

uments of antiquity, which, at the same time, were those of their own glory; and it may be said, that chance alone, and the solidity of their construction, much more than curiosity, or a love of the arts, has preserved those which still exist, although daily going to ruin. What information might not history have derived from them; and how many fables would have been refuted and erased from our writings! But we must here do justice to the corporation of the city of Granada, who, many years ago, caused all the Arabian inscriptions in that city to be faithfully copied, and an authentic translation to be made, and deposited among the public records.

I shall first speak of the monuments within the city. The most distinguished is the edifice called the Mint, founded by King Abi-Abdallah, as an hospital for the insane. Some have thought the Arabian inscription over the gate contained a reference to a mint, others maintain that it was neither a mint nor a house for the reception of insane persons, but an hospital for the poor. The gate of the foundation is in the 778th year of the Hegira, or the year 1376 of the Christian æra. The purpose for which it was intended may be judged of by the following inscription:

“ Praise be to God. This hospital, an asylum
“ of mercy, was built for the benefit of poor and
“ sick Moors, a work, the piety and utility of

“ which, no tongue can sufficiently praise. It
“ stands a monument of the faith and charity of
“ the founder, and will be his recompence when
“ God shall inherit the earth, and all that it con-
“ tains. The founder is the great, the renowned,
“ and the virtuous Abi Abdallah Mahomad, may
“ he prosper in God ; the zealous king, the friend
“ and benefactor of his people ; who employs his
“ minister for the glory of God ; the courageous
“ prince, the propagator of pious works ; the
“ prince protected by angels ; the pure soul, the
“ protector of the laws and of morality, the
“ worthy emperor of the Moors ; may he pros-
“ per in God. He is the son of our Lord, the
“ just king, the high and powerful, the conqueror,
“ the fortunate, the pious governor of the Moors.
“ Abialhageg, who bears witness to the law, son
“ of the renowned, of the sublime Abi Algualid,
“ the destroyer of those by whom companions are
“ given to God ; son of Nazar the privileged,
“ happy in his works, and in every thing which
“ is resolved in the decrees of God for his ser-
“ vice, and with him ; he projected this edifice
“ from the moment the Moorish nation became
“ sovereign of the city, and thus made a provision
“ of merit. He filled his arch with charity and
“ good works, and his whole intention was di-
“ rected in the presence of God. God is he who
“ inspires good thoughts, and who communicated

“ to him his light, that it might be communi-
“ cated to those who should come after him ;
“ and for the day when riches and ancestors will
“ avail us nothing, and when nought will remain
“ to us but that which God in his mercy shall
“ have given us. The plan of this hospital was
“ drawn in the ten days of the middle of the
“ month Moharram, in the year 777, and finished
“ in the ten days in the middle of Xaguet, in the
“ year 778. May God preserve the pious work
“ of the founders, and never leave, without re-
“ compence, the meritorious labours of these il-
“ lustrious princes. God be with Mahomet and
“ his adherents for ever.”

This house is at present inhabited by an individual. In the first court there is a fine reservoir, and two lions, rudely sculptured in marble, through which the water runs into the reservoir. The edifice is not remarkable, except from the long and pompous inscription just given.

The architect of the cathedral was a person of the name of Siloë, who died before the building was finished. The principal front is noble and simple. The date of the building, and dedication, are placed over the little door, which opens to the street of the prison ; and above are two well executed figures, representing Faith and Justice, with the following inscription :

*Post septingentos, Mauris dominantibus, annos
Catholicis dedimus populos hos regibus, ambæ
Corpora condidimus hoc templo, animasque locamus
In cœlis, quia justitiã coluere fidemque.
Pontificem dedimus Ferdinandum nomine primum,
Doctrinæ, morum, vitæque exemplar honestæ.*

The architect in building the cathedral is said to have taken the human body for his model : the great chapel is the head, the breast and stomach are represented by the nave, the two collateral naves are the arms, and the rest of the choir form the feet. I confess, that in examining this magnificent building, I could not perceive these resemblances. The dome over the great altar is supported by twenty-two Corinthian columns, in great and majestic proportions. Gilt colossal statues of the twelve apostles are placed upon the architrave, and between the columns of the second order are several paintings, which represent the life of the Virgin Mary. In a word, the whole of this dome is magnificent : it is an hundred and sixty feet high, and eighty in diameter, the choir is as many in length and about fifty in breadth. The most sensible defect of this edifice is the breadth not being proportioned to the length, which arises from the royal chapel and the parish church, or *Sagrario*, having been taken into the cathedral ; by which means

three churches have been made into one. The length of the whole is four hundred and twenty-five feet; the breadth only two hundred and forty-nine: it has five naves, divided by twenty detached pillars; those of the principal nave are twelve feet in diameter, the others but eleven.

The chancery, or court of justice, has a front equally elegant and majestic; it were to be wished the inside corresponded with this fine exterior. The inscription upon the pediment is by the famous Ambrose Morales, historiographer to Philip II.

*Ut rerum quæ hic geruntur
magnitudini non omnino
impar esset tribunalis
majestas, Phillippi II regis
providentia
Regiam hanc iustitibus
dijudicandis amplificandam
& hoc digno cultu exornandam
censuit, anno
MD. LXXXVII. Domino Ferrnando
Nino de Guevara præside.*

Martin Diaz Navarro and Alonso Hernandez, were the architects of this front; to which was

added, in 1762, a second body of building, which accords but little with the first.

There are but two chanceries in Spain, before which, in case of appeal, come all the causes that are judged in the kingdom; from these, in cases foreseen by the law, they are carried before the council of Castile. One of the chanceries is at Valladolid, and the other at Granada.

The gate of the Alhambra is near the court of justice, and leads to a delightful walk, in which there is a fountain, built in the reign of Charles V. It is ornamented with imperial eagles, and bears a simple inscription in the Roman style and taste. CAESARI IMPERATORI CAROLO V. HISPANIARVM REGI. Four bas reliefs, half destroyed by time, accompany the inscription; one represents Hercules, in the moment of his killing the hydra, and has this motto: *non memorabitur ultra*; another the rape of Europa, with the words: *imago mysticæ honoris*; the third, Apollo pursuing Daphne, with the following legend: *à sole fugante fugit*; the fourth, Alexander on horseback completely armed, and these words; *non sufficit orbis*. In a few years nothing of these bas reliefs will remain.

The principal entrance of the castle of the Alambra, is a few paces from the fountain; this gate, now called that of the Guard, on ac-

count of a few invalids posted there, is a strong tower, built by the king Joseph Abulhaggeh, as the Arabian inscription indicates.

“ This gate, called the gate of the Judgment, or Tribunal, (may God cause it to promote the happiness of the Moorish people, and perpetuate it to the end of nations) was built by our lord the emperor and king of the Moors, Joseph Abulhaggeh, son of the just and warlike Abiguald, son of Nazar; God give a happy end to his works for the good of the Mussulman nation, and prosper the edifice built for its defence. It was finished in the month of Maulen Almnadam, in the year seven hundred and forty-nine. God render it lasting upon its foundation, and perpetuate, in the memory of men, the epocha of its completion.”

The year 749 of the Hegira, and the month Maulen Almnadam, corresponded with the 4th of April, 1338, of our æra. This gate was built to serve as a tribunal, according to the custom of the Arabs and the Hebrews, who erected their tribunals at the gates of their cities; and from this ancient custom in Asia, the court of the grand seignor is called the *Porte* (or gate) by way of distinction.

On each side of the inscription is a piece of marble, upon which are the following sentences in Arabic.

“ Praise be to God. There is no other God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet. There is no strength but from God.”

A key and an open hand are placed over the inscription ; these are the two great symbols of the Mahometan religion. The Alcoran continually speaks of the almighty hand of God, which conducted the faithful in the way of righteousness : and of the key of God, which opened to them the gates of the world, and of religion.

The key, among the Mussulmen, is nearly what the cross is with Christians : the chief sign of the faith. Among the Arabians, it had much the same functions and power as the keys of Saint Peter with us ; the power of binding and loosening, and of opening and shutting the gates of heaven. We read in the Alcoran : “ Is not God almighty and merciful in favour of men who believe in him and write ? Did not he give to his legate the power of heaven which is above, and of fire which is beneath ? With the key, did not he give to him the title and power of a porter, that he may open to those whom he shall have chosen ? ” The key was, besides, the armorial ensign of the Andalusian Moors. As soon as they entered Spain, they bore it on their standards and *Ghiblaltath*, now Gibraltar, the name given it by the Moors, and which signifies the *mountain of the entry*, was

thus named, because it was looked upon as the key of the strait through which the ocean enters into the Mediterranean; and for the Moors, it was the gate also through which they found an entry into Spain. Therefore the key over the gate of the Alhambra may be taken in several acceptations, either as a symbol of the Mahometan faith, or as a simple armorial ensign.

The hand near the key had, among the Moors, three mysterious significations. It was a designation of Providence, and the prototype, or rather abridgment of the law. The hand is composed of four fingers and a thumb, and each finger has three joints; the thumb but two; but all are combined in the unity of the hand, which serves as the foundation. The law of the Mahometans contains five fundamental precepts: the first is, "*to believe in God and in his prophet* ; the second, *to pray* ; the third, *to give alms* ; the fourth, *to fast during the month of Ramadan* ; the fifth, *to visit the temple of Mecca, and that of Medina.*" Each of these dogmas, or precepts, have three modifications, except the first which has but two, and answers to the thumb; these are the *heart and works*. Words are useless in the law of Mahomet; all its doctrines, and their derivatory precepts, are founded on the profession of their faith in the unity of God, which the Mussulmen have continually in their mouths, *La allah illah*

allah; "there is no God but God;" and consequently the whole of Mahometanism may be confined within the hand, the five fingers, and the fourteen joints.

The third signification is purely superstitious. The Arabs still believe that the hand, by its form, being an abridgment of their religion, became a powerful defence against the enemies of the law, and might operate miracles by knowing how to give it certain figures, and changing them according to the course of the stars, planets, and constellations. Represented open, like that over the gate of the Alhambra, it had, said they, the power of weakening the strength of the enemy.

The hand was honoured with equal respect amongst us, during the ages of ignorant credulity: it has been made the foundation of the idle dreams of fortune-tellers. The professors of chiromancy have pretended, that every man carries in his hand the marks of his destiny. The lineaments Nature has traced there, and others occasioned by accident, have furnished a subject for many learned volumes. The Spanish women still put round the necks of their children, a kind of collar, made with little hands, of box, ebony, or ivory, to preserve them from enchantments; a superstition which they have received from the Moors.

The first edifice within the walls of the Al-

hambra, is the famous palace of Charles V. The architect, by whom the plan was formed, and the building begun, was the celebrated Alphonso Berruguete, born in the village of Paredes de Navas, near Valladolid. It was continued by Machuca, another Spaniard, pupil to Raphael, who, in his turn, left the undertaking to Siloe, the architect of the cathedral, a Spaniard like his predecessors, and born at Burgos. This palace was built with the money the emperor had the art to obtain from the Moors, under the pretence of allowing them liberty of conscience. They advanced at two payments sixteen hundred thousand ducats, for which they received nothing but promises; for in the end they were ruined, converted, and persecuted.*

* The means employed by the Spaniards to convert the Moors of Granada, may be judged of by a letter, which still remains, of the famous Aben Humeya; in which he conjures his subjects, his brethren, to persevere in their religion, and to wait for more happy days. We might imagine we hear Saint Paul, or the fathers of the primitive church, exhorting the faithful, and supporting them under persecutions, so much do the paths of error resemble those of truth. The letter cannot be displeasing, I have therefore translated it entirely.

“ The unhappy the sorrowful Molesma, despoiled of the
“ kingdom which belonged to him, as the only remaining
“ branch of the race of the kings, the defenders of the nation
“ and the law, Molesma, who took pleasure in the labours of
“ a sovereign, without losing sight of justice and religion,

This palace was abandoned at the death of Charles V. It is a perfect square of two hundred and twenty feet. No greater extent was given it,

“ Aben Humeya, son of Thali, and descendant of the high,
“ mighty, and faithful Muley Hacén, to the honourable and
“ zealous Mussulmen his brethren of Granada, health and be-
“ nediction.

“ We weep and shed bitter tears at the disgrace and mis-
“ fortunes which the faithful Mussulman Ab Hami has seen
“ fall upon you, and we rejoice to learn with what firmness
“ you resist the importunate intreaties, and cruel threats and
“ persecutions of those who wish to make you renounce the
“ truth, wretched men that they are. If the voices of two or
“ three of the Christian Imams be a torment to us, what must
“ you suffer who are exposed to so great a number of their
“ Imams, who daily preach to, surround you, and even enter
“ your houses? We know that the most severe among them
“ are they who, with their profane mosque, are placed in a
“ collected body in the midst of you. These are the persons
“ who most defame our patience and courageous fidelity. We
“ congratulate ourselves upon the means you employ to keep
“ them at a distance, and especially to prevent their destructive
“ poison from infecting the tender minds of your feeble
“ children. Fear nothing; arm yourselves with new strength;
“ power will manifest itself to destroy this race of infidels;
“ and we shall one day possess this power. He who, with a
“ steady eye, watches over us and our works is almighty; he
“ will multiply his faithful and zealous servants like the stars
“ of heaven and the sand of the sea. In the midst of all the
“ evils with which you are surrounded, you are happy, since
“ you have before your eyes that splendid city and the flowery
“ fields, which were the native country of our forefathers; may
“ they enjoy peace and receive the benediction of heaven.

that the Moorish palace might be preserved, which was designed for a summer residence.

The principal gate is of grey marble, and of the doric order. The frieze is ornamented with this simple inscription :

IMPERATORI CES. KA-
ROL. V. HISP. REG.

Near the house called that of the *Contador* (the receiver) not far from the palace, is an ancient elm, which, if tradition be believed, served as a throne to the chief of the Mahometan religion, to give audiences, and to interpret obscure points of the law : thus, among the Jews, we find the tribunal of Deborah under a palm tree.

The first court of the Moorish palace, called the Castle of Alhambra, and which is adjoining to the palace of Charles V, was called the *Mesuar* : the Spaniards now call it *Los Arrayanes*. It is paved with great squares of white marble, that are now broken and covered with

“ Time presses ; neglect not the education of your children,
“ that throughout their lives they may know the truth. We
“ are become opprobrious in the eyes of our neighbours, the
“ slaves and objects of mockery to those by whom we are ab-
“ horred. Be firm, and hope for every thing from time and
“ from God ; he is merciful and almighty.”

grass and moss. In the middle is a kind of basin, narrow and almost as long as the court; at the two extremities are four gothic columns, which support a charming gallery. The whole extent is decorated with ornaments, serving to join several Arabic letters, which, united, form different inscriptions. Some of those the most frequently repeated are,

“ God is the sovereign good, the universal support; he is full of goodness and mercy for compassionate hearts.”

“ God only is the conqueror.”

“ Honour and happiness to our lord Abd-Allah.”

Above the two principal cornices are several festoons, well finished, with Arabic characters forming the following inscription, which occupies the greatest part of the wall at the entrance of the tower of Comares.

“ Let God be extolled; he has given to the nation a governor who has brought it to the highest degree of glory and renown. Oh! from how many and from what heresies has he delivered the people! He has affectionately conducted them to their inheritances; but they who have shut their eyes against his light have been reduced to slavery, and made useful to the welfare of the kingdom. With his sword and invincible courage has he reduced nations to obe-

“ dience, and conquered provinces. Thou, *Nazar*,
“ hast achieved heroic deeds before unheard of.
“ Thou didst enter and conquer twenty renowned
“ cities; thou didst return crowned with victory
“ and immense riches, with which thou hast re-
“ warded thy brethren and people. If they know
“ how to direct their prayers, when their soul be-
“ comes elevated, they will ask of the great, the
“ sublime, and the only God length of days for
“ thee, and for thy states duration and prosperity.
“ O *Nazar*, although born in the midst of great-
“ ness, thou shinest by thine own lustre like the
“ star of heaven; thou art our fortress, our sup-
“ port, and our arm of vengeance; thou guidest
“ us like a flambeau, which dissipates darkness
“ from before us. The stars fear thee in their
“ course, the great star of heaven lights thee
“ with respect, and the highest tree which can
“ bend gains by thy side.”

Over the door of the same apartment, but on the outside, is a circle filled by the following inscription :

“ If thou admirest my beauty without thinking
“ of God, who is the author of all things, I
“ warn thee that it is a folly, because thou might-
“ est make thy admiration turn to thy profit, and
“ God may bring thee to death. O ye who look
“ upon this marble of perfect workmanship and
“ beauty, watch over its defence, and that it may

“be lasting, protect it with your five fingers and
“your hand.”*

This inscription seems to indicate that there was formerly a statue, bas-relief, or some precious marble over the gate.

The tower of Comares took its name from the Moorish architect by whom it was built. But Marmol and Pedraza, who have written the history of Granada, say that *Comares* is derived from *Commarragia*, the proper name of the Persian ornament with which the principal hall is embellished. The architect, whoever he was, after building his tower, made an experiment upon it; he measured the height as soon as the building was finished, and having measured it a second time the year after, found the tower to have sunk three feet. It is the highest and most magnificent tower of the Alhambra.

The door of the great hall is an arch, in a good taste, embellished with festoons, which are in stucco. On each side of the door are two little

* See what has been said upon the fingers and the hand, and the opinion of the Moors on this subject. The manner of employing the hand as a defence against fascination, as still received in Spain, is to shut it, and pass the thumb in the form of a cross between the middle and the fore fingers. In this manner a young and handsome woman imagines she skreens herself and preserves her children from the malicious looks of an old one.

niches, in which persons who entered left their sandals. This hall is worthy the attention of the curious by its height, the boldness of its arched roof, and the ornaments and inscriptions it contains.

The walls and cornice are covered with festoons and Arabic characters; those of the cornice are a repetition of the following words: "Celestial cheerfulness, ease of heart, and eternal delights to all believers." The cornices were undoubtedly cast in a mould, in which the words were engraved; whence it comes that most of the borders of the doors and windows are but a continued repetition of the same phrase.

The inscription round the cabinet, to the left on entering, is as follows:

"Observe, that all the kings who have been
"and now are in this palace render justice to
"Abu Nazar, and take pride in him; he is en-
"dowed with such majesty, that, placed in the
"heavens, he would have obscured the planets
"and the signs of the zodiac. His looks strike
"terror into the minds of kings: but without
"violence, he attracts them to him, and protects
"them by his own glory, for to his terrible look
"he always joins greatness of mind and bene-
"volence; he served not Arabian and Andalu-
"sian kings only, but all the sovereigns of the
"earth."

This *Abu Nazar* is, undoubtedly, the famous *Miramolin* who reigned in Africa, and in whose name the conquest of Spain was made.

The other cabinet has also an inscription, which is longer, more elegant, and better written.

“Glory of the kings who have disappeared
 “from the earth, honour of those by whom thou
 “shalt be succeeded, wert thou compared to the
 “stars they would be humbled; were splendour
 “and nobility wanting to thy dignity thy person
 “would give it sufficient lustre. Thou art the
 “depository of the books which have purified
 “the sect,* and which will be such evidence as
 “none shall ever contradict. How many former
 “nations, how many of those which now exist,
 “have been saved by thy zeal! Thou concealest
 “sublime ideas, and thy virtues are so necessary
 “that thy end ought never to come; they have
 “all chosen an asylum in thy breast; but espe-
 “cially clemency and oblivion of injuries.”

* When the famous Ximenez de Cisneros came to Granada to co-operate with the first archbishop of that city, Fernando de Talavera, in the conversion of the infidels, it is said, they collected a million and twenty-five thousand copies of the Alcoran, which were burnt in the public square; several works of taste and erudition, worthy of descending to posterity, were confounded with the law of the prophet, and partook its fate: the press, upon which this inscription is written, probably contained the Alcoran.

The following inscription is upon the window in the middle of the hall.

“ Oh, God! hasten to my assistance. May
 “ he who *stones the demon* * be with Mahomet
 “ and his generation, let him keep us from the
 “ wrath and snares of the evil spirit, that we may
 “ make war with hell; may he deliver me from
 “ the adversities which are followed by misfor-
 “ tune,† and may he avert the evil which the
 “ envious is about to do me in the moment of his
 “ envy. There exists no other divinity than that

* This expression originates from a tale told by Mahomet to the inhabitants of Mecca. He persuaded them that a mountain in the neighbourhood of that city, called *Hod Hud Ar Aram*, was the Mount Moriah to which Abraham led his son to sacrifice him, and that the demon, jealous of the progress of true religion, came every night to haunt the mountain, and do some evil to the real believers; but that the angel Gabriel had taught Abraham certain words, by repeating which, walking seven times round the mountain, and throwing stones at the devil, the evil spirit would run not only from that place, but from every other where the same religious act should be performed. Hence arose the custom of the pilgrims to Mecca; who never fail to roll a stone every night round the mountain, and to stone the devil: many indulgences are attached to this nocturnal ceremony, and the power of stoning the demon is in an especial manner attributed to God.

† The explanation of this idea is found in the second volume of the letters of M. Guis, upon Greece, in which he comments upon the Greek proverb which is so philosophical: *O misfortune, if thou comest alone, thou art welcome!*

“ of God. Praise be to the father of all ages and
 “ of the world; eternal praise.”

Over the window to the right is written :

“ I am like unto the sweet exhalation of plants,
 “ which satisfies, captivates, and enchants thy
 “ senses. Behold the vase I support, and, in its
 “ purity, thou wilt see the truth of my words.
 “ If thou shouldst desire to give me one like it,
 “ thou canst find it no where but in the Moon
 “ when at the full ; and Nazar, who is my mas-
 “ ter, is the star which communicates to me its
 “ light : as long as he watches over me, I shall
 “ never be eclipsed.”

This inscription is undoubtedly an eulogium on the court and basin upon which the window opens.

The following is over the window to the left in the hall :

“ Well may a sublime name be given to me,
 “ for I am fortunate and magnificent. This trans-
 “ parent and liquid reservoir which presents
 “ itself to thy view, will, if thou pleasest, quench
 “ thy thirst, but were the water to stop in its
 “ course, and never more to fill up these fortu-
 “ nate banks, it would not less testify the praises
 “ of Nazar, the man, liberal beyond measure,
 “ whom no one leaves with the want which
 “ brought him into his presence.”

The little cornice above the window is not without its inscription; it has the following words:

“ Praises to God, to the Prophet, to Nazar who gave empires; and to our King Abi-Abd-Allah, peace, elevation and happiness*.”

The frame of the principal door contains the following words:

“ By the sun and its splendour, by the moon
 “ which partakes of it, by the day when he pre-
 “ sents himself with all his pomp, by the night
 “ by which we are deprived of him, by heaven
 “ and him by whom it was created, by the earth
 “ and him from whom it received its extent, by
 “ the soul and him by whom it was predestined,
 “ there is no other God than God.†”

On each side of the entrance there is a short inscription: that on the right is as follows:

“ My peace is with God, to him have I attached myself; I have put my trust under his protection.”

* This inscription proves that Nazar, who is mentioned in the preceding inscriptions, is the same with Miramolin Jacob Almanzor, whom several historians call *Nazar*, a name of greatness and dignity, like *Augustus* among the Romans, and *Pharaoh* with the Egyptians.

† These Arabic verses are taken from the beginning of the ninety-first *sura* of the Alcoran, the title of which is the *sun*. This *sura* is one of the most elegant and poetical of the whole book. The inscription quoted contains seven verses.

And to the left:

“ There is no real grandeur but in God, the great being and the lover of justice.”

The little niches also, in which the sandals were placed, have their maxims :

“ God is our strength in tribulation: the nourishment contained in our food comes to us from God.”

And round the niches are these words:

“ Vigour and length of days to our lord Abulgagheh, king of the Moors; may God guide his steps and give lustre to his empire.”

And over them, “ Praise be to God” is three times repeated.*

In examining this abode of magnificence, the observer is every moment astonished at the new and interesting mixture of architecture and poetry. The palace of the Alhambra may be called a collection of fugitive pieces; and whatever duration these may have, time, with which every thing passes away, has too much contributed to confirm to them that title. If the simplicity of

* The reigns of Abulgagheh and of Abi-Abd-Allah are distinct and separate, so that it may be conjectured from the eulogiums of these kings transmitted to us by the inscriptions, that the edifice was begun by one and finished by the other: or that Abi-Abd-Allah, who reigned after the former, had a great affection for Abulgagheh, whose reign had been glorious, and wished to partake of the eulogiums given him, as all his predecessors had partaken of those bestowed on Nazar.

early ages, ideas frequently sublime, although expressed with emphasis, and manners not our own, and marked with the stamp of several centuries, can excite the curiosity of those by whom my book may be read, they will not blame me for having transmitted to them the minutest details of this kind; they will regret with me my inability to preserve the full blown flowers of the imagination of a valiant and voluptuous people, with all their freshness and natural elegance.

Over the window to the left, on the outside of the hall, we read:

“ Praise be to God : because my beauty vivifies this palace, and I attain from the circle with which I am crowned the elevation of the highest plants. My bosom contains springs of pure water. I embellish these scenes, pleasing of themselves. They who inhabit me are powerful, and God protects me. I have preserved the remembrance of the great actions of men who believe in God, and whom he calls to himself. The liberal hand of Abulghaghegh has ornamented my outlines; it is a moon in its full, the clearness of which dissipates the darkness of heaven, and, at the same time, acts upon the whole extent of the earth.”

The characters in the inside of the same window signify :

“ Praise to God only, who by his five powerful
 “ fingers puts away every thing that might do
 “ harm to Joseph ; and say with me, that God
 “ protects us from the effects of his anger. Praise
 “ be to God. Let us return thanks to God.”

Over the other window is written :

“ Praise be to God : my architect has ele-
 “ vated me to the height of glory. I surpass in
 “ beauty the bed of the bridegroom, and am suf-
 “ ficient to give a just idea of symmetry and con-
 “ jugal love. He who comes to me with the
 “ complaint of an injury finds in me an imme-
 “ diate avenger. I yield myself to such as desire
 “ my table. I resemble the bow in the heavens,
 “ and, like it, am decorated with the colours of
 “ beauty. My light is Abulghaghegh, who, in
 “ the paths of the world, continually watches
 “ over the temple of God, encourages pilgrims
 “ and loads them with gifts.”*

The inside of the window is filled up with the following words :

“ Praise be to God : praise him by whom
 “ Joseph was delivered from peril with the five

* The expression, *I surpass in beauty the bed of the bridegroom*, alludes to the custom of the great among the Moors, of being married in presence of the king. In all the royal mansions there was a hall destined to this ceremony. The poet, to celebrate the beauty of the hall of Comares, compares it to the bed of a bridegroom, ornamented with flowers and garlands.

“ precepts, and God thus delivered me from his
“ wrath, praise be to God.”*

A modern little staircase leads from the hall of Comares ; the old one, which corresponded to the beauty of the edifice, having been destroyed. At the top of the staircase is a gallery, a part of which is inclosed with an iron railing : this kind of cage is called the prison of the queen. It was here the wife of the last king of Granada was imprisoned. The Gomels and Legris, two families of distinction, bore false witness against her virtue, and occasioned the destruction of the greatest part of the Abencerrages, another powerful and numerous family of Granada of whom they were jealous. As the whole of this history is interesting, I shall present it to my reader : it is indeed necessary to the understanding of several facts relative to the Alhambra.

In the year 1491, Abdali, surnamed the Little, still reigned in Granada ; but this city was upon the brink of ruin, for the principal families were divided against each other. The Moors had carried their arms against Jaen, and had been bravely repulsed. Abdali was consoling himself

* The Joseph here mentioned is the patriarch to whom Mahomet gives a distinguished part in his Alcoran. We are told in this book, that Joseph being upon the point of committing a sin, God revealed to him five words, by means of which he acquired strength sufficient to resist the temptation.

in one of his pleasure houses for the ill success of his enterprize, when the Zegriss, who long had been the secret enemies of the Abencerrages, took the opportunity of this defeat to represent them to the king as rebellious subjects, who employed their immense riches to gain the favour of the people and dethrone their sovereign. They accused Albin Hamet, the most rich and powerful among them, of having an adulterous commerce with the queen, and produced witnesses who asserted they had on a certain festival seen, at Generalif, under a bower of rose trees, Albin Hamet in the arms of that princess. The fury of Abdali may easily be imagined; he swore the destruction of the Abencerrages. But the Zegriss, too prudent to let his anger break forth, advised him to dissimulate, and not to suffer it to be known to that numerous and powerful family that he was informed of their perfidy. It will be better, said they, to entice them into the snare, and, before they can unite and put themselves into a state of defence, revenge upon their heads the insult offered to the crown. This advice was followed: Abdali went to the Alhambra, having ordered thirty of his guards to arm themselves, and the executioner to attend. The Abencerrages were sent for one by one, and beheaded as soon as they entered the hall of the lions, where there is still a large vase of alabaster, and which

was quickly filled with blood and the heads of expiring bodies. Thirty-five heads had already been struck off, and all the Abencerrages would have died in the same manner, had not a page, who had followed his master, and remained unperceived in the hurry of the execution, taken an opportunity of withdrawing and giving information to the rest of the unhappy family of what had passed. These immediately assembled their friends in arms, crying out through the city of Granada, Treason! Treason! Let the king die! He unjustly puts to death the Abencerrages! The people, with whom they were favourites, did not hesitate in assisting them: fourteen thousand men were soon found in arms, and immediately proceeded towards the Alhambra, shouting all the way, let the king die! Abdali, surprised his secret should have been so soon discovered, and severely repenting of having followed the pernicious counsels he had received, ordered the castle gates to be shut; but they were presently set on fire. Muley Hacén, who had been forced to abdicate the throne in favour of his son, hearing the tumult of the people, had one gate opened, and presented himself to appease the rage of the citizens; but he no sooner appeared than he was lifted up by the multitude nearest the gate, who cried out: Behold our King, we have no other, long live Muley Hacén; and leaving him sur-

rounded by a strong guard, the Abencerrages, and other nobles, entered the castle, accompanied by upwards of an hundred soldiers. But they found the queen only, with her women, and in the utmost consternation at the sudden revolution of which she knew not the cause. They asked for the king, and being informed he was in the hall of the lions, entered it furiously, and found him defended by the Zegrís and the Gomels, and, in less than two hours killed upwards of two hundred of them. Abdali had the good fortune to escape. The bodies of the beheaded Abencerrages were laid upon black cloth, and carried to the city. Muza, brother to Abdali, and who, by his great actions, had gained the favour of the people, seeing the Abencerrages were revenged, found means to appease them; and having learned that the king had taken refuge in a mosque near the mountain now called Saint Helena, went and brought him back to the castle of the Alhambra. For several days nothing but sighs and groans were heard throughout the city. Abdali shut himself up in the castle, and refused to see the queen. Those who had accused her of adultery, however, persisted in their false accusations, and said, they would maintain, with arms in their hands, against all who should contradict them, that the queen was guilty. The unhappy princess was imprisoned, and the day

arriving on which she was to perish by the hands of the executioner, when none among the Moors offering to defend her, she was advised to commit her cause to some Christian knights, who presented themselves at the time appointed, and conquered her false accusers, so that she was immediately set at liberty. The taking of Granada soon followed this combat; Muza and the Abencerrages having, it is said, facilitated the conquest of it by Ferdinand and Isabella.

To the account I have given of the death of the Abencerrages, I shall add the following translation of an Arabic manuscript of the year 1492, by which they are justified from the accusation brought against them. The manuscript is curious for its simplicity of composition.

“ In the name of God who is merciful and in-
“ spires mercy. Praise to the most high: there
“ is no other God than God; he will exalt the
“ good, he protects them; he will pursue the
“ impious: he abhors falsehood and the evil man
“ does to his fellow creature. Good proceeds from
“ God, evil originates from the tempter: he in-
“ fuses his suggestions into the heart of man, who
“ suffers himself to be seduced by them, and then
“ does the work of the demon, who operates in
“ him, and has his will in the will of man: such
“ a man is man in his external figure only. God
“ gave wisdom to his creature, and endowed him

“ with a spirit of uprightness ; and if man be not
“ blinded by pride and envy he will know the
“ truth. The demon put envy into the heart of
“ Zulem Zegri, because he saw the virtue of Ma-
“ homed Aben Zurrah exalted in the eyes of his
“ master. He saw with an eye of hatred the de-
“ scendants of Aben Zurrah, who were benefi-
“ cent, rich and powerful, and whose virtue
“ shone forth like the stars in a fine night in
“ summer. Aben Zurrah was constantly in the
“ presence of our lord the king ; the queen call-
“ ed him her council, and had the greatest con-
“ fidence in his words, because his lips never
“ departed from truth. Zulem Zegri and Hacem
“ Gomel came to the king, and said to him ;
“ O king, knowest thou not that the queen dis-
“ honours thy bed with Mahomed Aben Zurrah,
“ and that he conspires against thy throne ?
“ Put away therefore the queen if thou wouldst
“ not be deprived both of thy crown and thy life.
“ The king spoke not of this to the queen, but
“ called Mahomed Aben Zurrah, with those of
“ his kindred, and in one day beheaded eighty-
“ six of them ; and not one would have been
“ left alive had not God protected the innocent.
“ The queen entrusted her defence to the hands
“ of Christians, and the most noble and valiant
“ Christian knights came and fought before the
“ king and queen, and before us and the people.