

time for pleasure; and, if my advice be listened to, no body will ever attempt it once.

Granada, December 25.

Our baggage being put upon a cart this morning, we proceeded down a valley, and over some heath and forest land, till we came in view of the plain and city of Granada.—Beautiful beyond expression even in its winter weeds, what must it be when decked out in all the gaudy colours of spring? You must not expect an account of it for some days, as I intend getting all possible intelligence, turning over all my books, and examining every place, before I venture to describe this city, its palace, and environs.

L E T T E R X X .

THE Moorish kingdom of Granada consisted of those parts of Spain that lie in the south-east corner of the peninsula, and at its most flourishing period never exceeded seventy leagues in length from east to west, and twenty-five in breadth from north to south. Its historians have laboured hard to prove, that it had separate

parate monarchs soon after the Moorish conquest of Spain; but it is more than probable, that this country did not become a distinct sovereignty, while the Caliphs of the East retained any authority in Europe. By degrees, the weakness of the other Mahometan potentates, who could afford no succour against the common enemy; the coalition of the Christian kingdoms under one or two powerful heads; and, more than all, their own civil discords and deadly feuds, had, long before its final overthrow, reduced the kingdom of Granada to little more than the Alpuxaras mountains and the capital city.

The Granadine antiquaries, with Pedraza at their head, insist that Granada was a colony of the Phœnicians, known to the Romans by the name of Illiberia. They allege, in support of their system, that the walls of the most ancient of its inclosures, which was afterwards called the Alcaçaba, are of a different sort of masonry from those of the Romans and Saracens, and similar to such remains of antiquity as are universally acknowledged to be the work of the Phœnicians. The spot where this mode of building is most conspicuous, is, the *Hetna-roman*, a tower where the stones are very long and narrow, laid regularly upon beds of cement of equal thickness with the stones. It is now of little consequence to endeavour to discover the founders of this city, and an analysis of the volumes published on these chimerical

topics, would but ill repay the time lost in writing and reading such a dissertation.

Another argument, that has afforded much entertainment to many doctors profoundly skilled in etymologies, is, the meaning, date, and origin, of the name of Granada. Some writers make out the derivation by compounding the word *Nata*, which they set down as the name of Count Julian's daughter⁷, with the word *Gar*, a cave, where she retired after the battle of Xeres: others will have it to come from the abundance of corn (*Grano*): and some again from *Nata*, a goddess of the Aborigines: others, with an appearance of probability, ascribe the origin of the name to the pleasantness and fertility of its environs, a word very like it, in the Phœnician language, meaning *fruitful* and *agreeable*. The Romans expressed the same signification by the title of *municipium floren-*

⁷ It is the common opinion (though not sufficiently warranted by authentic testimonies) that Rodrigo, last king of the Goths, ravished the daughter of Julian, governor of Africa. The father, enraged at such an injury, made a treaty with the Saracens, whom he induced to cross the Straits and invade Spain. Musa, lieutenant of the Caliph Walid, sent over Tarif with a small force to try his strength. There being great appearance of success, Tarif received a considerable reinforcement, and attacked the Goths near Xeres de la frontera. The Goths were defeated, their king killed, and the Gothic empire annihilated in 712. Musa, and his immediate successors, completed the conquest of all Spain, except the mountains of Oviedo, where Pelayo afterwards formed a principality, the parent of all the other Spanish kingdoms.

tinum illiberitanum. The Arabs called it *Roman*; the Jews *Rimmón*: and there are authors that derive it from *Granatum*, a pomegranate, brought from Africa, and first planted near this place. Many affirm it to be called so from the resemblance its position bears to that fruit when ripe; the two hills to represent the bursting skin, and the houses crowded into the intermediate valley, the pips. This is a very favourite opinion, and seems to be adopted by the nation, which gives a split pomegranate for its arms, and places it upon every gate or ornamented post in the streets and public walks.

Granada stands on two hills, at the foot of the *Sierra nevada*, where two small rivers join their waters. One of them, the Dauro, sometimes washes down gold; the other, the Xenil, virgin silver; but it was not possible for me to procure any specimens of either, on account of the severe prohibition issued out by government against all searchers after mines and minerals. The ancient palace of the *Alhambra*, and the *Torre vermeja*, crown the double summit of the hill between the rivers; the other hill, north of the Dauro, is covered with the *Albaycin* and *Alcaçaba*. The remainder of the city extends along the skirts of the plain in a semicircular form. The Vega, or plain, is eight leagues long, and four broad; a gentle slope of beautiful hillocks bound the horizon on all sides, except that of the *Sierra nevada*, and to the north-west, where it is terminated by the bare top of the *Sierra Elvira*,

Elvira, or *Sierra de los infantes*. This mountain was so named from the death of the princes of Castille, Peter and John, who perished here, through excess of heat and thirst, in a battle against the Moors, 1319.

The country about Granada was so alluring, the situation so striking, and the salubrity of its air so universally celebrated, that the victorious Saracens soon were induced to turn their arms that way. It was taken by the forces of Tarif in 715, the ninety-fifth year of the He-gira^s. As long as Spain remained subject to the viceroys of the Caliphs of the family of the Ommiades, Granada does not appear to have undergone any great revolution, although now and then an ambitious governor might make an attempt towards independency. The first that brought this design to bear, and rendered the crown hereditary in his family, was Mehemed Alhamar, governor of Arjone, who began his reign in 1236.

Mehemet Alhamar.

1236. This first king became tributary to St. Ferdinand, king of Castille, and paid him one moiety of all his revenues, which half amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand pieces of gold: he even assisted that prince in his conquest of Seville.

1273. The second king was his son Muley Mehemed Abdallah, who is said to have begun the Alhambra.

^s The flight of Mahomet, which happened in the night between the 15th and 16th of July, in the year 622.

1302. 3. *Mehemed Abenalbamar* the blind, son to *Muley*, was dethroned and murdered by his brother. *Mehemed* had a great passion for building; one of the magnificent monuments he left for the admiration of posterity, was the great mosque included in the *Alhambra*. The form was most elegant, the inside mosaic, adorned with ingenious devices in sculpture, supported upon lofty pillars with silver bases and capitals. He endowed this pious foundation with revenues arising from the baths, which he had built opposite to it, out of the tribute paid by the Christians and Jews. He also purchased lands, and let them out for the benefit of this mosque.

1310. *Nazer aba algueiusch* murdered his brother, and was himself driven into banishment by his sister's son.

1315. *Ismael ben pharagi abulgualid*, who was murdered by the alcaide of *Algeziras*, from whom he had forcibly taken a very beautiful female captive.

1326. *Mehemed Abuabdallab*, his son, succeeded. This prince was murdered by his own servants⁹, and succeeded by his son.

⁹ In a sally which the Christians made during the siege of *Baeca*, this king of *Granada* hurled a lance, enriched with precious stones, at a Spanish foldier; who, finding himself grievously wounded, limped away towards the town with the weapon fixed in his body. The Moors rushed forwards to recover the lance, but *Mehemed* forbade them to molest the poor wretch, and suffered him to carry away the spear to pay for his cure.

1333. *Jusaf Abubagiagi*. In 1340, this king, and Abi Haffan, king of Morocco, were defeated in the famous battle of Salado, by Alphonfus the eleventh. From that day Granada declined in power, and gradually dwindled away. The uninterrupted series of evil fortune that attended this unhappy prince, at length drew upon him the universal hatred of his subjects, one of whom stabbed him in the street.

1354. His successor was *Mebemed Lago*, a younger brother of Pheragi. He was dethroned by his cousin, *Mebemed Ismael ben Albamar*. Don Pedro, king of Castille, having always been intimately connected with Lago, espoused the cause of that exiled prince with great warmth, and made several attempts to reinstate him. Ben Alhamar, diffident of his own strength, and pressed to it by the entreaties of his counsellors, thought it safest to submit, and purchase the friendship of Pedro at any rate. With this view, he demanded a safe conduct, and went to the court of Seville, where he threw himself at the feet of the Spanish monarch, with the immense treasures he had brought with him as presents. That king received him with all apparent respect and cordiality for a few days, but then he ordered him, and thirty of his most noble attendants, to be led

led round the city upon asses, and afterwards to be brought to the field of the Tablada, where, if any credit is to be given to the Spanish historians, Don Pedro himself ran the unfortunate Mehemed through with a lance. His death being made known at Granada, Lago resumed the reins of government without opposition, and died quietly in 1379.

1379. His son Mehemed Abouhadjad, was one of the best kings that ever reigned in Granada. He preferred the solid advantages of peace to all the brilliancy of military glory. Under his wife administration, the kingdom gradually recovered its vigour; commerce and husbandry gave spirit and alacrity to every part of the realm, and spread abundance over the face of the land. His attention to the more important objects of government, did not prevent his shewing himself an earnest promoter and protector of the fine arts. The cities of Granada and Guadix were embellished with many noble structures during his reign. His affection for the latter was so conspicuous, that he was surnamed by his people, Mehemed of Guadix. He had the address to maintain peace with the Castilians, and at his death left a flourishing, peaceful succession to his son,

1392. Juzaf Abiabdallah, who was destroyed by means

of an envenomed shirt, sent as a present by the Sultan of Fez.

1396. Mehemed Balba, second son to Juzaf, seized upon the crown in prejudice of his elder brother, and passed his life in one continual round of disasters. His wars with Castille were invariably unsuccessful. His death was also caused by a poisoned vest. As soon as he found his case desperate, he dispatched an officer to the fort of Salobrena, to kill his brother Juzaf, lest that prince's party should form any obstacle to his son's succeeding to the crown. The Alcayde found the prince playing at chess with an Alfaqui or priest. Juzaf begged hard for two hours respite, which was denied him; at last, with great reluctance, the officer permitted him to finish the game. Before it was ended, a messenger arrived with the news of the death of Mehemed, and of the unanimous election of Juzaf to the crown.

1408. Juzaf Abul Haxex. The most unwearied importunity, and abject submission, were unable to procure him a peace with the Christians. The regent of Castille, D. Ferdinand, being inflexibly bent upon expelling the whole Saracen race out of our continent. At length, Ferdinand was elected king of Aragon, and finding sufficient employment with the affairs of his new kingdom, gave up all thoughts of his Moorish conquests, and listened to the proposals

posals of the king of Granada. A truce was agreed upon, and afterwards a peace concluded, which afforded Juzaf an opportunity of repairing his losses. He wound up the end of his days in tranquillity, and employed them solely in gaining the affections of his people, by a steady pursuit of a most equitable plan of administration. From the time Juzaf became possessed of the royal dignity, he was never known to shew the least sign of resentment against the grandees that had assisted his brother in depriving him of his birth-right and liberty: nay more, he conferred great honours and favours upon many of them, and gave them posts of trust in various capacities. Some of his own party found fault with his lenity, and endeavoured to work him up to the destruction of those noblemen; but Juzaf always made answer, Would you have me, by my cruelty, furnish them with an excuse for having preferred my brother to me? He educated the sons of Mehemed in his palace, and treated them in every respect like his own children.

1423. His eldest son, Mehemed Elazari, or the left-handed, succeeded. He was more remarkable for the strange vicissitudes of his fortune, than for any thing great of his own achieving: his tyranny and negligence encouraged his cousin-german,

1427. Mehemed El Zugair, or the lesser, to take up

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arms against him, and drive him out of the kingdom. Two years after Elazari, with the assistance of the kings of Castille and Tunis, retook Granada, and made El Zugair prisoner, whom he put to death in the most cruel and ignominious manner that could be devised.

1429. Elazari being thus restored to his throne, was far from altering his method of proceeding; in consequence of which, after many defeats in a bloody war against the Christians, he was a second time dethroned, and the grandson of that Mehemed who was killed at Seville, raised up in his stead.

1432. Juzaf aben Almaalnayar gave great hopes of his proving a just and wise monarch; but his death, which happened in the sixth month of his reign, put an end to all his projects, and Mehemed Elazari, was once more proclaimed king. The people of Granada were now become so well accustomed to a frequent change of masters, and so very prone to novelty, that it was no longer possible for any prince to remain firm in the royal seat for any length of time. Accordingly Elazari, that perpetual butt of fortune, was for the third and last time deprived of his sceptre, and shut up in a close prison by his nephew.

1445. Mehemed ben Osmin, surnamed the Tame. In the beginning of his reign, he waged war against
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the Christians with great success; but in the year 1452, his good fortune abandoned him, and he met with nothing ever after but crosses and disappointments. The king of Castille spirited up against him a competitor for the crown, Ismael, his cousin-german; who being admitted into the capital by a party he had previously secured, surprized Mehemed, and threw him into the same dungeon where their common uncle had already languished eight years. Thus ended these two princes like puppets, which, after having been made to move upon the stage the time allotted for representation, are thrown by in a lumber-room, and never thought of more.

1453. Ismael thus found himself in the peaceable possession of a crown, which had been so often shifted from head to head, and so mutilated and curtailed during a long series of misfortunes, that any sagacious observer might safely pronounce the period of its final dissolution to be near at hand. The Christians had so long laid waste with fire and sword the rich plain of Granada, that Ismael found that source of plenty almost irretrievably lost. To make up in some degree for this deficiency, he ordered a large tract of forest to be cleared, and the mountainous lands behind Granada to be levelled, and converted into arable and garden grounds. Earth

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