

open hand, and further on a key, having some mystical signification now unknown. This gateway was built by Yusuf, who was afterwards murdered whilst praying in the mosque of the Alhambra. It dates from the fourteenth century, and here the Moorish King sat in Oriental state, and administered justice.

Passing on through a narrow passage, we found ourselves in an enclosed space encumbered with ruins and every description of dilapidation, and commanded by square massive towers. The first feeling of excitement was followed by surprise and disappointment, and the exclamation rose to our lips—"Can this be the Alhambra of which so much has been said! Where are the fairy courts so often described?"

With a movement almost of impatience we followed our guide past these mounds of rubbish to the *TORRE DE LA VELA* (the Tower of Vigil) which was now close before us, rising high above all the other forts. Passing a picturesque Moorish well, we entered the tower, and found it guarded by a crusty old woman, preparing her dinner, and a young lad whom she deputed to lead us up the narrow staircase.

At the top of the tower was a low door, which the lad opened, and we stepped out upon the battlements.

What a glorious view met our eyes! Below us was spread out the city, with the beautiful green Vega beyond; its gardens, orchards, and meadows, walled in by distant mountains.

SANTA FÉ lay nestled in front of us amidst woods and groves; and as we looked upon this fair scene, we pictured to ourselves the Christian hosts encamped on this glorious plain, nearly four hundred years ago; and the intense excitement and eager gaze with which on the second morning of the year 1492 they must have watched the progress of Mendoza and his glittering train of knights, as they slowly wended their way from the camp to the citadel, and then passing within the Moorish gateway, were lost to view; till a loud shout proclaimed that the silver Cross had been placed on the highest tower of the Alhambra—this same *Torre de la Vela*—and the whole army knelt down and prayed.

Then floating from the Moorish citadel appeared the banner of Santiago, and the royal standards of Castile

and Aragon, and from the great plain below there rose up in one loud chant the solemn anthem, "Te Deum Laudamus."

Ere long another band was seen—but this time descending from the citadel into the plains below. These were Christian captives clanking their chains, and chanting a song of thanksgiving for deliverance—a song taken up by the triumphant hosts, and followed by loud acclamations as they reached the camp.

On the battlement of the tower is an inscription which marks the date of the fall of Granada—January 2nd, 1492. The silver Cross planted by Mendoza on this Torre de la Vela was the gift of Pope Sixtus IV., but alas! there was another gift from the same pope—that of the Inquisition—which he established in Spain, and which quickly filled this fair city with woe and desolation.

All Europe exulted in the glad tidings that Granada had become a Christian possession, and in London the event was celebrated by a grand service followed by a Te Deum at St. Paul's Cathedral, when Cardinal Morton preached before Henry VII. and his whole court.

From this Tower of Vigil is suspended a huge bell, dating from Moorish times. It is used nightly to summon labourers to the Vega, that the land may be irrigated in the cool night air.

We now descended from the tower, and crossing the large enclosure found ourselves in front of the massive walls of the palace of Charles V., before which are the usual gardens of box and myrtle, cut into geometrical figures. It was with a feeling something akin to resentment, that we looked at this palace, with its bronze bas reliefs, and imposing portals so out of character with the Moorish fortress. Its unroofed walls tell their own tale of one who began to build but was not able to finish. The Emperor was stopped we are told by an earthquake, as if sent to reprove his folly in pulling down portions of the most glorious of Moorish monuments, to make way for his Italian palace.*

We now turned down a narrow path: on our right rose one side of the palace, its huge portal partly sunk below the level of the ground, and above it the words

* The work of Machuca.

“Carlo Quinto” in large letters. On our left was a modern building, and facing us was another wall with a low door, over which was suspended a common oil lamp.

Through this mean entrance we passed into one of the far-famed fairy courts of the ALHAMBRA.

We were in the PATIO DE LA ALBERCA,—the Moorish Albarakah,* or Court of Blessing. In the centre is a large reservoir with a line of myrtles; at one end is the entrance to Charles V.’s palace; and opposite is the grand TOWER OF COMARES, within which is the HALL OF AMBASSADORS.

It was in this hall that Muley Abul Hassan received the knights sent by Ferdinand and Isabella to claim payment of the tribute due to them. The demand was received with scorn.

“Tell your masters,” said the Moorish king, “the mints of Granada no longer coin gold but steel.” Such was the reply with which he dismissed the knights, and the war began.

Then follows the Court of Lions, with the HALL OF THE ABENCERRAGES on one side, and opposite to it that of the Two Sisters, with its beautiful recess and Ajimez windows opening on a view of surpassing loveliness.

Often and minutely as these courts have been described, no word-painting, any more than the model at the Crystal Palace, can give a true idea of their beauty. The Alhambra must be seen.

THE HALL OF THE ABENCERRAGES has a tale of romantic interest.

The court of the old King, Muley Abul Hassan, was distracted by the factions of the princely tribes of the Abencerrages and the Zegrís. The strife grew fierce between them, and ended in the massacre of the Abencerrages, who had incurred the vengeance of the King. Thirty-six of this brave race were treacherously made prisoners. Unconscious, it is said, of the doom that awaited them, they were summoned one by one to the

* Philip V. made the reservoir in this Court his fish pond. Hence it has obtained its present less romantic name, “the Court of the Pond.”

presence of the King. As each chief reached the fountain—soon to be tinged with his blood—he was seized and beheaded by the executioner. Stains are to be seen on the white marble pavement, and no guide omits to point to these as marking the spot where the Abencerrages perished.

Before proceeding further, it will be as well to go back to the founder of this Moorish palace.

THE ALHAMBRA was begun by Muhammad Al Hamar in the thirteenth century—five hundred years later than the famous Mosque of Cordova. The Moors at this time retained but little of their old dominion in Spain. City after city had been subdued by Ferdinand III., surnamed the Saint, and the King of Granada, anxious for the safety of his kingdom, agreed to pay tribute to the Spanish crown.

Deep was the humiliation of Muhammad when he was summoned shortly after to aid Spain against the Moors of Andalusia, but he was unable to refuse compliance, and with his aid Seville was conquered. The Moorish king returned sorrowful in heart to Granada, and in reply to the acclamations of his people, bowed his head mournfully, saying, "God is the only conqueror." From henceforth this became his motto, and it is seen everywhere on the walls of his palace.

In the beautiful Court of Lions is the sole representation of animal life in the Alhambra. The twelve lions which support the fountain in the centre, are, however, of symbolic form, and recall the description of Solomon's twelve oxen upon which stood the molten sea,—Moslem and Jew being equally prohibited from making the exact likeness of things on earth.

From the Court of Lions we proceeded to the TOCADOR or MIRADOR, with its perforated floor, from whence issued sweet perfumes in the days when Oriental luxury reigned in the Moorish palace. Around this Tocador is an outer Gallery, formed of slender pilasters of white marble, on which rest horse-shoe arches, exquisitely light and graceful. It is impossible to imagine anything more lovely and varied

than the views through these arches--each arch forming a frame to a new and enchanting scene. On the right are thickly wooded heights, above which is a range of iron grey rocks--steep and rugged--and, higher still, the snow-white peaks of the Sierra Nevada. On the hill in front of the Mirador is the summer palace of the Moorish Kings--the Generalife--with its hanging-gardens and groves, and line of gigantic cypresses. On the left juts out the rude outline of the

TOWER OF COMARES, its rough cast walls rising out of a mass of underwood. Through the window of this tower, in a deep recess, are seen the beautiful Ajimez windows of the HALL OF AMBASSADORS, with their richly decorated apertures for ventilation.

Below these Ajimez windows is a latticed casement and a parapet. This casement gives light to the prison beneath the Hall of Ambassadors, where Muley Abul Hassan confined his once-beloved Ayxa and his son, Boabdil El Chico, or El Zogoybi the Unlucky. Boabdil was regarded by the people of Granada as the heir to the old King ; but it chanced that in one of the Moorish forays a Christian maiden, called Zorayda, was captured ; and Muley Abul Hassan became so enthralled by her beauty, that he put away the Sultana Ayxa, and finally imprisoned her and Boabdil in the Tower of Comares. From this casement Ayxa, fearing for her son's life, let him down by a silken cord over the parapet. It is a fearful height ; and, unable to see below, the intrepid mother of Boabdil with her ladies hearkened with eager ears until they caught the sound of his horse's feet bearing him away to a place of safety. When Boabdil returned to Granada, it was to dethrone his father, and declare himself King.

In the Hall of Ambassadors, Ayxa, restored to her state, armed her son, and bade him God speed ere he went forth to fight against the Spanish hosts ; but his young bride, Morayma, wept as she saw him depart. They watched him, mounted on his milk-white steed, and followed by his train of turbaned chiefs, as he passed through the Elvira gateway. His lance struck and broke against the arch, and when Morayma heard of this evil omen, she fled to her MIRADOR to weep over "El Zogoybi, the Unlucky One."

The omen proved true: Boabdil was taken prisoner in the battle which followed, and the savage old Muley Abul Hassan returned to reign in the Alhambra.

From the MIRADOR we wandered to the "Mezquita," where Yusuf was stabbed. Over the altar is a coarsely painted but suggestive picture of the Magi, and in a medallion above is represented "the Star in the East;" but Christian hands have ruined the once beautiful Moorish mosque. Inlaid wood, however, still adorns the ceiling, and everywhere is inscribed "Grace" and "Blessing," and the motto of Muhammad—"God is the only Conqueror."

We went next to the Baths and Whispering Gallery; but it is vain for me to attempt any description. Those who enter the halls of the Alhambra gradually feel as if drawn within a magic circle: the spell is over them, and, old or young, they cannot escape from its subjugating power. It is as though for a time you had surrendered yourself to the guidance of the charmed Hand over the Gate of Justice; and as, rapt in wonder, you glide through the silent and deserted courts, there rises on the inward ear a chime of melody—the chime of the past—soft and silver-toned, awakening a chord of harmony within you.

The spell of enchantment is however rudely broken by the voice of the custode, summoning all visitors at four o'clock to depart.

Sunday Morning, May 2nd.

We walked early this morning to the "Silla del Moro," the Moor's seat, overlooking the Generalife. It was here that Boabdil was wont to come for mournful reflection after he had sworn fealty to Ferdinand and Isabella. The minds of his people were full of fierce indignation; and from this spot he could behold the city where he dared not show himself; and lament unobserved the misfortunes which had clouded his life from his birth.

To reach the "Silla del Moro" we had to ascend a steep path, leading through the domain of the "Generalife," the summer palace of the Moorish Kings.

Passing through an avenue of dark cypresses of

enormous girth, planted by Moorish hands, we came upon the waters of the Darro, which with rushing sound flow through the gardens of the Generalife, on their passage from the snow mountains to the plain below. By the side of the rapid stream grow the pomegranate and the myrtle, the oleander "whose leaf withereth not"—and "the sweet cane from a far country."*

We mounted terrace after terrace filled with delicious flowers; then came another short ascent, and we stood on a hill, dry and barren, in sharp contrast with the hanging-gardens below. From here we looked down upon the Alhambra—her watch-towers and bulwarks; the city, with its grey tiled roofs and white houses lying like network at the foot of the Citadel;—the green Vega, green as an English meadow, spreading out for miles beyond to the foot of the Sierra;—villages scattered over the vast plain, amidst groves, and orchards, and gardens;—and as we sat on this lonely spot we heard the deep-toned bells of the many Churches, the cries of the town, and the voices of children below us—and above, the larks singing their hymns of praise.

In the Palace of the Generalife is a picture of Boabdil; and on the same walls are to be seen Ferdinand and Isabella, and Gonsalvo of Cordova, whose first laurels were won at the conquest of Granada.

Boabdil, with his golden hair and gentle expression, is the impersonation of peace, as Gonsalvo is that of war.

The next day we set forth to walk round the walls of the Alhambra. Massive square towers project at certain intervals. These towers are let or sold by the Government to private individuals, and a more charming possession than a tower in the Alhambra, as a summer residence, can hardly be imagined for those who have not passed the age of romance. With some difficulty we made the circuit, and found ourselves at last at a point overlooking the Torre de la Agua, from whence, after a certain amount of clambering, we made

* The sugar-cane was cultivated by the Moors in Spain before it was known to the rest of Europe.

our way to the blocked-up Gateway of "Los Siete Suelos." By this gate Boabdil El Zogoybi left the Alhambra, and it was his last request to Isabella that no one might ever after be permitted to pass through it.

The wish of El Zogoybi has been fulfilled. The arch remains, but huge stones bar the entrance, which is half hidden by mounds of earth and ruins—impassable since the day that the luckless Moorish King with his band of cavaliers sadly and silently rode through its gate, whilst distant shouts of triumph told them that the Christian hosts had entered the Alhambra by the Gate of Justice. Boabdil halted on a rocky height—his mother and wife were already there—then, turning to take a long last look at his loved city, he burst into tears, saying, "God is great; but when did misfortunes ever equal mine?"

"You do well," exclaimed his wrathful mother, "to weep like a woman for what you failed to defend like a man!"

This hill is still known as "La Cuesta de las lagrimas"—the hill of tears—and the summit of the rock, where he bade farewell to his home, is still called by the sorrowful name, "El ultimo Sospiro del Moro."

THE CATHEDRAL.—This Church dates from the sixteenth century, and is the work of Diego de Siloe, the son of the great sculptor whose beautiful monuments we had seen at the "Miraflores" at Burgos.

The name of Siloe raises expectation, but disappointment follows. The Cathedral is sadly deficient in architectural interest. It has a lofty dome, and fine stained glass windows; but its whole effect is rather Pagan than Christian.

There are several fine pictures by Alonso Cano and Ribera, but they are in so bad a light, that it is almost impossible to see them.

Alonso Cano was a canon of this Cathedral, and adorned it with his skill both in sculpture and painting. Torrigiano finds also a place here; but that which principally arrested our attention was a picture in the **CAPILLA DE SAN MIGUEL**. It is called "LA VIRGEN DE LA SOLEDAD" by *Alonso Cano*. The Virgin

Mother, "full of grace" is represented with a diadem on her head—crowned as "blessed among women," yet kneeling as if in prayer to Him whom she acknowledged as God her Saviour. In her loneliness and desolation, she still seems to say, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord : be it unto me as Thou wilt."

We next proceeded to the old mosque, which forms part of the Cathedral, and where, in ruinous neglect, is the tomb of the once honoured knight FERNANDO PEREZ DEL PULGAR, who on a dark night, with fifteen cavaliers from the Spanish camp, surprised the Moorish sentinels at a small postern gate, and dashing through their midst, with his dagger affixed the written words "Ave Maria" to the portal of this mosque. Then dismounting, the brave Pulgar knelt down, offered himself afresh to the service of his Divine master, and dedicated the building to the Virgin Mother. Once again he sprang into his saddle, and cutting his way through his bewildered foes, arrived at the royal camp. For this deed of Christian prowess, Pulgar was given burial beside the royal tombs, and the mosque dedicated by him to the Virgin is now the Christian Cathedral.

Another name deserves record here, that of Fernando de Talavera, the first Archbishop of Granada, whose tomb is in this sagrario. Talavera had been confessor to Isabella la Catolica: he was now made Archbishop of the newly conquered city. Mild and humane in character, Talavera avoided harsh measures, and strove to bring the Moors into the fold of Christianity by persuasion and kindness. He caused the services of the Church to be translated into Arabic for the use of the baptised Moors, and would have followed this by a translation of the Bible into the same tongue, had not Cardinal Ximenes been opposed to it. In the eyes of the Cardinal, to suffer the Scriptures to be read in the vulgar tongue was to "cast pearls before swine." "Hebrew, Greek and Latin, these were the only languages in which God's word should be read, the three languages pointed out to mankind by the inscription on the Cross itself." Such was the decision of the primate, and Talavera was forced to abandon his project.

It was Talavera who was wont to say that "Moorish works and Spanish faith were all that was necessary to make a good Christian." He was so respected by the Moors, that during an insurrection occasioned by the ill-advised zeal of the primate, he appeared among them preceded only by a priest bearing the Crucifix. At the sight of the good Archbishop, alone and undismayed, the Moors crowded around him, kissing the hem of his garment, and asking his blessing, and the insurrection was quelled.

LA CAPILLA DE LOS REYES.—We now entered the Royal chapel, railed off by a high screen of rich iron work. In front of the high altar is the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella by *Vigarny*, and that of Crazy Jane and her husband Philip the handsome, by *Peralta*. These occupy the centre of the chapel. Torrigiano, whose great work at Westminster Abbey had made his name renowned among sculptors, came to Spain with the hope that the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella would be entrusted to his skill, but *Vigarny* was selected by Charles, and when this tomb has been seen, it is impossible to feel regret at the selection.

TOMB OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.

Their monument is lower and less ornate in character than that of their daughter and her husband; but beautiful as is the face of poor crazy Jane, lying by the side of the husband who drove her mad, the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella is, on the whole, more striking.

Isabella la Católica died November 26th 1504. In her will she made two requests—that she should be buried at Granada, and that Gibraltar should never be relinquished! Isabella was greatly honoured by her Castilian subjects. They upheld her as their Queen, while they paid but slight homage to Ferdinand, and though the deep stain of bigotry rests on her memory, it was the sin of the age in which she lived. She believed that she was obeying the will of Heaven when she submitted to the dictates of her confessor Torquemada. Therefore, when her subjects

remonstrated against his excessive cruelty as Grand Inquisitor, she gravely replied:—"It is better for the service of God and for myself that the country should be depopulated, than that it should be polluted by heresy." Words almost identical with those afterwards uttered by her great-grandson, Philip II., with regard to the Netherlands. Her filial love, however, was shown in her marriage treaty with Ferdinand, to which she added a clause binding him to treat her mother with all respect and reverence. When her mother's intellect became clouded, Isabella watched over her with devoted care, and at her death raised a glorious monument to her memory.

To Isabella* is due the merit of having introduced camp hospitals into Europe; as to Ferdinand, we owe the system of embassies to foreign courts, which he was the first to adopt. He has therefore been described as the founder of "*la politique moderne*." Beneath a smiling surface Ferdinand disguised a merciless nature; his character was brim-full of duplicity; his friends were only valued as long as he needed them; and he scrupled not to repay their services with ingratitude.

Ferdinand died January 23rd, 1516, and his character is thus described by Voltaire:

"En Espagne *le sage, le prudent*;
En Italie *le pieux*;
En France et á Londres *le perfide*."

It is related of Ferdinand, that some one having told him that Louis XII. accused him of having thrice deceived him! "Thrice," exclaimed the king, "If he said this he lies, more than ten times have I overreached him."

The title of "Catholic" was given to Ferdinand and Isabella by Pope Alexander VI., after the conquest of Granada.

TOMB OF PHILIP AND JUANA.

Philip the handsome died at Burgos, aged twenty-eight, after a few days' illness (September 1506), having reigned but a few weeks over Castile. Crazy Jane never left his bedside during his illness: she sat there mute and

* See Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella.

tearless. Three months after the coffin had been closed she gave orders to have it re-opened, and with glazed eyes looked upon the form she had loved so well, and insisted on touching with her hand the ashes of the dead. In compliance with his last wishes, she then gave order to have his body conveyed to the royal vault at Granada, but refused to separate herself from his coffin. She only travelled by night, saying "she who hath lost the sun of her soul, should never again see the light of day." The mind which had first been shaken by the infidelity and cruel neglect of her husband, sunk under the terrible certainty of his death.* She had gleams of reason during the forty-seven years in which she survived him. At these times she would lament bitterly over her imprisonment at Tordesillas, and in "words to move stones" would pray to be permitted to see her son Ferdinand, and implore that her daughter might be left to her. In her sorrow and madness, she at one time refused to eat, when "by her father's order the rack was administered."† In her early married life she and Philip were nearly lost at sea. Juana was perfectly calm, and when told of their danger, immediately withdrew to array herself in jewels and royal apparel, that she might be recognised, and finally fastened a bag of money to her waist, "to defray," as she said, the expenses of a funeral worthy of a king's daughter, when her body should be found! The thought of sepulture was ever present, and she transmitted this monomania to her descendents.

On each side of the Retablo of the Capilla de los Reyes are most curious bas-reliefs by *Vigarny*. On the left the Alhambra towers are represented, and Boabdil is seen making his way on foot to the royal camp, followed by a page, who leads his horse. In the hands of Boabdil are the keys of the city, which he delivers to Cardinal Mendoza, who with the King and Queen are mounted. The Cardinal rides a mule, and wears jewelled gloves—the insignia of investiture. Behind are knights

* Our Henry VII. was bent upon marrying Juana. Sane or insane he was ready to take her, and with her the crown of Castile.

† See "Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers at Simancas." Supplement, edited by Bergenroth,