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THE PIRATES OF SEGNA.
A TALE OF VENICE AND THE
ADRIATIC. IN TWO PARTS

PART II.

CHAPTER I.—THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE

The time occupied by the events detailed in the three preceding chapters, had been passed by Antonio in a state of self-exile from his master's studio. Conscious of having disobeyed the earnest injunctions of Contarini, the weakness of his character withheld him alike from confessing his fault, and from encountering the penetrating gaze of the old painter. Neglecting thus his usual occupation, he passed his days in his gondola, wandering about the canals in the hope of again meeting with the mysterious being who had made such an impression on his excitable fancy. Hitherto all his researches had been fruitless; but although day after day passed without his finding the smallest trace of her he sought, his repeated disappointments seemed only to increase the obstinacy with which he continued the search.

The incognita not only engrossed all his waking thoughts, but she still haunted him in his dreams. Scarcely a night passed that her wrinkled countenance did not hover round his pillow, now partially shrouded by the ample veil, then again fully exposed and apparently exulting in its unearthly ugliness; or else peering at him from behind the drapery that covered the walls of his apartment. In vain did he attempt to address the vision, or to follow it as it gradually receded and finally melted away into distance.

It was from a dream of this description that he was one morning awakened by his faithful gondolier Jacopo. The sun was shining brightly through his chamber windows, and he heard an unusual degree of noise and bustle upon the canal without.

"Up, Signor mio!" cried the gondolier joyously, and with a mixture of respect and affectionate familiarity in his tone and manner. "Up, Signor Antonio! You were not wont to oversleep yourself on the day of the Bridge Fight. All Venice is hastening thither. Quick, quick! or we shall never be able to make our way through the press of gondolas."

The words of the gondolier reminded Antonio that this was the day appointed for the celebration of a festival, which for weeks past had been looked forward to with the greatest impatience and interest, by Venetians of all ranks, ages, and sexes; a festival which he himself was in the habit of regularly attending, though on this occasion his preoccupied thoughts and feelings had made him utterly unconscious that it was so near at hand.

Although the ancient and bitter hatred of the Guelphs and Ghibellines had died away, and the factions which divided northern Italy had sunk into insignificance, nearly a century before this period, the memory of their feuds was still kept up by their great grandchildren, and Venice was still severed into two parties or communities, separated from each other by the grand canal. Those who dwelt on the western or land side of this boundary were styled the Nicolotti, after the parish of San Nicolo;

while those on the eastern or sea side took the appellation of Castellani, from the district of Castello. Not only the inhabitants of the city itself, but those of the suburbs and neighbouring country, were included in these two denominations; the people from Mestre and the continent ranging themselves under the banners of the Nicolotti, while those from the islands were strenuous Castellani.

The frequent and sanguinary conflicts of the Guelphs and Ghibellines were now replaced and commemorated by a popular festival, occurring sometimes once, sometimes oftener in the year; usually in the autumn or spring. "In order that," says an old chronicler of the time, "the heat being less great at those seasons, the blood of the combatants should not become too heated and the fight too dangerous." "Also on cloudy days," says the same authority, "that the spectators might not be molested by the sun; and on Sundays or Saints' days, that the people thereby might not be hindered from their occupations." On these occasions one of the numerous bridges was selected as the scene of the mock combat that constituted the chief amusement of the day. The quays afforded good standing-room to the spectators; and here, under the inspection of ædiles appointed by the people, the two parties met, and disputed for supremacy in a battle, in which, however, no more dangerous weapons than fists were allowed to be brought into play.

It was not the populace alone that divided itself into these two factions. Accordingly as the palaces of the nobles stood on the one or the other side of the canal, were their owners Castellani or Nicolotti, although their partizanship existed but in jest, and only showed itself in the form of encouragement to their respective parties; whereas with the lower orders the strife, begun in good-humour, not unfrequently turned to bitter earnest, and had dangerous and even fatal results. In the wish, however, to keep up a warlike spirit in the people, and perhaps still more with a view to make them forget, in a temporary and boundless license, the strict subjection in which they were habitually held, the senate was induced to permit the continuance of a diversion, which from the local arrangements of Venice, the narrowness of the streets and bridges, and the depth of the larger canals, was unavoidably dangerous, and almost invariably attended with loss of life.

Hastily dressing himself, Antonio hurried into his gondola in order to proceed to the bridge of San Barnaba, opposite to the church of the same name and to the Foscarini palace, that being the spot appointed for the combat. The canal of the Giudecca was one black mass of gondolas, which rendered even a casual glimpse of the water scarcely obtainable; and it was amidst the cries of the gondoliers and the noise of boats knocking against each other, that the young painter passed the Dogana and reached the grand canal. There the crowd became so dense, that Jacopo, seeing the impossibility of passing, turned aside in time, and making a circuit, entered the Rio de San Trovaso, whence, through innumerable narrow canals, he succeeded in reaching the scene of the approaching conflict.

The combatants were attending mass, and had not yet made their appearance. Wonderfully great, however, was the concourse of spectators already assembled. Since sunrise they had been thronging thither from all sides, eager to secure places which might afford them a good view of the fight. Every roof, gable, and chimney had its occupants; not a projection however small, not a wall however lofty and perilous, but was covered with people, for the most part provided with baskets of provisions, and evidently determined to sit or stand out the whole of the spectacle. In the anxiety to obtain good places, the most extraordinary risks were run, and feats of activity displayed. Here might be seen individuals clambering up perpendicular buildings, by the aid of ledges and projections which appeared far too narrow to afford either grasp or foot-hold; further on, some herculean gondolier or peasant served as base to a sort of human column, composed of five or six men, who, scrambling over each other's shoulders, attained in this manner some seemingly inaccessible position. The seafaring habits of the Venetian populace, who were accustomed from boyhood to climb the masts and rigging of vessels, now stood them in good stead; and notwithstanding all the noise, confusion, and apparent peril, it was very rarely that an accident occurred.

Under the red awnings covering the balconies and flat roofs of the palaces, were seated groups of ladies, whose rich dresses, glittering with the costliest jewels and embroideries, appeared the more

magnificent from being contrasted with the black attire of the grave patricians who accompanied them. But perhaps the most striking feature of this striking scene was to be found in the custom of masking, then almost universal in Venice, and the origin of which may be traced in great part to dread of the Inquisition, and of its prying enquiries into the actions and affairs of individuals. Amidst the sea of faces that thronged roofs, windows, balconies, streets, and quays, the minority only were uncovered, and the immense collection of masks, of every form and colour, had something in it peculiarly fantastic and unnatural, conveying an impression that the wearers mimicked human nature rather than belonged to it.

Venice, whose trade and mercantile importance were at this period greatly on the decline, saw nevertheless, on occasions like the present, strangers from the most opposite nations of Europe, and even Asia, mingling peaceably on her canals. Here were Turks in their bright red caftans and turbans; there Armenians in long black robes; and Jews, whose habitually greedy and crafty countenances had for the nonce assumed an expression of eager curiosity and expectation. The mercantile spirit of the Venetians prevented them from extending to individuals the quarrels of states; and although the republic was then at war with Spain, more than one superb hidalgo might be seen, wrapped in his national gravity as in a mantle, and affecting a total disregard of the blunt or hostile observations made within his hearing by sailors of the Venetian navy, or by individuals smarting under the loss of ships and cargoes captured by Spanish galleys.

Scattered here and there amongst the crowd, Antonio's searching eye soon remarked a number of men, to whom, accustomed as he was to analyse the heterogeneous composition of a Venetian mob, he was yet at a loss to assign any distinct class or country. Their sunburnt and strongly marked features were partially hidden by the folds of ample cloaks, in which they kept themselves closely muffled; and it appeared to Antonio, that in their selection of places they were more anxious to escape observation than to obtain a good view of the approaching fight. In the dark patches of shadow thrown by the overhanging balconies, in the recesses of deep and gloomy portals, or peering out from the entrance of some narrow and tortuous alley, these men were grouped, silent, scowling, and alone, and apparently known to none of the surrounding crowd. But suspicious as were the appearance and deportment of the persons in question, Antonio's thoughts were too much engrossed by another and far more interesting subject, to accord them much attention. He nourished the hope of discovering amongst the multitude assembled around him, the mysterious being who had taken so strong a hold on his imagination. Vainly, however, did he scan every balcony and window and strain his eyes to distinguish the faces of the more distant of the assembled dames. More than once the flutter of a white robe, or a momentarily fancied resemblance of figure, made his heart beat high with expectation, until a second glance destroyed his hopes; and the turning of a head or drawing aside of a veil disclosed the blooming features of some youthful beauty, to which, in his then state of mind, the wrinkled and unearthly visage of the incognita would have been infinitely preferable.

While the young painter was thus fluctuating between hope and disappointment, several lads with naked arms, or but slightly encumbered with clothing, were giving the spectators a foretaste of the approaching conflict; and, encouraged by the applause which was liberally vouchsafed them, making violent efforts to drive one another off the bridge. At times the spirit of partizanship would induce some of the bystanders to come to the aid of those who seemed likely to be defeated—an interference that was repressed by the ædiles stationed at either end of the bridge, who did their utmost to enforce the laws of this popular tournament. Notwithstanding their efforts, however, the *mostra* or duello between two persons, by which the combat should begin, was often converted into the *frotta* or mêlée, in which all pressed forward without order. The first advantage was held to be—for one of the combatants to draw blood, if it were only a single drop, from the nose or mouth of his opponent. Loud applause rewarded the skill and vigour of him who succeeded in throwing his adversary into the canal; but the clamour became deafening when a champion was found who maintained his station in the centre of the bridge, without any of the opposite party venturing to attack him. This feat won the

highest honour that could be obtained; and he who achieved it retired from his post amid the waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and the enthusiastic cheers of the gratified spectators.

At length the bell of the Campanile announced that mass was over, and presently, out of two opposite streets that had been purposely kept clear, the combatants emerged, pressing forward in eager haste towards the bridge; their arms naked to the shoulders, their breasts protected by leathern doublets, and their heads by closely fitting caps—their dress altogether as light as possible, and well adapted to the struggle in which they were about to engage. The loud hum of the multitude was hushed on their appearance, and the deepest silence reigned while the ædiles marshaled them to their respective places, on which they planted themselves in threatening attitudes, their broad and muscular chests expanded, their fists clenched, their feet seeming to grasp the ground on which they stood.

A loud flourish of trumpets gave the signal of the onset, and with inconceivable impetuosity the two parties threw themselves on each other. In spite, however, of the fury and violence of the shock, neither side yielded an inch of ground. The bridge was completely filled with men from end to end, and from side to side; there was no parapet or barrier of any kind to prevent the combatants from pushing one another into the canal; yet so equally balanced was the strength of the two parties, that after nearly half an hour's struggle very few men had been thrown from the bridge, and not the smallest advantage had been obtained either by Castellani or Nicolotti. Those in the rear, who had as yet done nothing but push the others forward, now came to the front, and the combat was renewed with fresh vigour, but for a long time without any result. Again and again were the combatants changed; but it was past noon before Antonio, whose thoughts had been gradually diverted from the incognita by the struggle that was going on, perceived symptoms of weariness amongst those indefatigable athletes. Here and there a knee was seen to bend, or a muscular form to sink, under some well-directed blow, or before a sudden rush of the opposite party. First one, then another of the combatants was hurled from the bridge into the canal, an immersion that, dripping with perspiration as they were, not unfrequently caused death or severe illness. Nevertheless the fury of the fight seemed rather to increase than diminish. So long as only a man here and there fell into the water, they were dragged out by their friends; and the spectators even seemed to feel pity and sympathy for the unfortunates, as they saw them carried along, some covered with blood, others paralysed by the sudden cold, with faces pale as death and limbs stiff and rigid. But as the fury and violence of the combatants augmented, the bystanders forgot every other feeling in the excitement of the fight, about the result of which they seemed as anxious as those who were actively engaged in it. Even women might be seen encouraging those who were driven back, and urging them once more to the charge; applauding and cheering them on when they advanced, and assailing those who hung back with vehement reproaches. The uproar and shouting, shrieks and yells, exceeded any thing that could be imagined. The partizans had got completely mixed together; and, instead of the struggle being confined to the foremost ranks of the contending parties, the whole bridge was now one coil of raging combatants. Men fell into the canal by scores, but no one thought of rendering them any assistance. Their places were immediately filled up, and the fight lost none of its fury from their absence.

Evening was now approaching, and the combat was more violent than it had yet been, or than it had for years been known to be, when Antonio saw the cloaked and mysterious individuals who had already attracted his attention, emerge from their lurking-places, and disappear in different directions. Presently he thought he observed some of them on the bridge mingling with the combatants, whose blind rage prevented them from noticing the intrusion. Wherever they passed, there did the fight augment in obstinacy and fury. Suddenly there was a violent rush upon the bridge, a frightful outcry, and a clash of steel. At the same moment the blades of several swords and daggers were seen crossed and glittering upon the bridge, without its being possible for any one to divine whence the weapons came. The spectators, seized with a panic fear, fled in every direction, and sprang in crowds from the quays to seek shelter under the awnings of the gondolas covering the canal. In vain did the gondoliers resist the intrusion of the fugitives: all considerations of rank and property were lost sight of in the

terror of the moment, and some of the boats sank under the weight of the multitudes that poured into them. In their haste to get away, the gondolas impeded each other, and became wedged together in the canal; and amidst the screams of the ladies and angry exclamations of the men, the gondoliers laid down their oars and began to dispute the precedence with blows. Meanwhile the people on the roofs of the houses, believing themselves in safety, espoused different sides, and threw stones and bricks at each other, and at those standing below. In an incredibly short time houses were entirely unroofed, and a perfect storm of tiles rained upon the quays and streets. Those who had first fled, when they attained what appeared a safe distance, halted to look on, and thus prevented others from getting away. Antonio was amongst the number whose escape was thus impeded. His gondolier lay at the bottom of the boat, stunned by a blow from a stone; he himself was bruised and wounded by the missiles that fell in all directions.

The tumult was at its height when suddenly a sound was heard that had a truly magical effect upon the rioters, for such they might now be termed. The alarm-bell of St Mark's rang out its awful peal. In an instant the yells of defiance were hushed; the arm that was already drawn back to deal a blow fell harmless by its owner's side, the storm of missiles ceased, the contending factions parted, and left the combat undecided. The habit of obedience and the intimation of some danger to the city, stilled in an instant the rage of party feeling, and combatants and spectators alike hurried away in the direction of St Mark's place, the usual point of rendezvous on such occasions.

Jacopo had now recovered his senses, and Antonio's gondola was one of the first which reached the square in front of the cathedral. Thence the young painter at once discovered the cause of the alarm. Smoke and flame were issuing from some buildings on the opposite island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where the greater part of the merchants' warehouses were situated. Thither the crowd of gondolas now steered, and Antonio found himself carried along with the stream. But although the fire was already beginning to subside before the prompt measures taken to subdue it, the alarm-bell kept clanging on; and Antonio soon perceived that there must be some other point of danger to which it was intended to turn the attention of the people. Gazing about for some indication of its source, he saw several gondolas hurrying towards the grand canal, on which most of the palaces of the nobles were situated, and he ordered Jacopo to steer in the same direction.

On reaching the palazzo of the Malipieri family, a strange scene presented itself to him. The open space between the side of the palace and the adjacent church of San Samuele, was crowded with men engaged in a furious and sanguinary conflict. At one of the windows of the palace, a tall man in a flowing white robe, with a naked sabre in one hand and a musketoon in the other, which, from the smoke still issuing from its muzzle, had apparently just been discharged, stood defending himself desperately against a band of fierce and bearded ruffians, who swarmed up a rope ladder fixed below the window. The person making so gallant a defence was the Senator Malipiero; the assailants were Uzcoques from the fortress of Segna.

The arrival of the Proveditore Marcello at Gradiska, and his subsequent recognition of his jewels at the ball, having destroyed Strasolda's hopes of obtaining her father's liberation through the intervention of the archducal counsellors, the high-spirited maiden resolved to execute a plan she had herself devised, and which, although in the highest degree rash and hazardous, might still succeed if favoured by circumstances and conducted with skill and decision. This was to seize upon the person of a Venetian of note, in order to exchange him for the Uzcoques then languishing in the dungeons of the republic.

The Venetians were not yet aware that the much-dreaded woivode Dansowich was among their prisoners. The time chosen by the Uzcoques for their expeditions and surprises was usually the night; and this, added to the custom of mask-wearing, was the cause that the features of Dansowich were unknown to his captors. Nevertheless the striking countenance and lofty bearing of the chieftain, and of one or two of those who were taken prisoners with him, raised suspicions that they were persons of mark—suspicions which were not dissipated by their reiterated denial of being any thing more than

common Uzcoques. It was this doubt which saved their lives; for their captors, instead of hanging them at once at the yard-arm of the galleys, which was the usual manner of disposing of Segnarese prisoners, took them to Venice, and placed them at the disposal of the senate. All subsequent threats and promises proved ineffectual to extort from the pirates an acknowledgment of superior rank; and the Venetian authorities would perhaps have ended in believing the account they gave of themselves, had not the urgent applications made by the Austrian Envoy and the Capitano of Fiume, for the release of the Uzcoques, given their suspicions new strength. The object of the Venetians was, if they could ascertain that there was a chief among the prisoners, to obtain from him, by torture or otherwise, confessions which might enable them to prove to the Archduke the encouragement afforded by his counsellors to the piracies of the Segnarese. They accordingly delayed, by every possible pretext, giving an answer to the archducal ambassador, doing their utmost meanwhile to find out the real quality of the prisoners. This, Strasolda was most anxious that they should not discover; and her anxiety was scarcely less to prevent the captivity of their leader from becoming known among the pirates themselves. His daughter's entreaties, and his own better nature, had frequently caused Dansowich to check his followers in the atrocities they were too apt to commit. In consequence of this interference, Strasolda suspected her father to be more feared than liked by Jurissa Caiduch and some others of the inferior woivodes or officers; and she apprehended that, if she confided her plan to them, they would be more likely to thwart than to aid her in it. The crews of the two boats which had been engaged in the skirmish with the Venetian galleys when Dansowich was captured, and the men composing the garrison of the castle on the evening of that fatal occurrence, were therefore all whose assistance she could reckon upon. Some of those were her relatives, and the others tried and trusty adherents. They alone knew of their leader's captivity, his absence having been accounted for to the mass of Uzcoques dwelling in the town of Segna, by a pretended journey to Gradiska; and being too few in number to attack a Venetian galley, the sole plan that seemed to offer a chance of success to this handful of faithful followers, was the hazardous one devised by Strasolda. Of this, they did not hesitate to attempt the execution.

With the utmost cunning and audacity did the Uzcoques enter Venice on the day appointed for the Battle of the Bridge, singly, and by twos and threes, variously disguised, and mingled with the country people and inhabitants of the islands who were hastening to the festival. Watching their opportunity when the fight was at the fiercest, one party mixed with the combatants, exciting and urging them on, and doing all in their power to increase the confusion; others set fire to the warehouses on the island of San Giorgio, in order to draw the public attention in that direction; while the third and most numerous division, favoured by the deepening twilight and the deserted state of that part of the city, succeeded in fixing a rope ladder to the window of the Malipieri palace, the chief of which noble house was, as they had previously ascertained, lying sick in bed in a side-chamber, attended only by a few domestics.

But there were two things which Strasolda and the Uzcoques had forgotten to include in their calculations. These were, first, the slavish obedience of the Venetian populace to the call of their superiors—an obedience to which they were accustomed to sacrifice every feeling and passion; secondly, the Argus eyes and omnipresent vigilance of the Secret Tribunal. Scarcely was the ladder applied, when the first gush of flame from the warehouses brought a deafening peal from the alarm-bell; and at the same moment, the masked and armed familiars of the Venetian police, rising as it seemed out of the very earth, surrounded the ladder, and a fierce conflict began. Even the watchfulness and precautions of the Inquisition, however, were to a certain extent overmatched by Uzcoque cunning and foresight. Had it not been necessary to ring the alarm bell on account of the fire, the police, who were far the most numerous, and who each moment received an accession to their numbers, could scarcely have failed to capture some of their opponents, and thus have ascertained to a certainty what the promoters and the object of this audacious attempt really were. But before they could accomplish this, the small piazza where the conflict was going on was thronged with

the populace, half intoxicated with the excitement of the scarcely less serious fight they had been witnessing and sharing in. In the crush and confusion that ensued, familiars and Uzcoques were separated; and the latter, mingling with the crowd, and no longer distinguishable from the cloaked and masked figures that surrounded them, easily succeeded in effecting their escape.

When Antonio, who was pushed hither and thither by the mob, was able to extricate himself sufficiently to get another view of the window, the invalid nobleman, delivered from his assailants, had retired into his apartment, while the ladder, now deserted by the Uzcoques, had been cut and thrown down. Desirous of escaping from this scene of confusion, the young painter was making his way towards the quay, close to which his gondola was waiting, when his heart suddenly leaped within him at the sight of a muffled figure that passed near him, and in which he thought he recognized the mysterious old woman who had of late occupied so much of his thoughts. She was followed by a number of the rabble, who pressed upon her with oaths and curses, asserting that she was one of the party which had attacked the palace of the Malipieri.

"I saw her holding the ladder," exclaimed one fellow.

"Nay, she was climbing up it herself," cried a second.

"Strike the foul witch dead!" shouted a score of voices.

The old woman's life was in the greatest peril, when a strange and unaccountable, but at the same time irresistible impulse, moved Antonio to go to her rescue. He was forcing his way through the crowd with this intention, when the object of the popular fury turned her head towards him. Her veil was for a moment partially drawn aside, affording a glimpse of her features in profile; and Antonio, still the slave of his diseased imagination, fancied that her yellow shriveled features had been metamorphosed into a countenance of regular beauty; such a countenance, in short, as befitted the graceful and symmetrical form to which it belonged. Confused and bewildered, the naturally weak and undecided youth stood deliberating and uncertain whether he should attempt the rescue, which would have been by no means difficult to accomplish by the display of a little boldness and promptitude. Whilst he was thus hesitating, there suddenly broke through the crowd a young man, attired like himself in a black dress, and holding a naked rapier in his hand. The new comer had probably lost his mask in the tumult and confusion, for his features were uncovered, and Antonio saw, to his inexpressible consternation and astonishment, that they were the exact counterpart of his own. Before he could recover from this new shock, the stranger, by the aid of his fierce and determined demeanour, and the rapid play of his weapon, had made his way to the mysterious old woman, whose back was turned towards him, and seizing her round the waist he again forced a passage through the throng to the nearest gondola, which happened to be that of the young painter. The crowd pressed after him, and Antonio was hurried along with it to the edge of the quay. But at the very moment that, to avoid being pushed into the water by the throng, he sprang into one end of his gondola, he saw the stranger, who had just entered it at the other, gaze with a look of disgust and dismay on the features of her he had rescued, and then with a cry of horror, leap into another boat, which immediately rowed rapidly away. At the same instant Jacopo, by a strong sweep of the oar, spun the gondola round, and shot into a narrow canal which soon led them out of sight and sound of the scene of confusion they had just left.

These various events had succeeded each other so rapidly, that Antonio could hardly credit his senses when he found himself in this strange manner the deliverer of the mysterious being who now sat under the awning of his gondola, her frightful countenance, unveiled in the struggle and no longer seen through the beautifying prism of the young artist's imagination, again displaying the yellow and wrinkled skin, and the deep-set glittering eyes, which now seemed fixed upon him with an expression of love and gratitude that froze his blood. With a shuddering sensation he retreated to the stern of the boat, where Jacopo stood pale and trembling, crossing himself without a moment's intermission.

"Are you mad, Signore," whispered the gondolier, "to risk your life in behalf of such a frightful witch? Never did I see you so ready with your rapier, flashing it in people's eyes as though it had been one of your painting brushes."

"By Heaven, Jacopo," answered Antonio, "that was not I"—

"The saints protect us!" interrupted the gondolier. "You are assuredly bewitched, or have lost your senses, Signore. To think of your thus denying your own noble daring! Do, for the blessed virgin's sake, let us jump out upon the next landing-place, and leave the gondola to the sorceress who has bewitched you. Holy mother! she is coming this way!"

A prey to the strangest and most contradictory emotions, Antonio hastily advanced to meet the mysterious being, whom he could not help regarding with superstitious awe, though he at the same time felt himself drawn towards her by a fascination, against which he found it was in vain to contend. The features of the unknown were again shrouded carefully in her veil, but her black and brilliant eyes glittered through it like nebulous stars.

"To the house of the Capitano of Fiume," whispered she to Antonio, and then retreated, as if anxious to avoid further conversation, into the interior of the gondola.

In the district of Castello, through which Antonio and his strange companion were now passing, the canals and quays were deserted, and not a sound was heard except the distant hum of the multitude assembled in the quarter of St Mark's. Without exciting suspicion or attracting observation, they reached the Rialto and the grand canal, and the gondola stopped at a landing-place opposite the church of San Moyses.

As the young painter assisted his mysterious charge out of the boat, a gentle pressure from the warm soft hand which for a moment rested upon his, quickened every pulse in his frame; and long after the enigmatical being had disappeared behind the angle of a palace, he stood gazing, like one entranced, at the spot where he had last seen her imposing and graceful figure. The approach of Jacopo, still crossing himself, and calling upon all the saints for protection against the snares of the evil one, roused the perplexed youth from his reverie; and, stepping into the gondola, he was soon gliding rapidly over the canals in the direction of his father's palace.

CHAPTER II. THE PICTURE

The gondola of the young painter, gliding rapidly and silently over the still waters of the canals, was passing a turn leading to the Giudecca, when it suddenly occurred to Antonio that he would seek his old master, and, after confessing his disobedience, relate to him the events of the day, and make him the confidant of his troubles and perplexities. A word to Jacopo changed the direction of the gondola, and they entered the grand canal, on which Contarini's dwelling was situated.

The brief twilight of Italy had passed, and it was now completely night, dark and starless, which made more startling the sudden appearance of several blazing torches, borne by masked and hooded figures attired in black, who struck loud and repeated blows on the gates of the Palazzo Contarini.

"Antonio Marcello! We seek Antonio Marcello!" exclaimed a deep and hollow voice.

It would be necessary to be a Venetian, and to have lived in those days, fully to comprehend the feeling of horror which caused Antonio's blood to run cold, and the sweat to stand in beads upon his forehead, when he heard his name uttered by the familiars of the state Inquisition. Frightful dungeons, masked judges, halls hung with black, the block and the gleaming axe, the rack and its blood-stained attendants, the whole grim paraphernalia of the Secret Tribunal, passed like the scenes of a phantasmagoria before the mental vision of the young painter. He at once conjectured the cause for which they were seeking him. He had doubtless been taken for the youth who, by his energy and promptitude, had rescued the mysterious old woman from the mob, and who bore so striking and unaccountable resemblance to himself; and it must be on suspicion of his being connected with the attack on the Malipieri palace, that the ministers of justice were hunting him out. Nor did he see how he should be able to convince his judges of his innocence. The tale he had to tell, although the truth, was still too marvellous and improbable to obtain credence, and would be more likely to draw upon him severe punishment, or perhaps the torture, with the view of inducing him to confess its falsehood. Bewildered by his terror, Antonio sat trembling, and utterly incapable of deciding as to the course he should adopt, when the trusty gondolier again came to his rescue.

"Cospetto! Signor!" he exclaimed, "have you lost your senses, that you run thus into the very jaws of those devil's messengers? To one like myself flight would certainly avail little; but, with a Proveditore for your father, you may arrange matters if you only take time before you become their prisoner. Quick, then, to the palazzo! Don't you see old Contarini's head stuck out of his window? He is telling them you are not there. They have doubtless been to your father's palace, and will not be likely to return thither at present."

While the faithful fellow's tongue was thus wagging, his arms were not idle. Intimately acquainted, as became his calling, with the numerous windings and intricacies of the Venetian canals, he threaded them with unhesitating confidence; and, favoured by the darkness of the night, succeeded in getting Antonio unobserved through a back entrance of his father's palace.

The first impulse of the terrified youth on finding himself thus in at least temporary security, was to destroy the picture of the mysterious old woman, which, if found by the agents of the Inquisition, might bear false but fatal witness against him. With pallid cheek, and still trembling with alarm, he was hurrying to his chamber to execute his intention, when he encountered his father, who advanced to meet him, and, grasping his arm, fixed upon him for some moments his stern and searching gaze.

"The picture, father!" exclaimed the terror-stricken Antonio. "For the love of Heaven, stay me not! Let me destroy that fatal picture!"

Regardless of his son's agitation and terror, the Proveditore half led, half forced him to a seat in a part of the room, when the red blaze from the larch logs that were crackling on the hearth, lit up the young man's features.

"What means this, Antonio?" he said; "what has befallen during my absence at Gradiska? The familiars of the Inquisition have been seeking you here—you, the last person whose name I should expect to hear in such mouths. Alarm me it did not; for well I know that you are too scant of energy and settled purpose to be mixed up in conspiracies against the state."

Antonio was still too much preoccupied by his terror to understand, or at any rate to heed, the severity of his father's remark. Collecting his scattered thoughts, he proceeded to narrate all that had occurred to him, not only on that day, but since his first meeting with the incognita near the church of San Moyses, on the very same spot whither he had conveyed her in his gondola but a short hour ago.

"Let me destroy the painting, father!" he concluded; "it may be found, and used as testimony against me."

The Proveditore had listened with a smile, that was at once contemptuous and sorrowful, to his son's narrative, and to the confession of his weakness and disobedience to the injunctions of his aged teacher. When he had finished speaking, there was a minute's silence, broken at last by the elder Marcello.

"I have long been convinced," he said, "that Contarini would never succeed in making of you a painter fit to rank with those old and illustrious masters of whom Venice is so justly proud. But I had not thought so poorly of you, Antonio, as to believe that you would want courage to defend an object, for the attainment of which you scrupled not to disobey your venerable instructor. What the kind entreaties and remonstrances of Contarini could not induce you to abandon, you are ready to annihilate on the very first symptom of danger. Oh, Venice!" exclaimed the Proveditore, his fine countenance assuming an expression of extreme bitterness, as he gazed mournfully at the portraits of his ancestors, including more than one Doge, which were suspended round the walls of the apartment—"Venice! thou art indeed degenerate, when peril so remote can blanch the cheek of thy patrician youth."

He strode twice up and down the hall, then returning to his son, bade him fetch the picture which he was so desirous of destroying. Antonio, downcast and abashed by these reproaches, which, however, were insufficient to awaken nobler aspirations in his weak and irresolute nature, hurried to his chamber, and presently returned with a roll of canvass in his hand, which he unfolded and spread before the Proveditore—then, dreading to encounter his father's ridicule, he shrunk back out of the firelight. But the effect produced upon Marcello by the portrait of the old woman, was very different from that anticipated by his son. Scarcely had he cast his eyes upon the unearthly visage, when he started back with an exclamation of horror and astonishment.

"By all the saints, Antonio," cried he in an altered voice, "that is a fearful portrait! Alas, poor wretch! thou art long since in thy grave," continued he, addressing the picture, and with looks and tones strangely at variance with his usually stern and imperturbable deportment. "The worms have preyed on thee, and thou art as dust and ashes. Why, then, dost thou rise from the dead to fright me with that ghastly visage?"

"Is the face known to you, father?" the astonished Antonio ventured to exclaim.

"Known to me! Ay, too well! That wrinkled skin, that unearthly complexion, those deep-set eyes glowing like burning coals. Just so did she glare upon me as she swung from the tree, the blood driven into her features by the agonizing pressure of the halter. 'Tis the very look that has haunted me for years, and caused me many bitter moments of remorse; though, God knows, the deed was lawful and justifiable, done in the execution of my duty to the republic. And yet she lives," he continued musingly. "How could she have been saved? True, she had not been hanging long when we left the place. Some of her people, doubtless, were concealed hard by, and cut her down ere life had entirely fled. But, ha! 'tis a clue this to the perpetrators of to-day's outrage, for she was with them. Uzcoques, then they must have been! Said you not, Antonio, that she came from the house of the Capitano when first you saw her, and that to-day you left her there?"

"At her own special desire, father," replied Antonio.

"Then is the chain of evidence almost complete," continued the Proveditore. "It must have been herself. And now—this attack on the Malipieri palace. What was its object? A hostage?—Ay, I see it all, and our prisoner is none other than Dansowich himself. But we must have proof of that from his own confession; and this portrait may help to extort it."

Whilst uttering these broken sentences, which were totally incomprehensible to the bewildered Antonio, the Proveditore had donned his mantle, and placed his plumed cap upon his head.

"No, Antonio," said he, "we will not destroy this picture, hideous though it be. It may prove the means of rendering weighty service to the republic."

And with these words, inexplicable to his son, the Proveditore left the apartment; and, taking with him the mysterious portrait, hastened to the prison where the Uzcoque leader was immured.

The pirate chief was a man of large and athletic frame, of strong feelings, and great intellectual capabilities. His brow was large, open, and commanding; his countenance, bronzed with long exposure to the elements, and scarred with wounds, was repulsive, but by no means ignoble; his hair and beard had long been silvered over by time and calamity; but his vast bodily strength was unimpaired, and when roused into furious resentment, his manly chest emitted a volume of sound that awed every listener. Upon a larger stage, and under circumstances more favourable to the fair development of his natural powers and dispositions, the pirate Dansowich would have become one of the most distinguished and admirable men of his time. Placed by the accident of birth upon the frontiers of Christian Europe, and cherishing from early youth a belief that the highest interests of the human race were involved in the struggle between the Crescent and the Cross, he had embraced the glorious cause with that enthusiastic and fiery zeal which raises men into heroes and martyrs. Too soon, however, were these lofty aspirations checked and blighted by the anti-Christian policy of trading Venice, the bad faith of Austria towards the Uzcoque race, and the extortions of her counsellors. Cursing in the bitterness of his heart, not only Turks, Austrians, and Venetians, but all mankind, he no longer opposed the piratical tendencies of his neglected people, and eventually headed many of their marauding expeditions.

It was nearly midnight when Dansowich was awakened from a deep but troubled slumber by a grating noise at the door of his dungeon. Anxiety of mind, and still more, the effect of confinement in an impure and stifling atmosphere, upon one accustomed to the breezes of the Adriatic and the free air of the mountains, had impaired his health, and his sleep was broken by harassing and painful dreams. In that from which he now awoke, with the sweat of anguish on his brow, he had fancied himself before the tribunal of the Inquisition. The rack was shown to him, and they bade him choose between confession and torture. He then thought he heard his name repeated several times in tones deep and sepulchral. Starting up in alarm, he saw the door of his prison open, and give admittance to a man muffled in a black cloak, who walked up to the foot of his bed of damp straw, and threw the rays of a dark lantern full into his dazzled eyes.

The traces of recent and strong emotion, visible at that moment on the pirate's countenance, did not escape the Proveditore, who attributed them, and rightly, to an artifice he had practised. Previously to entering the dungeon, he had caused the name of Nicolo Dansowich to be repeated several times in a deep hollow voice. Aware of the superstitious credulity of the Uzcoques, the wily Venetian had devised this stratagem as one likely to produce a startling effect upon the prisoner, and to forward the end he proposed to obtain by his visit. He now seated himself upon a wooden bench, the only piece of furniture in the dungeon, and addressed the captive in a mild and conciliating tone.

"You should keep better watch over your dreams," said he, "if you wish our tribunals to remain in ignorance of your secrets."

"My dreams!" repeated the Uzcoque, somewhat startled by the ominous coincidence between Marcello's words and the visions that had broken his slumber.

"Ay, friend, your dreams! The jailers are watchful, and little passes in these prisons without coming to their knowledge. More than once have they heard you revealing in your sleep that which,

during your waking hours, you so strenuously deny.—'Enough! Enough!' you cried. 'I will confess all. I am Nicolo Dansowich.'

While Marcello was speaking, the old Uzcoque had had time to collect his thoughts, and call to mind the numerous snares and devices by which the Venetian tribunals obtained confessions from their prisoners. With an intuitive keenness of perception, he in a moment saw through the Proveditore's stratagem, and resolved to defeat it. A contemptuous smile played over his features, and, shaking his head incredulously, he answered the Venetian—

"The watchful jailers you speak of have doubtless been cheering their vigils with the wine flask," said he. "Their draughts must have been deep, to make them hear that which was never spoken."

"Subterfuge will avail you nothing," replied Marcello. "Your sleeping confessions, although you may now wish to retract them, are yet sufficient grounds for the tribunal to go upon, and the most excruciating tortures will be used, if needful, to procure their waking confirmation. Reflect, Dansowich," continued the Proveditore in a persuasive and gentle tone, "on the position in which you now find yourself. Your life is forfeited; and, if you persist in your denials, you will never leave this dungeon but for the rack or scaffold. On the other hand, the senate respects you as a brave and honourable, although misguided man, and would gladly see you turn from the error of your ways. Now is the time to ensure yourself a tranquil and respected old age. Harken to the proposals I am empowered to make you. The Signoria offers you life, freedom, and a captainship in the island of Candia, on the sole condition, on your part, of disclosing the intrigues and perfidy of the council at Gradiska, and furnishing us, as you are assuredly able to do, with documents by which we may prove to the Archduke the treachery of his ministers. Again, I say—Reflect! or rather hesitate not, but decide at once between a prosperous and honourable life, and a death of degradation and anguish."

Neither the threats nor the temptations held out by the Proveditore seemed to have the smallest effect upon the Uzcoque.

"You are mistaken," replied he calmly. "I am not Dansowich, nor have I any knowledge of the intrigues at Gradiska. I could not therefore, if I wished it, buy my life by the treachery demanded of me; and if the woivodes of Segna think as I do, they will let themselves be hewn in pieces before they do the bidding of your senators, or concede aught to the wishes of false and crafty Venice."

"You are a brave man, Dansowich!" resumed the Proveditore, who saw the necessity of changing his tactics. "You care little for the dangers and sufferings of this world. But yet—pause and reflect. Your hair is silvered by time, and even should you escape your present peril, you will still, ere many years are past, have to render an account to a higher tribunal than ours. By an upright course you might atone for the crimes of your youth and manhood, and become the chosen instrument of Heaven to deliver your fellow-Christians from a cruel scourge and sore infliction."

"And who has brought the scourge upon you?" demanded the old man in a raised voice, measuring the Proveditore with a stern and contemptuous look. "Is it our fault that, whilst we were striving to keep the Turk from the door of Christendom, you sought every means of thwarting our efforts by forming treaties with the infidel? You do well to remind me that my head is grey. I was still a youth when the name of Uzcoque was a title of honour as it is now a term of reproach—when my people were looked upon as heroes, by whose valour the Cross was exalted, and the Crescent bowed down to the dust. Those were the days when, on the ruins of Spalatro, we swore to live like eagles, amidst barren cliffs and naked rocks, the better to harass the heathen—the days when the power of the Moslem quailed and fled before us. And had not your sordid Venetian traders stepped in, courting the infidel for love of gain, the Cross would still be worshipped on all the shores of the Adriatic, and the Uzcoques would still combat for honour and victory instead of revenge and plunder. But your hand has ever been against us. Your long galleys were ever ready to sink our barks or blockade our coast; and the fate of robbers and murderers awaited our people if they had the mishap to fall into your hands. You reduced us at last to despair. Each valiant deed performed against the Turk was

recompensed by you with new persecutions, till at last you converted into deadly enemies those who would willingly have been your friends and fast allies. Thank yourselves, then, for the foe you have raised up. Your own cowardice and greed have engendered the hydra which now preys upon your heart's blood."

The Proveditore remarked with satisfaction, not unmingled with surprise, that the old pirate, who had hitherto replied to all interrogatories with a degree of cold reserve and cunning which had baffled his examiners, was becoming visibly excited, and losing his power of self-control. This was favourable to the meditated stratagem of the Venetian, who now, in pursuance of the scheme he had combined, gave the conversation another direction.

"I am willing to acknowledge," said he, "that the republic has at times dealt somewhat hardly with your people. But which is in fact the worst foe, he who openly attacks you, or he who makes you his tool to sow discord amongst Christians, and to excite the Turks against Venice, while under pretence of protection he squeezes from you the booty obtained at the price of your blood?"

"And who does that?" demanded the Uzcoque.

"Who! Need you ask the question? What do you give for the shelter you receive from Austria? At what price do you inhabit the town and castle of Segna?"

"At none that I am aware of," replied Dansowich fiercely. "We dwell there, in virtue of our compact with the Emperor, as soldiers of the Archduke, bound to defend the post confided to us against the aggressions of the infidel. As soldiers we have our pay, as mariners we have our lawful booty."

"Pay and booty!" repeated the Proveditore scornfully. "Whence comes, then, your manifest misery and poverty? Whence comes it that you turn robbers, if in the pay of Austria? No, Dansowich, you will not deceive us by such flimsy pretexts! Your gains, lawful and unlawful, are wrested from you by the archducal counsellors, in whose hands you are mere puppets. 'Twas they who prompted you to tell the Turks that you were in league with Venice; that the republic encouraged your misdeeds, and shared the profits of your aggressions on the subjects of the Porte. They it was who caused the documents to be prepared, with forged seals and signatures of the illustrious Signoria, which were to serve as proofs of your lying assertions. Deny this, if you can."

The beard and mustache of the old Uzcoque appeared to curl and bristle with fury at the insulting imputations of the Proveditore. For a moment he seemed about to fly at his interlocutor; his fingers clutched and tore the straw upon which he was sitting; and his fetters clanked as his whole frame shook with rage. After a brief pause, and by a strong effort, he restrained himself, and replied calmly to the taunting accusation of the Venetian.

"Why go so far," said he, "to seek for motives that may be found nearer home? You seem to have forgotten how many times the Archduke has compelled us to make restitution of booty wrested from Venetian subjects. You forget, too, that it was in consequence of your complaints he sent to the cruel Rabbata to control us—Rabbata whom we slew in our wrath, for we are freemen and brook no tyranny. If we are poor individually, it is because we yield up our booty into the hands of our woivodes, to be used for the common good of seven hundred families. No, Signor! if the republic has to complain of us, let her remember the provocations received at her hands, the persecutions which converted a band of heroes into a pirate horde, and which changed our holy zeal against the enemies of the Cross into remorseless hatred of all mankind. As to the forged seals and signatures you talk of, and the deceptions practised on the Turks, if such there were, they were the self-willed act of our woivodes, and in no way instigated by Austria."

"Thou liest, Dansowich!" said the Proveditore sternly. "Did you not proclaim and swear in the public market-place of the Austrian town of Segna, that you were the friends and allies of Venice? This you would never have dared to do, but with the approval and connivance of the archducal government."

The eyes of the pirate sparkled with a strange and significant gleam as the Proveditore recalled the circumstance to his recollection.

"Know ye not," said he with a grim smile, "whom ye have to thank for that good office? 'Twas Dansowich himself, who thereby but half fulfilled his vow of vengeance against the republic. And when did it occur?" he continued with rising fury. "Was it not shortly after the day in which that heartless villain, the Proveditore Marcello, captured the woivode's wife, and hung her, unoffending and defenceless, unshriven and unabsolved, upon a tree on the Dalmatian shore?"

The Uzcoque paused, overcome by the bitter memories he was calling up, and by the fury and hatred they revived in his breast. His eyes were bloodshot, and the foam stood upon his lips as he concluded. The Proveditore smiled. The favourable moment he had been waiting had arrived, the moment when he doubted not that Dansowich would betray himself. Taking Antonio's drawing from under his cloak, he suddenly unrolled and held it before the Uzcoque, in such a manner that the light of the lantern fell full upon the ghastly countenance of the old woman.

"Behold!" said he. "Does that resemble her you speak of?"

The object of the Proveditore was gained, but he had not well calculated all the consequences of his stratagem.

"Fiend of hell!" shouted Dansowich in a voice of thunder, while a sudden light seemed to burst upon him. "'Tis thou who are her murderer!" And bounding forward with a violence that at once freed him from his fetters, which fell clattering on the dungeon floor, he clutched the senator by the throat, and hurled him to the ground before the astonished Venetian had time to make the slightest resistance.

"Art thou still in being?" he muttered, while his teeth gnashed and ground together. "I thought thee long since dead. But, no! 'twas written thou shouldst die by my hand. Be it done to thee as thou didst to the wife of my bosom," continued he, while kneeling on the breast of the Proveditore, and compressing his throat in an iron gripe that threatened to prove as efficacious and nearly as speedy in its operation as the bow-string of the Turk. In vain did Marcello struggle violently to free himself from the crushing pressure of the pirate's fingers. Although a very powerful man, and in the full vigour of his strength, the disadvantage at which he had been taken prevented his being a match for the old Uzcoque, whose sinews were braced by a long life of hardship. Fortunately, however, for the Venetian, the furious shout of Dansowich had been overheard by the guards and jailers, who now rushed into the dungeon, and rescued the half strangled Proveditore from the grasp of his fierce antagonist.

"Do him no hurt!" exclaimed Marcello, so soon as he was able to speak, seeing that the guards were disposed to handle the Uzcoque somewhat roughly; "the secret I have won is well worth the risk. The prisoner is Dansowich, woivode of Segna."

The fetters which the pirate had snapped with such facility, were, upon examination, found to be filed more than half through. The instrument by which this had been effected was sought for and discovered, and the prisoner, having been doubly manacled, was again left to the solitude of his cell. After directing all imaginable vigilance to be used for the safe custody of so important a captive, the Proveditore re-entered his gondola and was conveyed back to his palace.

CHAPTER III. THE PIRATES

The desperate attempt on the life of the Proveditore, and the evidence given by him as to the identity of the prisoner, had the result that may be supposed, and the old Uzcoque was put to the torture. But the ingenuity of Venetian tormentors was vainly exhausted upon him; the most unheard of sufferings failed to extort a syllable of confession from his lips. At last, despairing of obtaining the desired information by these means, the senate commissioned Marcello, as one well acquainted with the localities, to make a descent on the Dalmatian coast, and profiting by the consternation of the Uzcoques at the loss of their leader, to endeavour to surprise a small fort situated at some distance from Segna, and which was the abode of Dansowich. In the absence of the old pirate it would probably be carelessly guarded and easily surprised; and it was hoped that documents would be found there, proving that which the Venetians were so anxious to establish. Another object of the expedition was to capture, if possible, the mysterious female who had been lately seen more than once in Venice, and who had taken so prominent a part in the attack on the palace of the Malipieri.

Accompanied by his son, whom for various reasons he had resolved to take with him, Marcello went on board an armed galley, and with a favouring breeze steered for the Dalmatian coast. He had little doubt of accomplishing the object of his expedition with ease and safety; for a Venetian Fleet was already blockading the channel of Segna, and the archducal city of Fiume, where several of the Uzcoque barks were undergoing repairs. The blockade had been instituted in consequence of the outrageous piracies committed by the Uzcoques during the Easter festival, and was a measure frequently adopted by the republic; which, although carefully avoiding a war, neglected no other means of enforcing their applications to the court at Gradiska for an energetic interference in the proceedings of the pirates. The inconvenience and interruption to the trade of Fiume occasioned by these blockades, usually induced the archducal government to institute a pretended investigation into the conduct of the Uzcoques, or at least to promise the Venetians some reparation—a mockery of satisfaction with which the latter, in their then state of decline and weakness, were fain to content themselves. Reckoning upon the terror inspired by the presence of the squadron now employed in the blockade, as well as upon its support, should he require it, the Proveditore made sure of success. He was doomed, however, to be cruelly disappointed in his sanguine anticipations.

When the attempt to get possession of the person of a Venetian nobleman had failed, Strasolda found it impossible to keep her father's captivity any longer a secret, and was compelled to appeal to the whole of the Uzcoques to assist her in his deliverance. Information of the woivode's recognition, and of the tortures he had suffered, soon reached the ears of the pirates, who were not slow to perceive that the safety, and even the existence of their tribe, were now at stake. Although well acquainted with the inflexible character of Dansowich, they trembled lest the agonies he was made to suffer should force from him a confession, which would enable the Venetians to convince the archduke of the criminal collusion between his counsellors and the Uzcoques. This would be the signal for the withdrawal of the archducal protection from the pirates, who then, exposed to the vengeance of all whom they had plundered, must inevitably succumb in the unequal conflict that would ensue.

The imminence of the peril inspired the Uzcoques with unwonted courage and energy. Jurissa Caiduch himself, forgetting any cause of dislike he might have to Dansowich, joined heart and hand in the plans formed by the pirates for the deliverance of their leader. Every man in Segna, whether young or old, all who could wield a cimenter or clutch a knife, hastily armed themselves, and crowded into the fleet of long light skiffs in which they were wont to make their predatory excursions. Then breaking furiously through the line of Venetian ships, stationed between Veglia and the mainland, and which were totally unprepared for this sudden and daring manœuvre, they disappeared amidst the shoals and in the small creeks and inlets of the Dalmatian islands belonging to the republic, where the

ponderous Venetian galleys would vainly attempt to follow them. Their object was the same which they had already attempted to carry out in Venice on the day of the Bridge Fight; namely, to seize upon some Venetian magistrate or person of importance whom they might exchange for Dansowich. Under the guidance of Jurissa Caiduch they waylaid and boarded every vessel that passed up or down the Adriatic, especially those coming from the Ionian islands, in hope of meeting with a Venetian of rank. Nor did they pursue their researches upon the water alone. Not a night passed that one or other of the islands was not lighted up by the blaze of villages, hamlets, and villas. In the absence of Dansowich, there was no restraint upon their fury; and urged on by the bloodthirsty Jurissa, the cruelties they committed were unprecedented even in their sanguinary annals. Nor were they without hope that the barbarities they were perpetrating might induce the Venetians to restore their leader to liberty, in order that he might, as was well known to be his wont, check the excesses of his followers.

The outbreak of the pirates had been so sudden and unexpected, that the Proveditore, who sailed from Venice on the same day on which it occurred, had received no intelligence of it, and, unconscious of his peril, steered straight for the islands. One circumstance alone appeared strange to him, which was, that during the last part of his voyage he did not meet a single vessel, although the quarter of the Adriatic through which he was passing was usually crowded with shipping. But he was far from attributing this extraordinary change to its real cause.

It was afternoon when Marcello's galley came in sight of the white cliffs of Cherso, and shortly afterwards entered the channel, running between that island and Veglia. The masses of dark clouds in the western horizon were becoming momentarily more threatening, and various signs of an approaching storm made the captain of the galley especially anxious to get, before nightfall, into the nearest harbour, which was that of Pesca, at the southern extremity of the island of Veglia. All sail was made upon the galley, and they were running rapidly down the channel, when a red light suddenly flashed over the waves in the quarter of the horizon they were approaching, and was reflected back upon the sky, now darkened with clouds and by the approach of night. Attracted by this unusual appearance, Antonio hurried to the high quarterdeck of the galley; and scarcely had he ascended it, when the fiery glow fell in a flood of rosy light upon the distant chalk cliffs. Entranced by the picturesque beauty of the scene, the young painter forgot to enquire the cause of this singular illumination, when suddenly his attention was caught by a shout from the man at the helm.

"By Heavens, 'tis a fire!" ejaculated the sailor, who had been watching the unusual appearance. "All Pesca must be in flames."

He had scarcely uttered the words when the galley rounded a projecting point of land, and the correctness of the seaman's conjecture was apparent. A thick cloud of smoke hung like a pall over the unfortunate town of Pesca. Tongues of flame darted upwards from the dense black vapour, lighting up sea and land to an immense distance.

Scarcely had Antonio's startled glance been able to take in this imposing spectacle, when the storm, which had long been impending, burst forth with tremendous violence; the wind howled furiously amongst the rigging, and the galley was tossed like a nutshell from crest to crest of the foaming waves; each moment bringing it into more dangerous proximity to the rocky shoals of that iron-bound shore. The light from the burning town showed the Venetians all the dangers of their situation; and their peril was the more imminent because the signal usually made for boats to tow large vessels through the rocks and breakers, was at such a moment not likely to be observed or attended to by the people of Pesca. Nevertheless the signal was hoisted; but instead of bringing the assistance so much needed by the Venetians, it drew upon them an enemy far more formidable than the elements with which they were already contending. Boats were soon seen approaching the galley; but as they drew near it was evident they were not manned by the peaceful fishermen, who usually came out to render assistance to vessels. They were crowded with wild, fierce-looking figures, who, on arriving within a short distance of the ship, set up a savage yell of defiance, and sent a deadly volley of musket-balls amongst the astounded Venetians. Before the latter had recovered from their astonishment, the

light skiffs of the Uzcoques were within a few yards of the galley. Another fatally effective volley of musketry; and then, throwing down their fire-arms, the pirates grasped their sabres and made violent efforts to board. But each time that they succeeded in closing, the plunging of the ponderous galley into the trough of the sea, or the rising of some huge wave, severed them from their prey, and prevented them from setting foot on the decks of the Venetian vessel. This delay was made the most of by the officers of the latter, in making arrangements for defence. The Proveditore himself, a man of tried and chivalrous courage, and great experience both in land and sea warfare, lent his personal aid to the preparations, and in a few pithy and emphatic words strove to encourage the crew to a gallant resistance. But the soldiers and mariners who manned the galley had already sustained a heavy loss by the fire of the Uzcoques, and were moreover alarmed by their near approach to that perilous shore, as well as disheartened by the prospect of a contest with greatly superior numbers. Although some few took to their arms and occupied the posts assigned them by their officers, the majority seemed more disposed to tell beads and mutter prayers, than to display the energy and decision which alone could rescue them from the double peril by which they were menaced. The pirates, meanwhile, were constantly foiled in their attempts to board by the fury of the elements, till at last, becoming maddened by repeated disappointments, they threw off their upper garments, and fixing their long knives firmly between their teeth, dashed in crowds into the water. Familiar with that element from childhood, they skimmed over its surface with the lightness and rapidity of sea-mews, and swarmed up the sides of the galley. A vigorous defence might yet have saved the vessel; but the heroic days of Venice were long past—the race of men who had so long maintained the supremacy of the republic in all the Italian seas, was now extinct. After a feeble and irresolute resistance, the Venetians threw down their arms and begged for quarter; while the Proveditore, disgusted at the cowardice of his countrymen, indignantly broke his sword, and retreating to the quarterdeck, there seated himself beside his son, and calmly awaited his fate.

Foremost among the assailants was Jurissa Caiduch, who sprang upon the deck of the galley, foaming with rage, and slaughtering all he met on his passage. The blazing town lighted up the scene, and showed him and his followers where to strike. In vain did the unfortunate crew implore quarter. None was given, and the decks of the ship soon streamed with blood, while each moment the cries of the victims became fewer and fainter.

Totally forgetting in his blind fury the object of the expedition, Jurissa stayed not his hand in quest of hostages, but rushed with uplifted knife on Marcello and his son. The latter shrieked for mercy; while the Proveditore, unmoved by the imminence of the peril, preserved his dignity of mien, and fixed his deep stern gaze upon the pirate. Jurissa paused for an instant, staggered by the look, and awed by the commanding aspect, of the Venetian. Soon, however, as though indignant at his own momentary hesitation, he rushed forward with a furious shout and uplifted blade. The knife was descending, the next instant it would have entered the heart of Marcello; when an Uzcoque, recognizing by the light of the conflagration the patrician garb of the Proveditore, uttered a cry of surprise, and seized the arm of his bloodthirsty leader.

"Caiduch!" exclaimed the pirate, "would you again blast our purpose? This man is a Venetian noble. His life may buy that of Dansowich."

"It is the Proveditore Marcello!" cried Antonio, eager to profit by the momentary respite.

The words of the young painter passed from mouth to mouth, and in a few seconds the whole of the Uzcoques were acquainted with the important capture that had been made. For a moment astonishment kept them tongue-tied, and then a wild shout of exultation conveyed to their companions on shore the intelligence of some joyful event.

Ropes were now thrown out to the pirate skiffs, the galley was safely towed into the harbour, and the Proveditore, his son, and the few Venetian sailors who had escaped the general slaughter, were conducted to the burning town, amidst the jeers and ill-treatment of their captors. Exposed to great danger from the falling roofs and timbers of the blazing houses, they were led through the streets

of Pesca, and on their way had ample opportunity of witnessing the incredible cruelties exercised by the pirates upon the inhabitants of that ill-fated town. What made these cruelties appear still more horrible, was the part taken in them by the Uzcoque women, who, as was the case at that period with most of the Slavonian races, were all trained to the use of arms,¹ and who on this occasion swelled the ranks of the freebooters. Their ferocity exceeded, if possible, that of the men. Neither age, sex, nor station afforded any protection against these furies, who perpetrated barbarities the details of which would exceed belief.

The violence of the flames rendering it impossible to remain in the town, the Uzcoques betook themselves to the castle of a nobleman, situated on a rising ground a short distance from Pesca. On first landing, the pirates had broken into this castle and made it their headquarters. After pillaging every thing of value, they had gratified their savage love of destruction by breaking and destroying what they could not well carry away. In the court-yard were collected piles of furniture, pictures of price, and fragments of rich tapestry, rent by those ruthless spoilers from the walls of the apartments. With this costly fuel had the Uzcoques lit fires, at which quarters of oxen and whole sheep were now roasting.

A shout of triumph burst forth when the news of the Proveditore's capture was announced to the pirates who had remained at the castle, and they crowded round the unfortunate prisoners, overwhelming them with threats and curses. Something like silence being at length obtained, Jurissa commanded instant preparations to be made for the banquet appointed to celebrate the success of their expedition. Tables were arranged in a spacious hall of the castle, and upon them soon smoked the huge joints of meat that had been roasting at the fires, placed on the bare boards without dish or plate. Casks of wine that had been rescued from the flames of the town, or extracted from the castle cellars, were broached, or the heads knocked in, and the contents poured into jugs and flagons of every shape and size. Although the light of the conflagration, glaring red through the tall Gothic windows, lit up the hall and rendered any further illumination unnecessary, a number of torches had been fixed round the apartment, the resinous smoke of which floated in clouds over the heads of the revelers. Seating themselves upon benches, chairs, and empty casks, the Uzcoques commenced a ravenous attack upon the coarse but abundant viands set before them.

The scene was a strange one. The brutal demeanour of the men, their bearded and savage aspect; the disheveled bloodstained women, mingling their shrill voices with the hoarse tones of their male companions; the disordered but often picturesque garb and various weapons of the pirates; the whole seen by the light of the burning houses—more resembled an orgie of demons than an assemblage of human beings; and even the cool and resolute Proveditore felt himself shudder and turn pale as he contemplated this carnival of horrors, celebrated by wretches on whose hands the blood of their fellow-men was as yet hardly dry. Antonio sat supporting himself against the table, seeming scarcely conscious of what passed around him. Both father and son had been compelled to take their places at the board, amidst the jeers and insults of the Uzcoques.

The revel was at its height, when Jurissa suddenly started from his seat, and struck the table violently with his drinking-cup.

"Hold, Uzcoques!" he exclaimed; "we have forgotten the crowning ornament of our banquet."

He whispered something to an Uzcoque seated beside him, who left the room. While the pirates were still asking one another the meaning of Jurissa's words, the man returned, bearing before him a trencher covered with a cloth, which he placed at the upper end of the table.

"Behold the last and best dish we can offer to our noble guests!" said Jurissa; "'twill suit, I doubt not, their dainty palates." And, tearing off the cloth, he exposed to view the grizzly and distorted features of a human head.

¹ The reader of German literature will call to mind the anecdote, in Jean Paul's *Levana*, of a Moldavian woman who in one day slew seven men with her own hand, and the same evening was delivered of a child.

The shout of savage exultation that burst from the pirates at this ghastly spectacle, drowned the groan of rage and grief uttered by the Proveditore, as he recognised in the pale and rigid countenance the well-known features of his friend Christophoro Veniero. That unfortunate nobleman, on his return from a voyage to the Levant, had fallen into the hands of Jurissa, who, before he was aware of the rank of his prisoner, had barbarously slain him. This had occurred not many hours before the capture of Marcello; and it was to the murder of Veniero that the Uzcoque made allusion, when he seized Jurissa's arm at the moment he was about to stab the Proveditore.

One of the pirates, a man of gigantic stature and hideous aspect, now rose from his seat, staggering with drunkenness, and forcing open the jaws of the dead, placed a piece of meat between the teeth. The wildest laughter and applause greeted this frightful pantomime, which made the blood of the Proveditore run cold.

"Infernal and bloody villains!" shouted he, unable to restrain his indignation, and starting to his feet as he spoke. There was a momentary pause, during which the pirates gazed at the noble Venetian, seemingly struck dumb with surprise at his temerity. Then, however, a dozen sinewy arms were extended to seize him, and a dozen daggers menaced his life. Dignified and immovable, the high-souled senator offered no resistance, but inwardly ejaculating a short prayer, awaited the death-stroke. It came not, however. Although some of the Uzcoques, in their fury and intoxication, would have immolated their valuable hostage, others, who had drunk less deeply, protested against the madness of such an act, and rushed forward to protect him. Their interference was resented, and a violent quarrel ensued. Knives were drawn, benches overturned, chairs broken up and converted into weapons; on all sides bare steel was flashing, deep oaths resounding, and missiles of various kinds flying across the tables. It would be impossible to say how long this scene of drunken violence would have lasted, or how long the Proveditore and his son would have remained unscathed amidst the storm, had not the advent of a fresh actor upon the scene stilled the tumult in a manner so sudden as to appear almost miraculous.

The new comer was no other than the ghastly old woman who has been seen to play such an important part in this history, and who now entered the banqueting hall with hasty step and impatient gesture.

"Uzcoques!" she exclaimed in a shrill, clear, and emphatic voice, that rose above the clamour of the brawl; "Uzcoques! what means this savage uproar? Are you not yet sated with rapine and slaughter, that you thus fall upon and tear each other? Are ye men, or wolves and tigers? Is this the way to obtain your leader's deliverance; and will the news of this day's havoc, think you, better the position of Dansowich?"

The pirates hung their heads in silent confusion at this reproof. None dared to reply; Jurissa alone grumbled something inaudible.

"Follow me!" continued the singular woman whose words had so extraordinary an effect on this brutal band. "Follow, every man! and stop as far as may be, the ruin you have begun."

Obedient to her voice the Uzcoques left the hall, some of them sullenly and slowly enough, but none venturing to dispute the injunction laid upon them. The old woman waited till the scene of tumult and revel was abandoned by all but Marcello and his son, and then hurrying after the pirates, led the way to the burning town. In a few minutes the two Venetians beheld, from the castle windows, the dark forms of the freebooters moving about in the firelight, as they busied themselves to extinguish the conflagration. Here and there the white robe of the mysterious old woman was discernible as she flitted from one group to another, directing their efforts, and urging them to greater exertions.

"Strange!" said the Proveditore musingly, "that so hideous and repulsive an old creature should exercise such commanding influence over these bandits."

He looked round to his son as he spoke; but Antonio, worn out by the fatigues and agitation of the day, had stretched himself upon a bench and was already in a deep sleep. The Proveditore

gazed at him for a brief space, with an expression of mingled pity, regret, and paternal affection upon his countenance.

"As weak of body as infirm of purpose," he murmured. "Alas! that a name derived from old Roman ancestors should be borne by one so little qualified to do it honour! Had it pleased Heaven to preserve to me the child stolen in his infancy by the Moslem, how different would have been my position! That masculine and noble boy, so full of life and promise, would have proved a prop to my old age, and an ornament to his country. But now, alas!"—

He continued for a while to indulge in vain regrets that the course of events had not been otherwise; then turning to the window, he watched the efforts made by the pirates to extinguish the flames, until a dense cloud of smoke that overhung the town was the only sign remaining of the conflagration.

For some time the Proveditore paced up and down the hall in anxious thought upon his critical position, and the strange circumstances that had led to it. In vain did he endeavour to reconcile, with what now seemed more than ever inexplicable, the vindictive rage of Dansowich in the dungeon, and the evidence before him that the pirate's wife was still in existence. It was a riddle which he was unable to solve; and at last, despairing of success, he abandoned the attempt, and sought in slumber a temporary oblivion of the perils that surrounded him.

CHAPTER IV. THE RECOGNITION

Upon a divan in the splendid armoury of the pacha's palace at Bosnia-Serai, the young Turk Ibrahim was seated in deep thought, the day after his return home. On the walls around him were displayed weapons and military accoutrements of every kind. Damascus sabres richly inlaid, and many with jeweled hilts, embroidered banners, golden stirrups, casques of embossed silver, burnished armour and coats-of-mail, were arranged in picturesque and fanciful devices. As the young Moslem gazed around him, and beheld these trophies of victories won by Turkish viziers and pachas in their wars against Austria and Venice, his martial and fearless spirit rose high, and he reproached himself with weakness and pusillanimity for having abandoned the pursuit of her he loved. Bitterly did he now regret his precipitation in leaving Venice the morning after the Battle of the Bridge, and while under the influence of the shock he had received, in beholding the hideous features of an old woman where he had expected to find the blooming countenance of Strasolda. His love for the Uzcoque maiden, as he had seen her when his captive, and again in the cavern on the coast by Segna, returned in full force. He was already planning a journey to Venice, when he was interrupted in his meditations by the noise of a horse's hoofs dashing full speed into the court of the palace. In another minute an attendant summoned him to the presence of the pacha, and there he heard the news just received, of the wild outbreak of the Uzcoques. The Martellossi and other troops were ordered to proceed immediately to the frontier, in order to protect Turkish Dalmatia from the pirates; and Ibrahim, at his urgent request, was appointed to a command in the expedition.

With joyful alacrity did the young Turk arm and hurry to horse; and then, putting himself at the head of a troop of light cavalry, sped onwards in the direction of the country where he hoped to gain tidings of Strasolda. Having received strict orders to content himself with protecting the Turkish frontier, and above all not to infringe on Archducal territory, Ibrahim, on arriving at the boundary of the pachalic, left his troop in charge of the second in command, and with a handful of men entered Venetian Dalmatia, with the intention of obtaining information concerning the Uzcoques, and more especially concerning her he loved. He was assisted in his enquiries by the good understanding existing between Venice and the Porte; and he soon learned that, after the burning of Pesca, the pirates had suddenly ceased their excesses and returned to Segna, taking the Proveditore with them. They had not gone, however, either to the castle or the town; but fearful lest the Archduke should interfere, and make them give up their illustrious prisoners, had betaken themselves to the mountains, in the numerous caverns and lurking-places of which they were able to conceal their captives. From every mouth did the eager enquirer hear praises of the female who accompanied the Uzcoques. None spoke of her but in terms of love and gratitude. As regarded her appearance accounts were at variance, some representing her as young and beautiful, while others compassionated her frightful ugliness; and, more than ever perplexed by this conflicting testimony, Ibrahim pursued his march and his enquiries, still hoping by perseverance to arrive at a solution of the enigma.

While the young Turk was thus employed, the Proveditore and his son were conveyed by their captors from one place of security to another, passing one night in the depths of some ravine, the next amongst the crags and clefts of the mountains, but always moving about in the daytime, and never sleeping twice in the same place. Since the evening of the revel at Pesca they had not again beheld the mysterious old woman, although they had more than once heard her clear and silvery voice near the place allotted to them for confinement and repose. In certain attentions and comforts, intended as alleviations of their unpleasant position, female care and thought were also visible; but all their efforts were vain to obtain a sight of the friendly being who thus hovered around them.

It was on a beautiful evening some fourteen days after their capture, that the Proveditore and his son lay upon the bank of the only river that waters the rocky vicinity of Segna, wearied by a long and

rapid march. There was an unusual degree of bustle observable amongst the Uzcoques, and numerous messengers had been passing to and from the castle of Segna, which was at no great distance from the spot where they had now halted. From the various indications of some extraordinary occurrence, the two Venetians began to hope that the crisis of their fate was approaching, and that they should at last know in what manner their captors meant to dispose of them. Nor were they wrong in their expectations. Suddenly the mysterious old woman stood before them, her partially veiled features bearing their wonted hideous aspect, and her eyes, usually so brilliant, dimmed with tears.

"You are free," said she in an agitated voice to the Proveditore and his son. "Our people will escort you to Fiume in all safety, and there you will find galleys of the republic to convey you back to Venice."

At the sight of the old woman's unearthly countenance, Antonio covered his face with his hands; the Proveditore rose from the ground deeply moved.

"Singular being!" he exclaimed, "by this mildness and mercy you punish me more effectually than by the bloodiest revenge you could have taken for my cruel treatment of you."

"You owe me no thanks," was the reply; "thank rather the holy Virgin, who sent the youth beside you to be your guardian angel, and who delivered you into the hands of the Uzcoques at a time when they had need of a hostage. Surely it was by the special intervention of Heaven that the murderer of the wife was sent to serve as ransom for the captive husband. But the atonement has come too late, the noble Dansowich was basely ensnared into an act of violence, and his life paid the forfeit of his wrath—he died upon the rack. And now the wily counsellors at Gradiska compel us to release you."

She paused, interrupted by a flood of tears. After a short silence, broken only by her sobs, she became more composed, and the Proveditore again addressed her.

"But what," said he, "could have driven Dansowich to an act of violence, which he must have known would entail a severe punishment? Surely his wife's safety and the lapse of years might have enabled him to forgive, if not to forget, the unsuccessful attempt upon her life."

"His wife's safety!" exclaimed the old woman. "Have the trials and fatigues of the last few days turned your brain? Alas! too surely was the rope fixed round her neck; and had you not carried off her remains how could you have possessed her portrait, and by the devilish stratagem of showing it to the bereaved husband, have driven him to the act which cost him his life?"

"Gracious Heaven! what hideous jest is this?" exclaimed Marcello. "Do I not see you living and standing before me; and think you I could ever forget your features, or the look you gave me when hanging from the tree? You were cut down and saved after our departure; and but a few weeks have elapsed since my son painted your likeness, after conveying you across the canal in his gondola."

The old woman stood for a few moments as though petrified by what she had just heard. At last she passed her hand slowly across her face, as if to convince herself of her identity.

"And she you murdered resembled *me*?" she exclaimed in a trembling voice. "It was of *me* that the portrait was taken, and by *him*!" she continued, pointing to Antonio with a gesture of horror and contempt. "*My* picture was it, that was held before Dansowich, and by *you*, the murderer of his wife? Holy Virgin!" she exclaimed, as the truth seemed to flash upon her, "how has my faith in thee misled me! I beheld in this youth one sent by Heaven to aid me; but now I see that he was prompted by the powers of darkness to steal my portrait, and thus become the instrument of destruction to the best and noblest of our race."

"Forgive and spare us!" exclaimed Antonio, conscience-stricken as he remembered the admonitions of Contarini. "'Tis true, I was the instrument, but most unwittingly. How could I know so sad an end would follow?"

"'Tis not my wont to seek revenge," replied the old woman; "nor do I forget that you saved my life from the fury of the Venetians."

Antonio essayed to speak, but had not courage to correct the error into which she had been led by his strong resemblance to the gallant stranger.

"But," she continued, "'tis time you should have full proof that the features you painted were not those of the wife of Dansowich."

With these words she threw back her veil, unfastened some small hooks concealed in her abundant tresses, and took off a mask of thin and untanned lambskin, wrinkled and stained with yellow and purple streaks by exposure to sun and storm. This mask, closely fitted to features regular and prominent, and strongly resembling those of her unfortunate mother, whose large, dark, and very brilliant eyes she had also inherited, will explain the misconception of the Proveditore as well as that of Dansowich, who had never seen his daughter in a disguise worn only at Venice or other places of peril, and while away from her father and his protection.

While the beautiful but still tearful Uzcoque maid stood thus revealed before the astonished senator, and his enraptured and speechless son, the approaching footfall of a horse at full speed was heard, and in an instant there darted round the angle of a cliff the martial figure of a Turk, mounted upon a large and powerful steed, of that noble race bred in the deserts eastward of the Caspian. The tall and graceful person of the stranger was attired in a close riding-dress of scarlet cloth, from the open breast of which gleamed a light coat-of-mail. A twisted turban bound with chains of glittering steel defended and adorned his head. A crooked cimeter suspended from his belt was his only weapon. His countenance bore a striking resemblance to that of Antonio, and had the same sweet and graceful expression about the mouth and chin; but the more ample and commanding forehead, the well opened flashing eyes, the more prominent and masculine nose, the clear, rich, olive complexion and soldierly bearing, proclaimed him to be of a widely different and higher nature. Riding close up to the side of Strasolda, he reined in his steed with a force and suddenness that threw him on his haunches; but speedily recovering his balance, the noble animal stood pawing the earth and lashing his sides with his long tail, like some untamed and kingly creature of the desert; his veins starting out in sharp relief, his broad chest and beautiful limbs spotted with foam, and his long mane, that would have swept the ground, streaming like a banner in the sea-breeze.

For a moment the startled Strasolda gazed alternately, and in wild and mute amazement, at Antonio and the stranger; but all doubt and hesitation were dispersed in an instant by the well-remembered and impassioned tones, the martial bearing and Moslem garb of Ibrahim, whose captive she had been before she saw him in the cavern.

Leaping from his saddle and circling her slender waist with his arm, he addressed her in those accents of truth and passion which go at once to the heart—

"Heroic daughter of Dansowich! thou art the bright star of my destiny, the light of my soul! Thou must be mine! Come, then, to my heart and home! Gladden with thy love the life of Ibrahim, and he will give thee truth unailing and love without end."

Strasolda did not long hesitate. Already prepossessed in favour of the young and noble-minded Moslem; her allegiance to the Christian powers and faith weakened by the treachery of Austria; her people degraded into robbers; a soldier's daughter, and keenly alive to the splendours of martial gallantry and glory; an orphan, too, and desolate—can it be wondered at if she surrendered, at once and for ever, to this generous and impassioned lover all the sympathies of her affectionate nature? She spoke not; but, as she leaned half-fainting on his arm, her eloquent looks said that which made Ibrahim's pulses thrill with grateful rapture. Pressing her fondly to his bosom, he placed her on the back of his faithful steed, and vaulted into the saddle. Snorting as the vapour flew from his red nostrils, and neighing with mad delight, the impatient animal threw out his iron hoofs into the air, flew round the angle of the cliff, and joined erelong a dozen mounted spearmen. Then, bending their headlong course towards the far east, in a few seconds all had disappeared.

During this scene, which passed almost with the speed of thought, the Proveditore, who was seated on a ledge of the cliff, had gazed anxiously and wildly at the youthful stranger. He knew him in an instant, and would have singled him out amidst thousands; but was so overwhelmed by a rushing

tide of strong and heartrending emotions, that he could neither rise nor speak, and remained, long after the Turk had disappeared, with out-stretched arms and straining eye-balls.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the bewildered Antonio, half suspecting the truth, "who was that daring youth?"

After a pause, and in tones broken and inarticulate, his father answered—"Thy twin brother, Antonio! When a child he was stolen from me by some Turks in Candia; and those who stole have given him their own daring and heroic nature, for they are great and rising, while Venice and her sons are falling and degenerate. Oh Ercole! my dear and long-lost son—seen but a moment and then lost for ever!" ejaculated the bereaved father, as, refusing all comfort, he folded his cloak over his face and wept bitterly.

NOTE.—Shortly after these events, Venice, urged at last beyond all endurance, took up arms against Austria on account of the protection afforded by the latter power to the Uzcoques. The pirate vessels were burned, Segna besieged and taken, the Uzcoques slain or dispersed. The quarrel between Austria and the republic was put an end to by the mediation of Spain shortly before the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War.

"Ces misérables," says a distinguished French writer, speaking of the Uzcoques, "fûrent bien plus criminels par la faute des puissances, que par l'instinct de leur propre nature. Les Vénétiens les aigrèrent; l'église Romaine préféra de les persécuter au devoir de les éclaircir; la maison d'Autriche en fit les instruments de sa politique, et quand le philosophe examine leur histoire il ne voit pas que les Uscoques soient les seuls criminels."

THE SLAVE-TRADE. ²

The extraordinary change which took place in the public mind in the beginning of the century on the subject of the slave-trade, unquestionably justified the determination of Government to abolish a traffic contradictory to every principle of Christianity. It had taken twenty years to obtain this victory of justice. But we must exonerate the mind of England from the charge of abetting this guilty traffic in human misery. The nation had been almost wholly ignorant of its nature. Of course, that Africans were shipped for the West Indies was known; that, as slaves, they were liable to the severities of labour, or the temper of masters, was also known; but in a country like England, where every man is occupied with the concerns of public or private life, and where the struggle for competence, if not for existence, is often of the most trying order, great evils may occur in the distant dependencies of the crown without receiving general notice from the nation. It seems to have been one of the singular results of the war with America, that the calamities of the slave-trade should have been originally brought to the knowledge of the people. The loss of our colonies on the mainland, naturally directed public attention to the increased importance of the West Indian colonies. A large proportion of our supplies for the war had been drawn from those islands; they had become the station of powerful fleets during the latter portion of the war; large garrisons were placed in them; the intercourse became enlarged from a merely commercial connexion with our ports, to a governmental connection with the empire; and the whole machinery of the West Indian social system was brought before the eye of England.

The result was the exposure of the cruelties which slavery entails, and the growing resolution to clear the country of the stigma, and the benevolent desire to relieve a race of beings, who, however differing in colour and clime from ourselves, were sons of the same common blood, and objects of the same Divine mercy. The exertions of Wilberforce, and the intelligent and benevolent men whom he associated with himself in this great cause, were at last successful; and he gained for the British the noblest triumph ever gained for a nation over its own habits, its selfishness, its pride, and its popular opinion.

But the manner in which this great redemption of national character was effected, did less honour to the wisdom of the cabinet than to the benevolence of the people. Fox, probably sincere, but certainly headlong, rushed into emancipation as he had rushed into every measure that bore the name of popularity. Impatient of the delay which might take the honour of this crowning act out of the hands of his party—and unquestionably, in any shape, it was an honour to any party—he hurried it forward without securing the concert, or compelling the acquiescence, of any one of the European kingdoms engaged in the slave-trade. It is true that England was then at war with them all; but there was thus only the stronger opportunity of pronouncing the national resolve, never to tolerate the commerce in slaves, and never to receive any country into our protection by which that most infamous of all trades was tolerated. The opportunity was amply given for establishing the principle, in the necessity which every kingdom in succession felt for the aid of England, and the abolition ought to have been the first article of the treaty. But the occasion was thrown away.

The parliamentary regulations, which had largely provided for the comfort of the slaves on the passage from Africa, and their protection in the British colonies, could not be extended to the new and tremendous traffic which was engaged in by all the commercial states of Europe and the West. The closing of the British mart of slavery flooded the African shore with desperate dealers in the flesh and blood of man; whose only object was profit, and who regarded the miseries of the African only as they affected his sale. The ships which, by the British regulations, had been suffered to carry only a number limited to their accommodation, were now crowded with wretches, stowed in spaces

² Fifty Days on board a Slave vessel, in 1843. By the Rev. PASCOE GRENFELL HILL, Chaplain of H.M.S. Cleopatra.

that scarcely allowed them to breathe. The cheapness of the living cargo, produced by the withdrawal of the British from the slave coast, excited the activity, almost the fury, of the trade; and probably 100,000 miserable beings were thus annually dragged from their own country, to undergo the labour of brutes, and die the death of brutes in the Western World.

Another source of evil was added to the original crime. The colonial possessions of Spain had been broken up into republics, and those were all slave-dealers. The great colony of Portugal, Brazil, had rushed into this frightful commerce with the feverish avidity of avarice set free from all its old restrictions. North America, coquetting with philanthropy, and nominally abjuring the principle of slavery, suffered herself to undergo the corruption of the practice for the temptation of the lucre, and the Atlantic was covered with slave-ships.

But rash, ill considered, and unfortunate as was the precipitate measure of Fox, we shall never but rejoice at the abolition of the slave-trade by our country. If England had stood alone for ever in that abolition, it would be a national glory. To have cast that commerce from her at all apparent loss, was the noblest of national gains; and it may be only when higher knowledge shall be given to man, of the causes which have protected the empire through the struggles of war and the trials of peace, that we may know the full virtue of that most national and magnanimous achievement of charity to man.

It is only in the spirit of this principle that the legislature has followed up those early exertions, by the purchase of the final freedom of the slave, by the astonishing donative of twenty millions sterling, the largest sum ever given for the purposes of humanity. It is only in the same spirit that our cabinet continues to press upon the commercial states the right of search, a right which we solicit on the simple ground of humanity; and which, though it cannot be our duty to enforce at the hazard of hostility, must never be abandoned where we can succeed by the representations of reason, justice, and religion.

The curious and succinct narrative to which we now advert, gives the experience of a short voyage on board of one of those slave ships. And the miseries witnessed by its writer, whose detail seems as accurate as it is simple, more than justify the zeal of our foreign secretary in labouring to effect the total extinction of this death-dealing trade.

H.M.S. the *Cleopatra*, of twenty-six guns, commanded by Captain Wyvill, arriving at Rio Janeiro in September 1842, the reverend writer took the opportunity of being transferred from the Malabar, as chaplain. In the beginning of September the *Cleopatra* left the Mauritius, to proceed to the Mozambique Channel, off Madagascar, her appointed station, to watch the slave-traders. After various cruises along the coast, and as far as Algoa Bay, they at last captured a slaver.

April 12.—At daybreak the look-out at the topmast-head perceived a vessel on the lee quarter, at such a distance as to be scarcely visible; but her locality being pronounced "very suspicious," the order was given to bear up for her. The breeze falling, the boats were ordered out, and in a few minutes the barge and the first gig were pulling away in the direction of the stranger. So variable, however, is the weather at this season, that before the boats had rowed a mile from the ship, a thick haze surrounded the ship, and the chase was lost sight of. The rain fell in torrents, and the ship was going seven knots through the water. On the clearing up of the fog, the chase was again visible. The sun broke forth, and the rakish-looking brigantine appeared to have carried on all sail during the squall. They could see, under her sails, the low black hull pitching up and down; and, approaching within range, one of the fore-castle guns was cleared away for a bow-chaser. The British ensign had been for some time flying at the peak. It was at length answered by the green and yellow Brazilian flag. At length, after a variety of dexterous manœuvres to escape, and from fifteen to twenty shots fired after her, she shortened sail and lay to. Dark naked forms passing across the deck, removed any remaining doubt as to her character, and showed that she had her slave cargo on board. An officer was sent to take possession, and the British ensign displaced the Brazilian. The scene on board was a sufficiently strange one; the deck was crowded with negroes to the number of 450, in almost riotous confusion, having risen but a little while before against the crew. The meagre, famished-looking throng, having

broken through all control, had seized every thing for which they had a fancy in the vessel; some with handfuls of the powdered roots of the cassava, others with large pieces of pork and beef, having broken open the casks, and others with fowls, which they had torn from the coops. Many were busily dipping rags, fastened with bits of string, into the water-casks to act as sponges, and had got at the contents of a cask of Brazilian rum, which they greatly enjoyed. However, they exhibited the wildest joy, mingled with the clank of the iron, as they were knocking off their fetters on every side. From the moment the first ball had been fired, they had been actively employed in thus freeing themselves. The crew found but thirty thus shackled in pairs, but many more pairs of shackles were found below. There could not be a moment's doubt as to the light in which they viewed their captors, now become their liberators. They rushed towards them in crowds, and rubbed their feet and hands caressingly, even rolling themselves on the deck before them; and, when they saw the crew of the vessel rather unceremoniously sent over the side into the boat which was to take them prisoners to the frigate, they set up a long universal shout of triumph and delight. The actual number of the negroes now on board, amounted to 447. Of those 180 were men, few, however, exceeding twenty years of age; 45 women; 213 boys. The name of the prize was the *Progresso*, last from Brazil, and bound to Rio Janeiro. The crew were seventeen; three Spaniards, and the rest Brazilians. The vessel was of about 140 tons; the length of the slave-deck, 37 feet; its mean breadth, 21½ feet; its height, 3½ feet—a horrible space to contain between four and five hundred human beings. How they could even breathe is scarcely conceivable. The captain and one of the crew were said to have been drowned in the surf at the embarkation of the negroes. Two Spaniards, and a Portuguese cook, were sent back into the prize.

As the writer understood Spanish, and as some one was wanting to interpret between the English crew and those managers of the negroes, he proposed to go on board with them to their place of destination, the Cape of Good Hope. The English crew were a lieutenant, three petty officers, and nine seamen. It had been the captain's first intention to take a hundred of the negroes on board the frigate, which would probably have prevented the fearful calamities that followed; but an unfortunate impression prevailed, that some of them were infected with the small-pox. In the same evening the *Progresso* set sail. For the first few hours all went on well—the breeze was light, the weather warm, and the negroes were sleeping on the deck; their slender supple limbs entwined in a surprisingly small compass, resembling in the moonlight confused piles of arms and legs, rather than distinct human forms. But about an hour after midnight, the sky began to gather clouds, a haze overspread the horizon to windward, and a squall approached. The hands, having to shorten sail, suddenly found the negroes in the way, and the order was given to send them all below.

There seems to have been some dreadful mismanagement to cause the horrid scene that followed. Why *all* the negroes should have been driven down together; or why, when the vessel was put to rights, they should not have been allowed to return to the deck; or why, when driven down, the hatches should have been forced upon them—are matters which we cannot comprehend; but nothing could be more unfortunate than the consequence of those rash measures. We state the event in the words of the narrative:—

"The night being intensely hot and close, 400 wretched beings crammed into a hold twelve yards in length, seven in breadth, and only three and a half feet in height, speedily began to make an effort to re-issue to the open air; being thrust back, and striving the more to get out, the *after hatch* was forced down upon them. Over the other hatchway, in the fore part of the vessel, a wooden grating was fastened. A scene of agony followed those most unfortunate measures, unequalled by any thing that we have heard of since the Black Hole of Calcutta. To this *sole inlet* for the air, the suffocating heat of the hold, and perhaps panic from the strangeness of their situation, made them press. They crowded to the grating, and, clinging to it for air, completely barred its entrance. They strove to force their way through apertures in length fourteen inches, and barely six inches in breadth, and in some instances

succeeded. The cries, the heat, I may say without exaggeration, 'the smoke of their torment,' which ascended, can be compared to nothing earthly. One of the Spaniards gave warning that the consequence would be many deaths—*manana habra muchos muertos.*"

If this statement with its consequences be true, we cannot conceive how the conduct of those persons by whom it was brought about can be passed over without enquiry. There seems to have been nothing in the shape of *necessity* for its palliation. There was no storm, the vessel was in no danger of foundering unless the hatches were fastened down. That the negroes might have lumbered the deck for the first few minutes of preparing to meet the squall is probable; but why, when they were palpably suffocating, they should still have been kept down, is one of the most unaccountable circumstances we ever remember. We must hope that while we are nationally incurring an enormous expenditure to extinguish this most guilty and detestable traffic, such scenes will be guarded against for ever, by the strictest orders to the captors of the slave-traders. It would have been infinitely better for the wretched cargo if they had been carried to their original destination, and sent to toil in the fields of Brazil.

The Spaniard's prediction was true. Next morning no less than fifty-four crushed and mangled corpses were lifted up from the slave deck, and thrown overboard. We shall avoid disgusting our readers with mentioning the state in which their struggles had left those trampled and strangled beings. On the survivors being released from their torrid dungeon, they drank their allowance of water, somewhat more than half a pint to each, with inconceivable eagerness. A heavy shower having freshened the air, in the evening most of the negroes went below of their own accord, the hatchways having been left open to allow them air. But a short time, however, had elapsed, when they began tumultuously to reascend; and some of the persons on deck, fearful of their crowding it too much, repelled them, and they were trampled back, screaming and writhing in a confused mass. The hatch was about to be forced down upon them; and had not the lieutenant in charge left positive orders to the contrary, the catastrophe of last night would have been re-enacted. On explaining to the Spaniard that it was desired he should dispose those who came on deck in proper places, he set himself to the task with great alacrity; and he showed with much satisfaction how soon and how quietly they might be arranged out of the way of the ropes, covered with long rugs provided for the purpose. "To-morrow," said he, "there will be no deaths, except perhaps among some of those who are sick already." On the next day there was but one dead, but three were reported dying from the sufferings of the first night. They now saw the *Cleopatra* once more, and the alarm of small-pox having been found groundless, the captain took on board fifty of the boys.

To our surprise, the provisions on board the slaver were ample for the negroes, consisting of Monte Video dried beef, small beans, rice, and cassava flour. The cabin stores were profuse; lockers filled with ale and porter, barrels of wine, liqueurs of various sorts, cases of English pickles, raisins, &c. &c.; and its list of medicines amounted to almost the whole *Materia Medica*. On questioning the Spaniards as to the probability of extinguishing the slave-trade, their reply was, that though in the creeks of Brazil it might be difficult, yet it had grown a desperate adventure. Four vessels had been already taken on the east coast of Africa this year; but the venture is so lucrative, that the profits of a fifth which escaped, would probably more than compensate the loss of the four.

On the east coast negroes are paid for in money or coarse cottons, at the rate of eighteen dollars for men, and twelve for boys. At Rio Janeiro their value may be estimated at £52 for men, £41, 10s. for women, and £31 for boys. Thus, on a cargo of 500, at the mean price the profit will exceed £19,000—

Cost price of 500, average fifteen dollars, or £3 5s. each	£1,625
Selling price at Rio Janeiro, average £41 10s.,	£20,730

While these enormous profits continue, it must be a matter of extreme difficulty to suppress the trade, especially while the principals, captains, and crews, have perfect impunity. At present, all

that they suffer is the loss of their cargo. But if enactments were made, by which heavy fines and imprisonment were to be inflicted on the merchants to whom the expedition could be traced, and corporal punishment and transportation for life for the crews, and for the captains service as common sailors on board our frigates, we should soon find the ardour for the traffic diminished.

The voyage was slow from the frequent calms. By the 20th of April they had advanced only to the tropic, 350 miles. From day to day the sick among the negroes were dropping off. A large shark followed the ship, which they conceived might have gorged some of the corpses. He was caught, but the stomach was empty. When brought on the deck, he exhibited the usual and remarkable tenacity of life. Though his tail was chopped, and even his entrails taken out, in neither of which operations it exhibited any sign of sensation, yet no sooner was a bucket of salt water poured on it to wash the deck, than it began to flounder about and bite on all sides.

Symptoms of fever now began to appear on board, and the Portuguese cook died.

April 29.—A storm, the lightning intolerably vivid, flash succeeding flash with scarcely a sensible intermission; blue, red, and of a still more dazzling white, which made the eye shrink, lighting up every object on deck as clearly as at mid-day. All the winds of heaven seemed let loose, as it blew alternately from every point of the compass. The screams of distress from the sick and weak in the hold, were heard through the roar of the tempest. From the rolling and creaking, one might fancy every thing going asunder. The woman's shed on deck had been washed down, and the planks which formed its roof falling in a heap, a woman was found dead under the ruin.

May 1.—In this hemisphere, marking the approach of the cold weather, the naked negroes began to shiver, and their teeth to chatter.

May 3.—Another storm, with severe cold. Seven negroes were found dead this morning. The wretched beings had begun now to steal water and brandy from the hold. "None can tell," says the writer, "save he who has tried, the pangs of thirst which may excite them in that heated hold, many of them fevered by mortal disease. Their daily allowance of water is about a half pint in the morning, and the same quantity in the evening." This passage now became all storms. A heavy squall came on *May 8*, which continued next day a strong gale. The first object which met the eye in the morning, was three negroes dead on the deck.

May 11.—Another storm, heavier than any of the preceding ones. Towards evening the report of the helmsman was the gratifying one, that the heart of the gale was broke; yet a yellow haze overspread the setting sun, and it continued to blow as wildly as ever. Squalls rapidly succeeding each other mingled sea and air in one sheet of spray, blinding the eyes of the helmsman; waves towering high above us, tossing up the foam from their crests towards the sky, threatened to engulf the vessel at every moment. When the squalls, breaking heavily on the vessel, caused her to heel over, and the negroes to tumble one against each other in the hold, the shrieks of the sufferers through the darkness of the night, rising above the noise of the winds and waves, seemed of all horrors in this unhappy vessel the saddest. Dysentery now attacked the crew, and the boatswain's mate died. We pass over the melancholy details of this miserable voyage, in which disgusts and distresses of every kind seemed to threaten all on board with death, every day bringing its mortality. At last on Sunday, May 28th, the welcome sight of Cape Agulhas cheered them at the distance of ten miles. The weather was now fine, but the mortality continued, the fatal cases averaging four a-day. On the 1st of June eight were found dead in the morning; and, when the morning mist had cleared away, they found themselves within three miles of Simon's Bay. As soon as the *Progresso* anchored, the superintendent of the naval hospital came on board, and the writer descended with him for the last time to the slave hold. Accustomed as he had been to scenes of suffering, he was unable to endure a sight, surpassing all he could have conceived, he said, of human misery, and made a hasty retreat. The numbers who had died within the fifty days were 163. Even this was not all; for, on returning to the vessel next day, six corpses were added to the eight of the preceding day, and the fourteen were piled on deck for interment on the shore. A hundred of the healthiest negroes were landed at the pier to proceed in

waggons to Cape Town; but though rescued from a state of extreme misery, the change seemed to excite anxiety and apprehension. Each of the men had received on landing a new warm jacket and trousers, and the women had each a new white blanket in addition to an under dress, and they were placed snugly in waggons; yet their countenances resembled those of condemned victims. Of the whole of the original cargo, not far short of one half had died. To what causes this horrible mortality must be imputed, it is not our purpose to decide; but that it did not arise from the original tendency of the negroes to sickness seems evident—the fact being, that of the fifty who were taken on board the frigate, but one had died at sea and one on shore. Within a few days the liberated negroes had acquired a more cheerful look, their first conception having been that they were to be devoured by the people of the country, and they were reluctant to eat, fearing that it was intended to fatten them for the purpose. However, the negroes in the colonies soon freed them from this apprehension.

We shall be rejoiced if the publicity given to this little but intelligent pamphlet by our means, may assist in drawing the attention of the influential classes to the subject. We fully believe that, if we were to look for the deepest misery that was ever inflicted in this world, and the greatest mass of it, we should find it in the slave-trade. It is the misery, not as in civilized life, of scattered individuals, but of multitudes, and a misery comprehending every other; sudden separation from every tie of the human heart, parent, child, spouse, and country; the misery of bodily affliction, disease, famine, storms, shipwreck, and ultimately slavery, with all its wretchedness of toil and tyranny for life. We certainly do not think it our duty to go to war for the object of teaching humanity to other nations. We must not attempt to heal the calamity of the African by the greatest of all calamities and crimes—an unnecessary war. But England has only to persevere sincerely and steadily, however calmly, and she will, by the blessing of that supreme Disposer of the ways of men, who desires the happiness of all his creatures, succeed in the extinction of a traffic which has brought a curse, and brings it at this hour, and will bring it deeper still, upon every nation which insults the laws of humanity and the dictates of religion, by dealing in the flesh and blood of man.

MOSLEM HISTORIES OF SPAIN.³

THE ARABS OF CORDOVA

"The second day was that when Martel broke
The Mussulmen, delivering France opprest,
And in one mighty conflict, from the yoke
Of unbelieving Mecca saved the West."

SOUTHEY.

The Arab domination in Spain is the grand romance of European history. The splendid but mysterious fabric of Asiatic power and science is seen for age after age, like the fairy castle of St John, exalted far above the rugged plain of Frank semi-barbarism—till the spell is at last broken by the iron prowess of Christian chivalry; and the glittering edifice vanishes from the land as though it had never been, leaving, like the fabled structure of the poet, only a wreath of laurel to bind the brows of the victor. Yet though replete with gorgeous materials both for history and fiction, and stored not only with the recondite lore of Asia and Egypt, but with the borrowed treasures of ancient Greece, (long known to Christendom only by versions through an Arabic medium,) the language and literature of this marvellous people, and even their history, except so far as it related to their never-ceasing warfare with their Christian foes, remained, up to the middle of the last century, a sealed book to their Spanish successors. Coming into possession, like the Israelites of old, "of a land for which they did not labour, of cities which they built not, of vineyards and olive-yards which they planted not," the Spaniards not merely contemned, but persecuted with the fiercest bigotry, all that was left in the peninsula of the genius and learning of their predecessors. Eighty thousand volumes were publicly burned in one fatal *auto-da-fé* at Granada by order of Cardinal Ximenes, in whom the literature of his own language yet found a munificent patron; and so meritorious, did the deed appear in the eyes of his contemporaries, that the number has been magnified to an incredible amount by his biographers, in their zeal for the renown of their hero! So complete was the destruction or deportation⁴ of the seventy public libraries, which, a century and a half before the subjugation of the Moors, were open in different cities of Spain, that the valuable collection now in the Escorial owes its origin to the accidental capture, early in the seventeenth century, of three ships laden with books belonging to Muley Zidan, emperor of Morocco—and even of this casual prize so little was the value appreciated, that it was not till more than a hundred years later, and after three-fourths of the books had been consumed by fire in 1671, that the learned and diligent Casiri was commissioned to make a catalogue of the remainder. The result was the well-known *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, which appeared in 1760-70; and which, in the words of the present learned translator, "though hasty and superficial, and containing frequent unaccountable blunders, must, with all its imperfections, ever be valuable as affording palpable proof of the literary cultivation of the Spanish Arabs, and as containing the first glimpses of historical truth." Up to this time the only authority on Spanish history purporting to be drawn from Mohammedan sources, was the work of a Morisco named Miguel de Luna, written

³ The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain. By AHMED IBN MOHAMMED AL-MAKKARI of Telemsan. Translated and illustrated with Critical Notes by Pascual de Gayangos, late Professor of Arabic in the Athenæum of Madrid.—Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund. 2 vols. 4to. 1840-43.

⁴ The Almoravide and Almohade princes, who ruled both in Spain and Africa, often inserted a clause in their treaties with the Christians for the restoration of the libraries captured in the towns taken from the Moslems; and Ibn Khaldun mentions, that Yakob Al-mansor destined a college at Fez for the reception of the books thus recovered.

by command of the Inquisition; which was first printed at Granada in 1592, and has passed through many editions. Its value may be estimated from its placing the Mohammedan conquest of Spain in the time of Yakub Al-mansor, the actual date of whose reign was from A.D. 1184 to 1199; inasmuch that Señor de Gayangos suggests, as a possible explanation of its glaring inaccuracies, that it was the writer's intention to hoax his employers. Casiri had, however, opened the door for further researches; and he was followed in the same path by Don Faustino de Borbon, whose works, valuable rather from the erudition which they display than from their judgment or critical acumen, have now become extremely scarce—and next by Don Antonio José Condé, one of the most zealous and laborious, if not the most accurate, of Spanish orientalist. His "History of the Domination of the Arabs and Moors in Spain," has been generally regarded as of high authority, and is in truth the first work on the subject drawn wholly from Arab sources; but it receives summary condemnation from Señor de Gayangos, for "the uncouth arrangement of the materials, the entire want of critical or explanatory notes, the unaccountable neglect to cite authorities, the numerous repetitions, blunders, and contradictions." These charges are certainly not without foundation; but they are in some measure accounted for by the trouble and penury in which the author's last years were spent, and the unfinished state in which the work was left at his death in 1820.

An authentic and comprehensive view of the Arab period, as described by their own writers, was therefore still a desideratum in European literature, which the publication before us may be considered as the first step towards supplying. The work of Al-Makkari, which has been taken as a text-book, is not so much an original history as a collection of extracts, sometimes abridged, and sometimes transcribed in full, from more ancient historians; and frequently giving two or three versions of the same event from different authorities—so that, though it can claim but little merit as a composition, it is of extreme value as a repository of fragments of authors in many cases now lost; and further, as the only "uninterrupted narrative of the conquests, wars, and settlements of the Spanish Moslems, from their first invasion of the Peninsula to their final expulsion." In the arrangement of his materials, the translator has departed considerably, and with advantage, from the original; giving the historical books in the form of a continuous narrative, and omitting several sections relating to matters of little interest—while the deficiencies and omissions of the author are supplied by an appendix, containing, in addition to a valuable body of original notes, copious extracts from numerous unpublished Arabic MSS. relating to Spain, which afford ample proof of the extent and diligence of his researches among the Oriental treasures of Paris and London. To those in the Escorial, however, he was denied access during his labours—an almost incredible measure of illiberality, which, if he be correct in ascribing it to his known intention of publishing in England, "ill suits a country" (as he justly remarks in the preface) "which has lately seen its archives and monastic libraries reduced to cinders, and scattered or sold in foreign markets, without the least struggle to rescue or secure them."

Ahmed Al-Makkari, the author or compiler of the present work, derived his surname from a village near Telemsan called Makkarah, where his family had been established since the conquest of Africa by the Arabs. He was born at Telemsan some time in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and educated by his uncle, who held the office of Mufti in that city; but having quitted his native country in 1618 on a pilgrimage to Mekka, he married and settled in Cairo. During a visit to Damascus in 1628, he was received with high distinction by Ahmed Ibn Shahin Effendi, the director of the college of Jakmak in that city, and a distinguished patron of literature; at whose suggestion (he tells us) he undertook this work. His original purpose had been only to write the life of Abu Abdullah Lisanuddin, a celebrated historian and minister in Granada, better known to Oriental scholars as Ibnu'l-Khattib; but having completed this, the thought struck him of adding, as a second part, an historical account of the Moslems of Spain. He had formerly written an extensive and elaborate work on this subject, composed (to use his own words) "in such an elevated and pleasing style, that had it been publicly delivered by the common crier, it would have made even the stones deaf:—but, alas! the whole of this we had left in Maghreb (Morocco) with the rest of our library.... However, we have done our

best to make the present work as useful and complete as possible." It was probably the last literary undertaking of his life; since he was on the point of quitting Cairo to fix his residence in Damascus, when he died of a fever in the second Jomada of A.H. 1041, (Jan. 1632,) leaving a high reputation as a traditionist and doctor of the Moslem law.

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