VARIOUS

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NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

BY THOMAS CARLYLE

The following article has been compiled from the different works of Thomas Carlyle, and embodies all he has written, or at least published, about Napoleon Bonaparte. We offer it in the absence of a more elaborate work on this subject, which we hope one day to see from the pen of this gifted and earnest writer. It is a glimpse of the insight of the clearest-headed Seer of our age, into the noisiest great man of the last, about whom we listen with pleasure to each new voice, perhaps critically and doubtingly, yet for our own part colored by that absorbing, painful interest, which induced us when a boy to close the book which first told us of his doings, after having traced his meteoric flight to the 'monster meeting' at Moscow, unable to proceed to the catastrophe; and it was months before we could bring ourselves to read on, of the heroism which charmed, or the glitter which dazzled us, to its final chaos and night. On Napoleon's right to the title great, the character of his greatness, and what would be left if the smoke-clouds, battle-glory and so on were torn away, we will offer but a few words. Of the title in its best sense but few now believe him worthy, perhaps no thinker or reflecting man. He is a volcano rather than a sun, a destroyer more than a creator; and our sympathy is mingled with little of that which we feel for the martyr; who dies rather than sell his birthright, heaven, for any mess of earth's pottage, or for him who spends his life in the search for truth, and in speaking it to mankind, taking no heed for himself what he shall eat and wherewithal he shall be clad. No! the feeling is far more akin to that which we have for a deep-playing gambler, whom we know to have some noble impulses. How eagerly, yet sorrowingly we watch his movements! The dice rattle, they are thrown, and again thrown; thousands after thousands he wins and lays aside; and at last, in the madness of the game, stakes the whole sum, with his house, estate, all on the hazard of one cast. With beating heart we listen to the rattling of the dice, and with strained gaze watch the blow. The box is lifted—all is lost. Now we are excited by the daring of this being, and feel deeply, more so if we know him to have something of a better nature, some nobler impulses, but the interest is still in the great gambler, not in the great *man*; and though his boldness startles, and for the moment carries us away, yet ever with our admiration comes a still small voice from the 'inner sanctuary,' which whispers of those whom his winnings ruined, or the dependents who were reduced to beggary by his loss. Would the *great* man have played the game at all?

We have always felt that Napoleon stepped down from his greatness when he let them hurry him away alive to that island-prison; and there is reasoning in this feeling itself, which most persons feel on reading of his career, which his worshippers would do well to consider in its various bearings; for if Napoleon, (when the royal guard, his last hope, was cut to pieces at Waterloo, and crying to Bertrand, 'It is finished,' he turned and fled,) had placed himself before the last cannon which sent destruction to his foes, and let its ball end his career and life together, who is there but would feel that he was acting truer to his greatness, than to 'eat his heart away' a captive? If throughout his career we had seen the brave fighter for country, for principle, for right, instead of for self, this feeling would never arise. Place Washington in a similar situation; imagine him to have believed it best to gather all his country could give him of hardy defenders, and on the result of one battle let his country's

fate be decided. The battle is fought and lost; his army is routed and cut to pieces; he has asked for liberty with his whole strength, with his whole soul, and the answer is 'No!' written with bayonets in blood, and voiced by the enemy's cannon. Would Washington have been true to *his* greatness in placing himself before the last cannon? No! emphatically, no! With Napoleon he might have cried, 'It is finished,' but then with the same calm brow yet bursting heart, he would have resigned his sword to his conquerors; and if the scaffold were his fate, met it with quiet dignity; or if the dungeon, there calmly await the Almighty's time when he might again raise his right arm for his country; still as great in the prison or on the scaffold, as when he was at the head of conquering armies. Napoleon's intellectual character was perceptive rather than deep; and there is an intense concentrativeness about him, a power of throwing the whole effort of his soul into the environment of the moment, which is remarkable; and not less so the facility with which he changes that concentration from place to place, from subject to subject. Probably no man ever had his whole mind so much under the control of his will, at his fingers' ends, as it were; 'the eye to see and the will to do.' But revert we to Carlyle.

Some call for Barras to be made commandant; he conquered in Thermidor. Some, what is more to the purpose, bethink them of the Citizen Bonaparte, unemployed artillery officer who took Toulon. A man of head, a man of action: Barras is named Commandant's Cloak; this young artillery officer is named Commandant. He was in the gallery at the moment, and heard it; he withdrew some half hour to consider with himself: after a half-hour of grim compressed considering, to be or not to be, he answers *yea*. And now, a man of head being at the head of it, the whole matter gets vital. Swift to camp of Sablon, to secure the artillery; there are not twenty men guarding it! A swift adjutant, Murat is the name of him, gallops, gets thither some minutes within time, for Lepelletier was also on march that way: the cannon are ours. And now beset this post and beset that; rapid and firm; at Wicket of the Louvre, in Cul-de-sac Dauphin, in Rue St. Honoré, from Pont Neuf all along the North Quays, southward to the Pont *ci-devant* Royal, rank round the sanctuary of the Tuilleries, a ring of steel discipline; let every gunner have his match burning, and all men stand to their arms. Lepelletier has seized the Church of Saint Roche; has seized the Pont Neuf, our piquet there retreating thence without fire. Stray shots fall from Lepelletier, rattle down on the very Tuilleries' stair-case. On the other hand, women advance dishevelled, shrieking peace; Lepelletier behind them waving his hat in sign that we shall fraternize. Steady! The artillery officer is steady as bronze; can, if need were, be quick as lightning. Lepelletier making nothing by messengers by fraternity or hat-waving, bursts out, along the southern Quai Voltaire, along streets and passages, treble-quick in huge veritable onslaught! Whereupon thou bronze artillery officer—? 'Fire'! say the bronze lips. And roar and thunder, roar and again roar, continual, volcano-like, goes his great gun, in the Cul-de-sac Dauphin against the Church of Saint Roch; go his great guns on the Pont Royal; go all his great guns—blow to air some two hundred men, mainly about the Church of Saint Roch! Lepelletier cannot stand such harsh play; no sectioner can stand it; the forty thousand yield on all sides scour toward covert. The ship is over the bar; free she bounds shoreward—amid shouting and vivats! Citizen Bonaparte is 'named General of the Interior by acclamation;' quelled sections have to disarm in such humor as they may; sacred right of insurrection is gone forever! 'It is false,' says Napoleon, 'that we fired first with blank charge; it had been a waste of life to do that.' Most false; the firing was with sharp and sharpest shot: to all men it was plain that here was no sport; the rabbits and plinths of Saint Roch Church show splintered by it to this hour. Singular: in old Broglie's time, six years ago, this whiff of grape shot was promised; but it could not be given then; could not have profited then. Now, however, the time has come for it and the man; and behold you have it; and the thing we specifically call *French Revolution* is blown into space by it and become a thing that was!

The French revolution did disclose original men: among the twenty-five millions, at least one or two units. Some reckon in the present stage of the business, as many as three: Napoleon, Danton, Mirabeau. Whether more will come to light, or of what sort, when the computation is quite liquidated, one cannot say. Meanwhile, let the world be thankful for these three; as indeed, the world is; loving

original men, without limit, were they never so questionable, well knowing how rare they are! To us, accordingly, it is rather interesting to observe how on these three also, questionable as they surely are, the old process is repeating itself; how these also are getting known in their true likeness. A second generation, relieved in some measure from the spectral hallucinations, hysterical ophthalmia, and natural panic-delirium of the first contemporary one, is gradually coming to discern and measure what its predecessor could only execrate and shriek over; for, as our proverb said, the dust is sinking, the rubbish-heaps disappear; the built house, such as it is, and was appointed to be, stands visible, better or worse. Of Napoleon Bonaparte, with so many bulletins, and such self-proclamation from artillery and battle-thunder, loud enough to ring through the deafest brain, in the remotest nook of this earth, and now, in consequence, with so many biographies, histories and historical arguments for and against, it may be said he can now shift for himself; that his true figure is in a fair way of being ascertained. Doubtless it will be found one day, what significance was in him; how, (we quote from a New-England book,) 'the man was a divine missionary, though unconscious of it; and preached through the cannon's throat that great doctrine, *La carrière ouverte aux talens*, (the tools to him who can handle them,) which is our ultimate Political Evangel, wherein alone can Liberty lie. Madly enough he preached it is true, as enthusiasts and first missionaries are wont; with imperfect utterance, amid much frothy rant; yet as articulately, perhaps, as the case admitted. Or call him if you will, an American backwoodsman, who had to fell unpenetrated forests, and battle with innumerable wolves, and did not entirely forbear strong liquor, rioting, and even theft; whom, nevertheless, the peaceful sower will follow, and, as he cuts the boundless harvest, bless.' From 'the incarnate Moloch,' which the world once was, onward to to this quiet version, there is a considerable progress.

What are the conquests and expeditions of the whole corporation of captains, from Walter the Pennyless to Napoleon Bonaparte, compared with these 'moveable types' of Johannes Faust? Truly, it is a mortifying thing for your conqueror to reflect, how perishable is the metal which he hammers with such violence; how the kind earth will soon shroud up his bloody foot-prints; and all which he achieved and skilfully piled together, will be but like his own 'canvass city' of a camp; this evening loud with life, to-morrow all struck and vanished, 'a few earth-pits and heaps of straw!' For here, as always, it continues true, that the deepest force is the stillest; that, as in the fable, the mild shining of the sun shall accomplish what the fierce blustering of the tempest has in vain essayed. Above all, it is ever to be kept in mind, that not by material but by mental power, are men and their actions governed. How noiseless is thought! No rolling of drums, no tramp of squadrons or immeasurable tumult of baggage-wagons, attends its movements; in what obscure and sequestered places may the head be meditating which is one day to be crowned with more than imperial authority; for kings and emperors will be among its ministering servants; it will rule not over, but *in* all heads, and with these, its solitary combinations of ideas, as with magic formulas, bend the world to its will! The time may come, when Napoleon himself will be better known for his laws than for his battles; and the victory of Waterloo prove less momentous than the opening of the first mechanic's institute.

Brother Ringletule, the missionary, inquired of Ram-Dass, a Hindoo man-god, who had set up for godhead lately, what he meant to do then with the sins of mankind? To which Ram-Dass at once answers, he had *fire enough in his belly* to burn up all the sins in the world. Ram-Dass was right so far, and had a spice of sense in him; for surely it is the test of every divine man this same, and without it he is not divine or great; that he *have* fire in him to burn up somewhat of the sins of the world, of the miseries and errors of the world: why else is he there! Far be it from us to say that a great man must needs with benevolence prepense, become a 'friend of humanity;' nay, that such professional self-conscious friends are not the fatalest kind of persons to be met with in our day. All greatness is unconscious or it is little and naught. And yet a great man without *such* fire in him, burning dim or developed as a divine behest in his heart of hearts, never resting till it be fulfilled, were a solecism in nature. A great man is ever, as the transcendentalists speak, possessed with an *idea*. Napoleon, himself not the superfinest of great men, and balanced sufficiently with prudence and egoisms, had

nevertheless, as is clear enough, an idea to start with; the idea that democracy was the cause of man, the right and infinite cause. Nay, to the very last, he had a kind of idea, that, namely, of 'the tools to him that can handle them;' really one of the best ideas yet promulgated on that matter, or rather the one true central idea, toward which all the others, if they tend any whither, must tend. Unhappily, it was only in the military province that Napoleon could realize this idea of his, being forced to fight for himself the while; before he got it tried to any extent in the civil province of things, his head by much victory grew light, (no head can stand more than its quantity,) and he lost head, as they say, and became a selfish ambitionist and quack, and was hurled out, leaving his idea to be realized, in the civil province of things, by others! Thus was Napoleon; thus are all great men: children of the idea; or, in Ram-Dass' phraseology, furnished with fire to burn up the miseries of men.

Napoleon, Danton, Mirabeau, with fire-words (of public speaking) and fire whirlwinds (of cannon and musketry,) which for a season darkened the air, are perhaps at bottom but superficial phenomena.

Napoleon was the 'armed soldier of democracy,' invincible while he continued true to that. ••• He does by no means seem to me so great a man as Cromwell. His enormous victories, which reached over all Europe, while Cromwell abode mainly in our little England, are but as high *stilts* on which the man is seen standing; the stature of the man is not altered thereby. I find in him no such sincerity as in Cromwell; only a far inferior sort. No silent walking, through long years, with the Awful, Unnameable, of this universe; 'walking with God' as he called it; and faith and strength in that alone: *latent* thought and valor, content to lie latent, then burst out as in a blaze of heaven's lightning! Napoleon lived in an age when God was no longer believed; the meaning of all Silence, Latency, was thought to be Nonentity: he had to begin not out of the Puritan Bible, but out of poor, sceptical encyclopedias. This was the length the man carried it. Meritorious to get so far. His compact, prompt, every way articulate character, is in itself perhaps small compared with our great chaotic inarticulate Cromwell's. Instead of 'dumb prophet struggling to speak,' we have a portentious mixture of the Quack! Hume's notion of the Fanatic-Hypocrite, with such truth as it has, will apply much better to Napoleon than it did to Cromwell, to Mahomet or the like, where indeed, taken strictly, it has hardly any truth at all. An element of blameable ambition shows itself from the first in this man; gets the victory over him at last, and involves him and his work in ruin.

'False as a bulletin' became a proverb in Napoleon's time. He makes what excuse he could for it: that it was necessary to mislead the enemy, to keep up his own men's courage, etc. On the whole these are no excuses. A man in no case has any liberty to tell lies. It had been in the long run better for Napoleon too if he had not told any. In fact, if a man have any purpose beyond the hour and day, meant to be found extant next day, what good can it ever be to promulgate lies? The lies are found out; ruinous penalty is exacted for them. No man will believe the liar next time, even when he speaks truth, when it is of the last importance that he be believed. The old cry of the 'wolf!' A lie is *no*-thing; you cannot of nothing make something; you make *nothing* at last, and lose your labour in the bargain.

Yet Napoleon *had* a sincerity: we are to distinguish between what is superficial and what is fundamental insincerity. Across these outer manœuvrings and quackeries of his, which were many and most blameable, let us discern withal that the man had a certain instinctive ineradicable feeling for reality; and did base himself upon fact so long as he had any basis. He has an instinct of nature better than his culture was. His *savans*, Bourrienne tells us, in that voyage to Egypt were one evening busily occupied arguing that there could be no God. They had proved it to their satisfaction by all manner of logic. Napoleon, looking up into the stars, answers, 'Very ingenious, Messieurs; but *who made* all that?' The Atheistic logic runs off from him like water; the great Fact stares him in the face. 'Who made all that?' So too in practice; he, as every man that can be great, or have victory in this world, sees through all entanglements, the practical heart of the matter; drives straight toward that. When the steward of his Tuilleries Palace was exhibiting the new upholstery, with praises and demonstrations, how glorious it was and how cheap withal, Napoleon, making little answer, asked for

a pair of scissors, clipped one of the gold tassels from a window-curtain, put it in his pocket, and walked on. Some days afterward he produced it at the right moment, to the horror of the upholstery functionary: it was not gold but tinsel! In Saint Helena, it is notable how he still, to his last days, insists on the practical, the real. 'Why talk and complain? Above all, why quarrel with one another? There is no *resultat* in it; it comes to nothing that we can *do*. Say nothing if one can do nothing!' He speaks often so to his poor, discontented followers; he is like a piece of silent Strength in the middle of their morbid querulousness there.

And accordingly, was there not what we can call a *faith* in him, genuine as far as it went? That this new enormous Democracy, asserting itself here in the French revolution is an insuppressible fact, which the whole world, with its old forces and institutions cannot put down: this was a true insight of his, and took his conscience along with it—a *faith*. And did he not interpret the dim purport of it well? 'The implements to him who can handle them.' This actually is the truth, and even the whole truth; it includes whatever the French revolution, or any revolution could mean. Napoleon, in his first period, was a true Democrat. And yet by the nature of him, fastened too by his military trade, he knew that democracy, if it were a true thing at all, could not be an anarchy: the man had a heart-hatred for anarchy. On that twentieth of June, (1792,) Bourrienne and he sat in a coffee-house as the mail rolled by. Napoleon expresses the deepest contempt for persons in authority that they do not restrain this rabble. On the tenth of August he wonders there is no one to command these poor Swiss; they could conquer if there were. Such a faith in democracy, yet hatred of anarchy it is, that carries Napoleon through all his great work. Through his brilliant Italian campaigns, onward to the peace of Luben, one would say his inspiration is: 'Triumph to the French revolution; assertion of it against these Austrian Simulacra that pretend to call it a simulacrum!' Withal, however, he feels, and has a right to feel, how necessary a strong authority is; how the revolution cannot prosper at all without such. To bridle in that great devouring, self-devouring French revolution; to *tame* it, so that its intrinsic purpose can be made good; that it may become organic, and be able to live amongst other organisms and *formed* things, not as a wasting destruction alone; is not this still what he partly aimed at, as the true purport of his life; nay, what he actually managed to do? Through Wagrams, Austerlitzes; triumph after triumph; he triumphed so far. There was an eye to see in this man, a soul to dare and do. He rose naturally to be the king. All men saw that he *was* such. The common soldiers used to say on the march: 'These babbling *avocats* up at Paris: all talk and no work? What wonder it runs all wrong! We shall have to go and put our *petit corporal* there!' They went and put him there; they and France at large. Chief-consulship, emperorship, victory over Europe; till the poor lieutenant of *La Fère*, not unnaturally, might seem to himself the greatest of all men that had been in the world for some ages.

But at this point the fatal charlatan-element got the upper-hand. He apostatized from his old faith in facts, took to believing in semblances; strove to connect himself with Austrian dynasties, popedoms, with the old false feudalities which he once saw clearly to be false; considered that *he* would found 'his dynasty' and so forth; that the enormous French revolution meant only that! The man was 'given up to strong delusion that he should believe a lie;' a fearful but most sure thing. He did not know true from false now when he looked at them; the fearfulest penalty a man pays for yielding to untruth of heart. *Self* and false ambition had now become his god: *self*-deception once yielded to, *all* other deceptions follow naturally, more and more. What a paltry patch-work of theatrical paper-mantles, tinsel and mummery, had this man wrapped his own reality in, thinking to make it more real thereby! His hollow Pope's-Concordat, pretending to be a reëstablishment of Catholicism, felt by himself to be the method of extirpating it, '*la vaccine de la religion*;' his ceremonial coronations, consecrations by the old Italian chimera in Notre Dame there; 'wanting nothing to complete the pomp of it but the half million who had died to put an end to all that!' Cromwell's inauguration was by the sword and Bible; what we must call a genuinely *true* one. Sword and Bible were borne before him, without any chimera. Were not these real emblems of Puritanism; its true decoration and insignia? It had used them both in a very real manner, and pretended to stand by them now! But this poor

Napoleon mistook; he believed too much in the *dupeability* of men; saw no fact deeper in man than hunger and this. He was mistaken. Like a man that should build upon cloud; his house and he falls down in confused wreck, and depart out of the world.

Alas! in all of us this charlatan-element exists; and might be developed, were the temptation strong enough. 'Lead us not into temptation!' But it is fatal, I say, that it *be* developed. The thing into which it enters as a cognizable ingredient is doomed to be altogether transitory; and, however huge it may *look*, is in itself small. Napoleon's working, accordingly, what was it with all the noise it made? A flash as of gunpowder wide spread; a blazing up as of dry heath. For an hour the whole universe seems wrapt in smoke and flame; but only for an hour. It goes out. The universe, with its old mountains and streams, its stars above and kind soil beneath, is still there.

The Duke of Weimar told his friends always to be of courage; this Napoleonism was unjust, a falsehood, and could not last. It is true doctrine. The heavier this Napoleon trampled on the world, holding it tyrannously down, the fiercer would the world's recoil against him be, one day. Injustice pays itself with frightful compound interest. I am not sure but he had better lost his best park of artillery, or had his best regiment drowned in the sea, than shot that poor German bookseller, Palm! It was a palpable, tyrannous, murderous injustice, which no man, let him paint an inch thick, could make out to be other. It burnt deep into the hearts of men, it and the like of it; suppressed fire flashed in the eyes of men, as they thought of it, waiting their day! Which day *came*: Germany rose round him. What Napoleon *did* will amount in the long run to what he did *justly*; what Nature with her laws will sanction. To what of reality was in him; to that and nothing more. The rest was all smoke and waste. *La carrière ouverte aux talens:* that great true message, which has yet to articulate and fulfil itself every where, he left in a most inarticulate state. He was a great *ébauche*, rude-draught; as indeed what great man is not? Left in too rude a state, alas!

His notions of the world, as he expresses them there at St. Helena, are almost tragical to consider. He seems to feel the most unaffected surprise that it has all gone so; that he is flung out on the rock here, and the world is still moving on its axis. France is great, and all great; and at bottom, he is France. England itself he says is by nature only an appendage of France; 'another isle of Oberon to France.' So it was *by nature*, by Napoleon-nature; and yet look how in fact—here am I! He cannot understand it; that France was not all great, that he was not France. 'Strong delusion,' that he should believe the thing to be which *is* not! The compact, clear-seeing, decisive Italian nature of him, strong, genuine, which he once had, has enveloped itself, half dissolved itself, in a turbid atmosphere of French fanfaronade. The world was not disposed to be trodden down under foot; to be bound into masses, and built together as *he* liked, for a pedestal for France and him: the world has quite other purposes in view! Napoleon's astonishment is extreme. But alas, what help now! He had gone that way of his; and Nature had also gone her way. Having once parted with reality, he tumbles helpless in vacuity; no rescue for him. He had to sink there mournfully as man seldom did; and break his great heart and die—this poor Napoleon; a great implement too soon wasted, till it was useless; our last Great Man!

THE FLORAL RESURRECTION

BY THE SHEPHERD OF SHARONDALE

Welcome, sweet flowers! bright Summer's poetry!
I hail your fragrant coming, and again
With joy I read your brilliant imagery
Written once more in nature's holiest strain:
The lowly cottage, and the princely hall
Your advent cherisheth—ye are all to all.

Rising in glory from their winter graves,
The painted Tulip comes, and Daisy fair,
And o'er the brook the fond Narcissus waves
Her golden cup—her image loving there.
Those early flowers their glowing tributes bring
To weave a chaplet round the brow of Spring.

The sultry sun of June looks down, and then
Comes forth the lovely rose, the garden's pride,
To herald summer over glade and glen,
O'er wild and waste, o'er mead and mountain side:
Proudly she rears her crest on high, the vain
And gay pursuivant of a brilliant train.

And now, bright Dahlia, heartless one, appear!
Thy time has come to join the festival:
Come, Peru's daughter, belle of night! dost fear
To wear in glorious day thy coronal?
And thou, pale exile from the holy land,
Imperial Lily! come and join the band!

See, o'er the lattice creeps the Eglantine,
And there the Jasmine clambers up the wall
To twine her wreaths with Flora's blushing queen,
Rejoicing all in summer's carnival:
How kind of them to deck the shepherd's cot,
And with their presence cheer his humble lot!

I love ye, flowers; your odors ever bring
Back visions of the past: I love ye well;
From the lone Primrose, nursling of the Spring,
Unto the beauteous Aster, Autumn's belle,
Or reared on verdant field, or ruined wall,
I love ye all, sweet flowers!—I love ye all!

THE LEGEND OF DON RODERICK

NUMBER THREE

The scattered fugitives of the Christian army spread terror throughout the land. The inhabitants of the towns and villages gathered around them as they applied at their gates for food, or laid themselves down, faint and wounded, beside the public fountains. When they related the tale of their defeat, old men shook their heads and groaned, and the women uttered cries and lamentations. So strange and unlooked-for a calamity filled them with consternation and despair; for it was long since the alarm of war had sounded in their land: and this was a warfare that carried chains and slavery, and all kinds of horrors, in its train.

Don Roderick was seated with his beauteous queen, Exilona, in the royal palace which crowned the rocky summit of Toledo, when the bearer of ill-tidings came galloping over the bridge of the Tagus. 'What tidings from the army?' demanded the king, as the panting messenger was brought into his presence. 'Tidings of great wo!' exclaimed the soldier. 'The prince has fallen in battle. I saw his head and surcoat upon a Moorish lance; and the army was overthrown and fled!'

At hearing these words, Roderick covered his face with his hands, and for some time sat in silence; and all his courtiers stood mute and aghast, and no one dared to speak a word. In that awful space of time passed before his thoughts all his errors and his crimes, and all the evil that had been predicted in the necromantic tower. His mind was filled with horror and confusion, for the hour of his destruction seemed at hand: but he subdued his agitation by his strong and haughty spirit; and, when he uncovered his face, no one could read on his brow the trouble and agony of his heart. Still, every hour brought fresh tidings of disaster. Messenger after messenger came spurring into the city, distracting it with new alarms. The infidels, they said, were strengthening themselves in the land; host after host were pouring in from Africa: the sea-coast of Andalusia glittered with spears and scimitars. Bands of turbaned horsemen had overrun the plains of Sidonia, even to the banks of the Guadiana. Fields were laid waste, towns and cities plundered, the inhabitants carried into captivity, and the whole country lay in smoking desolation.

Roderick heard all these tidings with an undaunted aspect; nor did he ever again betray sign of consternation: but the anxiety of his soul was evident in his warlike preparations. He issued orders that every noble and prelate of his kingdom should put himself at the head of his retainers, and take the field; and that every man capable of bearing arms should hasten to his standard, bringing whatever horse, and mule, and weapon he possessed: and he appointed the plain of Cordova for the place where the army was to assemble. Throwing by, then, all the trappings of his late slothful and voluptuous life, and arming himself for warlike action, he departed from Toledo at the head of his guard, composed of the flower of the youthful nobility. His queen, Exilona, accompanied him; for she craved permission to remain in one of the cities of Andalusia, that she might be near her lord in this time of peril.

Among the first who appeared to hail the arrival of the king at Cordova, was the Bishop Oppas, the secret partisan of the traitor Julian. He brought with him his two nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the sons of the late king Witiza; and a great host of vassals and retainers, all well armed and appointed, for they had been furnished, by Count Julian, with a part of the arms sent by the king to Africa. The bishop was smooth of tongue, and profound in his hypocrisy: his pretended zeal and devotion, and the horror with which he spoke of the treachery of his kinsman, imposed upon the credulous spirit of the king, and he was readily admitted into his most secret council.

The alarm of the infidel invasion had spread throughout the land, and roused the Gothic valor of the inhabitants. On receiving the orders of Roderick, every town and hamlet, every mountain and

valley, had sent forth its fighting men, and the whole country was on the march toward Andalusia. In a little while there were gathered together, on the plain of Cordova, near fifty thousand horsemen, and a countless host of foot-soldiers. The Gothic nobles appeared in burnished armor, curiously inlaid, and adorned with chains and jewels of gold, and ornaments of precious stones, and silken scarfs, and surcoats of brocade, or velvet richly embroidered; betraying the luxury and ostentation with which they had declined from the iron hardihood of their warlike sires. As to the common people, some had lances and shields and swords and crossbows, but the greater part were unarmed, or provided merely with slings, and clubs studded with nails, and with the iron implements of husbandry; and many had made shields for themselves from the doors and windows of their habitations. They were a prodigious host, and appeared, say the Arabian chroniclers, like an agitated sea; but, though brave in spirit, they possessed no knowledge of warlike art, and were ineffectual through lack of arms and discipline.

Several of the most ancient and experienced cavaliers, beholding the state of the army, advised Don Roderick to await the arrival of more regular troops, which were stationed in Iberia, Cantabria, and Gallia Gothica; but this counsel was strenuously opposed by the Bishop Oppas; who urged the king to march immediately against the infidels. 'As yet,' said he, 'their number is but limited; but every day new hosts arrive, like flocks of locusts, from Africa. They will augment faster than we; they are living, too, at our expense, and, while we pause, both armies are consuming the substance of the land.'

King Roderick listened to the crafty counsel of the bishop, and determined to advance without delay. He mounted his war horse, Orelia, and rode among his troops assembled on that spacious plain, and wherever he appeared he was received with acclamations; for nothing so arouses the spirit of the soldier as to behold his sovereign in arms. He addressed them in words calculated to touch their hearts and animate their courage. 'The Saracens,' said he, 'are ravaging our land, and their object is our conquest. Should they prevail, your very existence as a nation is at an end. They will overturn your altars; trample on the cross; lay waste your cities; carry off your wives and daughters, and doom yourselves and sons to hard and cruel slavery. No safety remains for you but in the prowess of your arms. For my own part, as I am your king, so will I be your leader, and will be the foremost to encounter every toil and danger.'

The soldiery answered their monarch with loud acclamations, and solemnly pledged themselves to fight to the last gasp in defence of their country and their faith. The king then arranged the order of their march: all those who were armed with cuirasses and coats of mail were placed in the front and rear; the centre of the army was composed of a promiscuous throng, without body armor, and but scantily provided with weapons.

When they were about to march, the king called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honor of Spain; scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand, when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many ancient courtiers who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counselled the king not to set forward on his march that day; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance, and gave it in charge of another standard-bearer; then commanding the trumpets to be sounded, he departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.

The field where this great army assembled was called, from the solemn pledge given by the nobles and the soldiery, *El campo de la verdad*; or, The field of Truth; a name, says the sage chronicler Abul Cassim, which it bears even to the present day.

The hopes of Andalusia revived, as this mighty host stretched in lengthened lines along its fertile plains; from morning until night it continued to pour along, with sound of drum and trumpet; it was led on by the proudest nobles and bravest cavaliers of the land, and, had it possessed arms and discipline, might have undertaken the conquest of the world.

After a few days' march, Don Roderick arrived in sight of the Moslem army, encamped on the banks of the Guadalete, where that beautiful stream winds through the fertile land of Xeres. The

infidel host was far inferior in number to the Christians; but then it was composed of hardy and dexterous troops, seasoned to war, and admirably armed. The camp shone gloriously in the setting sun, and resounded with the clash of cymbal, the note of the trumpet, and the neighing of fiery Arabian steeds. There were swarthy troops from every nation of the African coast, together with legions from Syria and Egypt, while the light Bedouins were careering about the adjacent plain. What grieved and incensed the spirits of the Christian warriors, however, was to behold, a little apart from the Moslem host, an encampment of Spanish cavaliers, with the banner of Count Julian waving above their tents. They were ten thousand in number, valiant and hardy men, the most experienced of Spanish soldiery, most of them having served in the African wars; they were well armed and appointed also, with the weapons of which the count had beguiled his sovereign; and it was a grievous sight to behold such good soldiers arrayed against their country and their faith.

The Christians pitched their tents about the hour of vespers, at a short league distant from the enemy, and remained gazing with anxiety and awe upon this barbaric host that had caused such terror and desolation in the land: for the first sight of a hostile encampment in a country disused to war, is terrible to the newly enlisted soldier. A marvellous occurrence is recorded by the Arabian chroniclers as having taken place in the Christian camp; but discreet Spanish writers relate it with much modification, and consider it a stratagem of the wily Bishop Oppas, to sound the loyalty of the Christian cavaliers.

As several leaders of the army were seated with the bishop in his tent, conversing on the dubious fortunes of the approaching contest, an ancient pilgrim appeared at the entrance. He was bowed down with years, his snowy beard descended to his girdle, and he supported his tottering steps with a palmer's staff. The cavaliers rose and received him with great reverence as he advanced within the tent. Holding up his withered hand, 'Wo, wo to Spain!' exclaimed he, 'for the vial of the wrath of heaven is about to be poured out. Listen, warriors, and take warning. Four months since, having performed my pilgrimage to the sepulchre of our Lord in Palestine, I was on my return toward my native land. Wearied and wayworn, I lay down one night to sleep beneath a palm tree, by the side of a fountain, when I was awakened by a voice saying unto me, in soft accents, 'Son of sorrow, why sleepest thou?' I opened my eyes, and beheld one of a fair and beauteous countenance, in shining apparel and with glorious wings, standing by the fountain; and I said, 'Who art thou who callest upon me in this deep hour of the night?'

"Fear not,' replied the stranger, 'I am an angel from heaven, sent to reveal unto thee the fate of thy country. Behold the sins of Roderick have come up before God, and his anger is kindled against him, and he has given him up to be invaded and destroyed. Hasten then to Spain, and seek the camp of thy countrymen. Warn them that such only shall be saved as shall abandon Roderick; but those who adhere to him shall share his punishment, and shall fall under the sword of the invader."

The pilgrim ceased, and passed forth from the tent; certain of the cavaliers followed him to detain him, that they might converse further with him about these matters, but he was no where to be found. The sentinel before the tent said, 'I saw no one come forth, but it was as if a blast of wind passed by me, and there was a rustling as of dry leaves.'

The cavaliers remained looking upon each other with astonishment. The Bishop Oppas sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and shadowed by his overhanging brow. At length, breaking silence, in a low and faltering voice, 'Doubtless,' said he, 'this message is from God; and since he has taken compassion upon us, and given us notice of his impending judgment, it behooves us to hold grave council, and determine how best we may accomplish his will and avert his displeasure.'

The chiefs still remained silent, as men confounded. Among them was a veteran noble named Pelistes. He had distinguished himself in the African wars, fighting side by side with Count Julian, but the latter had never dared to tamper with his faith, for he knew his stern integrity. Pelistes had brought with him to the camp his only son, who had never drawn a sword except in tourney. When the young man saw that the veterans held their peace, the blood mantled in his cheek, and, overcoming

his modesty, he broke forth with a generous warmth: 'I know not, cavaliers,' said he, 'what is passing in your minds, but I believe this pilgrim to be an envoy from the devil; for none else could have given such dastard and perfidious counsel. For my own part, I stand ready to defend my king, my country, and my faith. I know no higher duty than this, and if God thinks fit to strike me dead in the performance of it, his sovereign will be done!'

When the young man had risen to speak, his father had fixed his eyes upon him with a grave and stern demeanor, leaning upon a two-handed sword. As soon as the youth had finished, Pelistes embraced him with a father's fondness. 'Thou hast spoken well, my son,' said he; 'if I held my peace at the counsel of this losel pilgrim, it was but to hear thy opinion, and to learn whether thou wert worthy of thy lineage and of the training I had given thee. Hadst thou counselled otherwise than thou hast done, hadst thou shown thyself craven and disloyal, so help me God, I would have struck off thy head with this weapon which I hold in my hand. But thou hast counselled like a loyal and a Christian knight, and I thank God for having given me a son worthy to perpetuate the honors of my line. As to this pilgrim, be he saint or be he devil, I care not; this much I promise, that if I am to die in defence of my country and my king, my life shall be a costly purchase to the foe. Let each man make the same resolve, and I trust we shall yet prove the pilgrim a lying prophet.' The words of Pelistes roused the spirits of many of the cavaliers; others, however, remained full of anxious foreboding, and when this fearful prophecy was rumored about the camp, as it presently was by the emissaries of the bishop, it spread awe and dismay among the soldiery.

On the following day, the two armies remained regarding each other with wary but menacing aspect. About noontide, King Roderick sent forth a chosen force of five hundred horse and two hundred foot, the best armed of his host, to skirmish with the enemy, that, by gaining some partial advantage, they might raise the spirits of the army. They were led on by Theodomir, the same Gothic noble who had signalised himself by first opposing the invasion of the Moslems.

The Christian squadrons paraded with flying pennons in the valley which lay between the armies. The Arabs were not slow in answering their defiance. A large body of horsemen sallied forth to the encounter, together with three hundred of the followers of Count Julian. There was hot skirmishing about the field, and on the banks of the river; many gallant feats were displayed on either side, and many valiant warriors were slain. As the night closed in, the trumpets from either camp summoned the troops to retire from the combat. In this day's action the Christians suffered greatly in the loss of their distinguished cavaliers; for it is the noblest spirits who venture most, and lay themselves open to danger; and the Moslem soldiers had instructions to single out the leaders of the adverse host. All this is said to have been devised by the perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had secret communications with the enemy, while he influenced the councils of the king; and who trusted that by this skirmishing warfare the power of the Christian troops would be cut off, and the rest disheartened.

On the following morning, a larger force was ordered out to skirmish, and such of the soldiery as were unarmed were commanded to stand ready to seize the horses and strip off the armor of the killed and wounded. Among the most illustrious of the warriors who fought that day was Pelistes, the Gothic noble who had sternly checked the tongue of the Bishop Oppas. He led to the field a large body of his own vassals and retainers, and of cavaliers trained up in his house, who had followed him to the wars in Africa, and who looked up to him more as a father than a chieftain. Beside him was his only son, who now for the first time was fleshing his sword in battle. The conflict that day was more general and bloody than the day preceding; the slaughter of the Christian warriors was immense, from their lack of defensive armour; and as nothing could prevent the flower of the Gothic chivalry from spurring to the combat, the field was strewed with the bodies of the youthful nobles. None suffered more, however, than the warriors of Pelistes. Their leader himself was bold and hardy, and prone to expose himself to danger; but years and experience had moderated his early fire; his son, however, was eager to distinguish himself in this, his first essay, and rushed with impetuous ardor into the hottest of the battle. In vain his father called to caution him; he was ever in the advance, and seemed

unconscious of the perils that surrounded him. The cavaliers and vassals of his father followed him with devoted zeal, and many of them paid for their loyalty with their lives. When the trumpet sounded in the evening for retreat, the troops of Pelistes were the last to reach the camp. They came slowly and mournfully, and much decreased in number. Their veteran commander was seated on his war-horse, but the blood trickled from the greaves of his armour. His valiant son was borne on the shields of his vassals; when they laid him on the earth near to where the king was standing, they found that the heroic youth had expired of his wounds. The cavaliers surrounded the body and gave utterance to their grief; but the father restrained his agony, and looked on with the stern resignation of a soldier.

Don Roderick surveyed the field of battle with a rueful eye, for it was covered with the mangled bodies of his most illustrious warriors; he saw, too, with anxiety, that the common people, unused to war, and unsustained by discipline, were harassed by incessant toils and dangers, and were cooling in their zeal and courage.

The crafty Bishop Oppas marked the internal trouble of the king, and thought a favorable moment had arrived to sway him to his purpose. He called to his mind the various portents and prophecies which had forerun their present danger. 'Let not my lord the king,' said he, 'make light of these mysterious revelations, which appear to be so disastrously fulfilling. The hand of Heaven appears to be against us. Destruction is impending over our heads. Our troops are rude and unskilful, but slightly armed, and much cast down in spirit. Better is it that we should make a treaty with the enemy, and, by granting part of his demands, prevent the utter ruin of our country. If such counsel be acceptable to my lord the king, I stand ready to depart upon an embassy to the Moslem camp.'

Upon hearing these words, Pelistes, who had stood in mournful silence, regarding the dead body of his son, burst forth with honest indignation. 'By this good sword,' said he, 'the man who yields such dastard counsel deserves death from the hand of his countrymen rather than from the foe; and, were it not for the presence of the king, may I forfeit salvation if I would not strike him dead upon the spot.'

The bishop turned an eye of venom upon Pelistes. 'My lord,' said he, 'I too, bear a weapon, and know how to wield it. Were the king not present you would not dare to menace, nor should you advance one step without my hastening to meet you.'

The king interposed between the jarring nobles, and rebuked the impetuosity of Pelistes, but at the same time rejected the counsel of the bishop. 'The event of this conflict,' said he, 'is in the hand of God; but never shall my sword return to its scabbard while an infidel invader remains within the land.'

He then held a council with his captains, and it was determined to offer the enemy general battle on the following day. A herald was despatched defying Taric ben Zeyad to the contest, and the defiance was gladly accepted by the Moslem chieftain. Don Roderick then formed the plan of action, and assigned to each commander his several station, after which he dismissed his officers, and each one sought his tent, to prepare by diligence or repose for the next day's eventful contest.

Taric ben Zeyad had been surprised by the valor of the Christian cavaliers in the recent battles, and at the number and apparent devotion of the troops which accompanied the king to the field. The confident defiance of Don Roderick increased his surprise. When the herald had retired, he turned an eye of suspicion on Count Julian. 'Thou hast represented thy countrymen,' said he, 'as sunk in effeminacy and lost to all generous impulse: yet I find them fighting with the courage and the strength of lions. Thou hast represented thy king as detested by his subjects, and surrounded by secret treason, but I behold his tents whitening the hills and dales, while thousands are hourly flocking to his standard. Wo unto thee if thou hast dealt deceitfully with us, or betrayed us with guileful words.'

Don Julian retired to his tent in great trouble of mind, and fear came upon him that the Bishop Oppas might play him false; for it is the lot of traitors ever to distrust each other. He called to him the same page who had brought him the letter from Florinda, revealing the story of her dishonor.

'Thou knowest, my trusty page,' said he, 'that I have reared thee in my household, and cherished thee above all thy companions. If thou hast loyalty and affection for thy lord, now is the time to serve him. Hie thee to the Christian camp, and find thy way to the tent of the Bishop Oppas. If any one

ask thee who thou art, tell them thou art of the household of the bishop, and bearer of missives from Cordova. When thou art admitted to the presence of the bishop, show him this ring, and he will commune with thee in secret. Then tell him Count Julian greets him as a brother, and demands how the wrongs of his daughter Florinda are to be redressed. Mark well his reply, and bring it word for word. Have thy lips closed, but thine eyes and ears open; and observe every thing of note in the camp of the king. So speed thee on thy errand—away, away!'

The page hastened to saddle a Barbary steed, fleet as the wind, and of a jet black color, so as not to be easily discernible in the night. He girded on a sword and dagger, slung an Arab bow with a quiver of arrows at his side, and a buckler at his shoulder. Issuing out of the camp, he sought the banks of the Guadalete, and proceeded silently along its stream, which reflected the distant fires of the Christian camp. As he passed by the place which had been the scene of the recent conflict, he heard, from time to time, the groan of some expiring warrior who had crawled among the reeds on the margin of the river; and sometimes his steed stepped cautiously over the mangled bodies of the slain. The young page was unused to the sights of war, and his heart beat quick within him. He was hailed by the sentinels as he approached the Christian camp, and, on giving the reply taught him by Count Julian, was conducted to the tent of the Bishop Oppas.

The bishop had not yet retired to his couch. When he beheld the ring of Count Julian, and heard the words of his message, he saw that the page was one in whom he might confide. 'Hasten back to thy lord,' said he, 'and tell him to have faith in me, and all shall go well. As yet I have kept my troops out of the combat. They are all fresh, well armed, and well appointed. The king has confided to myself, aided by the princes Evan and Siseburto, the command of a wing of the army. To-morrow, at the hour of noon, when both armies are in the heat of action, we will pass over with our forces to the Moslems. But I claim the compact made with Taric ben Zeyad, that my nephews be placed in dominion over Spain, and tributary only to the Caliph of Damascus.' With this traitorous message the page departed. He led his black steed by the bridle to present less mark for observation, as he went stumbling along near the expiring fires of the camp. On passing the last outpost, when the guards were half slumbering on their arms, he was overheard and summoned, but leaped lightly into the saddle and put spurs to his steed. An arrow whistled by his ear and two more stuck in the target which he had thrown upon his back. The clatter of swift hoofs echoed behind him, but he had learnt of the Arabs to fight and fly. Plucking a shaft from his quiver, and turning and rising in the stirrups as his courser galloped at full speed, he drew the arrow to the head and launched it at his pursuer. The twang of the bow-string was followed by the crash of armour, and a deep groan, as the horseman tumbled to the earth. The page pursued his course with further molestation, and arrived at the Moslem camp before the break of day.

A light had burned throughout the night in the tent of the king, and anxious thoughts and dismal visions troubled his repose. If he fell into a slumber, he beheld in his dreams the shadowy phantoms of the necromantic tower, or the injured Florinda, pale and dishevelled, imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon his head. In the mid-watches of the night, when all was silent except the footstep of the sentinel, pacing before his tent, the king rose from his couch, and walking forth looked thoughtfully upon the martial scene before him. The pale crescent of the moon hung over the Moorish camp, and dimly lighted up the windings of the Guadalete. The heart of the king was heavy and oppressed; but he felt only for himself, says Antonio Agapida, he thought nothing of the perils impending over the thousands of devoted subjects in the camp below him; sleeping, as it were, on the margin of their graves. The faint clatter of distant hoofs, as if in rapid flight, reached the monarch's ear, but the horsemen were not to be descried. At that very hour, and along the shadowy banks of that river, here and there gleaming with the scanty moonlight, passed the fugitive messenger of Count Julian, with the plan of the next day's treason.

The day had not yet dawned, when the sleepless and impatient monarch summoned his attendants and arrayed himself for the field. He then sent for the venerable Bishop Urbino, who had

accompanied him to the camp, and, laying aside his regal crown, he knelt with head uncovered, and confessed his sins before the holy man. After this a solemn mass was performed in the royal tent, and the eucharist administered to the monarch. When these ceremonies were concluded, he besought the archbishop to depart forthwith for Cordova, there to await the issue of the battle, and to be ready to bring forward reinforcements and supplies. The archbishop saddled his mule and departed just as the faint blush of morning began to kindle in the east. Already the camp resounded with the thrilling call of the trumpet, the clank of armor, and the tramp and neigh of steeds. As the archbishop passed through the camp, he looked with a compassionate heart on this vast multitude, of whom so many were soon to perish. The warriors pressed to kiss his hand, and many a cavalier full of youth and fire received his benediction, who was to lie stiff and cold before the evening.

When the troops were marshalled for the field, Don Roderick prepared to sally forth in the state and pomp with which the Gothic kings were wont to go to battle. He was arrayed in robes of gold brocade; his sandals were embroidered with pearls and diamonds; he had a sceptre in his hand, and he wore a regal crown resplendent with inestimable jewels. Thus gorgeously apparelled, he ascended a lofty chariot of ivory, the axle-trees of which were of silver, and the wheels and pole covered with plates of burnished gold. Above his head was a canopy of cloth of gold embossed with armorial devices, and studded with precious stones. This sumptuous chariot was drawn by milk-white horses, with caparisons of crimson velvet, embroidered with pearls. A thousand youthful cavaliers surrounded the car; all of the noblest blood and bravest spirit; all knighted by the king's own hand, and sworn to defend him to the last.

When Roderick issued forth in this resplendent state, says an Arabian writer, surrounded by his guards in gilded armour and waving plumes and scarfs and surcoats of a thousand dyes, it was as if the sun were emerging in the dazzling chariot of the day from amidst the glorious clouds of morning.

As the royal car rolled along in front of the squadrons, the soldiers shouted with admiration. Don Roderick waved his sceptre, and addressed them from his lofty throne, reminding them of the horror and desolation which had already been spread through the land by the invaders. He called upon them to summon up the ancient valor of their race, and avenge the blood of their brethren. 'One day of glorious fighting,' said he, 'and this infidel horde will be driven into the sea, or will perish beneath your swords. Forward bravely to the fight; your families are behind you praying for your success; the invaders of your country are before you; God is above to bless his holy cause, and your king leads you to the field.' The army shouted with one accord, 'Forward to the foe, and death be his portion who shuns the encounter!'

The rising sun began to shine along the glistening waters of the Guadalete as the Moorish army, squadron after squadron, came sweeping down a gentle declivity to the sound of martial music. Their turbans and robes, of various dyes and fashions, gave a splendid appearance to their host; as they marched, a cloud of dust arose and partly hid them from the sight, but still there would break forth flashes of steel and gleams of burnished gold, like rays of vivid lightning, while the sound of drum and trumpet, and the clash of Moorish cymbal, were as the warlike thunder within that stormy cloud of battle.

As the armies drew near each other the sun disappeared among gathering clouds, and the gloom of the day was increased by the columns of dust which rose from either host. At length the trumpet sounded for the encounter. The battle commenced with showers of arrows, stones, and javelins. The Christian foot-soldiers fought to disadvantage, the greater part being destitute of helm or buckler. A battalion of light Arabian horsemen, led by a Greek renegado named Magued el Rumi, careered in front of the Christian line, launching their darts, and then wheeling off beyond the reach of the missiles hurled after them. Theodomir now brought up his seasoned troops into the action, seconded by the veteran Pelistes, and in a little while the battle became furious and promiscuous. It was glorious to behold the old Gothic valor shining forth in this hour of fearful trial. Wherever the Moslems fell, the Christians rushed forward, seized upon their horses, and stripped them of their armour and their

weapons. They fought desperately and successfully, for they fought for their country and their faith. The battle raged for several hours; the field was strown with slain, and the Moors, overcome by the multitude and fury of their foes, began to falter.

When Taric beheld his troops retreating before the enemy, he threw himself before them, and, rising in his stirrups, 'Oh, Moslems! conquerors of Africa!' cried he, whither would you fly? The sea is behind you, the enemy before; you have no hope but in your valor and the help of God. Do as I do and the day is ours!'

With these words he put spurs to his horse and sprang among the enemy, striking to right and left, cutting down and destroying, while his steed, fierce as himself, trampled upon the foot soldiers and tore them with his teeth. At this moment a mighty shout arose in various parts of the field; the noontide hour had arrived. The Bishop Oppas with the two princes, who had hitherto kept their bands out of the fight, suddenly went over to the enemy, and turned their weapons upon their astonished countrymen. From that moment the fortune of the day was changed, and the field of battle became a scene of wild confusion and bloody massacre. The Christians knew not whom to contend with, or whom to trust. It seemed as if madness had seized upon their friends and kinsmen, and that their worst enemies were among themselves.

The courage of Don Roderick rose with his danger. Throwing off the cumbrous robes of royalty, and descending from his car, he sprang upon his steed Orelia, grasped his lance and buckler, and endeavored to rally his retreating troops. He was surrounded and assailed by a multitude of his own traitorous subjects, but defended himself with wondrous prowess. The enemy thickened around him; his loyal band of cavaliers were slain, bravely fighting in his defence; the last that was seen of the king was in the midst of the enemy, dealing death at every blow.

A complete panic fell upon the Christians; they threw away their arms and fled in all directions. They were pursued with dreadful slaughter, until the darkness of the night rendered it impossible to distinguish friend from foe. Taric then called off his troops from the pursuit, and took possession of the royal camp; and the couch which had been pressed so uneasily on the preceding night by Don Roderick, now yielded sound repose to his conqueror.

On the morning after the battle, the Arab leader, Taric ben Zeyad, rode over the bloody field of the Gaudalete, strewed with the ruins of those splendid armies, which had so lately passed like glorious pageants along the river banks. There Moor and Christian, horseman and horse, lay gashed with hideous wounds; and the river, still red with blood, was filled with the bodies of the slain. The gaunt Arab was as a wolf roaming through the fold he had laid waste. On every side his eye revelled on the ruin of the country, on the wrecks of haughty Spain. There lay the flower of her youthful chivalry, mangled and destroyed, and the strength of her yeomanry prostrated in the dust. The Gothic noble lay confounded with his vassals; the peasant with the prince; all ranks and dignities were mingled in one bloody massacre.

When Taric had surveyed the field, he caused the spoils of the dead and the plunder of the camp to be brought before him. The booty was immense. There were massy chains, and rare jewels of gold; pearls and precious stones; rich silks and brocades, and all other luxurious decorations in which the Gothic nobles had indulged in the latter times of their degeneracy. A vast amount of treasure was likewise found, which had been brought by Roderick for the expenses of the war.

Taric then ordered that the bodies of the Moslem warriors should be interred; as for those of the Christians, they were gathered in heaps, and vast pyres of wood were formed, on which they were consumed. The flames of these pyres rose high in the air, and were seen afar off in the night; and when the Christians beheld them from the neighboring hills they beat their breasts and tore their hair, and lamented over them as over the funeral fires of their country. The carnage of that battle infected the air for two whole months, and bones were seen lying in heaps upon the field for more than forty years; nay, when ages had past and gone, the husbandman, turning up the soil, would still find fragments of Gothic cuirasses and helms, and Moorish scimitars, the relics of that dreadful fight.

For three days the Arabian horseman pursued the flying Christians, hunting them over the face of the country; so that but a scanty number of that mighty host escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

Taric ben Zeyad considered his victory incomplete so long as the Gothic monarch survived; he proclaimed great rewards, therefore, to whomsoever should bring Roderick to him, dead or alive. A diligent search was accordingly made in every direction, but for a long time in vain; at length a soldier brought to Taric the head of a Christian warrior, on which was a cap decorated with feathers and precious stones. The Arab leader received it as the head of the unfortunate Roderick, and sent it, as a trophy of his victory, to Musa ben Nosier, who, in like manner, transmitted it to the caliph at Damascus. The Spanish historians, however, have always denied its identity.

A mystery has ever hung and ever must continue to hang, over the fate of King Roderick, in that dark and doleful day of Spain. Whether he went down amidst the storm of battle, and atoned for his sins and errors by a patriot grave, or whether he survived to repent of them in hermit exile, must remain matter of conjecture and dispute. The learned Archbishop Rodrigo, who has recorded the events of this disastrous field, affirms that Roderick fell beneath the vengeful blade of the traitor Julian, and thus expiated with his blood his crime against the hapless Florinda; but the archbishop stands alone in his record of the fact. It seems generally admitted that Orelia, the favorite war-horse of Don Roderick, was found entangled in a marsh on the borders of the Gaudalete, with the sandals and mantle and royal insignia of the king lying close by him. The river at this place ran broad and deep, and was encumbered with the dead bodies of warriors and steeds; it has been supposed therefore, that he perished in the stream; but his body was not found within its waters.

When several years had passed away, and men's minds, being restored to some degree of tranquillity, began to occupy themselves about the events of this dismal day, a rumor arose that Roderick had escaped from the carnage on the banks of the Gaudalete, and was still alive. It was said, that having from a rising ground caught a view of the whole field of battle, and seen that the day was lost, and his army flying in all directions, he likewise sought his safety in flight. It is added, that the Arab horsemen, while scouring the mountain in quest of fugitives, found a shepherd arrayed in the royal robes, and brought him before the conqueror, believing him to be the king himself. Count Julian soon dispelled the error. On being questioned, the trembling rustic declared that while tending his sheep in the folds of the mountains, there came a cavalier on a horse wearied and spent and ready to sink beneath the spur; that the cavalier with an authoritative voice and menacing air commanded him to exchange garments with him, and clad himself in his rude garb of sheep-skin, and took his crook and his scrip of provisions, and continued up the rugged defiles of the mountains leading towards Castile, until he was lost to view.

This tradition was fondly cherished by many, who clung to the belief in the existence of their monarch as their main hope for the redemption of Spain. It was even affirmed that he had taken refuge with many of his host, in an island of the 'Ocean sea,' from whence he might yet return, once more to elevate his standard, and battle for the recovery of his throne.

Year after year, however, elapsed and nothing was heard of Don Roderick; yet, like Sebastian of Portugal, and Arthur of England, his name continued to be a rallying point for popular faith, and the mystery of his end to give rise to romantic fables. At length, when generation after generation had sunk into the grave, and near two centuries had passed and gone, traces were said to be discovered that threw a light on the final fortunes of the unfortunate Roderick. At that time, Don Alphonso the Great, King of Leon, had wrested the city of Viseo in Lusitania from the hands of the Moslems. As his soldiers were ranging about the city and its environs, one of them discovered in a field, outside of the walls, a small chapel or hermitage, with a sepulchre in front, on which was inscribed this epitaph in Gothic characters:

HIC REQUIESCIT RUDERICUS,

ULTIMUS REX GOTHORUM

Here Lies Roderick,

The last King of the Goths

It has been believed by many that this was the veritable tomb of the monarch, and that in this hermitage he had finished his days in solitary penance. The warrior, as he contemplated the supposed tomb of the once haughty Roderick, forgot all his faults and errors, and shed a soldier's tear over his memory; but when his thoughts turned to Count Julian, his patriotic indignation broke forth, and with his dagger he inscribed a rude malediction on the stone.

'Accursed,' said he, 'be the impious and headlong vengeance of the traitor Julian. He was a murderer of his king; a destroyer of his kindred; a betrayer of his country. May his name be bitter in every mouth, and his memory infamous to all generations.'

Here ends the legend of Don Roderick.

LINES

WRITTEN UNDER A PORTRAIT OF JUPITER AND DANAE

Fair maid of Argos! dry thy tears, nor shun
The bright embrace of Saturn's amorous son.
Pour'd from high Heaven athwart thy brazen tower,
Jove bends propitious in a glittering shower:
Take, gladly take, the boon the Fates impart;
Press the gilt treasure to thy panting heart:
And to thy venal sex this truth unfold,
How few, like Danae, grasp both god and gold.

J. Smith.

THE DOG-STAR SPIRIT

SUGGESTED BY CERTAIN PAPERS ENTITLED ‘MIND AND INSTINCT,’ IN THE KNICKERBOCKER

Calm be thy slumbers, faithful Tray,
Calm in thy bed
Low-gathered underneath the clay,
Where they have laid thy bones away,
And left thee—dead!

No common dog, dear Tray, wert thou
In life’s short age;
For *instinct* shone upon thy brow,
And something in thy deep bow-wow
Proclaimed the sage.

When ugly curs at evening made
Their hideous wail,
Mutely thy musing eye surveyed
Bright themes for thought around displayed,
Perched on thy tail.

Oft have I seen thy vision turned
Up to the skies,
Where thy intelligence discerned
In all the little stars that burned,
Strange mysteries.

And then, thy keen glance fixed on one
That glimmered far;
‘If souls of men live when they’re gone,’
Thou thought’st, ‘why not of dogs when flown,
In yonder star?

‘Though diverse in our natures, yet
It don’t ensue
That other judgment we should meet,
Because we muster four good feet
Instead of two.

‘And if in some light, wanton freak
Of Nature’s mind,
She planted hair upon our back,
And, in capricious mood, did tack

A tail behind:

‘It matters not. That coat of hair
Is very thin;
But the habiliment we wear
To warm the heart from wintry air,
We have within.

‘Ah, no! what selfish man would have
For *him* alone,
To us a title Nature gave:
We too shall live beyond the grave,
When we are gone.’

Now, when at twilight’s solemn hour,
O’er field and lea,
I see the dog-star gently pour
Its beamy light—a golden shower—
I think of thee!

And well, I wot, thy spacious mind,
With journey brief,
Hath mounted like a breath of wind;
And thou art in that orb enshrined,
A thing of life.

Then peace be with thine ashes, Tray,
In their long rest:
Faithful wert thou in thy short day;
And now, that thou art passed away,
I know thou’rt blest.

Pittsburgh, March, 1844. Sancho.

A DREAM

This accident is not unlike my dream; belief of it
Oppresses me already.
Othello.

Upon a certain clear and starry night of unbroken tranquility and peace, in the month of September, in the year of Grace one thousand eight hundred thirty and two; I, John Waters of man's Estate, Gentleman, dreamed a Dream. And lest I might be forced, like the great Babylonian monarch of yore, to say 'the thing is gone from me,' I resolved while a vague remembrance yet rested in my thoughts, to record if possible some lasting memorial of it.

Now, more than one half of the average number of years, assigned by computation to a generation of our race, have, since that point of time, rolled into the rearward hemisphere of Eternity; trials and changes, deep and stern and manifold, have rent and desolated this *house not made with hands*, and have exercised and broken the spirit that is supposed to be contained within it; yet the slight memorandum, written at that time, lies unchanged before me, and gives evidence of the comparatively impassible duration of inert matter over man; whose home, and whose abiding-place is not of earth!

It is not that I can hope to describe my sensations of that night, in such a manner as to impart them to the contemplative spirit that may read this sketch, and to afford pleasure at all comparable with that which I enjoyed; but I have thought that I might by the recital awaken some gratifying recollections of still higher flittings of the imagination into the regions of unlimited Fancy; where the pleasure has been, as was mine, alike unbounded and pure.

In an Existence like ours, where so much is ideal; where so many things are feared, that never come to pass; hoped for, that are never realized; enjoyed, that are impalpable to sense; where that, which by common convention is called substantial and real, is very far inferior to that which is falsely termed illusory and vain; where life borders on immortality; and the spiritual world so closely overhangs the natural, that it is as difficult to separate them as it is in Switzerland to know which is Alps and which is Heaven;—there may oftentimes be much pleasure, perhaps some instruction, in a Dream.

What should we say of dreams, if our eyes could but once have been opened upon the bright intellectual fancies, and anticipations; or upon the spiritual movements, of some of those by the side of whose supine and deserted forms it may have been our privilege to watch; but who, on waking into restored consciousness, remember not what they may have seen, or imagined, or may perhaps have accomplished, in their sleep?

How often, within the compass of our own minds, do we not find thoughts and images that spring from sources that we cannot trace! Have we not more than once been called upon to perform some act of life, important to ourselves, or perchance to others; or been in some incidental circle of friends, or of persons who were strangers until then; or walked upon some lonely path in Europe—all for the first time as we suppose, and yet have we not had it irresistibly borne in upon our minds, that we have done all this before! signed the same paper in the same presence! heard the same voices speak the same words! noticed the same faces in the same positions! or recognized the mountains perhaps, and the trees, the landscape, the rocks, the very brook, as acquaintances of old; although the broad Atlantic had never yet been crossed by us before—except in spirit!

Did you never in the day or night dream yourself to be upon some lofty overhanging precipice? did you never in imagination look down over its extreme verge upon the dark coast that skirts the foot of it, so far below you that you only distinguish the Rocks themselves by the white foam of the blue wave that breaks over them? Did you never hold by a bush while you were bending over this awful verge, listening to the low roar of the deep and distant waters, and perceive the Eagle itself

soaring mid-way only up the cliff—and while you grew chill with the thoughts of depth, and danger, and distance from relief, did you never feel the bush give way and the gravel slide from beneath you, and the whole mass come thundering down from earth to ocean?

One throb is given to madness and in the next you wake and find the body in security although perhaps in pain. Have you been in actual danger? do you believe that you have been? If not, why do you immediately pray to God and bless Him at such moments for his protection and care of you? Is it not that while the body has been quiescent, the excursive Soul has been in spiritual presence on the edge of that beetling and stupendous height?

Suppose, as the mother sits beside the small bed, drinking with her eyes that draught of ecstatick pleasure which only Woman's heart can taste, she could perceive the spirit of her boy, rising from the body that it leaves behind in roseate sleep, a thousand times more beautiful than it and yet the same; and still her own; and taking upon himself, as of his proper right, the grace and charm of 'a young and rose-lipped cherub,' should chase, (and all within her sight,) the rainbow-butterflies of Paradise across its swards of velvet, and laugh in music to express his joy!

Suppose that to the husband it should be given to behold his Wife—the pure in heart!—walking like a seraph in the Spiritual Life, as the earliest light of morning moves along the hill-tops; her countenance 'beautified with salvation' and joy unfolding itself at her approach: he sees and follows her as she enters into grottoes of shells, compared with which all flowers of Earth are mere attempts at colour! She listens to choirs of angels, joining worthily with them in the celestial chaunt! and when the hearts of both are elevated by the anthem strain, she kneels in solitude and prays for him in words that rise to Heaven, a grateful and accepted incense!

Regard in silence those features of the young and beautiful upon the bed of slow consuming death; with what a grace do they not awake from the momentary trance of sleep! thoughts, not given to be revealed, have been garnered by that precious spirit as it hath soared upward toward the Heaven that is now bending with a summons unto everlasting Life! How gently yet how touchingly do not its glances and its last regrets pass through the diaphanous covering that remains to it of mortality, upon the friend who gazes in equal love and wonder at its side! how like the light within the vase! how sublimated the expression! how intent, how occupied that long look! how effulgent that passage of hope! how intimate, how exalted must have been the communion, when gleams of Faith and Joy, too beautiful for utterance, indicate the redeemed soul just fluttering to ascend in 'robes made white in the blood of the Lamb!'

Are not these and such as these, imaginations, communions, capacities, employments of the soul in Dreams? Ah! if what is called the Sleep of Death be mysterious, be awful, be sublime, be beautiful at times; how much more so,—when the form lies waiting to be revivified by the quick return of the excursive spirit,—how much more so is the Sleep of Life!

I was lying in my bed, in a deep delicious repose, in my own bed, without either care, or cold, or gout, to molest me even in my dreams; I had been occupied during the evening with some elementary algebraical processes in the company of my dear son who was to prepare them for examination at school on the following day and who had succeeded in arriving at correct results, had copied off his work, and packed it in his satchel for the morning.

Methought, while I slept, my son and I stood together hand in hand in the Church where we were accustomed to worship. We were very near the altar, but with our faces directed toward the organ and front gallery. There is in my mind some recollection of another person, I believe our Rector, near us but a little behind us.

Presently the surface of the gallery extended itself in breadth and height, so greatly as to cover the entire organ-loft with it's increased plane, and it became an immense practising-board, such as, upon a small scale, teachers of mathematics use to resolve problems upon for the instruction of a class, and it immediately assumed the deep slate-coloured hue that such boards are frequently painted.

And now there arranged themselves upon this board, in white characters, problem after problem in Equation; the Rule in which we had been exercising. I cannot describe the celerity with which these problems were stated upon the board, and worked out to the intense gratification of my son and myself; the most difficult and apparently unequal quantities being with the rapidity of thought interchanged neutralized reduced and determined, so that what seemed at the outset extremely involved, became lucid as day, and the unknown quantities made specific to our perfect satisfaction in an instant of time.

We were delighted with the lesson. I felt the hand of my son gently pressing mine, as he was accustomed to do when he would evince his satisfaction at any thing we examined successfully together; and we agreed with each other to cherish the recollection of these elucidations for future practice.

Turning again toward the board, we found it entirely freed from any trace of what had been wrought upon it. And now, in a manner which I have no possible means of imparting to the Reader, the good and evil of Life formed the specific and the unknown quantities that were wrought out upon the board. Problem succeeded problem, formed out of various conditions of life, with the same rapidity as those in Arabicks had been, and though vastly more complicated, with the same satisfactory result. Every variety and combination of circumstances in life seemed exhibited; positive negative neutral in a moment; until certain trials and occurrences led to certain virtues, with the same precision as in the preceding series of demonstrations *x*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.