

Court of the Lions is extremely elegant, consisting of an arch comprising within it three stalactite arches, the centre one double the width of the others; and nothing can exceed the delicacy and beauty of the ornaments which adorn them.

The traveller should pause ere he enters La Sala de las dos Hermanas. The double arches of the entrance, the exquisite court about twenty-nine feet square, the arches of the rooms beyond, and the beautiful window looking into the Patio della Lindaraja, form the most magical picture that can be conceived. Fable or romance never created anything more charming. This suite of rooms derives its name from two equal-sized marble slabs, which form a portion of the pavement, and are called the "Sisters." The door leading into it was hung like the doors in the East. There are exquisite arched alcoves on each side, probably for divans. In the centre is a fountain, which diffused a delicious coolness, and over it a superb stalactite-domed roof.

The decorations of this fairy abode are more exquisite, if possible, than any of the others; the *fleur-de-lis* and a dozen different ornaments, amongst others the pomegranate, and others entirely Moorish may be traced. Above the centre arches were latticed windows, through which the hareem of the King might see and enjoy the fountain with-

out being seen ; one of them still remains, and is quite like the Egyptian lattices. The azulejos in this room, are also very beautiful, and the stalactite roof is magnificent. The conical ceilings of this hall, and also the Halls of Justice and Abencerrages, as well as the arches of a similar construction, attest the wonderful power and effect obtained by the most simple elements. Nearly five thousand pieces, says Mr. Jones, enter into the construction of the ceiling of the Hall of the Two Sisters, and though they are mostly of plaster, strengthened here and there with pieces of reed, no part of the palace is, in the present day, in a more perfect state of preservation.

This room leads into a gallery splendidly decorated, with a delicious alcove ornamented with one large window, looking into the garden of the Lindaraja, and divided by slender marble pillars from a smaller window on each side. As you enter the gallery there is a niche for the slippers to be deposited, and the decorations of the arch forming the entrance of the alcove are charming ; nothing, indeed, can surpass the richness of this delicious retreat.

It appears, says Mr. Jones, to be the spot of this enchanted palace, on which the poets, painters, and architects of that day, bestowed most of their attention. All the varieties of form and colour which adorn the other portions of the palace, have

here been blended with the most happy effect. Its chief ornaments are the inscriptions, which address themselves to the eye of the observer by the most beautiful forms of the characters, exercise his intellect by the difficulty of deciphering their curious and complex involutions, and reward his imagination when read by the beauty of the sentiments they express, and the music of their composition.

This suite of rooms is almost perfect, and with the floor above is now more habitable than the other parts of the palace ; a more beautiful, more magical, more enjoyable residence cannot be imagined. Oriental luxury and taste never created anything so voluptuous and so charming. No wonder Boabdil was enervated in such an abode, furnished with Oriental magnificence and crowded with the most beautiful houris in the world. The atmosphere it still breathes is more calculated for luxurious indolence and repose, than to nerve a hero for the battle ; it is not, therefore, surprising, that the weak Abdillah yielded to its influence and lost his throne.

This part of the palace has clearly been used as a residence, and there are no apartments now remaining where it is more probable the hareem existed, and certainly a more charming residence for love and beauty does not exist in the world. When also the

imagination restores the gorgeous yet harmonious colouring, and rich but well-toned gilding, of which considerable remains still exist, the splendid dresses, jewellery, rich draperies, voluptuous divans, and the Oriental amusements, music, dancing, crowds of beautiful slaves, &c., anything more approaching the dreams of the Arabian Nights cannot be conceived. A long poem sings its praises and the kings.

1. I am the garden, and every morn I appear decked out in beauty. Look attentively at my elegance, thou wilt reap the benefit of a commentary on decoration. 2. For by Allah! the elegant buildings (by which I am surrounded) certainly surpass all other erections in the propitious omens attending their foundation. 3. How many delightful prospects I enfold! How many objects, in the contemplation of which a highly-gifted mind finds the gratification of its utmost wishes. 4. Here is the wonderful cupola, at sight of whose beautiful proportions all other (cupolas) vanish and disappear. 5. To which the constellation of the Twins extends the hand of salutation, and to converse with which the full moon deserts her station in heaven. 6. Nay, were they both to abide (here,) in its two aisles, they would hasten to pay it such homage as would satisfy all the neighbours around. 7. No wonder if the stars grow pale in their high stations,

and if a limit be put to the duration (of their light). 8. Here, also, is the portico, enfolding every beauty. Indeed, had this palace no other (ornament) it would still surpass in splendour the high regions of the sky. 9. For how many are the gorgeous robes in which thou, (O, Sultan!) hast attired it, which surpass in brilliancy of colour, the vaunted robes of Yemen. 10. To look at them one would imagine them to be so many planets revolving on (the arches of this court as on) their orbits, in order to throw in the shade (even) the first rays of morning. 11. Here are columns ornamented with every perfection, and the beauty of which has become proverbial: (columns.) 12. Which when struck by the rays of the morning sun, one might fancy, notwithstanding their colossal dimensions to be so many blocks of pearl. 13. Indeed we never saw a palace more lofty (than this) in its exterior, or more brilliantly decorated in the interior, or having more extensive apartments. 14. Markets (they are) where those provided with money are paid in beauty, and where the judge of elegance is perpetually sitting to pronounce sentence. 15. Which when the breath of the zephyr expires before the noontide rays, appear surrounded by a light which throws into the shade all other lights. 16. Between me and Victory the closest relationship exists; but the most striking resem-

blance (between us two) is the splendour (we both bear).\*

There are other inscriptions less lengthy.

“ And there is no conqueror but God. Praise be to God, the only one.”† “ Every art has gifted me with its elegance ; nay, has given me all its splendour and perfection.”‡ “ Those who behold me take me for a female addressing this vase, whose favour (as her beloved) she wishes to obtain.” “ Indeed when the spectator has attentively examined my beauty, he will find reality to exceed the most extravagant conceptions of his fancy. He will see the full moon beam forth from among the rays of my light, and its halo leave me to enter the mansions of the sky. This is a palace of (transparent) crystal, those who look at it imagine it to be a boundless ocean. And yet I am not alone (to be wondered at), for I overlook in astonishment a garden, the like of which no human eye ever saw.” “ I was built by the Iman Ibn Nusr ; may God uphold his majesty (as an honour) to other things, and perpetuate his high station and glorious rank as long as, like the sun or the new moon, he continues to rise in the high region of the sky.”

\* Over the mosaic dado. † In the corridor on the left of the hall. ‡ On the jambs of the doorway at the entrance of the alcove of the Two Sisters.

In the alcove (La Ventana) there are numerous inscriptions.

“Brightly doth (our Sultan like) the full moon of direction shine in the high regions of empire. May his praiseworthy deeds for ever last, and his radiant light never tarnish. For what else is he but the sun taking up his abode in this sign, therefrom to dissipate all the shadows around. From me (as from the horizon) to overlook the court of his empire, whenever he appears on the throne of the Caliphs like a bright luminary. Let him but direct a glance to the quarter in the sky where the zephyrs joyfully play, and the fugitive breezes shall instantly return to their usual abode. Apartments are there unfolding so many wonders, that the eyes of (the spectator) remain for ever fixed on them provided he be gifted with a mind to estimate them.”\* “Glory be given to our Lord Sidi Abu Abdillah Alghani-billah. May God prosper his empire and perpetuate his happiness.”† “God is the best of protectors. He is the most compassionate of the compassionate. God Almighty is true (in his words).‡ Wherein the warm gale descends to mitigate the cold of winter, thereby producing a salubrious air, and a mild temperature.

\* On the bend round the windows, in Arabic. † The Coptic inscription in the panel beneath. ‡ The inscription in Arabic, enclosed by the tails of the Coptic letters in the centre.

Truly so many are the beauties of every kind that we unfold, that even the stars of heaven (come down to) borrow their light from us. And how can it be otherwise, when we are built by the command of a king, whose illustrious deeds and commendable actions are already recorded by the historians.”\* “ May divine help, solidity of empire, and splendid victory over his enemies fall to the lot of our Lord, the Commander of the Moslems.”† “ As to me, I am like a beneficent eye (overlooking) that garden. I never cease to repeat certainly he is the Lord Mohammed, the extolled for his liberality and courage; he whose fame knows no bounds, and whose righteous deeds in religion cannot be surpassed.”‡

There are other inscriptions giving glory to Abdillah.

“ Praise be to God! With my ornaments and tiara I surpass beauty itself; may the luminaries in the zodiac (out of envy) descend to me. The water vase within me is like a devout man, standing towards the Kiblah of the Mihrab ready to begin his prayers. Against the current of times my generous deeds are insured. I shall always quench the thirst of the thirsty, and remedy the wants of the

\* On the right wall, on the bend round the window. † The Coptic inscriptions above these. ‡ On the left wall, round the window.



needy. Indeed it looks as if I had borrowed liberality (itself) from the hands of our Lord Abu-l-Hajaj. May he continue to shine a bright luminary in my sky, as long as the full moon beams forth through the shadow of night.”\* “Delicately have the fingers of the artist embroidered my robe after setting the jewels of my diadem. People compare me to the throne of a bride; yet I surpass it in this, that I can secure the felicity of those who possess me. If any one approach me complaining of thirst, he will receive in exchange cool and limpid water, sweet without admixture. As if I were the bow of the clouds when it first appears, and the sun, our Lord Abu-l-Hajaj, a monarch, whose hands distribute gifts to the needy (as often and profusely) as the waves (succeed each other.) May his Court be revered and visited as long as the house of God (Mecca), shall continue the resort of the pilgrims.”† “And there is no God but God. Glory to our Lord Saed. God help him. Glory to God. God is eternal. God is our refuge in every trouble.”‡

These inscriptions are long, perhaps tedious; but really the eye rests more upon them than the ornaments, which are often so minute as at first not

\* On the niche to the left, in verse.  
the right.

† On the niche to  
‡ On the arch above.

to attract so much attention. On entering the Alhambra, the stranger is astonished at the general richness, but when recovering from the delight excited by the general effect, he looks around more closely; every examination discovers fresh beauties, more minute, but not less beautiful than he had observed before.

We then went to the Patio of the Mezquita, which had better be seen at the same time as the Mezquita. There is a beautiful *façade*, with exquisite decorations untouched by the destroying hand of restorers. A representation of a cornice, almost of Egyptian form, adorns the beam which supports the roof, and under the cornice there is a rich stalactite ornament. This *façade* is unfortunately much injured by a modern gallery. Around the archivolt of the windows are the following verses from the Koran:

“I flee to God to protection from Satan, the pelted with stones. In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate Allah: there is no deity but him, the living, the eternal, whom neither sleep nor slumber overtakes. To him belongs whatever is in heaven and whatever is on earth. Who is there on earth who can presume to intercede with him except with his acquiescence. He knows what is before men, and what is behind them, and they comprehend nought of his wisdom except what he

pleases. He has exhibited his throne (over) the heavens and the earth, yet the protection of these gives him no trouble (whatever). He is the high, the great."

After the mind is weary of the enjoyment of examining this mine of Moorish art, there cannot be a greater relief or a greater delight than to ascend the Torre de la Vela, where you see around you a splendid panorama embracing every beauty, distinguishable from the windows and terraces I have mentioned. It is a view which must dwell in the recollection for ever. On one side is seen the Homage Tower; beyond it the Generalife—the white, shining villa—with its magnificent cypresses and beauteous gardens; and above it the Moorish ruin, the Silla del Moro, where the King might well delight to sit, and exult in the beauty and riches of his Vega.

Beyond the palace of Charles V. are seen the Church of St. Helen, the beautiful shady walks of the Alhambra, tenanted with nightingales, the magnificent Sierra Nevada, some Moorish arches, a splendid cedar, the Campo Santo, and the luxuriant Vega, seventy miles in circumference, with white farms sparkling amidst the verdure, which the Moors might well compare to "Oriental pearls set in a cup of emeralds."

Looking towards the very picturesque Vermilion

Tower, at the end of the Alhambra, beyond it is seen the dome of a convent, and two towers of St. Augustin's Church, and the mountains leading into the grand range of the Alpujarras; the Xenil river, with its umbrageous banks; and to the right the little hill called the Last Sigh of the Moors, where the conquered King Abdillah took leave of Granada and happiness; then the immense town, forming a semicircle around the Alhambra, with its cathedral and promenades; and in the distance Santa Fé, where the Christians were encamped; Soto de Roma, the country retreat of Charles V., which now belongs to the Duke of Wellington, and yields him, they say, £5,000 a-year; the Gorge of Loja, the Sierra de Elvira, and Parapanda, the barometer of Granada; beyond, and more picturesque than these hills, which are low, the defile of Moclin; and looking towards this range, the Vega appears extremely rich, the colouring more brilliant even than usual. Plantations of prickly pear-trees, mulberries, cypresses, oranges, &c., surround the town, in which there is scarcely a house of any size that has not its little garden, redolent with fruits and flowers. It is indeed a splendid view; and great as must every one's expectation be in visiting Granada, disappointment need not be dreaded here; and when one thinks of the celebrated siege, of the gallant challenges which were given and accepted on this Vega,

celebrated as the arena for more than two centuries of Moorish and Christian chivalry, every inch of its soil, as has been truly said, fertilized with human blood, and reflect on the misfortunes of the gallant defenders of this glorious palace, one cannot but feel the thrilling associations are like the lapis-lazuli sky above, which gives a vivid colouring to the scene unequalled in colder and more prosaic lands.

We then went to the Torre de las Infantas, the residence of the Moorish princesses, beautiful for its decorations, machicolated roof, and portico leading into a pretty gallery. Two arches, with a slender column between them, are exquisitely ornamented. All will recollect Washington Irving's story of the three Moorish princesses who fell in love with noble Christian prisoners working in the gardens, and how two escaped, and one was too timid to descend the window, and when her lover fled with her sisters how she languished and died; but as the window is fifty feet from the ground, it is less surprising that she was timid than that the others had the courage to descend.

We then went to the Torre de las Puertas, which is ornamented with two little arches, divided by a column. Near there are five arches, filled up, said to be the stables; but I should not think they would be beyond the fortifications. The walls are

worth examining, as some portions of them are very ancient. Our tour of the Alhambra concluded with a visit to the Tower de los siete Suelos. Three minutes' walk above it is the doorway which Boabdil passed through, never to return, when it was closed for ever. "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it."\* A section of an arch is visible, showing it never could have been large. Out of this small gate went Boabdil, to avoid the imprecations of his subjects, indignant that an ineffectual resistance should not be continued. Truly this war of Granada was a melancholy instance "that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

\* Ezekiel XLIV, 2.

## CHAPTER XIII.

LA CAPELLA DE LOS REYES—INTERESTING SCULPTURES—SE-  
PULCHRES OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA—THE GENERAL LIFE  
—GIPSIES—EL CUARTO REAL.

AFTER the Alhambra, the great object of interest at Granada is the Capella de los Reyes. Though forming part of the cathedral, it is quite independent of that edifice, and well adapted for the interesting sepulchres it contains. A rich Gothic portal leads into the chapel, where the attention is instantly rivetted on the splendid reja, or iron railing, of a beautiful design, which guards the treasures of the chapel. Through this reja the two magnificent sepulchres of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of their daughter Juana and her husband Philip, are seen—tombs really worthy of the

conquerors of Granada. But passing these, I examined first the representations of Ferdinand and Isabella, kneeling near the great altar. The King is in armour, with his straight hair nearly covering his brow, and his countenance heavy-looking. Isabella, on the other side, wears a scarf, which almost covers her forehead and hair, and her mantle is of deep crimson and gold. They are both represented as tolerably good-looking, and rather like each other; but the Queen is plump and ruddy in the face, too like a dairy-maid. There is a carving behind the King, of St. James of Arragon on horseback; and behind Isabella, another of St. James, on his white steed killing the Moors: the horses are well executed.

There are two intensely interesting sculptures, one of the Alhambra, with its picturesque walls and towers, and Boabdil in his turban and red and green garments, with features in which care and sorrow may almost be traced, although they are shamefully mutilated. He has descended from his white horse, which a boy holds, and is on the point of offering the keys of the Alhambra to the royal Christian party. Behind him is a string of Spanish prisoners, dressed as Moors, walking two and two out of the gate of the palace. The royal party on horseback consists of Ferdinand and Isabella, Mendoza, and the Great Captain. Mendoza, privileged to wear gloves, is in the act of putting forth his hand to



receive the keys of the Alhambra, which Boabdil is presenting. The Cardinal's features are perfectly jesuitical, sharp and acute, with an aquiline nose, and thin cheeks, so peculiar and so characteristic that there can be no doubt of its being a likeness; but if we can trace the fanatic in his expression, we can also discover those great talents which seconded Isabella in every great and useful work, and earned him the title of "the third King of Spain." Behind the royal party is a host of knights, and halberdiers.

The other *basso-relievo* records the treachery of the Spaniards, who after promising the Moors religious liberty, compelled them to adopt the Catholic religion or abandon their beloved Granada, as it is doubtless a representation of the baptism of some of the fifty thousand Moors Ximenes forced into the fold of a church whose doctrines they did not understand and hated, and whose relapses supplied fuel for the fires of the Inquisition. These sculptures are also interesting, for the Oriental costumes of the women. They are very fairly executed, by the same artist who did the sepulchres, Filipe de Vigarney, who was born at Burgos, and flourished early in the sixteenth century—telling their tale simply and with effect.

Having seen the representations of the great achievements of their lives, in which both took such



an active part, Ferdinand constantly in the field, and Isabella, with her extraordinary energy and zeal, furnishing supplies, and when despair was creeping into the camp dispelling it with her presence, we turned to their sepulchres. How true are the words of the Psalmist "that all is vanity!"

Spain has ever acknowledged the reign of Isabella as her Augustan age; and certainly never was there a monarch in the country whose reign was more glorious, and more conducive to the happiness of her people. Isabella, with hands folded, is represented in relief on this splendid tomb of alabaster, with an expression of sweetness and calm, characteristic of the purity of her life: her face is perhaps too full, yet still beautiful. Ferdinand has a more haughty expression, but talented, and his hands rest on the sword which was so useful to him.

The tomb is overloaded with ornaments. How much more imposing would be simplicity in such a sepulchre as this; yet the execution of the figures is good, especially of the doctors of the law at the four corners, the Apostles, and the St. James on horseback fighting the Moors. The little ovals containing the Annunciation and the Baptism of our Saviour, and the angels supporting the arms of Ferdinand and Isabella, are very pretty, especially two at the back.

Isabella did not die at Granada, but it was her

wish to be buried where she achieved, what her predecessors had failed in accomplishing, the recovery of her native land from a Moorish domination which had lasted nearly eight hundred years, and what she valued more, the triumph of the Cross.

The other tomb, of the same size and equal magnificence, is very interesting, being that of their child, Juaña, and her worthless husband, Philip of Burgundy.

Great was the grief of the Catholic Sovereigns when they lost their talented and only son, and their first-born child, the Queen of Portugal (Isabella); and though the discovery of America, and still more, the glorious conclusion of the religious war, filled their cup with joy, they had their sorrows; and immense must have been their misery when their only surviving child lost her intellect at her confinement.

Both Juaña and her husband are represented as remarkably handsome, the former with perfectly Grecian features. This tomb is loaded with ornaments, in the same style as the other; and yet the figures and decorations, however much they may deviate from the required simplicity, have not a bad effect. Some of them on this tomb are also very well executed: the figures of the Evangelists, the medallion containing a Holy Family, and the angels are good, though not first-rate

sculpture. The Deposition from the Cross and the angels, on the opposite side to the grand altar, are well done; and undoubtedly the general effect of these tombs is very imposing.

Passing from the representations, we descended by a flight of stairs to the reality—the lead coffins actually containing the inviolated remains of the Catholic Princes. It is no ordinary matter to visit the tombs of those whose career has thrown a halo over the dreary history of their country, whose reputation is not merely local, but European, for the then known world was agitated with the discoveries made during their reigns and with their assistance, and every Catholic was scarcely less excited than at the time of the Crusades by the religious war they waged against the Infidels. The initials designate the tombs. Juaña's and the Prince Don Juan's interest but little, but Ferdinand's, and especially Isabella's, immensely. Spain has a right to be proud of them, but take even a Spaniard's estimate of the character of the King :\*

“Ferdinand is justly celebrated. No one without injustice can deny him the glorious titles of liberator of the kingdom of Granada, of restorer of order and public tranquillity, of conqueror, of great; but at the same time, while we must confess the

\* Escaragota, *Historia de España*, libro xi, p. 249.

eminent talents for government with which Heaven had endowed him, we cannot disguise the defects which to a certain extent obscured them. The excessive suspicion and extreme distrust he showed even to those who had served him with the greatest fidelity, the bad example which he gave to his successors of want of faith in not adhering to his treaties; the indirect vanity which he exhibited in ridiculing his confidential friends; the excuse which he invented for marrying the unfortunate Baltraneja, taking her from a convent where she had lived retired many years, without any other motive than that of reviving his claims to the throne of Castile, only to revenge himself on his son-in-law, forgetting entirely what he owed to his deceased wife, whose reputation would have been injured by such a marriage; his subsequently marrying Doña Germana de Foix, in order that she might have a son who would inherit the crown of Arragon, and disappoint his son-in-law, Don Philip. All these are blemishes which have contributed not a little to make it doubtful in what light posterity should esteem him."

As all his faults were exhibited after the death of his wife, we may, I think, give her the chief credit for the great deeds which they accomplished together; and, with every respect for Ferdinand's talent, we can have little sympathy for one

who was so unjust to the Great Captain Gonzalo di Cordova, who with inadequate forces overrun Calabria, gaining victory after victory, and whose powerful assistance at the siege of Atella, compelled the French to surrender, and ended triumphantly the Italian wars.\* Yet the last years of this great man were embittered by the contumely and neglect of a sovereign for whom he had gained a kingdom. Isabella is undoubtedly the most interesting of Spanish sovereigns. All will recollect the glowing pages of Prescott. The fortitude and energy which under every difficulty she exhibited, in promoting the Moorish wars, pawning her very jewels to purchase the necessary supplies, the spirit and zeal which she infused into all ranks, and by her presence in the camp inspired the soldiers, the hardships and dangers she encountered; and when the Moorish war ended triumphantly, her wise reforms, gentleness, taste for literature, and acts of piety, charity and munificence, endeared her to all her subjects. Perhaps the brightest feature in her character, was the constancy of her friendships. Columbus, whose discoveries were alone sufficient to immortalize his patron's name, would not have had the means to undertake his eventful voyage, and when sent back to Spain in chains, would never

\* Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. II, p. 299.

have overcome the malice of his jealous enemies, if Queen Isabella had not been his friend. Ximenes assailed the corrupt habits of the clergy, the most powerful body in the kingdom, and must have fallen a victim to their opposition, had not the Queen supported him. Even the great captain of the age, Gonzalo di Cordova, who first distinguished himself at the siege of Granada, and whose career in Italy was a continual succession of brilliant exploits, would not have been allowed to retain his command, if it had not been for Isabella. Pity it is, that with her excellent sense, admirable judgment, sincere piety, and unbounded generosity, Isabella should have established the Inquisition, and given her consent to a decree which condemned the Jews, her most useful and wealthy subjects, to banishment from the kingdom, and the dreadful sufferings that sentence entailed upon most of them. We must, however, recollect that the head of her Church, the Pope himself had avowed the principle, that zeal for the purity of the faith, atoned for every crime. Isabella being born and educated a bigot, and engaged during a great portion of her life in a religious war, may account for a woman of her sound judgment yielding to such a principle, and allowing her confessor to influence a heart which must have shrunk from cruelty, as it broke at last, overwhelmed with her severe domestic bereavements.

There are various interesting relics, bequeathed