MARY JOHNSTON

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CHAPTER I

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THE morning was gray and I sat by the sea near Palos in a gray mood. I was Jayme de Marchena, and that was a good, *old Christian* name. But my grandmother was Jewess, and in corners they said that she never truly recanted, and I had been much with her as a child. She was dead, but still they talked of her. Jayme de Marchena, looking back from the hillside of forty-six, saw some service done for the Queen and the folk. This thing and that thing. Not demanding trumpets, but serviceable. It would be neither counted nor weighed beside and against that which Don Pedro and the Dominican found to say. What they found to say they made, not found. They took clay of misrepresentation, and in the field of falsehood sat them down, and consulting the parchment of malice, proceeded to create. But false as was all they set up, the time would cry it true.

It was reasonable that I should find the day gray.

Study and study and study, year on year, and at last image a great thing, just under the rim of the mind’s ocean, sending up for those who will look streamers above horizon, streamers of colored and wonderful light! Study and reason and with awe and delight take light from above. Dream of good news for one and all, of life given depth and brought into music, dream of giving the given, never holding it back, which would be avarice and betraying! Write, and give men and women to read what you have written, and believe—

poor Deluded!—that they also feel inner warmth and light and rejoice.

Oh, gray the sea and gray the shore!

But some did feel it.

The Dominican, when it fell into his hands, called it perdition. A Jewess for grandmother, and Don Pedro for enemy. And now the Dominican—the Dominicans!

The Queen and the King made edict against the Jews, and there sat the Inquisition.

I was—I am—Christian. It is a wide and deep and high word. When you ask, “What is it—Christian?” then must each of us answer as it is given to him to answer. I and thou—and the True, the Universal Christ give us light!

To-day all Andalusia, all Castile and all Spain to me seemed gray, and gray the utter Ocean that stretched no man knew where. The gray was the gray of fetters and of ashes.

The tide made, and as the waves came nearer, eating the sand before me, they uttered a low crying. *In danger—danger—in danger, Jayme de Marchena!*

I had been in danger before. Who is not often and always in danger, in life? But this was a danger to daunt.

Mine were no powerful friends. I had only that which was within me. I was only son of only son, and my parents and grandparents were dead, and my distant kindred cold, seeing naught of good in so much study and thinking of that old, dark, beautiful, questionable one, my grandmother. I had indeed a remote kinsman, head of a convent in this neighborhood, and he was a wise man and a kindly. But not he either could do aught here!

All the Jews to be banished, and Don Pedro with a steady forefinger, “That man—take him, too! Who does not know that his grandmother was Jewess, and that he lived with her and drank poison?” But the Dominican, “No! The Holy Office will take him. You have but to read—only you must not read—what he has written to see why!”

Gray Ocean, stretching endlessly and now coming close, were it not well if I drowned myself this gray morning while I can choose the death I shall die? Now the great murmur sang *Well*, and now it sang Not well.

Low cliff and heaped sand and a solitary bird wide-winging toward the mountains of Portugal, and the Ocean gray-blue and salt! The salt savor entered me, and an inner zest came forward and said No, to being craven. In banishment certainly, in the House of the Inquisition more doubtfully, the immortal man might yet find market from which to buy! If the mind could surmount, the eternal quest need not be interrupted—even there!

Blue Ocean sang to me.

A vision—it came to me at times, vision—set itself in air. I saw A People who persecuted neither Jew nor thinker. It rose one Figure, formed of an infinite number of small figures, but all their edges met in one glow. The figure stood upon the sea and held apart the clouds, and was free and fair and mighty, and was man and woman melted together, and it took all colors and made of them a sun for its brow. I did not know when it would live, but I knew that it should live. Perhaps it was the whole world.

It vanished, leaving sky and ocean and Andalusia. But great visions leave great peace. After it, for this day, it

seemed not worth while to grieve and miserably to forebode. Through the hours that I lay there by the sea, airs from that land or that earth blew about me and faint songs visited my ears, and the gray day was only gray like a dove’s breast.

Jayme de Marchena stayed by the lonely sea because that seemed the safest place to stay. At hand was the small port of Palos that might not know what was breeding in Seville, and going thither at nightfall I found lodging and supper in a still corner where all night I heard the Tinto flowing by.

I had wandered to Palos because of the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria de la Rabida and my very distant kins-man, Fray Juan Perez. The day after the gray day by the shore I walked half a league of sandy road and came to convent gate. The porter let me in, and I waited in a little court with doves about me and a swinging bell above until the brother whom he had called returned and took me to Prior’s room. At first Fray Juan Perez was stiff and cold, but by littles this changed and he became a good man, large-minded and with a sense for kindred. Clearly he thought that I should not have had a Jewish grandmother, nor have lived with her from my third to my tenth birthday, and most clearly that I should not have written that which I had written. But his God was an energetic, enterprising, kindly Prince, rather bold himself and tolerant of heathen. Fray Juan Perez even intimated a doubt if God wanted the Inquisition. “But that’s going rather far!” he said hastily and sat drumming the table and pursing his lips. Presently he brought out, “But you know I can’t do anything!”

I did know it. What could he do? I suppose I had had a half-hope of something. I knew not what. Without a hope I would not have come to La Rabida. But it was maimed from the first, and now it died. I made a gesture of relinquishment. “No, I suppose you cannot—”

He said after a moment that he was glad to see that I had let my beard grow and was very plainly dressed, though I had never been elaborate there, and especially was he glad that I was come to Palos not as Jayme de Marchena, but under a plain and simple name, Juan Lepe, to wit. His advice was to flee from the wrath to come. He would not say flee from the Holy Office—that would be heinous!—but he would say absent myself, abscond, be banished, Jayme de Marchena by Jayme de Marchena. There were barques in Palos and rude seamen who asked no question when gold just enough, and never more than enough, was shown. He hesitated a moment and then asked if I had funds. If not—

I thanked him and said that I had made provision.

“Then,” said he, “go to Barbary, Don Jayme! An intelligent and prudent man may prosper at Ercilla or at Fez. If you must study, study there.”

“You also study,” I said.

“In fair trodden highways—never in thick forest and mere fog!” he answered. “Now if you were like one who has been here and is now before Granada, at Santa Fe, sent for thither by the Queen! That one hath indeed studied to benefit Spain—Spain, Christendom, and the world!”

I asked who was that great one, but before he could tell me came interruption. A visitor entered, a strong-lipped, bold-eyed man named Martin Pinzon. I was to meet him

again and often, but at this time I did not know that. Fray Juan Perez evidently desiring that I should go, I thought it right to oblige him who would have done me kindness had he known how. I went without intimate word of parting and after only a casual stare from Martin Pinzon.

But without, my kinsman came after me. “I want to say, Don Jayme, that if I am asked for testimony I shall hold to it that you are as good Christian as any—”

It was kinsman’s part and all that truly I could have hoped for, and I told him so. About us was quiet, vacant cloister, and we parted more warmly than we had done within.

The white convent of La Rabida is set on a headland among vineyards and pine trees. It regards the ocean and, afar, the mountains of Portugal, and below it runs a small river, going out to sea through sands with the Tinto and the Odiel. Again the day was gray and the pine trees sighing. The porter let me out at gate.

I walked back toward Palos through the sandy ways. I did not wish to go to Africa.

It is my belief that that larger Self whom they will call protecting Saint or heavenly Guardian takes hand in affairs oftener than we think! Leaving the Palos road, I went to the sea as I had done yesterday and again sat under heaped sand with about me a sere grass through which the wind whined. At first it whined and then it sang in a thin, outlandish voice. Sitting thus, I might have looked toward Africa, but I knew now that I was not going to Africa. Often, perhaps, in the unremembered past I had been in Africa; often, doubtless, in ages to come its soil would be under my

foot, but now I was not going there! To-day I looked westward over River-Ocean, unknown to our fathers and unknown to ourselves. It was unknown as the future of the world.

Ocean piled before me. From where I lay it seemed to run uphill to one pale line, nor blue nor white, set beneath the solid gray. Over that hilltop, what? Only other hills and plains, water, endlessly water, until the waves, so much mightier than waves of that blue sea we knew best, should beat at last against Asia shore! So high, so deep, so vast, so real, yet so empty-seeming save for strange dangers! No sails over the hilltop; no sails in all that Vast save close at hand where mariners held to the skirts of Mother. Europe. Ocean vast, Ocean black, Ocean unknown. Yet there, too, life and the knowing of life ran somehow continuous.

It wiled me from my smaller self. How had we all suffered, we the whole earth! But we were moving, we the world with none left out, moving toward That which held worlds, which was conscious above worlds. Long the journey, long the adventure, but it was not worth while fearing, it was not worth while whining! I was not alone Jayme de Marchena, nor Juan Lepe, nor this name nor that nor the other.

There was now a great space of quiet in my mind. Suddenly formed there the face and figure of Don Enrique de Cerda whose life I had had the good hap to save. He was far away with the Queen and King who beleaguered Granada. I had not seen him for ten years. A moment before he had rested among the host of figures in the unevenly

lighted land of memory. Now he stood forth plainly and seemed to smile.

I took the leading. With the inner eye I have seen lines of light like subtle shining cords running between persons. Such a thread stretched now between me and Enrique de Cerda. I determined to make my way, as Juan Lepe, through the mountains and over the plain of Granada to Santa Fe.

CHAPTER II

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SET will to an end and promptly eyes open to means! I did not start for Granada from Palos but from Huelva, and I quitted Andalusia as a porter in a small merchant train carrying goods of sorts to Zarafa that was a mountain town taken from the Moors five years back. I was to these folk Juan Lepe, a strong, middle-aged man used to ships but now for some reason tired of them. My merchants had only eyes for the safety of their persons and their bales, plunged the third day into mountainous wild country echoing and ghastly with long-lasting war. Their servants and muleteers walked and rode, lamented or were gay, raised faction, swore, laughed, traveled grimly or in a dull melancholy or mirthfully; quarreled and made peace, turn by turn, day by day, much alike. One who was a bully fixed a quarrel upon me and another took my part. All leaped to sides. I was forgotten in the midst of them; they could hardly have told now what was the cause of battle. A young merchant rode back to chide and settle matters. At last some one remembered that Diego had struck Juan Lepe who had flung him off. Then Tomaso had sprung in and struck Diego. Then Miguel—“Let Juan Lepe alone!” said my merchant. “Fie! a poor Palos seafaring child, and you great Huelva men!” They laughed at that, and the storm vanished as it had come.

I liked the young man.

How wild and without law, save “Hold if you can!” were these mountains! “Hold if you can to life—hold if you can to knowledge—hold if you can to joy!” Black cliff overhung

black glen and we knew there were dens of robbers. Far and near violence falls like black snow. This merchant band gathered to sleep under oaks with a great rock at our back. We had journeyers' supper and fire, for it was cold, cold in these heights. A little wine was given and men fell to sleep by the heaped bales; horses, asses and mules being fastened close under the crag. Three men watched, to be relieved in middle night by other three who now slept. A muleteer named Rodrigo and Juan Lepe and the young merchant took the first turn. The first two sat on one side of the fire and the young merchant on the other.

The muleteer remained sunken in a great cloak, his chin on his arms folded upon his knees, and what he saw in the land within I cannot tell. But the young merchant was of a quick disposition and presently must talk. For some distance around us spread bare earth set only with shrubs and stones. Also the rising moon gave light, and with that and our own strength we did not truly look for any attack. We sat and talked at ease, though with lowered voices, Rodrigo somewhere away and the rest of the picture sleeping. The merchant asked what had been my last voyage.

I answered, after a moment, to England.

"You do not seem to me," he said, "a seaman. But I suppose there are all kinds of seamen."

I said yes, the sea was wide.

"England now, at the present moment?" he said, and questioned me as to Bristol, of which port he had trader's knowledge. I answered out of a book I had read. It was true that, living once by the sea, I knew how to handle a boat. I

could find in memory sailors' terms. But still he said, "You are not a seaman such as we see at Palos and San Lucar."

It is often best not to halt denial. Let it pass by and wander among the wild grasses!

"I myself," he said presently, "have gone by sea to Vigo and to Bordeaux." He warmed his hands at the fire, then clasped them about his knees and gazed into the night. "What, Juan Lepe, is that Ocean we look upon when we look west? I mean, where does it go? What does it strike?"

"India, belike. And Cathay. To-day all men believe the earth to be round."

"A long way!" he said. "O Sancta Maria! All that water!"

"We do not have to drink it."

He laughed. "No! Nor sail it. But after I had been on that voyage I could see us always like mice running close to a wall, forever and forever! Juan Lepe, we are little and timid!"

I liked his spirit. "One day we shall be lions and eagles and bold prophets! Then our tongue shall taste much beside India and Cathay!"

"Well, I hope it," he said. "Mice running under the headlands."

He fell silent, cherishing his knees and staring into the fire. It was not Juan Lepe's place to talk when master merchant talked not. I, too, regarded the fire, and the herded mountains robed in night, and the half-moon like a sail rising from an invisible boat.

The night went peacefully by. It was followed by a hard day's travel and the incident of the road. At evening we saw the walls of Zarafa in a sunset glory. The merchants and their train passed through the gate and found their

customary inn. With others, Juan Lepe worked hard, unlading and storing. All done, he and the bully slept almost in each other's arms, under the arches of the court, dreamlessly.

The next day and the next were still days of labor. It was not until the third that Juan Lepe considered that he might now absent himself and there be raised no hue and cry after strong shoulders. He had earned his quittance, and in the nighttime, upon his hands and knees, he crept from the sleepers in the court. Just before dawn the inn gate swung open. He had been waiting close to it, and he passed out noiselessly.

In the two days, carrying goods through streets to market square and up to citadel and pausing at varying levels for breath and the prospect, I had learned this town well enough. I knew where went the ascending and descending ways. Now almost all lay asleep, antique, shaded, Moorish, still, under the stars. The soldiery and the hidalgos, their officers, slept; only the sentinels waked before the citadel entry and on the town walls and by the three gates. The town folk slept, all but the sick and the sorrowful and the careful and those who had work at dawn. Listen, and you might hear sound like the first moving of birds, or breath of dawn wind coming up at sea. The greater part now of the town folk were Christian, brought in since the five-year-gone siege that still resounded. Moors were here, but they had turned Christian, or were slaves, or both slave and Christian. I had seen monks of all habits and heard ring above the inn the bells of a nunnery. Now again they rang. The mosque was now a church. It rose at hand,—white, square, domed. I

went by a ladder-like lane down toward Zarafa wall and the Gate of the Lion. At sunrise in would pour peasants from the vale below, bringing vegetables and poultry, and mountaineers with quails and conies, and others with divers affairs. Outgoing would be those who tilled a few steep gardens beyond the wall, messengers and errand folk, soldiers and traders for the army before Granada.

It was full early when I came to the wall. I could make out the heavy and tall archway of the gate, but as yet was no throng before it. I waited; the folk began to gather, the sun came up. Zarafa grew rosy. Now was clatter enough, voices of men and brutes, both sides the gate. The gate opened. Juan Lepe won out with a knot of brawny folk going to the mountain pastures. Well forth, he looked back and saw Zarafa gleaming rose and pearl in the blink of the sun, and sent young merchantward a wish for good. Then he took the eastward way down the mountain, toward lower mountains and at last the Vega of Granada.

CHAPTER III

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THE day passed. I had adventures of the road, but none of consequence. I slept well among the rocks, waked, ate the bit of bread I had with me, and fell again to walking.

Mountains were now withdrawing to the distant horizon where they stood around, a mighty and beautiful wall. I was coming down into the plain of Granada, that once had been a garden. Now, north, south, east, west, it lay war-trampled. Old owners were dead, men and women, or were *mudexares*, vassals, or were fled, men and women, all who could flee, to their kindred in Africa. Or they yet cowered, men and women, in the broken garden, awaiting individual disaster. The Kingdom of Granada had sins, and the Kingdom of Castile, and the Kingdom of Leon. The Moor was stained, and the Spaniard, the Moslem and the Christian and the Jew. Who had stains the least or the most God knew—and it was a poor inquiry. Seek the virtues and bind them with love, each in each!

If the mountain road had been largely solitary, it was not so of this road. There were folk enough in the wide Vega of Granada. Clearly, as though the one party had been dressed in black and the other in red, they divided into vanquished and victor. Bit by bit, now through years, all these towns and villages, all these fertile fields and bosky places, rich and singing, had left the hand of the Moor for the hand of the Spaniard.

In all this part of his old kingdom the Moor lay low in defeat. In had swarmed the Christian and with the Christian

the Jew, though now the Jew must leave. The city of Granada was not yet surrendered, and the Queen and King held all soldiery that they might at Santa Fe, built as it were in a night before Granada walls. Yet there seemed at large bands enough, licentious and loud, the scum of soldiery. Ere I reached the village that I now saw before me I had met two such bands, I wondered, and then wondered at my own wonder.

The chief house of the village was become an inn. Two long tables stood in the patio where no fountain now flowed nor orange trees grew nor birds sang in corners nor fine awning kept away the glare. Twenty of these wild and base fighting men crowded one table, eating and drinking, clamorous and spouting oaths. At the other table sat together at an end three men whom by a number of tokens might be robbers of the mountains. They sat quiet, indifferent to the noise, talking low among themselves in a tongue of their own, kin enough to the soldiery not to fear them. The opposite end of the long table was given to a group to which I now joined myself. Here sat two Franciscan friars, and a man who seemed a lawyer; and one who had the air of the sea and turned out to be master of a Levantine; and a brisk, talkative, important person, a Catalan, and as it presently appeared alcalde once of a so-so village; and a young, unhealthy-looking man in black with an open book beside him; and a strange fellow whose Spanish was imperfect.

I sat down near the friars, crossed myself, and cut a piece of bread from the loaf before me. The innkeeper and his wife, a gaunt, extraordinarily tall woman, served,

running from table to table. The place was all heat and noise. Presently the soldiers, ending their meal, got up with clamor and surged from the court to their waiting horses. After them ran the innkeeper, appealing for pay. Denials, expostulation, anger and beseeching reached the ears of the patio, then the sound of horses going down stony ways. “O God of the poor!” cried the gaunt woman. “How are we robbed!”

“Why are they not before Granada?” demanded the lawyer and alertly provided the answer to his own question. “Take locusts and give them leave to eat, being careful to say, ‘This fellow’s fields only!’ But the locusts have wings and their nature is to eat!”

The mountain robbers, if robbers they were, dined quietly, the gaunt woman promptly and painstakingly serving them. They were going to pay, I was sure, though it might not be this noon.

The two friars seemed, quiet, simple men, dining as dumbly as if they sat in Saint Francis’s refectory. The sometime alcalde and the shipmaster were the talkers, the student sitting as though he were in the desert, eating bread and cheese and onions and looking on his book. The lawyer watched all, talked to make them talk, then came in and settled matters. The alcalde was the politician, knowing the affairs of the world and speaking familiarly of the King and the Queen and the Marquis of Cadiz.

The shipmaster said, “This time last year I was in London, and I saw their King. His name is Henry. King Henry the Seventh, and a good carrier of his kingship!”

“That for him!” said the alcalde. “Let him stay in his foggy island! But Spain is too small for King Ferdinand.” “All kings find their lands too small,” said the lawyer.

The shipmaster spoke again. “The King of Portugal’s ship sails ahead of ours in that matter. He’s stuck his banner in the new islands, Maderia and the Hawk Islands and where not! I was talking in Cadiz with one who was with Bartholomew Diaz when he turned Africa and named it Good Hope. Which is to say, King John has Good Hope of seeing Portugal swell. Portugal! Well, I say, ‘Why not Spain’?”

The student looked up from his book. “It is a great Age!” he said and returned to his reading.

When we had finished dinner, we paid the tall, gaunt woman and leaving the robbers, if robbers they were, still at table, went out into the street. Here the friars, the alcalde and the lawyer moved in the direction of the small, staring white and ruined mosque that was to be transformed into the church of San Jago the Deliverer. That was the one thing of which the friars had spoken. A long bench ran by inn wall and here the shipmaster took his seat and began to discourse with those already there. Book under arm, the student moved dreamily down the opposite lane. Juan Lepe walked away alone.

Through the remainder of this day he had now company and adventure without, now solitude and adventure within. That night he spent in a ruined tower where young trees grew and an owl was his comrade and he read the face of a glorious moon. Dawn. He bathed in a stream that ran by the mound of the tower and ate a piece of bread from his wallet and took the road.

The sun mounted above the trees. A man upon a mule came up behind me and was passing. “There is a stone wedged in his shoe,” I said. The rider drew rein and I lifted the creature’s foreleg and took out the pebble. The rider made search for a bit of money. I said that the deed was short and easy and needed no payment, whereupon he put up the coin and regarded me out of his fine blue eyes. He was quite fair, a young man still, and dressed after a manner of his own in garments not at all new but with a beauty of fashioning and putting on. He and his mule looked a corner out of a great painting. And I had no sooner thought that than he said, “I see in you, friend, a face and figure for my ‘Draught of Fishes.’ And by Saint Christopher, there is water over yonder and just the landscape!” He leaned from the saddle and spoke persuasively, “Come from the road a bit down to the water and let me draw you! You are not dressed like the kin of Midas! I will give you the price of dinner.” As he talked he drew out of a richly worked bag a book of paper and pencils. I thought, “This beard and the clothes of Juan Lepe. He can hardly make it so that any may recognize.” It was resting time and the man attracted. I agreed, if he would take no more than an hour.

“The drawing, no!—Bent far over, gathering the net strongly—Andrew or Mark perhaps, since, traditionally, John must have youth.”

He had continued to study me all this time, and now we left the road and moved over the plain to the stream that here widened into a pool fringed with rushes and a few twisted trees. An ancient, half-sunken boat drowsing under the bank he hailed again in the name of Saint Christopher.

Dismounting, he fastened his mule to a willow and proceeded to place me, then himself found a root of a tree, and taking out his knife fell to sharpening pencil. This done, he rested book against knee and began to draw.

Having made his figure in one posture he rose and showed me another and drew his fisherman so. Then he demonstrated a third way and drew again. Now he was silent, working hard, and now he dropped his hand, threw back his head and talked. He himself made a picture, paly gold of locks, subtle and quick of face, plastered against a blue shield with a willow wreath going around.

I stood so or so, drawing hard upon the net with the fishes. Then at his command I approached more nearly, and he drew full face and three-quarter and profile. It was between these accomplishings that he talked more intimately.

“Seamen go to Italy,” he said. “Were you ever in Milan? But that is inland.”

I answered that I had been from Genoa to Milan.

“It is not likely that you saw a great painter there Messer Leonardo?”

It happened that I had done this, and moreover had seen him at work and heard him put right thought into most right words. I was so tired of lying that after a moment I said that I had seen and heard Messer Leonardo.

“Did you see the statue?”

“The first time I saw him he was at work upon it. The next time he was painting in the church of Santa Maria. The third time he sat in a garden, sipped wine and talked.”

“I hold you,” he said, “to be a fortunate fisherman! Just as this fisher I am painting, and whether it is Andrew or Mark, I do not yet know, was a most fortunate fisherman!” He ended meditatively, “Though whoever it is, probably he was crucified or beheaded or burned.”

I felt a certain shiver of premonition. The day that had been warm and bright turned in a flash ashy and chill. Then it swung back to its first fair seeming, or not to its first, but to a deeper, brighter yet. The Fisherman by Galilee was fortunate. Whoever perceived truth and beauty was fortunate, fortunate now and forever!

We came back to Messer Leonardo. “I spent six months at the court in Milan,” said the fair man. “I painted the Duke and the Duchess and two great courtiers. Messer Leonardo was away. He returned, and I visited him and found a master. Since that time I study light and shadow and small things and seek out inner action.”

He worked in silence, then again began to speak of painters, Italian and Spanish. He asked me if I had seen such and such pictures in Seville.

“Yes. They are good.”

“Do you know Monsalvat?”

I said that I had climbed there one day. “I dream a painting!” he said, “The Quest of the Grail. Now I see it running over the four walls of a church, and now I see it all packed into one man who rides. Then again it has seemed to me truer to have it in a man and woman who walk, or perhaps even are seated. What do you think?”

I was thinking of Isabel who died in my arms twenty years ago. “I would have it man and woman,” I said.

“Unless, like Messer Leonardo, you can put both in one.”

He sat still, his mind working, while in a fair inner land Isabel and I moved together; then in a meditative quiet he finished his drawing. He himself was admirable, fine gold and bronze, sapphire-eyed, with a face where streams of visions moved the muscles, and all against the blue and the willow tree.

At last he put away pencil, and at his gesture I came from the boat and the reeds. I looked at what he had drawn, and then he shut book and, the mule following us, we moved back to the road.

“My dear fisherman,” he said, “you are trudging afoot and your dress exhibits poverty. Painters may paint Jove descending in showers of golden pesos and yet have few pesos in purse. I have at present ten. I should like to share them with you who have done me various good turns to-day.”

I said that he was generous but that he had done me good turns. Moreover I was not utterly without coin, and certainly the hour had paid for itself. So he mounted his mule and wished me good fortune, and I wished him good fortune.

“Are you going to Santa Fe?”

“Yes. I have a friend in the camp.”

“I go there to paint her Highness the Queen for his Highness the King. Perhaps we shall meet again. I am Manuel Rodriguez.”

“I guessed that,” I answered, “an hour ago! Be so good, great painter, as not to remember me. It will serve me better.”

The light played again over his face. “*The Disguised Hidalgo*. Excellent pictures come to me like that, in a great warm light, and excellent names for pictures.—Very good. In a way, so to speak, I shall completely forget you!”

Two on horseback, a churchman and a knight, with servants following, came around a bend of the dusty road and recognizing Manuel Rodriguez, called to him by name. Away he rode upon his mule, keeping company with them. The dozen in their train followed, raising as they went by such a dust cloud that presently all became like figures upon worn arras. They rode toward Santa Fe, and I followed on foot.

CHAPTER IV

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SANTA Fe rose before me, a camp in wood, plaster and stone, a camp with a palace, a camp with churches. Built of a piece where no town had stood, built that Majesty and its Court and its Army might have roofs and walls, not tents, for so long a siege, it covered the plain, a city raised in a night. The siege had been long as the war had been long. Hidalgo Spain and simple Spain were gathered here in great squares and ribbons of valor, ambition, emulation, desire of excitement and of livelihood, and likewise, I say it, in pieces not small, herded and brought here without any “I say yes” of their own, and to their misery. There held full flavor of crusade, as all along the war had been preached as a crusade. Holy Church had here her own grandees, cavaliers and footmen. They wore cope and they wore cowl, and on occasion many endued themselves with armor and hacked and hewed with an earthly sword. At times there seemed as many friars and priests as soldiers. Out and in went a great Queen and King. Their court was here. The churchmen pressed around the Queen. Famous leaders put on or took off armor in Santa Fe,—the Marquis of Cadiz and many others only less than he in estimation, and one Don Gonsalvo de Cordova, whose greater fame was yet to come. Military and shining youth came to train and fight under these. Old captains-at-arms, gaunt and scarred, made their way thither from afar. All were not Spaniard; many a soldier out at fortune or wishful of fame came from France and Italy, even from England and Germany. Women were in

Santa Fe. The Queen had her ladies. Wives, sisters and daughters of hidalgos came to visit, and the common soldiery had their mates. Nor did there lack courtesans.

Petty merchants thronged the place. All manner of rich goods were bought by the flushed soldiers, the high and the low. And there dwelled here a host of those who sold entertainment,—mummers and jugglers and singers, dwarfs and giants. Dice rattled, now there were castanets and dancing, and now church bells seemed to rock the place. Wine flowed.

Out of the plain a league and more away sprang the two hills of Granada, and pricked against the sky, her walls and thousand towers and noble gates. Between them and Santa Fe stretched open and ruined ground, and here for many a day had shocked together the Spaniard and the Moor. But now there was no longer battle. Granada had asked and been granted seventy days in which to envisage and accept her fate. These were nearing the end. Lost and beaten, haggard with woe and hunger and pestilence, the city stood over against us, above the naked plain, all her outer gardens stripped away, bare light striking the red Alhambra and the Citadel. When the wind swept over her and on to Santa Fe it seemed to bring a sound of wailing and the faint and terrible odor of a long besieged place.

I came at eve into Santa Fe, found at last an inn of the poorer sort, ate scant supper and went to bed. Dawn came with a great ringing of church bells.

Out of the inn, in the throbbing street, I began my search for Don Enrique de Cerda. One told me one thing and one another, but at last I got true direction. At noon I found him

in a goodly room where he made recovery from wounds. Now he walked and now he sat, his arm in a sling and a bandage like a turban around his head. A page took him the word I gave. “Juan Lepe. From the hermitage in the oak wood.” It sufficed. When I entered he gazed, then coming to me, put his unbound hand over mine. “Why,” he asked, “‘Juan Lepe’?”

I glanced toward the page and he dismissed him, whereupon I explained the circumstances.

We sat by the window, and again rose for us the hermitage in the oak wood at foot of a mountain, and the small tower that slew in ugly fashion. Again we were young men, together in strange dangers, learning there each other’s mettle. He had not at all forgotten.

He offered to go to Seville, as soon as Granada should fall, and find and fight Don Pedro. I shook my head. I could have done that had I seen it as the way.

He agreed that Don Pedro was now the minor peril. It is evil to chain thought! In our day we think boldly of a number of things. But touch King or touch Church—the cord is around your neck!

I said that I supposed I had been rash.

He nodded. “Yes. You were rash that day in the oak wood. Less rash, and my bones would be lying there, under tree.” He rose and walked the room, then came to me and put his unhurt arm about my shoulders. “Don Jayme, we swore that day comrade love and service—and that day is now; twilight has never come to it, the leaves of the oak wood have never fallen! The Holy Office shall not have thee!”

“Don Enrique—”

We sat down and drank each a little wine, and fell to ways and means.

I rested Juan Lepe in the household of Don Enrique de Cerda, one figure among many, involved in the swarm of fighting and serving men. There was a squire who had served him long. To this man, Diego Lopez, I was committed, with enough told to enlist his intelligence. He managed for me in the intricate life of the place with a skill to make god Mercury applaud. Don Enrique and I were rarely together, rarely were seen by men to speak one to the other. But in the inner world we were together.

Days passed. We found nothing yet to do while all listening and doing at Santa Fe were bound up in the crumbling of Granada into Spanish hands. It seemed best to wait, watching chances.

Meantime the show glittered, and man’s strong stomach cried “Life! More life!” It glittered at Santa Fe before Granada, and it was a dying ember in Granada before Santa Fe. The one glittered and triumphed because the other glittered and triumphed not. And who above held the balances even and neither sorrowed nor was feverishly elated but went his own way could only be seen from the Vega like a dream or a line from a poet.

For the most part the nobles and cavaliers in Santa Fe spent as though hard gold were spiritual gold to be gathered endlessly. One might say, “They go into a garden and shake tree each morning, which tree puts forth again in the night.” None seemed to see as on a map laid down Spain and the broken peasant and the digger of the gold. None seemed to feel that toil which or soon or late they must recognize for