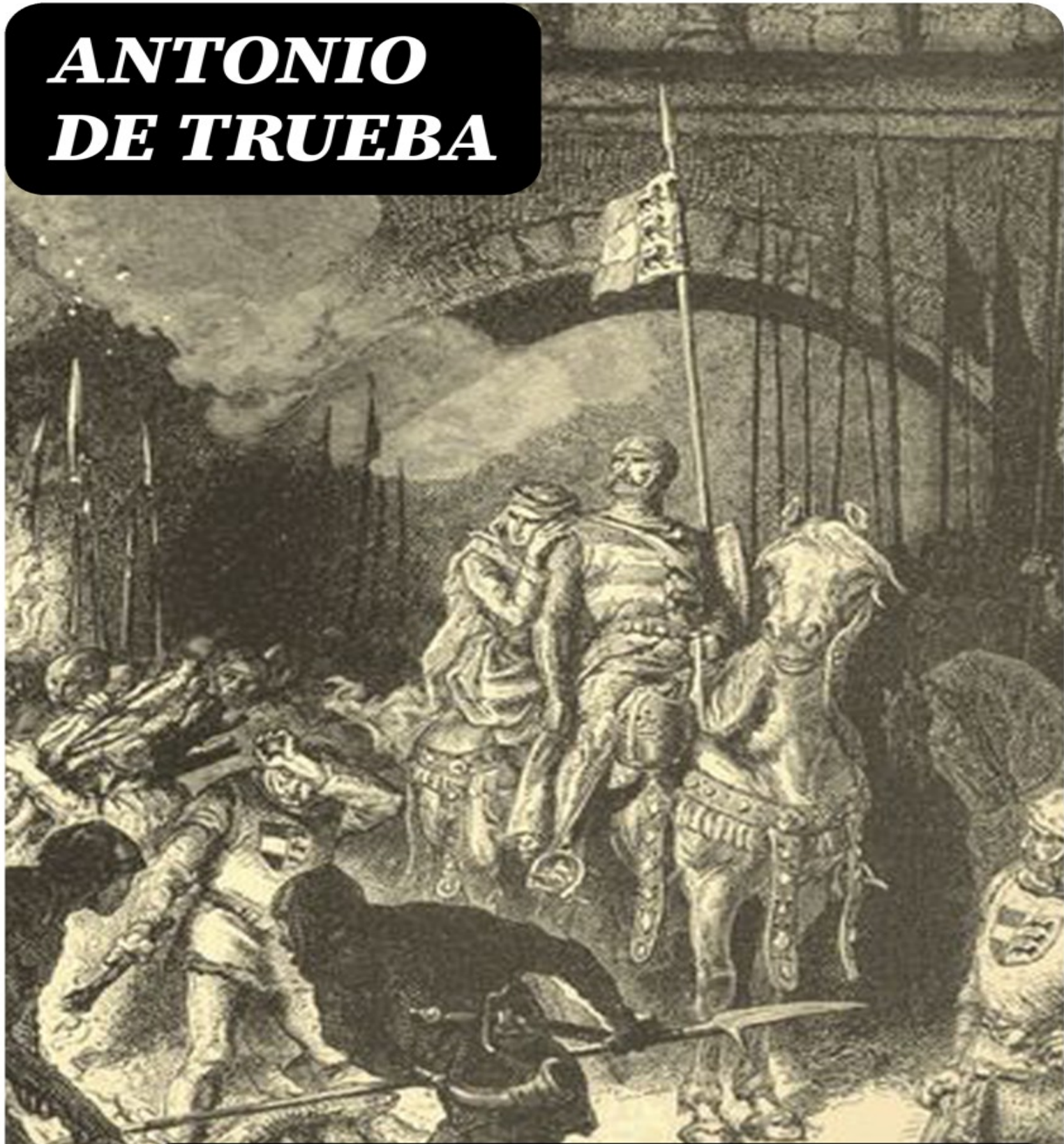


***ANTONIO
DE TRUEBA***



***THE CID
CAMPEADOR***

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Antonio de Trueba

The Cid Campeador

A Historical Romance

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PREFACE

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The "Cid Campeador" has been for centuries the great popular hero of Spain. He takes the same place in that country as King Arthur does in England, Roland, or Rolando, in France, and William Tell in Switzerland; and, like them, his life and exploits are, to a great extent, founded on popular traditions. In English-speaking countries there is very little known respecting him, and the translator ventures to place before the public a work which is considered by Spaniards to be one of the best historical romances in their literature. It is founded on a large number of ballads and other poetical pieces, extant in Spain for centuries, and on a very old work named "The Chronicle of the Cid."

The Author writes in his Introduction: "The Cid is the most popular of the Castilian heroes, and not without reason, for in him are personified all the virtues of the citizen and of the soldier. A good son, he avenges the insults offered to his father by bravely fighting with the Count of Gormaz: a good cavalier and faithful lover, he gives his hand and heart to the daughter of the man whom he had slain in fair combat: a good monarchist, he risks the anger of King Alfonso by compelling him to take an oath that he was not guilty of a crime which would stain the throne of Fernando the Great: a good soldier and a good vassal, he conquers, with his invincible sword, hostile realms and Moorish kings, and lays at the feet of his sovereign, who had unjustly banished him, the spoils which he had won and the countries of which he had made himself master: a good

patrician, loving the glory and the preponderance of his native land, he proceeds to Rome, enters the Church of St. Peter, and seeing in the place of honour the seat of the representative of France, he breaks it in pieces, filled with indignation, and puts in its place that of the representative of Spain: and finally, a good Christian, a good husband, and a good father; before entering into the combats, when calling upon God, he also uses the names of his wife and children, over whom he had wept when parting from them, —he who, in battle, showed a heart more hard than the armour which covered it."

CHAPTER I

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WHICH TREATS OF SOME LOVE AFFAIRS WHICH COMMENCED ALMOST WHEN OTHERS END

Joyous festivities were being celebrated at the Court of Leon in the spring of A.D. 1053. Don Fernando I., King of Castile and Leon, had journeyed to Najera to visit his brother Don Garcia, King of Navarre, who was sojourning, in bad health, in that town; but, having learned that Don Garcia desired to take him prisoner, on account of certain matters which were pending between them, regarding the partition of their late father's kingdom, he quickly withdrew to a place of safety. Don Garcia having gone, in his turn, to visit his brother, was incarcerated in the Castle of Cea. However, having succeeded in escaping from it, he summoned the Moors to his aid, and entered Castile, determined on revenge, and committed horrible atrocities. Don Fernando sallied forth to meet him, engaged with him at Atapuerca, not far from Burgos, and the invading army was completely routed. Don Garcia was killed by a lance-wound inflicted on him by a soldier named Sancho Fortun, who had gone over to the service of Don Fernando.

This, then, was the occasion of the festivities to which we have alluded, festivities which had attracted to the Court great numbers of ladies and cavaliers, not alone from Castile and Leon, but also from the other kingdoms, into which, at that time, Spain was divided. There had been various games, and a splendid tournament had taken place,

in which Don Fernando had broken lances with the bravest and most polished cavaliers of the period—a period so celebrated for skilful jousts and valiant warriors.

Night having come on, the dances, games, and jousts ceased, and great bonfires were lighted up in the open places of the town and in the surrounding fields, where the people continued the rejoicings until the approach of morning. They mingled their songs and acclamations with the continuous clanging of the bells and the sounds of the rustic musical instruments used in those times, until the ladies and cavaliers filled up the halls of the royal Alcazar. In them was to be celebrated a ball well worthy of the festivities that had taken place on that memorable day, the remembrance of which both Castilians and Leonese preserved for long years after, on account of the favours which their king dealt out to them with a generous hand.

If we were to paint with rich and vivid colours the halls in which was assembled the Court of Don Fernando, we should perchance please readers fond of the marvellous and magnificent. The picture would indeed be very effective, but we should fail in strict adherence to truth, and in our intention to sacrifice everything for its sake, during the long course of events which we are about to describe. The spirit of independence which reigned at that period in Castile had driven out the Eastern luxury which the Moslems were in the habit of displaying, during four centuries, in the southern parts of Spain. The contemporaries of the Cid were as brave and manly as the heroes of Covadonga, but also as rude and simple-minded as the first champions of the Holy Crusade, who had succeeded in driving back into the African

deserts the impious followers of the Crescent. Light and flowers were the riches which abounded in the halls of the Alcazar of Leon—light and flowers which are the riches of the fields, the luxury of nature. However, if any discontented person found those decorations too insignificant, he must have found compensation in the beauteous dames and brave knights who moved about in all directions, evidently well pleased and content. All were impatiently awaiting the arrival of the king, which was to be the prelude to the dancing and to the other amusements proper to the occasion and to the period, when the voice of a page was heard above the buzz of the crowd, announcing the approach of Don Fernando and his family. A profound silence reigned throughout the saloons, and all looks were fixed on the door which communicated with the royal apartments. And, indeed, Don Fernando immediately appeared, accompanied by his queen Doña Sancha, by his daughters Elvira and Urraca, by his sons, Sancho, Alfonso, and Garcia, and by some grandees who, during the day, had had the honour of accompanying him, and whom the king had invited to his table. Amongst these last universal attention was centred on an old man of noble appearance, to whom Don Fernando directed his conversation frequently and with great kindness. That old grandee was the noble Diego Lainez, lord of Vivar.

We have said that all looks were fixed on the royal family, but for our credit sake, as true and accurate narrators, we must make an exception. At one end of the principal hall a gentle maiden, who might count perhaps twenty summers, was conversing, without paying attention to their arrival,

with a handsome youth not much more advanced in years. The importunities of a rather ancient dueña, who evidently feared that they might be noticed, judging from the terrified way in which she frequently gazed around, did not succeed in interrupting their confidential chat, which to all appearance was of an amatory character. The two young persons were Ximena, daughter of the Count de Gormaz, and Rodrigo, son of Diego Lainez; the elderly lady, who showed herself so uneasy, was Lambra, the dueña of the young girl.

The conversation between them was indeed of the nature mentioned above, for Rodrigo and Ximena loved each other from the years of their childhood, and love was always the subject of their conversations. Let us tell how the son of Diego Lainez and the daughter of Don Gome de Gormaz first became lovers. Bonds of friendship and relationship—the latter, however, rather distant—had united for very many years the two families. On the occasion of the celebration of certain famous tournaments at Vivar, Don Gome and his family repaired thither, and were hospitably lodged in the house of Diego Lainez. Rodrigo at that time was four years old, and Ximena, whose parents had brought her with them to Vivar, but little younger. Diego Lainez, to do honour to his friends, gave a banquet sufficiently splendid and abundant, when the traditional frugality in his household is taken into consideration. On this occasion the two gentlemen renewed their pledges of friendship.

Teresa Nuña, the noble wife of Diego, loved her son with a tenderness only to be compared with that with which the wife of De Gormaz loved her daughter. The children rivalled

each other in beauty and grace, and the two mothers started a friendly and praiseworthy discussion on that subject, after the termination of the banquet. We call it praiseworthy, because maternal pride is noble and holy, although it may appear unreasonable to those who judge it dispassionately. That controversy ended by all those present, including the fathers of the children, agreeing that they were equal in beauty and grace, as they were almost equal in age.

"They seem made for each other," said Teresa Nuña. And from that opinion a thought took birth which was received with enthusiasm by both families—to enlance more and more their interests and friendship by the union of Rodrigo and Ximena. The realisation of this project was arranged for the time when the two fair scions of those noble families would have completed their twentieth years; for in that iron age all the risks to life and health attending the too early marriages of young girls were, with good reason, avoided.

Love, and above all the love of a mother, is the source of the most beautiful and poetic thoughts; thus it was that Teresa was inspired with a very beautiful idea. It was, that the children should consecrate this arrangement for their future union with a kiss, which also should be the pledge of a love that commenced on that day. Teresa Nuña, therefore, took Rodrigo by the hand and led him up to Ximena; he then sealed with his pure lips the blushing cheek of the girl, who, in her turn, kissed that of Rodrigo.

This compact was a bond which made the intercourse of the two families more close than it had been before, and the

two children grew up like two flowers on one stem—brother and sister in their education as they were also in their souls.

Many years passed, and nothing had disturbed the warm friendship of the two noble families; however, some special privileges conferred on Diego Lainez at the Court of King Fernando, with whom the two grandees had enjoyed much favour, irritated De Gormaz, whose nature, to judge by some circumstances which had arisen anterior to those which afterwards took place, was widely different, in nobleness and generosity, from that of Diego. Indeed, thanks to the prudence of the latter, a complete estrangement had been avoided until a short time before the events which we have narrated at the beginning of this chapter; but at last De Gormaz took the initiative by ordering his daughter to have no communication whatever with Rodrigo, threatening Lambra to expel her from his household if she permitted such.

On the day of which we are now treating the exasperation and the anger of De Gormaz rose to their highest point, on account of the kindness shown by the king to Diego, and, on the other hand, by the coldness with which he himself had been received, and above all, by the slight which he considered had been cast on him, by his not having been invited to the royal table, as had been Diego Lainez, to whom he attributed his disgrace with the king. Certainly Diego was very far indeed from meriting such an accusation on the part of his former friend, for on that very day he had done his utmost to rehabilitate him in the eyes of Don Fernando; the king, however, had just motives for

complaint against the count, and the good offices of De Vivar had been unavailing.

At the moment when the entry of the royal family into the saloons of the Alcazar was announced, Don Gome was passing through them, accompanied by his daughter. Although feeling much resentment, on account of the coldness of the king, he did not wish to renounce all chance of recovering the favour of Don Fernando, provoking afresh his resentment by abstaining from joining his suite, and thus acting differently from all the other cavaliers who were passing through the saloons. It so happened that, charging Lambra with the care of his daughter, he advanced towards the royal family. Rodrigo, who was watching for an opportunity to speak to the young girl, saw heaven opened when he perceived that she was free from the presence of her father, and flew to her side despite the anxiety which he knew it would cause the dueña.

Many days had passed since Ximena had seen him, and it is easy to imagine what was her pleasure, taking into account the tender and old love which united them.

"Ximena!" murmured Rodrigo in a low voice, trembling with emotion.

"Rodrigo!" whispered the girl, without being able to add another word.

"By all the saints of the heavenly court," said the terrified dueña, directing an entreating gesture to Rodrigo, "I ask you to depart hence, for if the count sees you it will go ill with my lady and with me. You doubtless do not know that he has threatened to cut my skirts short, in order to disgrace me, if I allow my lady to hold any converse with you. I

beseech you to do nothing to increase his anger, as things have not gone well with him to-day."

"Fear nothing, honoured dueña," replied Rodrigo, "for if the count cuts your skirts short I shall give you others made of the richest cloth."

"I know well that you are a cavalier, and it is the prerogative of cavaliers to be generous. Speak with my lady; but be brief. I shall meantime keep watch, and say my beads that my lord may not see ye."

Rodrigo and Ximena were already conversing, not paying the slightest attention to the words of Lambra.

"Rodrigo," said Ximena, "whither have gone those happy times when the houses of De Vivar and De Gormaz were as one trunk with two branches; when no cloud obscured the bright sky of our loves; when we saw the distant horizon rosy and beautiful before us; when I found in your parents the love which you found in mine? Vain have been your efforts, vain have been mine, and vain also have been those of your friends and mine, to appease the enmity which now separates our noble parents."

"That time, Ximena, has not, perhaps, passed away never to return. My father, the son of Lain Calvo, although old, preserves, in youthful luxuriance, the noble pride of ancestry, and it would not correspond with such dignity if he were to bear with patience the unjust suspicions with which your father has responded to his friendship. For a long time he has borne them, Ximena. I indeed might humiliate myself before your father, without such humiliation casting a stain on me, for I would do it for your sake, and no reproach could be directed against him who humiliates himself for a lady.

What does your father desire? Honours; riches; a kingdom; a throne for his daughter? You shall have all that, Ximena, I swear it by our love and by the honour of my ancestors. My arm is strong and my heart full of courage. Even to-morrow I shall set out for the country of our enemies. I shall enter the territory of the Moors, I shall fight as Bernardo fought at Roncesvalles, and I shall be victorious; for that love, which I have cherished for you during so many years, will make me invincible; and I shall lay all at the feet of your father, demanding, as a recompense, your hand and the return of the friendship which, at one time, was equal to ours for him."

"Good heavens!" said Doña Lambra, "my lord is just coming, and you, Don Rodrigo, will be the victim of his anger; and if he cuts my skirts short, good-bye to those of rich cloth!"

The two lovers paid little attention to the inquietude and the ridiculous words of the dueña.

"I know well, Ximena," continued Rodrigo, "that your father will use every means in order to avenge his supposed injuries on mine, and perchance I, the idol of Diego Lainez, shall be the first victim of his attempts; for, in order to wound the heart of the father, he will wound that of the son, by taking from me the hope of gaining the sole object of my ambition, which is yourself, Ximena. However, if the love which you often have sworn to me is real, if you hold in any account the happiness, the hopes, the life of the companion of your childhood, of him who has dreamed of such felicity with you, you will know how to resist his endeavours until the day shall come when Rodrigo will return to Castile,

worthy of the daughter of a king. Then pride will compel him to grant that which his ambition, thwarted in its hopes, now denies to me."

"I swear to you," answered Ximena, in one of those bursts of enthusiasm in which, without taking reason into account, all things appear possible to us,— "I swear to you that nothing in this world shall be able to conquer my resolve,—I shall be the wife of Rodrigo or of none other. My father may be able to extinguish the breath of my lungs, but never the love of my heart."

"Ah!" exclaimed Rodrigo, "blessed was the day when my eyes first looked on you! Perhaps, without the love of Ximena, Rodrigo Diaz would be one of those plants which spring up, live, and die, without having borne any fruit; one of those men who pass through the world without leaving a trace which might point out his path to those who come after him; your love, however, will immortalise his name; by him the plains of Castile will be stained by Moslim blood; through him the standard of Mahomet will be trampled under foot by the Christian kingdoms; in him the weak and the oppressed shall have an arm to sustain and defend them; and through him the race of the Counts of Castile shall wear the royal purple."

Whilst thus speaking, forgetting where he was, the cheeks of Rodrigo flushed, his broad and noble brow lit up, and his eyes sparkled, as if all the fire that inflamed his heart flew to his head. The eyes of Ximena shone also with joy, and her heart beat with violence, agitated by love and pride,—by pride, for the daughter of a king would have felt it, knowing she was loved by such a generous and brave

youth, to whom she desired to return, in her ardent glances, all the treasures of love which were shut up in her soul.

The anxiety of Lambra was increasing every moment, and not without cause; for the crowd which had collected around the royal family, curiosity being satisfied, was moving off and distributing itself through the saloons; and the honoured dueña feared the return of her master, or that someone might notice her complacency and report it to him.

"Ah! my skirts!" she said, moving in between Ximena and Rodrigo, "my master is coming, and he will cut them short without remedy!"

A group of cavaliers came from the farthest end of the hall, and Rodrigo thought he saw amongst them Don Gome.

"Adieu, Ximena," the young man hastened to say; "either everything or nothing, either death or Ximena!"

"Either Rodrigo or nothing!" replied the young girl, following with her glances her lover, who was just issuing from the halls of the Alcazar at the instant that the count was returning to the side of his daughter.

An unusual joyous expression could be noticed on the visage of Don Gome, which but shortly before was gloomy, and frequently contracted by anger. The cause of this was, that the Count de Gormaz, far from receiving, as he feared, a fresh slight from the king, had met with a kind reception, which, as he had not anticipated it, doubly pleased him. To what was due this sudden change in the feelings of the monarch? It was caused by the endeavours which Diego Lainez, taking advantage of the mood in which the king was on that day to grant favours, had used, with the object of restoring his former friend to the royal favour. The monarch

ultimately had yielded to his solicitations, promising to show marks of kindness to the grandee De Gormaz, in the presence of the entire Court. And indeed the king had done so; when Don Gome had approached him in the saloons of the Alcazar. Don Fernando had succeeded in concealing his resentment, and received him with the same kindness which he exhibited towards Diego Lainez himself.

"Ximena, my daughter!" exclaimed the count, pressing her in his arms, for he required some means of showing his content, "the king, despite my calumniators, has remembered my services, and restored me to his favour. Don Fernando, who knows how much I love you,—that you are the dearest thing that your father possesses, and that honouring you he honours me,—desires to see you, and has commanded me to lead you to him."

Pleasure, in turn, shone on the countenance of Ximena; it was not, however, the same kind of pleasure which her father experienced; it was not that joy which proceeds from satisfied vanity. The reason for it was, that Ximena loved her father, although she was well acquainted with his defects, and desired his happiness, whatever might be the occasion of it. A ray of hope now brightened up her heart—the hope that the old friendly relations between the two families might be renewed, the consequence of which would be the return of those happy times when no obstacle was interposed between her and her lover. Pure and loving souls are as much inclined towards hope as towards despair; Ximena, therefore, ran over in her mind, in a brief space of time, those conflicting sentiments, and passed from darkness to light, from death to life.

Her father then led her into the presence of the king, from whom, as well as from the queen and the royal children, she received a most kind reception. The many different experiences, which she had passed through on that day, had in no way rendered her less beautiful than usual, and a murmur of admiration arose amongst the ladies and cavaliers who were accompanying the royal family when Ximena approached. De Gormaz smiled with satisfaction and pride; and Diego Lainez, contemplating for the thousandth time so much beauty and nobleness of expression, could not help thinking, "My Rodrigo will be a hero if she commands it; he will gain a throne if she asks him for one!" And a similar thought most likely came into the minds of many others, for no one connected with the Court was ignorant of the old love that united Ximena and Rodrigo, nor of the influence that the maiden exercised on the soul of the valiant youth who was the pride of the family of De Vivar, and the hope of the good Castilians and Leonese.



CHAPTER II

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IN WHICH CERTAIN FESTIVITIES ARE DESCRIBED, WHICH ENDED WITH A BLOW ON A FACE

The numerous guests who occupied the saloons of the Alcazar were devoting themselves, joyously and noisily, to the various amusements which the magnificent festival provided; whilst the king and the royal princes were familiarly conversing with the group of cavaliers that surrounded them; and the queen and princesses, amidst another group composed of beautiful women, were amusing themselves also with pleasant conversation. It could be easily seen, however, that if the queen devoted most attention to Ximena, the father of the latter was not obtaining similar favour from the king, notwithstanding the apparent kindness with which he had been received only a very short time before. Affection which does not proceed from the heart cannot long sustain its fictitious semblance, and, in a moment of forgetfulness, the mask which conceals it falls off, and the cold visage of indifference appears. Such was the case with regard to Don Gome, and, on the other hand, the sincere and wise monarch was openly showing the real affection which he felt for De Vivar.

"Gentlemen," said the king, addressing the cavaliers who surrounded him, "as a brother I have lamented the death of Don Garcia, but as a king, obliged to sacrifice the warmest affections of my heart to the good of the kingdom, which God has entrusted to me to rule over and govern, I must

rejoice at the victory obtained by the Castilian and Leonese arms at Atapuerca. In celebrating that glorious triumph I have given proofs of my munificence to the commoners, my vassals. It would not be well that the cavaliers who assist at my Court should be debarred from participating in my favours, according to their merits. You, noble and loyal Peranzures, I appoint major-domo of my Alcazar; as you have served my State so well, with your sword in battle and with your wisdom at the Court and in the councils, I know you will also faithfully serve my household. To you, honoured Arias Gonzalo, I entrust my treasures, feeling sure that they will increase under your supervision. To you, noble and prudent Diego Lainez, I confide the care and education of my sons, as I feel sure that, having instructed your own son so well, you will act similarly with regard to mine. You well know how I love the princes; placing them in your charge is the greatest proof of friendship and confidence that a king can give to a subject, and I now tell you that if I could give you a greater proof I would heartily do so. You, the most faultless cavalier and the most honoured and prudent of the grandees of Castile, will cultivate the talents of my sons, so that the crowns which one day shall encircle their brows may sit well on them. God gave me three kingdoms, and I shall leave one to each of them. You, brave Count de Gormaz, shall be, from to-day, the General of the Leonese and Castilian troops, in the place of Diego Lainez and Peranzures, whose arms have been weakened by age and by the constant wielding of the sword and lance. You have given me proofs of your courage, fighting against the Moorish power, and I doubt not but that you, and the

cavaliers who surround you, will serve me well, some by their valour in battle, and others by their loyalty and wisdom."

Peranzures, Arias Gonzalo, and Diego Lainez bent their knees and kissed the hand of the king, in order to thank him for the great favours which he had conferred on them, as was their duty as good and grateful subjects; De Gormaz, however, when his turn came, gave loose reins to the anger which had been accumulating in his heart whilst the other cavaliers were being thus addressed, especially De Vivar, who appeared to him to have been unjustly favoured by the king, whose coldness towards himself he attributed to the evil counsels of the honoured old man, who indeed was far from deserving such a suspicion.

"Sire," he said to the king, directing his glances from time to time towards Diego Lainez, "the Count de Gormaz would be a fawning courtier, and not an honourable cavalier, if he were to thank the king for favours which he does not receive. If flatterers alone please you, do not hope to find one in me."

Another monarch, less prudent than Don Fernando, would have punished the audacity and ingratitude of Don Gome, and would have put a bridle on the tongue which had so rashly spoken; Don Fernando, however, restrained his vexation, and allowed De Gormaz to express his resentment, even though it were unjust, and even though he did it in terms unfitting a subject in the presence of his king.

"You entrust, sire," continued Don Gome, "the education of your sons to a feeble old man, as if they should be reared

up to be monks, or as if you should desire them to be as effeminate as women; and, to favour a debilitated flatterer, you forget, sire, my services and the valour with which I have always served you! If you desire that the princes should be good cavaliers, skilful in breaking a lance in a joust, and daring and prudent in attacking a squadron of Moors, to whom should you confide their training? Is it to an old man, whose hand can scarce hold the staff which supports him, or to me, who have valour in my heart and strength in my arm to brandish a sword, not only against the infidel, but against all who dare to doubt the truth of what I say? If there is any such, I stand prepared to meet him!"

Speaking thus, Don Gome advanced insultingly towards Diego Lainez, provoking him by his look as well as by his words.

The old man looked towards the king and curbed his righteous indignation, which, if it had not been restrained by the presence of his sovereign, would have burst forth in rage; if not indeed with the aid of the sword, which his aged hands could not wield, yet with the voice which could be still energetic and terrible in defence of an honour which nobody but the Count de Gormaz had ever dared to cast a slur on; he then said—

"Sire, pardon me if in defending my outraged honour I pass beyond the limits of the moderation which I should adhere to in the presence of my lord and king." And he continued, fixing his gaze on De Gormaz: "Don Gome, you are unjust in the highest degree if you think that I am a flatterer and calumniator. Diego Lainez is grateful for the favours which he receives from his king, but he never tries

to win them, much less by means of flattery and calumny. If the reasons which you have brought forward, in order to prove that the king should have entrusted to you, instead of to me, the education of the princes, have convinced him, to whom I owe this mark of confidence, I shall renounce in your favour so great an honour, although I consider it the most signal one which has been conferred on me during my long life, consecrated almost entirely to the service of my country. However, I do not think that those reasons weigh much with the king. That weakness which you see in my hand, those grey hairs which you see on my head, and those scars on my face, only prove that I have lived longer than you, and that I have not spent my life entirely in the saloons of the Court. If I can no longer break a lance at a tournament, or enter into close quarters with a hostile army, I can teach how to do both one and the other; you, who learned those things from me, should be able to certify to that, and respect me, if no longer as an old man, at least as your instructor."

The king recognised the unreasonableness of the count and the prudence and moderation of De Vivar; he did not wish, however, to decide publicly in favour of the one or of the other, for he knew the evils which a complete rupture between those two noble families would cause to the State, as both of them were powerful on account of their wealth and the number of their partisans; therefore, to make the Count de Gormaz an enemy was a thing which even a monarch might shrink from. Thus it was that he thought it best to use his influence with a view to reconciling both

opponents, and thus continue in friendly relations with them.

"Leave aside," he therefore said to them, "those sad contentions, and think only of renewing the friendship which, in times not far remote, united you, and of serving your country and the religion of your forefathers, now continually menaced by the Moors, for by no other means can good Christian cavaliers give proof of their loyalty. Both of you are strong pillars, to support our faith and my throne, and it would never enter my mind to favour one of you to the prejudice of the other; indeed, in order to recompense your merits I have desired that each of you should fill the position which circumstances necessitate. When De Vivar was robust and strong enough to wield a lance, he commanded the Christian armies, and now that he can only serve me by his wisdom and experience I confide to him a task for which those very qualities are most necessary. You, Don Gome, are the most capable of commanding my troops, and therefore I make you their leader. Some future day you will be old, as Lainez now is, and then the king will utilise your wisdom and loyalty in his household. Knowing that you are valiant and take pleasure in the chances of war, I believed that it would not be pleasing to you if I appointed you to a position in my Alcazar which only old men, as Arias, Peranzures, and Lainez are, can properly fill; or, if not they, only those cavaliers who, on account of a peaceful nature, are ill suited for battlefields. Lainez, stretch forth your hand to Don Gome and he will willingly clasp it."

The old man then held out his feeble hand, as if to seek that of the count, desirous of pleasing the king, and of

sacrificing his just resentment for the sake of a reconciliation which might prevent many evils to the State, and which might restore tranquillity to his household. Perhaps, at that moment, he was also thinking of Rodrigo, whose happiness depended on the renewal of friendly relations with De Gormaz. Judge, however, of his surprise and indignation when he saw the count draw his hand away, and heard him say in accents full of disdain—

"The hand of the Count of Gormaz never has clasped and never shall clasp that of a culumniator."

"Don Gome!" exclaimed the honoured old man, assuming the haughtiness of a cavalier deeply outraged, "before extending my hand again to you I would cut it off. You—you are the culumniator, whose hand would have stained mine if it touched it!"

"If it has not stained your hand," exclaimed the count, "take this, old dotard; it will stain for ever your visage."

And with a blow on the face of the venerable old man he drew blood—the blood of Diego Lainez, of him who in former times was the terror of the Moors, the bravest cavalier of Castile, the son of Lain Calvo!

"Justice of God!" cried the outraged old man, vainly endeavouring, such was his weakness, to return the blow of the coward and avenge the insult which he had received; anger, however, stopped his voice, clouded his visage, and made his head so dazed that he fell to the floor.

"Traitor! unworthy knight and bad subject!" exclaimed the king. "In my presence you dared to raise your hand against an aged cavalier, who, old as he is, is worth more than your entire race! As God lives, my executioner shall cut

off, to-morrow, in the public place of Leon, the hand which has acted in so dastardly and cowardly a manner! My guard here! My guard here!"

The voice of Don Fernando, however, was lost in the noise and uproar which arose throughout the saloon. The ladies uttered terrified cries and fled precipitately into the inner apartments of the Alcazar, believing that they would find in them a refuge from the tumult; and the cavaliers, divided into two parties, one in favour of Don Gome and the other for Diego Lainez, placed their hands on their swords and broke out into loud imprecations and threats, without paying any attention to the presence, to the words, or to the authority of the king or of the princes. At last Don Fernando succeeded in allaying the tumult just at the moment when the old man was rising from the ground. He then clasped him in his arms and pressed his lips on his cheek, as if to remove from it the stain which the blow of De Gormaz had imprinted thereon. His anger being calmed for the time, he was able to reflect, and the prudent monarch thought that, if he insisted on arresting De Gormaz then and there, torrents of blood would flow in the Alcazar and that inextinguishable feuds would blaze up amongst the flower of the chivalry of Leon and Castile. He remembered that the grandee De Vivar had numerous champions, on whom he could rely to avenge such an affront, and he considered it more prudent to defer the punishment of the count to a later time. The voice of Diego was then heard in support of such a decision.

"To Vivar, to my castle!" exclaimed the old man, tearing his hair, and shedding the first tears which came from his

eyes since he had girded on the sword and buckled on the spurs of a knight. The outrage inflicted on him had not disturbed his mind so much that he could not remember what was due to the dwelling-place of the king, in whose presence no honourable cavalier could draw his sword to avenge personal insults.

Diego Lainez was obeyed: a few minutes later he was journeying, in a litter, on the road that led to Vivar, accompanied by many followers, both on foot and on horseback; and the halls of the Alcazar became deserted.

The Count de Gormaz had many partisans in Leon, as was proved by the large number of cavaliers who thronged to his side when the friends of De Vivar grasped the hilts of their swords, enraged by the vile offence inflicted on the old man. However, when the tumult had been appeased, when reflection forced them to realise on whose side was right, Don Gome could scarcely have found a cavalier to draw sword in his defence. It might be said on the following day that, in a few hours, the count had lost all his friends, for those who had been hitherto firmly attached to him were now content to remain neutral with regard to the matter of which everyone was speaking.

CHAPTER III

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IN WHICH THE READER WILL SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO
RODRIGO AND HIS SQUIRE BETWEEN LEON AND VIVAR.

We have seen Rodrigo quitting the Alcazar precisely at the time when the pleasures of the ball and the fact of finding himself amongst the most beautiful women of Leon and Castile should have made his remaining there exceedingly agreeable. And whither was he going? What was his object in departing from the centre of joyousness and pleasure? The chronicles do not give much information on this occasion, as on many others, as to the actions of our hero.

The tumult and bustle of the Court were insupportable to him; his uneasy soul required calm and solitude; he desired to concentrate his thoughts on one subject alone, on the love which, the more it was thwarted, the more it became strong and burning in his heart. What were all those beautiful women to him, all those elegant and noble cavaliers, all that delicious music, all those amusements and dances, all that animation, that life, that gaiety of the Court, if he could not continue his sweet converse and his love-whisperings with Ximena—his love-dreams of love and happiness of a former time? He had reflected that if he had gone to take leave of his father, he could not do so without also taking leave of the king and of the cavaliers who surrounded him, and in that case they would all have endeavoured to prevent his abandoning the pleasures of the