but certain words (among them the following) possessed special virtue: “Avemaría”, because from the contents of that prayer one comes to understand the mystery of Jesus, moreover it contains the words of salutation used by the angel to María and these words still greatly please her; “Paternoster”, because it reveals the Father and contains the seven petitions which Jesus taught His disciples; and “Credo in Deum”, because it reveals the Holy Spirit and contains all the faith and science of Christianity.⁶

From these and similar regulations pertaining to the various sacraments, especially baptism, perhaps we might not err seriously in supposing that the practitioners of black magic received not a little of their inspiration from the Church itself, altho much against the will of the latter.

⁵ *Partidas*, 1-4-38 and 39.

⁶ *Idem*, 1-4-71.

With such a number of laws, regulations, etc., it might at first seem a little surprising to find so few legends in which conjuring plays an important part, but probably this can be accounted for by the fact that it was so common a practice that it was scarcely esteemed worthy of mention. The most interesting story for our present purpose — and one which is illustrative of the group in general — is that of the great debate conducted in Rome in the year 320 between the Christians and the Jews. The latter, to prove the superiority of their God, whispered His name in the ear of an angry bull, which promptly fell dead. The Christians went even further; they whispered the name of their God in the ear of the *dead* animal, which immediately returned to life and, quite gentle and meek, was led from the assembly.⁷

In *Las Cantigas* conjuring is mentioned only in passing references, and almost always it is the Devil who is conjured to leave a person (No. 67). But in one instance we have the well known story of a man, this time a monk, who has at his command the services of the Devil and when Satan cannot procure for him what he desires, because the person concerned is under the special protection of Santa María, the monk threatens him and his host of imps in these words:

“Ide fazer
Com’ eu a donzela aia
log’ esta noit’ en meu poder;
se non, *eu hũa redoma*
todos uos ensserraría. (No. 125.)

⁷ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, 189 ff. In *Las Cantigas* No. 144 the scene of

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II.—GHOSTS

There is not a genuine clean-cut ghost in the entire period. In fact, such apparitions as we know them seem never to have flourished very vigorously in Spain. There are *fantasmas*, and *sombras*, etc., in abundance in a later period, but the ghost that appeals to present day observers was entirely lacking. In the time of Alfonso X, the function of the ghost, which is usually that of issuing warnings from the other world, was generally exercised by the saints or angels. In one case, it is true, a friar returns after his decease to explain to his two brethren why his corpse turned black at death and was restored to its natural color when a candle from the altar of the Virgin was placed in its hand (No. 123). But this is a very poor example; there is no element of fear recorded. The shade does not pass thru closed doors, weapons do not pierce its body without effect, etc. Emperor Julian has a rather ghostly experience when he is killed by the phantom knight,⁸ but this is in reality a returned saint and not a ghost, and besides he kills with a weapon — a most unorthodox piece of behavior for a ghost.

There is only one good ghost story in the entire lot, and this claims to be no more than a narrative from Roman history, apparently told solely because it is in the old records. Emperor Caius Caligula was assassinated and his enemies half burned his body, then in haste par-

the miracle is a bull ring. For a history of the bullfight in Spain see Conde de las Navas, *Historia de las corridas de toros*.

⁸ See p. 68.

tially buried it. Because of this his spirit could not rest in peace but tormented the keepers of the garden where the body lay, and the guardians of the place where he had been killed, until the cremation was properly performed and the ashes suitably buried. This has indeed the necessary elements of a ghost story, but as indicated above, it seems to have found its way into the literature purely by chance and makes no literary impression on the period.⁹

III.—THE HOST

The sacrament of communion was intended especially to remove the tendency to do evil rather than good. This sacrament being the most frequently observed of all and in many ways closely associated with Extreme Unction which may be described as the most potent, there grew up around the Host a number of legends. The Host, on account of its extreme sacredness, became one of the favorite points of attack for the practitioners of black magic, who seemed to have considered it as a most powerful charm. Four of the miracles¹⁰ in *Las Cantigas* were performed to protect it from such an unholy use, altho in only one of these, which is briefly as follows, does the black magician appear in person:¹¹ a countryman wished to secure a large yield of honey with little effort, so he consulted a *sorteira*, who

⁹ For the study of the ghost in the drama see C. E. Whitmore, *The Supernatural in Tragedy*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1915.

¹⁰ Nos. 104, 128, 208, and 238.

¹¹ That is in No. 128.

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told him that next time he went to communion he should not swallow the Host nor touch it with his teeth but should take it and put it in one of the hives. Having done so, he found later upon opening the hive, an image of the Virgin and Child. Frightened, he hastened to the priest, who ordered the marvel taken in procession to the church. There, when it was blessed, it turned back again into the simple Host.

The Host is again transformed in No. 149. Here it is a devout priest who cannot bring himself to believe in transubstantiation. One day at Mass the Host disappeared and the priest saw before him the Virgin and Child. He asked the Virgin if she had the Host. "Yes, it is here," she said showing him her Son. With that, upon explaining why it took the form of bread and wine, she disappeared. As she vanished the priest again saw the bread and wine as it was previously, but he no longer doubted.

Aside from this type of story, illustrating the sacredness and inviolability of the Host, there are a number of cures of various kinds purporting to have been wrought in persons waiting before the altar at the time of Mass.¹² The hours themselves at which Mass was celebrated were symbolic. These were ordinarily the third hour, the hour in which the Jews demanded the death of Jesus and in which He was scourged; the sixth hour, that of the crucifixion and the ascension; or the ninth hour. In cases of conflict with an hour of regular occupation, or other reason of necessity, private Mass might be said earlier or later

¹² Nos. 12, 128, 133, 145, 149, 179, 211, 228, 234, 251, 293, 311, 322.

up to the ninth hour.¹³ At Christmas a clergyman might recite three Masses (usually he was allowed to recite only one a day), and they were to be at the following hours: (1) at cock-crowing before dawn, signifying the time when the people were still in darkness, (2) at dawn, signifying the semi-light of the prophets, and (3) at the third hour, representing the full light of the present dispensation.¹⁴

The ceremony of the Mass was one which the Devil could not venture to look upon. In order to test whether a questionable peculiarity was of the devil, the person affected by it was sometimes taken to Mass, as in the case of a young girl who had been placed in a convent and consecrated to the Church, but who developed a mania for fondling the Child of the Virgin Mary, without opposition on the part of the Holy Mother. At last the community discovered the situation, and, duly shocked, appealed to the Pope. He did not know what to say, so he decided to test the case at Mass. During the ceremony, at the girl's request, he had the image of the Virgin's Child placed in the girl's arms. Upon receiving it she exclaimed, "This is my child and I want to go with him." Saying which, she took the Host and expired, going to be with Him in paradise (No. 251).¹⁵

¹³ *Partidas*, 1-4-104.

¹⁴ *Partidas*, 1-4-105.

¹⁵ This same motif of wishing to join the Child Jesus in heaven is beautifully enlarged upon in No. 139. A Flemish woman takes her child with her to ask guidance of the Virgin. On arriving before the shrine the little fellow, who has been eating bread on the way, offers his bread to the Child Jesus, saying, "Do you want some?" In an-

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IV.—MYSTIC NUMBERS

The Spanish—as before intimated—are a highly imaginative race and incline to look for a mystical meaning or a symbol in everything. It was probably due to this that the Catholic faith, with its elaborate ceremonial, crowded with symbolism, was so fervently embraced by the nation as a whole. For them every event was fraught with an hidden meaning. The enigma of the future, for example, had been written by the mysterious finger of God in the stars. There was a special mystery, again, shrouding certain numbers, particularly three, seven, and nine. Since there were three classes of sins, venial, criminal, and mortal, the priest, in the ceremony of baptism, was to breathe three times in the face of the candidate, conjuring the Devil to leave the body; three times was he to conjure salt and put it in the mouth of the person; and three times must he immerse the infant who was the recipient of the rite. Again there were nine orders of angels, nine also of the clergy—nine being the square of three.¹⁷ But the greatest and most significant of all numbers was seven. There were seven things needed before a church was complete (*Partidas*, 1-10-14); seven privileges of the prelates over the clergy (1-5-65); seven punishments for crime (7-31-4); seven virtues a king should possess (2-5-7 and 8). Each official must swear to seven things; there are twice seven,

swer to the invitation the Christ Child replies "Tomorrow you will eat with me in heaven." No. 353 has many points of resemblance.

¹⁷ *Partidas*, 1-6. Intro. p. 250.

or fourteen, joints in the hand, and therefore twice seven articles of faith, as the articles of faith have the same function in the divine hand as the joints in the human (1-3-3). There are seven notes in the musical scale.¹⁸ But to give a just idea of the true significance of this number I can do no better than to quote from the Prólogo of *Las Siete Partidas*, pages six and seven.

POR QUALES RAZONES ESTE LIBRO ES DEPARTIDO
EN SIETE PARTES

Septenario es un cuento muy noble que loaron mucho los sabios antiguos, porque se fallan en él muy muchas cosas et muy señaladas que se departen por cuento de siete, asi como todas las criaturas que son departidas en siete maneras. Ca segunt dixo Aristotiles et los otros sabios, ó es criatura que non ha cuerpo ninguno, mas es espiritual como angel et alma; ó es cuerpo simple que non se engendra nin se corrompe por natura, et es celestial, asi como los cielos et las estrellas; o ha cuerpo simple que se corrompe et se engendra por natura, como los elementos; ó ha cuerpo compuesto et alma de crecer, et de sentir et de razonar como home; o ha cuerpo compuesto et alma de crecer et de sentir et non de razonar, asi como las otras animalias que no son homes; ó ha cuerpo compuesto de crecer, mas non de sentimiento nin de razon, asi como los árboles et todas las otras plantas; ó ha cuerpo compuesto et non alma nin sentimiento, asi como los metales, et las piedras et las cosas minerales que se crian en la tierra. Otrosi todas las cosas naturales han movimiento que se departe en siete maneras; ca o es asuso ó ayuso, ó delante

¹⁸ Antonio G. Solalinde, *General Estoria in Antologia de Alfonso X, el Sabio*, p. 201-202.

ó atrás, ó á diestro ó á siniestro, ó en derredor. Et en este mesmo cuento fallaron los sabios antiguos las siete estrellas mas nombradas, á que llaman planetas, et de que tomaron cuento por los siete cielos en que estan por los sus nombres; et ordenaron por ellos los siete dias de la semana. Et los sabios departieron por este cuento de siete las partes de toda la tierra á que llaman climas. Et por este mesmo cuento departieron los metales; et otrosi algunos hi hobo que por este cuento de siete partieron los saberes á que llaman artes: eso mesme fecieron de la edad del home. Et aun por ese mesmo cuento demostró Dios á los que eran sus amigos muchas de sus poridades por fecho et por semejanza, asi como á Noe, á quien mandó facer el arca en que se salvase del deluvio, et que le mandó que de todas las cosas que fuesen buenas et limpias metiese en ella siete. Otrosi Jacob, que fue patriarca servió a su suegro siete años por Rachêl, et porque le dió a Lia servió otros siete por ella mesma, et esto fué por muy grant significanza. Et Josep, su fijo, que fue poderoso sobre toda la tierra de Egipto por el sueño que soltó al rey Faraon de los siete años de mengua et de los siete de abondo, segunt el sueño que el Rey soñara de las siete espigas et de las siete vacas: esto fue fecho de grant devocion. Otrosi á Moysen quando le mandó facer el tabernáculo en que feciesen oracion los fijos de Israel, le mandó que entre todas las otras cosas que señaladamente posiese dentro de él un candelero de oro fecho en manera de árbol, en que hobiese siete ramos, que fuese fecho por grant significanza. Et David, que fue otrosi rey de Israel, por gracia que le veno de nuestro señor Ieso Cristo, fizo por Espíritu Santo el salterio, que es una de las mejores escripturas de santa Eglesia, et mostró en él siete cosas, asi como profecía, et oracion, et loor, et bendicion, et reprehendimiento, et consejo et penitencia. Et despues de todo esto quando nuestro Señor quiso facer tan grant

mercer al mundo que deñó prender carne de la vírgen santa María por nos salvar, et que le podiésemos veer vesiblemente, et conoscer que era Dios et home, por este cuento, segun dixo el profeta, hobo él en si siete dones de Espiritu Santo. Et otrosi por este cuento, segunt dixieron los santos, hobo santa María siete placeres muy grandes del su fijo, que se cantan en santa egle-sia. Et en este cuento mesmo nos dió nuestro señor Ieso Cristo siete sacramentos, porque nos podiésemos salvar. Et otrosi en este mesmo cuento nos mostró él mesmo la oracion del pater noster en que ha siete cosas en que le debemos pedir merced. Otrosi san Iohan evangelista, que fue pariente et amigo de nuestro señor Iesu Cristo, fizo un libro, á que llaman Apocalipse, de muy grandes poridades que le él demostró, et las mayores cosas que en él escribió son todas partidas por este cuento de siete. Onde por todas estas razones que muestran muchos bienes que en este cuento son, partimos este nuestro libro en siete partes, et mostramos en la primera dellas de todas las cosas que pertenescen a la santa fe católica.

While one of the greatest of all mysteries was that connected with certain numbers the idea did not stop here. Jerusalem was destroyed in the same month Jesus was crucified.¹⁹ The well known biblical mystery traditions connected with the earthly life of Jesus are all faithfully narrated.²⁰ Attila is supplied with a sword from Vulcan in a mysterious way.²¹ Alejandro el Magno and his host, after traveling for seven days in darkness in the Orient come to a river

¹⁹ *Prim. Crón. Gral.*, p. 136-b-21.

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 108 ff.

²¹ *Idem*, p. 235 a 3 ff.

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“que habia las aguas caldas, et fallaron alli allend ese rio mugieres que moraban y muy fermosas, et vestian unas vestiduras muy espantosas, et andaban en caballos et traien en las manos armas doro, por que non habien fierro nin cobre de que las facer, nin habie varon maslo entre todas ellas.

“E Alexandre quisiera pasar el rio a ellas, mas non pudo por ninguna guisa por que era ancho et lleno de dragones et de otras bestias fieras muy grandes.”²²

After leaving this place and journeying a little farther amid various adventures they again come upon another land of

“mugieres muy grandes de cuerpos et las barbas tan luenguas que les alcanzaban fasta en las tetas, et las cabezas planas; et vistien pieles, et eran muy buenas cazadoras et corredoras de mont, et pora correr mont en logares de canes, traien bestias fieras enseñadas pora ello, et ensañaban se las ellas. E quando entraron Alexandre et su huest en aquellas selvas o estas mugieres eran, et vieron ellos a ellas et ellas a ellos fuxieron ellas; et caballeros de Macedonia quando las vieron foir cogieron empos ellas en sus caballos et alcanzaron den ya cuantas, et prisieron dellas et aduxieron las a Alexandre.

“Alexandre quando las vió mandó las preguntar por el lenguaje de India que dixiesen como vinien a morar a aquellas selvas o morada de homne del mondo non habie. Fablaron ellas et dixieron que vivieron de caza que facien con bestias fieras et non dal, et que moraban por ende siempre en las selvas. Et salieron daquellas selvas Alexandre et su huest a los campos grandes et anchos, et fallaron alli de cabo otros varones et mugieres; et las mugieres desnuyas todas; et habien todos los cuerpos vellosos de pelos como bestias. Et era costumbre daquellos

²² Solalinde, *Antologia de Alfonso X, el Sabio*, p. 262.

homes et daquellas mugieres de morar en aquel rio et en la tierra et asi como fue viniendo la huest et llegando les aquellas mugieres somurguieron se ellas luego en el rio; et estudiaron alli una pieza Alexandre et su huest por veer si saldrien et probar ellos ende mas. Et movieron dalli et fueron yendo adelant, et fallaron otras mugieres que habien dientes como de puercos monteses et los cabellos de las cabezas tan luengos que les daban por los tobiellos, et el otro cuerpo que lo habien todo velloso de pelos como el estrucio et el camello, et en los lomiellos que habien como vaca que las colgaban alli ayuso; et el estado dellas de luengo era de doce pies."²³

V.—RELICS

Relics, which played an exceedingly important part in the life of the medieval Church, might consist of anything which formerly belonged to a saint or to Jesus, or anything which might serve as evidence in establishing a miracle. Every altar, upon being consecrated, should have some relics placed within it,²⁴ and these usually were of miracle-working power themselves. At Chartres there

²³ Solalinde, *Antologia de Alfonso X, el Sabio*, p. 264-65. In the *Libro de Alejandro* we find the mysterious bird continually being burned in its nest only to be revived again when half consumed, line 2311, as well as the hen that ceases to lay the golden eggs when Alejandro is born, because they would be no longer needed to pay tribute, line 130. There are also the two "grifos" which carry him thru the air all over Asia, Africa, and Europe (lines 2333 ff.).

In the second part of the *Primera Crónica General* the body of the Cid, now seven years dead, is said to draw its sword a palm's breadth when affronted by a Jew and never could the sword be forced back into its scabbard (p. 642 b 26).

²⁴ *Partidas*, I-10-12, "Et non deben consagrar altar ninguno, fueras ende el que fuere de piedra, et quando lo consagren deben meter en él algunas reliquias". (Italics are mine.)

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was a certain dress that had belonged to the Virgin, on which it was the custom to place cloth which was made up into garments for warriors, because it was believed that after being thus treated garments made from it would be invulnerable. In fact a knight wearing one of these was attacked while unarmed, and altho his enemies thought they had pierced him thru and thru he was in reality unharmed (No. 148). The bones of St. Thomas, together with a letter purporting to have been written by Jesus, were so powerful that when placed over the gate of Edessa no enemy could enter without first making peace with the city.²⁵ Very interesting is the case of the humble woman who went to confession and after doing penance asked for a written certificate of pardon, which after some hesitation was given. Misfortune overtook her and she was forced to beg. In one city she came upon a money-changer and asked the loan of a small sum but he would not let her have it without security. The only security she could offer was this certificate of pardon. The money-changer laughed at the idea, but finally promised to let her have the equivalent of its weight in gold, and putting it on his scales was astonished to find that all his gold would not balance it. This convinced him, and becoming converted he told the woman to take whatever amount she needed. (No. 305).

Such relics not only had the power to work miracles but were themselves divinely protected. One man, a peasant, laughed at the idea that a certain shoe on the

²⁵ *Prim. Crón. Gral.* 161 b 30 ff.

altar in the church had ever belonged to the Virgin, because, he said, a shoe as old as that would not be in so good a state of preservation. To cure him of such flagrant unbelief she afflicted him in the mouth in such a manner that he could be cured only upon the application of the shoe in question (No. 61). At another time some priests, by the exhibition of relics, were collecting money to rebuild a church. In the course of their travels they entered a ship with some merchantmen. After a short while they were attacked by pirates, and in the face of danger the merchants, to secure immunity, offered gifts of money for the building of the church. When the danger was safely passed they repented of their extravagance and took back their donations, buying wool for their own use with the money. Shortly afterward a stroke of lightning set fire to their purchases, thus avenging both God and the Virgin (No. 35).

Naturally, some relics were more powerful and more sacred than others, and they varied in these respects according to the importance of the saint to whom they belonged; and seemingly were protected in a like measure. When Alfonso el Sabio left Seville for Castile he ordered the relics of the Virgin, along with those of the other saints, to be carefully put away, but when he returned ten years later he found only those of the Virgin in perfect condition; those of the other saints had decayed (No. 257).

CONCLUSION

After the foregoing investigation the fact is impressed on us more vividly than ever that the Spain of the Middle Ages was truly the mother of the Spain of today. Hers were a people with a lively imagination, but this was dominated by the two elements which have always been most marked in her history—religion and realism. And wherever these two elements enter into the development of the supernatural in the mind of man, the Spanish contribution has to be taken seriously into the account.

It is impossible, as stated previously, to affirm which of the medieval traditions are Spanish and which are not. [The most that we can hope to do is to note what type of legend appealed to this people; of all the host of supernatural stories common thruout the Europe of the Middle Ages, to determine what classes or types found their way into Spain and there were welcomed, being repeated from generation to generation (becoming thus a part of the national tradition); and what kind or kinds were rejected because they did not have this appeal.

In Spain the beliefs and superstitions we have been passing in review, having as their starting point the actual observation of objective nature and of human nature, were

amazingly multifarious. The study in particular of omens and of auguries, based on the real experiences of life, made a peculiar appeal to the Spaniards, as is witnessed by the abundance of material concerning such found at every turn in the early literature. Contrasted with this is the notable lack of the fantastic and purely imaginary, so popular among the nations of the north, as well as among the Mohammedans.

The effect of this realistic spirit on the religion of the people, the other dominating element of their national life, must also be noted. The unreal ghost has given place to the more naturalistic saint or angel, for their religion permitted no denial of the existence of these two orders of beings. Moreover, soothsayers, diviners, and other similar characters were recognized by the Church as a real force, as is evidenced by the Church's constant warfare against them. And the Devil! What good medieval Christian,—above all, what Spaniard,—could refuse to believe in him?

To summarize: We are impressed first by the commanding prominence accorded to the personalities of the saints, especially Saint Mary, then of Santiago (St. James) and the others; next, of the predominating importance of the rôle of the Child Jesus, with the relegation to a comparatively unimportant place of the adult Saviour; and finally of the enemies of God, headed by Diabolus. The works and influences of all the above are manifested in dreams and visions, miracles and portents, in almost every conceivable form, conjuring, fortune-telling, etc. The ritual of the church service, especially of the sacraments,

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becomes intertwined and adorned with what many faithful churchmen of the present time would doubtless be willing to class as downright superstitions. Omens and the like, because of their realistic appeal, continue in spite of the constant opposition of the Church.

In contrast to this, however, we find no unquestionable ghosts. The "magic ring", moreover, is entirely lacking, as is nearly all that type of Arabian magic. King Oberon, with his fairy band, has not yet made his appearance, and the sage Merlin is only alluded to occasionally by the learned. Subterranean cities still remain limited to their northern abode. The well-known *mal de ojo* is absent, and enchantment is little heard of. The Werewolf, mentioned, it is said, by Pomponius Mela, Herodotus, and Ovid, is entirely neglected and omitted either thru simple ignorance of it or because it does not conform to their realistic thought. The search for the elixir of life is only faintly hinted at in the restoration of youth to the aged priest who seeks help from the Virgin (No. 141). The myth of supernatural prolongation of life is to be found only in its primitive stages, in such legends as that of María Egipcíaca and in some of the miracles contained in *Las Cantigas*, and yet we are told that,

"The first appearance of the Wandering Jew *in England* is in the chronicles of Roger of Wendover, who reports the legend as being told at the monastery of St. Albans by an Armenian bishop, in 1228, but to hearers *already familiar with it.*"¹

¹ Dorothy Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, p. 175. The Italics in the quotation are mine.

Arabian influence does appear, however, quite frequently, especially in certain types of visions such as those in which a person is transported from one point to another to witness various scenes; as well also as in those in which the subject sleeps many years while experiencing the joys of Paradise. French religious traditions dealing with various shrines were common property. Many of the miracles related in *Las Cantigas* are said to have been performed in France, especially at Soissons.

The general impression gained from the study is that we are standing at the beginning of a new period; that soon there is going to unfold before us a magnificent spectacle, so far as the supernatural is concerned, in which these elements, whose beginnings we can even now discern, will present themselves in all their fullness, but at the same time those which have already reached their culmination will survive, and, being the product of the real life and soul of the nation, will still be the determining factors in shaping its beliefs and practices, as it continues its course among the hosts of outside influences it is soon to encounter.

As we close the study we can not, if we would, resist the pervasive charm cast over us by the simplicity of the primitive age with its childlike faith. From time to time the canvas has been reversed, the customary medieval picture has been changed, the sound of the bugle, the glitter of burnished arms, the noise of battle, have now receded into the background, and altho we are still faintly conscious of them we become almost unaware of their presence. In the foreground have arisen, we scarcely

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know how or whence, the common people, with their sheep and their goats, their games of chance and their wine, their joys and their sorrows, their loves and their hates, their marriages, births, deaths—all these—along with their interesting superstitions and ardent devotion to their local saints, as well as their fidelity to their lord, who moves about among them as their guardian and protector.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE MIRACLES IN *LAS CANTIGAS*

I

A.—DIRECT ANSWER TO PRAYER BY THE VIRGIN

- a.* Life restored or sustained. 14, 26, 43, 45, 76, 84, 111, 115, 118, 122, 124, 133, 167, 168, 171, 178, 182, 197, 204, 224, 237, 241, 334, 347, 378, 381, 389. (See p. 32-34 for discussion of group.)
- b.* Bodily ailments cured. 37, 47, 53, 69, 77, 81, 86, 89, 91, 92, 93, 101, 105, 114, 117, 126, 127, 134, 141, 146, 157, 163, 166, 173, 174, 177, 179, 189, 191, 199, 201, 206, 209, 218, 221, 223, 224, 234, 235, 244, 256, 263, 265, 268, 269, 275, 278, 279, 282, 283, 289, 293, 298, 308, 314, 315, 316, 319, 322, 327, 333, 337, 338, 343, 346, 357, 362, 363, 364, 367, 368, 372, 375, 385, 389, 391, 393. (See p. 35-38.)
- c.* Physical harm prevented. 7, 13, 15, 17, 22, 25, 28, 35, 36, 49, 51, 55, 57, 64, 74, 78, 82, 83, 86, 94, 97, 102, 106, 107, 121, 125, 135, 138, 142, 144, 151, 158, 165, 172, 181, 184, 185, 186, 193, 194, 195, 213, 227, 233, 235, 236, 242, 245, 249, 251, 252, 254, 255, 264, 266, 271, 286, 287, 291, 301, 303, 313, 325, 339, 341, 354, 371, 383. (See p. 38-40.)
- d.* Miracles in which bargaining occurs. 31, 43, 44, 97, 106, 112, 118, 121, 129, 166, 167, 172, 176, 178, 197, 268, 271, 291, 347, 352, 366, 374, 375, 376, 377, 278, 382, 385, 389. (See p. 40-43.)
- e.* Unmoral miracles. 3, 7, 13, 17, 55, 94, 111, 214, 255, 291. (See p. 43-45.)

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- f.* Miracles in which sacred breasts or milk occur. 54, 93, 138.
(See p. 45-46.)
- g.* Possessions restored or saved or things supplied. 23, 44, 48, 62, 73, 112, 143, 147, 159, 172, 178, 187, 202, 212, 231, 232, 243, 323, 326, 348, 352, 354, 366, 369, 376, 382, 386, 398. (See p. 46-49.)
- h.* Those of other faiths protected. 89, 107, 167, 181. (See p. 49.)
- i.* Threats or the appeal to reputation avail much. 23, 76, 233, 247. (See p. 49-51.)

B.—MIRACLES VOLUNTARILY PERFORMED

- a.* Life restored or sustained. 6, 11, 21, 96, 131, 175, 311, 323, 355. (See p. 55-58.)
- b.* Physical ailments cured. 33, 41, 156, 228, 259, 262, 276, 279, 324, 331. (See p. 58.)
- c.* Physical harm prevented. 4, 64, 67, 109, 113, 119, 161, 164, 192, 198, 205, 216, 222, 225, 251, 266, 302, 305, 317, 344, 359, 399. (See p. 58.)
- d.* Miracles in which bargaining occurs. 307. (See p. 58.)
- e.* Unmoral miracles. 11, 119, 281. (See p. 58.)
- f.* Miracles in which sacred breasts or milk occur. (See p. 61.)
- g.* Possessions restored or saved or things supplied. 2, 52, 116, 145, 203, 211, 228, 258, 328, 351, 356, 358, 379. (See p. 61-62.)
- h.* Those of other faiths protected. 85, 205, 379. (See p. 62-65.)
- i.* Aid in worship or in restraining evil passions. 137, 151, 152, 156, 207, 227, 246, 266, 273, 336. (See p. 65-66.)
- j.* Miracles in which visions occur. 2, 16, 24, 32, 53, 58, 65, 66, 68, 69, 71, 75, 79, 85, 87, 88, 105, 119, 125, 131, 132, 135, 138, 145, 149, 152, 158, 176, 192, 195, 261, 262, 263, 269, 274, 284, 285, 288, 292, 295, 296, 299, 307, 309, 336, 345, 348, 359, 365, 368, 372, 384, 399. (See p. 66-70.)
- k.* Warnings and admonitions (not in visions). 47, 88, 154, 196, 274. (See p. 70-73.)

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- l.* Rewards 2, 4, 5, 8, 18, 56, 63, 66, 87, 95, 124, 141, 155, 251, 253, 281, 335, 353, 384. (See p. 73-77.)
- m.* Violation of vows or acts of sacrilege punished. 42, 57, 59, 108, 117, 132, 163, 285, 347, 392. (See p. 77-78.)
- n.* Objects or places of worship protected. 2, 9, 12, 19, 27, 34, 38, 46, 51, 59, 61, 123, 136, 139, 148, 161, 162, 164, 183, 183, 198, 208, 215, 217, 229, 238, 239, 244, 248, 257, 262, 276, 277, 283, 286, 289, 293, 294, 297, 302, 304, 314, 316, 317, 318, 327, 329, 332, 345. (See p. 78-81.)
- o.* Virgin acts as advocate. 14, 45. (See p. 81-82.)

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Miracles performed by image, name, or relics or Virgin. 9, 27, 34, 38, 46, 51, 59, 61, 123, 139, 148, 161, 162, 164, 183, 185, 194, 202, 209, 254, 256, 264, 272, 294, 303, 306, 321, 332, 353, 361. (See p. 83-87.)

III

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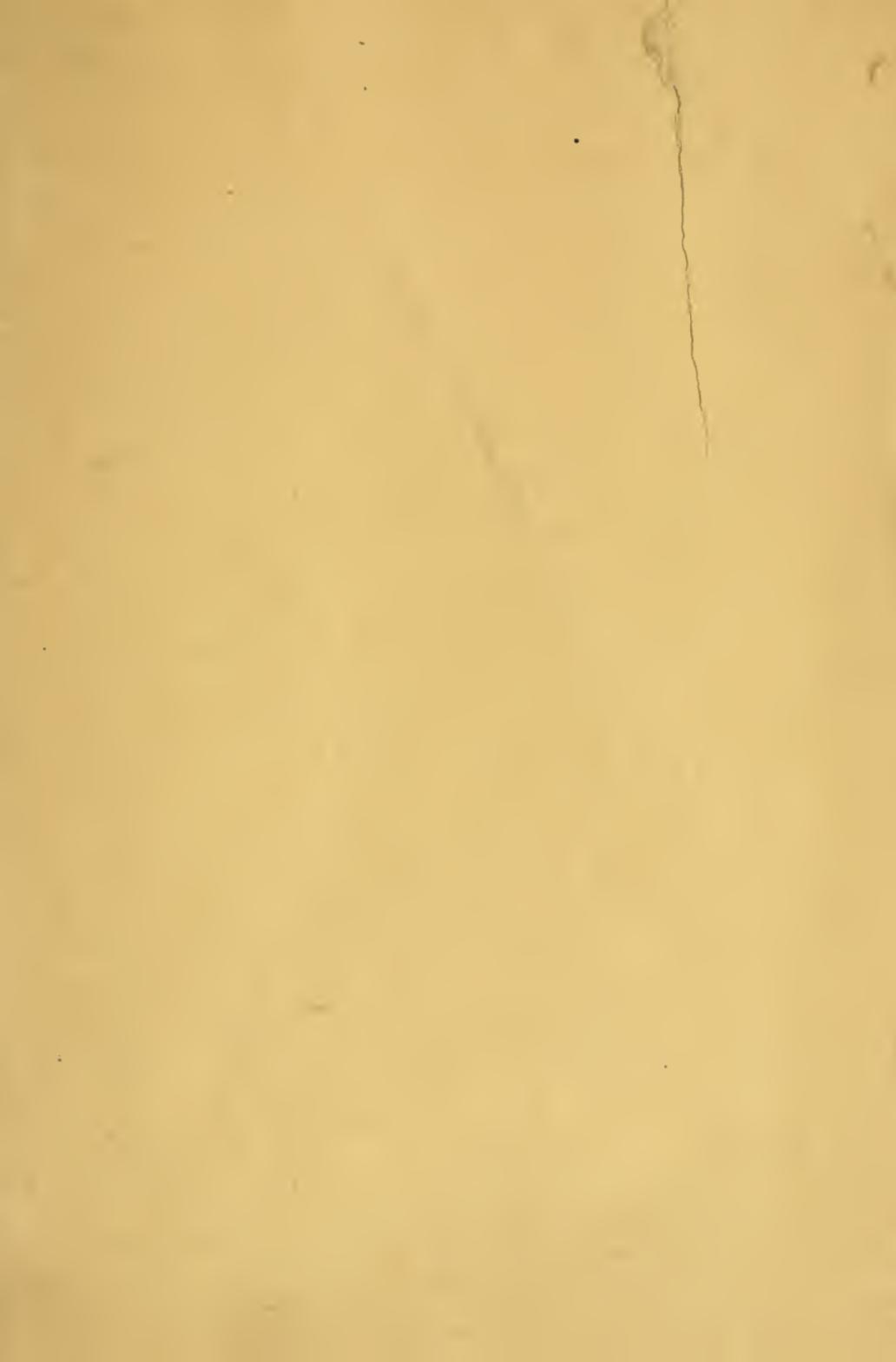
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