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THE

CROSS;

OR,

The Spanish Champion:

A TALE.

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Oh! thou fell monster War, that in a moment  
Lay'st waste the noblest part of the creation,  
The boast and masterpiece of the great Maker:  
That wears in vain the impression of his image,  
Unprivileged from thee.

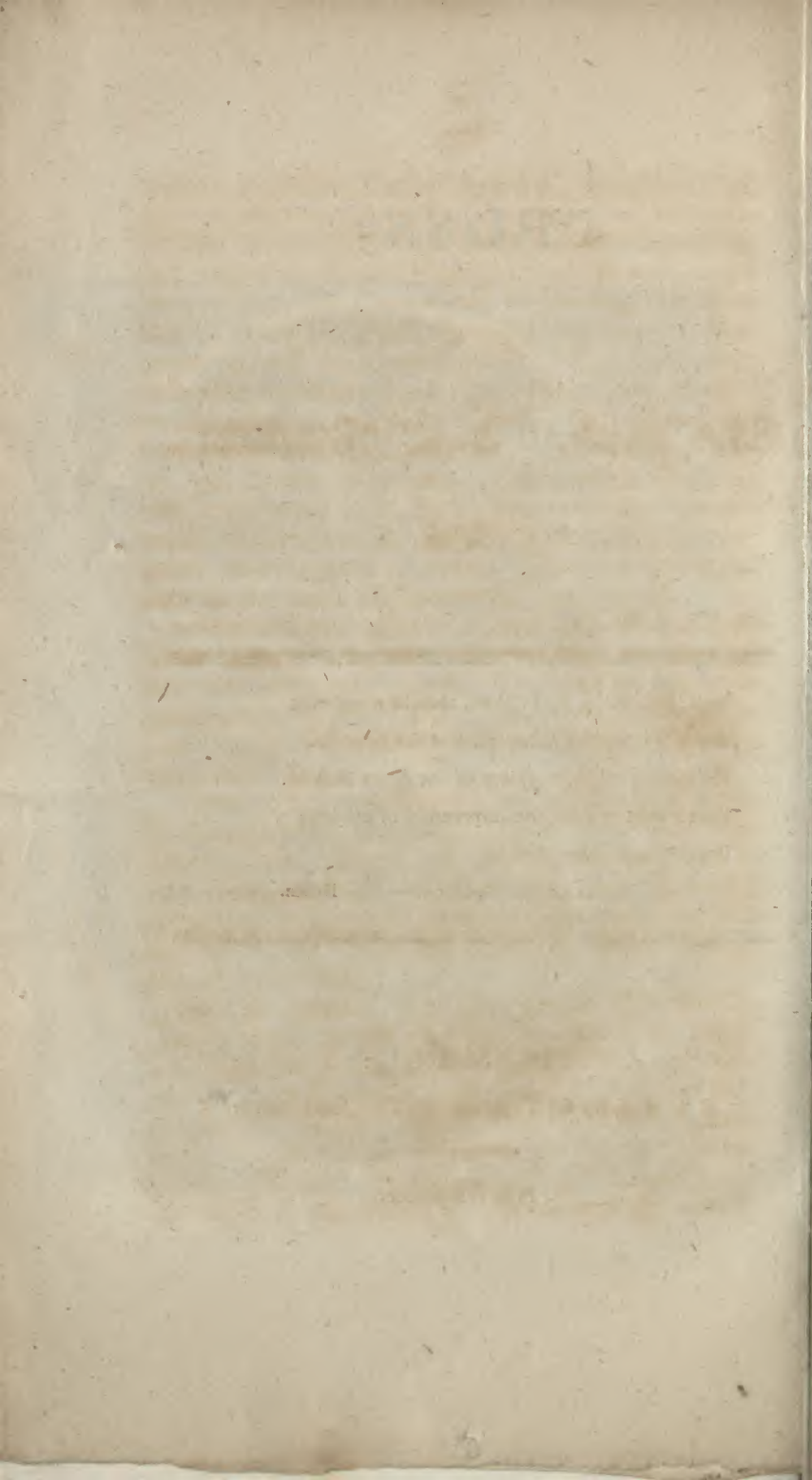
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# THE CROSS ;

OR,

## *THE SPANISH CHAMPION.*

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DURING that period when the Moors, after extending their sway over the whole northern coast of Africa, tempted by the fertility of Spain, poured immense multitudes of ferocious warriors into that ill-fated country, Murad, a chief of the most intrepid valour and unbounded ambition, conducted a vast army of those pitiless invaders into the alluring kingdom of Mursia. In vain Sebastian, the sovereign of this country, opposed the bravery, fidelity, and the utmost resources of his kingdom, to this ravening horde, stimulated alike by rapine and the glory of warlike exploits. Many, however, through succeeding years, were the conflicts which its brave inhabitants sustained, headed by a sovereign, whom they loved equally for his justice, humanity, and courage, against their veteran opponents, flushed with so many vic-

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stories: a pitched battle (in which Sebastian and his son Alphonso, heading the remaining strength of his dominions, were completely vanquished, and Sebastian himself being taken prisoner, while he and his intrepid son were performing the most heroic deeds,) decided at once the fate of that monarch, and the whole country. Alphonso, after achieving whatever the height of consummate skill or desperate valour could effect, to retrieve the fortune of the day, was forced to fly with a few of his brave adherents, and take refuge in the most lonely and almost impenetrable recesses which the surrounding forests afforded, under the cruel mortification of leaving his unfortunate father in the hands of the triumphant Murad.

Sebastian, according to the custom of that barbarous age, was loaded with chains, and hurried into the deep and gloomy dungeons of his own palace, which, with all its treasures, the highly-exulting Murad took possession of, and made his residence.

Among the numerous captives, who had eminently distinguished themselves upon that fatal day which placed Murad on the throne of Mursia, was Alvar, a youth endowed with every personal attraction, heightened by a courage which spurred him on to the most heroic deeds, and which no danger could allay.

On the conclusion of the battle, this youth, though grieving inwardly for the ruin of his country, disdaining the chains with which he was loaded, stood undauntedly before the haughty conqueror. Murad beheld him with fixed attention; his youth, the dignified beauty and gracefulness which displayed themselves throughout his face and person, together with his courage, plead-

ed strongly in his favour. Animated by selfish principles, with his own hands Murad released him from his chains, and embracing him, hailed him as the completest warrior of that hard-contested action.

Native dignity, and the unsullied principles of honour, occasioned a violent contention with gratitude in the bosom of Alvar, for this seeming act of generosity, and held him for some time mute; but the recollection of the benefit he might render his suffering country, by mitigating, through his interest, the haughty ferocity of Murad, overpowered every other impulse, and he bowed with dignified acknowledgement for the favour granted him.

The bosom of this youthful warrior was no stranger to the shafts of love; the beautiful Seraphina had made the deepest impression there. This lady was possessed of the most captivating charms, both of body and mind; she was the daughter of a Jew, whose name was Olivarez, who had in his early years quitted Spain for Palestine, prompted by the eager desire of riches, the inordinate thirst for which had nearly hurried him to ruin.

His wealth, which was rapidly acquired by usury, failed not to attract the eyes of a greedy prince, in whose dominions he resided, and some irregularities in his bargains gave an opportunity of gratifying that rapacity, which is the constant attendant upon eastern power: it was merely by his embracing the Mahometan faith, and giving a large sum of money, that he preserved the remainder of his wealth, and his life.

He had purchased a beautiful Christian slave, by whom he had Seraphina; on her he had

spared neither pains nor expense, to render her complete in every accomplishment and attraction; and her assiduity fully answered his fondest hopes. The plague, which raged with the utmost violence, carried off her mother about the time Seraphina had attained her sixteenth year; and her father, who had ever preserved the tenderest regard for that captivating female, who was in every respect highly worthy of his affection, remained inconsolable. Soon after her death, he took the first opportunity of conveying himself and his daughter to Spain; having, previous to his landing, laid aside the turban, and resumed the garb and religion of the Jew. When the Moors conquered Mursia, he again put on the turban, and became one of the most zealous of the true believers; but he did not long survive his settling in Mursia, to which city he had removed on its falling into the hands of Murad. On his death, he left his beloved daughter great wealth, together with the prudent advice of carefully secreting it, and spreading the report of his having died poor.

But it was not possible to conceal the truth from the penetrating eyes of Roderigo, a youthful Spaniard, whose subtlety in bargains, and readiness in accounts, rendered him a most useful agent to this Jew, both with the Spaniards and the Moors. Long had he in secret cherished a tender flame for the lovely Seraphina; and he was not without hopes, that he might one day become the possessor both of herself and fortune.

But her heart was decidedly fixed on Alvar. The latter had been under the necessity of applying to Olivarez for a loan, to relieve the wants of numbers of his distressed countrymen, whom he found the secret means of aiding, and which the



riches bestowed upon him by Murad quickly enabled him to repay, together with the most exorbitant interest charged upon it. It was during these meetings with the father that Alvar first beheld Seraphina, and the most ardent love for her succeeded. The heart of Seraphina received an equally strong impression; and their mutual passion was soon made known to each other, by means of a favourite and trusty servant of Seraphina, named Jacintha, who procured them frequent private interviews, in which they exchanged their vows. After the death of Olivarez, their intercourse was still more closely repeated.

It chanced, that one evening while the subtle Roderigo was musing on the surest means of furthering his views on Seraphina, amid a retired and shady part of the garden at the back of her house, he was roused from his reveries by the rustling of the leaves at no great distance from him. Starting, he wrapped his cloak closer round him, and concealing his face, he paced with cautious steps to the spot from whence the sound came. He approached near enough to hear the sound of voices, though in a low tone, and quickly after saw Jacintha conducting a man with great caution towards a private door which led into the fields. The moon, which had just before emerged from the clouds, now shone sufficiently bright for him to see the face of Alvar, which he well remembered, from having often seen him with his late master. Transported with fury, he revolved a thousand projects in his mind, to prevent Alvar's union with Seraphina, which he doubted not was on the point of taking place; but the situation of Alvar, and the high estimation in which he stood with Murad, occasioned him the utmost perplexity, and he could resolve upon nothing, but determined

to seize the first opportunity, of either blasting his hopes, or effecting his destruction.

Although Murad remained in possession of the kingdom of Mursia, and no extensive opposition to his power was displayed, yet Alphonso was surrounded by an army, which, though at first small, was daily increasing, by the number of Spaniards who found the means of secretly resorting to him.

This prince was possessed of a strong and penetrating judgment, which was capable of improving every fortunate event to the utmost, and of mitigating or repairing the most disastrous: in battle he was cool and intrepid; deeply versed in all the science and practice of war; humane and generous when a conqueror; patient, and abounding with fortitude, when conquered. Such an opponent Murad secretly dreaded, and his apprehensions were the more keen, from the great affection which the whole kingdom had for him; and he was firmly satisfied, that his newly-acquired throne could never be firmly established, while so able and industrious a rival was in existence; to deprive him of life, therefore, by whatever means it could be effected, was the prime object of his soul.

The hand of Alvar was the only means that could afford the security he so ardently panted for: seizing, therefore, a moment, when he judged the satisfaction and gratitude of Alvar for the favours bestowed upon him had clothed his face with joy, he commenced the trial of his heart, lamenting the necessity, which his fears imposed upon him, of those restrictions and hardships which the Spaniards endured.

Alvar remained in silence, while his soul shuddered amid conjectures upon what would be the end of this address; when Murad, eagerly catching

his hand, said that the future happiness of his countrymen depended solely upon his arm. Alvar started, and Murad lost no time in trying to soothe and tempt his awakened soul, by placing before him the aggrandizement and power which awaited the executing, at the same time, what would yield such happiness to his country, and even stamp virtue upon the deed: then, hastily placing a dagger in his hand, emphatically added, "That it was the only means of making *multitudes* happy, by the sacrifice of *one*." The horror which this excited in the breast of Alvar, robbed him of all reflection, and he instantly dashed the dagger on the earth. The countenance of Murad kindled with rage and disappointment, in conscious guilt he rolled his glaring eye-balls from the face of Alvar, and fixed them with a downcast look; while his deeply agitated bosom prompted the destruction of this virtuous warrior. Alvar beheld, with returning thought, the convulsive gusts of passion which shook the frame of Murad, and his prudence sought to quell them. Seizing, therefore, the dagger, and submissively returning it, he thus addressed him: "Mighty conqueror! let the enemies of Murad perish in the open field of contention; and never may the secret dagger, in the breast of his adversary, *stab* his own glory." The furious soul of Murad was abashed at this generous sentiment of Alvar, and the crimsoned fury of his countenance was instantly changed to a deadly paleness.

Recovering himself, he eagerly raised Alvar, and embracing him, apologized for this pretended trial which he had put him to; highly extolled the purity of his heart, nor failed to add how much the result had raised him in his own; and, on departing, assured him of new and increasing favours. But Alvar had too well noticed his coun-

tenance and sudden change, to remain free from apprehensions. Under the cover of the night, therefore, hastening from the palace, he sought the abode of his beloved Seraphina. She had been by no means easy at the situation of Alvar with Murad; dreading, as she was conscious of his generous nature, lest it should operate but too powerfully to the disadvantage of his suffering countrymen. To remind him, therefore, of his duty, and to keep it constantly before him, she had employed her utmost skill in embroidering a rich scarf with these words: *Alvar, yield thy oath to aid Alphonso, and this becomes the pledge for Seraphina's hand.* She had just finished it, when a signal at the door announced his arrival. Seraphina started, and though surprised at his visiting her at an hour so much later than that to which they had accustomed themselves, yet she flew with joy to give him entrance.

Alvar approached her with downcast looks; and when she anxiously enquired the cause, he, with a trembling accent, informed her of the whole that had passed between him and Murad.

Seraphina stood fixed in horror at his relation; and overcome with apprehensions for his safety, sunk motionless on his bosom. He clasped her in his arms; and his soothing voice at length restoring her, she gave vent to her sorrow in a flood of tears.

Though absorbed in equal grief, he strove to comfort her. At length the danger of his longer delay rushed upon her mind, and she bade him fly, assuring him his life was dearer to her than her own; and although his absence would plunge her into the depth of misery, yet his safety would be the subject of her constant prayer.

After many mutual endearments, Alvar was

forced at length to tear himself from her; but ere he departed she bethought her of the scarf which she had worked for him. On her presenting him with it he kissed it a thousand times, and reading the words took a most solemn oath to obey her injunctions: then, after fresh embraces and mutual vows, he reluctantly quitted her presence. Jacintha stood ready to conduct him through the garden to the gate which led into the fields; where, having joined his companions, who waited for him, they hastened forward on their journey.

Jacintha, on her return through the garden, met Roderigo; for that crafty Spaniard, who had been constantly on the watch ever since his first discovery of the intercourse between Alvar and Seraphina, had seen him enter, and by the aid of all-powerful gold, soon became acquainted with the cause of his visit at so late an hour.

The treacherous Roderigo lost not a moment in letting Murad know, by a secret agent whom he employed, of the flight of Alvar to join Alphonso, yet carefully concealing the name of Seraphina, and the love which Alvar held for her; well knowing, that such an information would lose him for ever his charming mistress.

Murad was thrown into the most violent transport of rage on gaining this intelligence. He instantly commanded Alvar's apartments in the palace to be searched, and finding him gone, doubted not the truth of what was thus imparted to him, and immediately dispatched a party of his soldiers, headed by a favourite Moor, whom he strictly charged to bring him the head of Alvar.

Meanwhile Seraphina remained under the most painful apprehensions for his safety, and every moment started with terror at some fresh idea of

mischief befalling him; and so wretched did these suggestions render her, that she determined to risk her own life, and immediately follow him with every aid in her power. For this purpose she hastily summoned Roderigo and her servants before her, and informed them that the most urgent business required her going immediately to the country; and giving them money, ordered them to procure as many men as they could engage with sufficient secrecy, and who could be depended upon, in the neighbourhood, to accompany them in guarding her.

They cheerfully acquiesced, and prepared accordingly, Roderigo alone excepted, who deeply repined at the summons; but this he was forced to do in secret, as his acting otherwise would have betrayed his knowledge of her design. He therefore prepared to head them, resolving within himself to thwart her design of succouring Alvar by every means in his power.

Seraphina having now entrusted every thing to the care of Jacintha during her absence, and taking all the wealth which she could possibly secret, particularly her jewels, issued with her party, under cover of the night, through the private entrance which had led Alvar to the fields, and, directed by her, they pursued the same route he had taken, she having been well-informed of it ere he departed from her.

The party dispatched by Murad had pursued a tract among the woods, and they were on the borders of a thicket when Seraphina and her party appeared. Iram, the Moor deputed by Murad, who proceeded with extreme caution, and whose eyes were constantly prying around him on every object, quickly beheld them. He lost no time in secreting himself and his followers among the

bushes, from whence he plainly discerned that the group was composed of Spaniards, and that they were conducting a lady, who, though plainly attired, he doubted not, from her numerous attendants, was of no small consequence. As they drew near the place of his concealment, he discovered her to be of exquisite beauty; which instantly inflamed him, that forgetting for the moment every other consideration, he gazed motionless at so delightful an object. When the reflection upon his immediate commission obtruded itself, he summoned up every argument of excuse for attacking this party before he proceeded farther in search of Alvar.

Desire, and the hopes of a rich booty, quickly decided him, and he waited for their near approach, that he might rush out upon them with the sure prospect of success. He no sooner beheld them on the wished-for spot, than he sallied forth, closely followed by his attendant Moors. The suddenness of the attack had nearly deprived Seraphina's party of all power of defence; but the despair of saving themselves by any other means, quickly furnished them with a desperate courage, which enabled them to stand the shock of their furious assailants, several of whom fell in the attack. The Moors, from being greatly superior in numbers, quickly terminated the action, compelling the Spaniards to seek their safety in flight. The terrified Seraphina, clasping her hands toward Heaven, bewailed the miserable lot which awaited her. Iram was advancing to seize her in his arms, when a party of Spaniards suddenly rushed among them and checked their victorious career. Seraphina, who was near falling to the earth with terror at the approach of the furious Moor, suddenly heard the voice of one who rushed to her deliverance, and who with loud and menacing tone, ex-

claimed—"Forbear! proud infidel, and meet my avenging sword!"

Iram started from his prey—he beheld the face of Alvar; and the astonished Seraphina sustained a fresh tumult in her bosom, from the joy of beholding him, and the fear for his life. While the Spaniards, recovering from their panic on this timely aid, recommenced the action with renewed hope and vigour; and so desperate was become the strife, that none had survived but Alvar, who was fiercely engaged with Iram, together with Roderigo, Perez, and two other Spaniards, that were opposed by a couple who now alone remained, besides Iram, of all the Moors. Roderigo and his companions had the good fortune to slay one of these, though two of the Spaniards had scarce strength left to use their weapons, and the other Moor appeared to shun all farther contention.

At this moment a clump of earth, against which the foot of Alvar struck, threw him on his knees, and Iram, who was nearly spent with the fatigue of so long a contest, with uplifted sabre, seizing the advantage, was on the point of plunging it into him. Seraphina screamed with terror at the descending stroke, while Roderigo, now freed from danger, beheld with joy the approaching death of his rival, and seeing this was a favourable moment to secure Seraphina to himself, beckoning to Perez, who immediately followed him, rushed upon her, and seizing her in her arms, was hastening away with her; while the remaining Moor, whose backwardness in continuing the engagement proceeded not from fear, sprung upon Iram and checked his arm. Alvar instantly sprung up, and with renewed strength attacking his adversary, soon laid him lifeless at his feet. The cries of Seraphina



prevented him thanking his deliverer; for, on turning hastily toward her, he beheld Roderigo, aided by Perez, forcing her away. Astonished, he rushed upon him, accompanied by the Moor; but Roderigo, who expected not this sudden change in the fate of Alvar, quitting her, declined all contest, and with refined hypocrisy, begged him to forbear; congratulating him on his safety, he assured him, that his only motive was to secure her from the chief of the infidels, whose success he had deemed certain, from the desperate situation of Alvar, and the inability which he and his companions lay under, from their fatigue, of defending her from him aided by the other Moor.

The generous, unsuspecting Alvar, believed his story, and in the height of his joy embraced him.

Alvar had now leisure to thank the generous Moor for having preserved his life; and, at the same time he requested to learn to what peculiar tive he was indebted to him for his assistance.

Mosoul informed him, that Iram was always his deadly foe. He hated him for his valiant deeds. "Often has he," said Mosoul, "vowed thy destruction; and when our sovereign, on thy flight, in the transport of his fury, commanded thee to be pursued and slain, Iram joyfully stepped forth, and promised to bring him thy head, or forfeit his own. Murad joyfully accepted the tender of his services, and furnished him with as many warriors as were deemed sufficient; amongst whom I, much against my will, was one—for oft have I admired thy generous nature, and deeply repined at being forced to seek thy death. Thus accompanied, he set off in pursuit of thee; but meeting thy beloved Seraphina by the way, he was so inflamed with lust and the hopes of plunder, that he ventured the lives of his attendants to gratify his own inordinate

desires. Too nearly had he succeeded in his views; but I could not behold with indifference his uplifted sabre, ready to take the life of the brave defender of her honour, so I rushed forward to save thee. Go, may Alla preserve thee from further evils, and mayest thou be happy with thy beloved and charming Seraphina!" Alvar parted from Mosoul, but not till after many embraces; and the eyes of Seraphina, glistening with regret at his departure, spoke at the same time the deep gratitude of her heart.

And now the delighted Alvar passed gaily on, leading his Seraphina, who, with downcast looks, listened with rapture to his soothing voice, which in tender accents strove to chase from her bosom those terrifying objects, which her late dangerous situation had planted there.

Long had they pursued their way without rest or refreshment; for the hand of rapine had created a dreary waste around them, and those delicious plains, which formerly had fed vast herds and innumerable flocks, now presented nothing but a wide extended space, without a living object to cheer the wandering eye. Seraphina, complaining of fatigue and thirst, sat down upon the turf; Alvar anxious to afford her relief, leaving Roderigo and Perez to guard her, proceeded in search of water. At a considerable distance he found a brook, and filling a small cup, which he always carried about with him on a journey, he returned to the place where he had left Seraphina. What was his astonishment to find her gone! Thinking she and her attendants had been surprised by a party of Moors, and carried off by these infidels, with a look of despair he threw himself upon the earth, and bitterly bewailed his misfortune; then, starting up, flew with frenzied step

he knew not whither. Thus urged by the wild impulse of his mind, he hastened through the wood, till its rugged surface impeded his further progress. Raging with despair at his loss, he sat down; and while a deep sigh heaved from the most inward recesses of his aching bosom, he cried—"Alas! all hope is now fled! She is lost to me for ever!" Then suddenly starting up, and gazing wildly around him, he groaned: "Yet through the world will I seek thee! this heart shall be dead to all comfort till thou art found!" Then with melancholy step he proceeded, and eagerly passed each obstruction that came in his way.

Meantime Seraphina, after Alvar's departure complaining of a sudden sickness, fainted in Roderigo's arms, who, during her insensibility, flew with her across the wood, accompanied by Perez. On her recovery she stared wildly around, but seeing no appearance of Alvar, in a tone of command she bade Roderigo release her, which he refused.

Seraphina, in the utmost terror, filled the air with her cries, which were answered by the rough voice of Roderigo commanding her to be silent, or her instant destruction would ensue; while Perez, on the other hand, gazed around him in fear, or the alarm which her screams might occasion, brandished his sword over her head, with threatening looks, he trembling followed the footsteps of the base Roderigo.

They had advanced, heedless of the path, until thoroughly bewildered; they then gazed around them in perplexity which way to proceed; while the terrified Seraphina, beholding the sword constantly suspended over her, with agonized thoughts, deplored her wretched fate and her lost Alvar.

It was now evening, and the two villains were

debating upon their further tract, when a deep shade, which obscured part of the horizon, arresting their eyes, they observed a large building not far distant. Thither they instantly determined upon conducting her. As they approached it, the pale beams of the moon shone through its windows, deep chasms, and over its decayed battlements; adjoining to these, they beheld the rugged edges of roofless walls, all displaying the dire effects of destructive war.

When they arrived at the foot of these lofty ruins, which were situated upon an eminence, they cautiously surveyed them, and perceiving an entrance, with trepidation they ventured in, determined to rest themselves, and debate upon their future purposes.

In a gloomy apartment, which only admitted disjointed rays of the moon between the iron bars of a window at a great height from the floor, they determined to secure her; while they, resting themselves, guarded the entrance. Where, after having left her, they shut the door after them, and seating themselves on the ground, commenced their consultation. In the midst of their discourse, Perez, who was thoroughly fatigued, began to nod; and though Roderigo repeatedly shook him by the arm to keep up his attention, he at length fell backward in a profound sleep.

Roderigo, who was himself sufficiently tired, from having borne Seraphina so far in his arms, would have followed his companion's example, had not the thoughts of having her thus in his power raised in his breast a powerful opponent to Morpheus. A raging lust burned within him, and roused him to take advantage of her lonely situation; and he was the further prompted to this

diabolical intention by the situation of Perez, which promised not to admit any touch of pity into his bosom, sufficient for rousing him to her assistance.

To accomplish this purpose, after having by rest invigorated his limbs, he cagerly arose; but the sudden bursting open of a door arrested his steps, and fixed him motionless. The cold drops flowed from his pale visage; his staring eyeballs rolled, accompanied with convulsive starts, around him; and, while his knees knocked together, he sought in terror the cause of his alarm. His ears were wide open to catch the least sound, dreading one to succeed to that he had just heard.

Seraphina, after her first terror had subsided on being left in so miserable a situation, guided by despair and the feeble light which the window afforded her, paced cautiously round the room, with the hope of finding some place to hide herself from the attempts of Roderigo, which she so much dreaded. In the doing of which, her foot striking against some rubbish which lay in her way, threw her with violence against part of an old hanging; which giving way, her weight burst open a door behind, and she fell prostrate into a low and arched passage. Stunned with the fall, she remained motionless and insensible for some time; but at length, recovering, she raised her head, and beheld, by the light of a gloomy lamp which gleamed from an apartment to which this avenue led, a man of grim and furious visage standing over her.

Terror and apprehension robbed her of all power of utterance. While she gazed upon him with supplicating woe, his countenance instantly assumed a milder aspect: he raised her up in his arms, and leading her from the avenue, placed her on a seat;

then rushing with rekindled rage toward the passage, he fixed upon it his glaring eyes; but hearing no sound, he quitted the entrance and stalked, with furious muttering and brandished weapon, to the further end of the apartment; where, often starting, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and groaned deeply.

Meantime Roderigo having awakened Perez, accompanied by him, ventured to push open the door leading to the apartment in which Seraphina had been confined, and peeping in, beheld the faint light which glimmered through the vaulted entrance of the inner recess. They gazed upon each other with amazement and apprehension; yet at length they ventured, finding all still, to pass through the first apartment, and approach the passage; where they beheld, with astonishment, Seraphina seated by the trembling flame, and leaning dejectedly upon her hand.

The furious Spaniard, who had assisted her, was fixed in deep and convulsed agitation of mind, with his eyes rivetted on the earth, at a distance, and out of sight from the entrance; and the cautious observers of Seraphina, conceiving her to be alone, though unable to account for the light, determined to seize her; and rushing in, were on the point of accomplishing their purpose, when her screams, and the sight of her assailants, roused the agonized Spaniard. Darting upon them with his sword, he exclaimed, with frenzied looks, "Come on, my brave countrymen, and aided by this arm, drive the murderous infidels before you! thus let us avenge our wrongs!"

Roderigo and Perez, surprized and terrified, started from their prey; and though they saw but one, who with fury rushed upon them, their frightened imaginations made them fancy his compa-

nions at his heels. With the utmost speed which sudden panic could impart, they fled before him; and rushing from the shattered mansion, scrambling over the fragments of its ruins, thus saved themselves from the enraged Spaniard, who followed them; but the darkness of the night impeded his pursuit.

He now returned to Seraphina, who had remained in the deepest anxiety for his success, and entering with triumphant looks, loudly exclaimed, "Banish all apprehensions, fair mourner; this arm shall drive thy foes before it—it has ever protected female innocence." Here he started, and striking his bosom gave a deep groan; then, raising his eyes toward heaven, the big tear rolled down his cheek, and mingled with his deeply-clotted beard. Seraphina gazed on him with pity, and her bosom heaved with sympathizing woe: "May heaven relieve the sorrows of thy heart!" exclaimed she.—He gazed upon her with discomposed, yet thankful aspect, and was struggling within himself to make a reply, when the sound of a footstep in the passage, cautiously advancing, arrested their attention.

Seraphina was seized with fresh alarm, and fury glowed anew upon the countenance of the Spaniard. Drawing again his sword, he rushed forward; and now the repeated clashing of weapons in the arched entrance, struck her terrified ear. Long was the contention; but at length the Spaniard was forced to retire before his adversary, and, fighting bravely with undiminished valour, re-entered the chamber. Dismay seized upon the heart of Seraphina, at seeing her defender so hard pressed; and, with her hands clasped towards heaven, she earnestly prayed for his success.

While she was thus employed, the prosperous

assailant, following his opposer, pressed hard upon him, until the sight of Seraphina palsied his arm. The Spaniard, viewing his advantage, rushed upon him, while he, unable to recover himself, fell back upon one knee; and his antagonist, with uplifted weapon, was preparing to strike, when Seraphina, screaming, rushed forward. She threw herself before him, and, with her arm opposed to the descending sword, exclaimed, "Oh! spare, spare my Alvar!" The Spaniard, checking the blow which had almost fallen, viewed them alternately in astonishment. He recoiled a few paces, and Alvar, springing up, caught Seraphina in his arms.

After the first transports of their meeting were over, she failed not to represent to him, with the warmest glow of gratitude, how much she had been indebted to the stranger for his protection, and related the whole of the circumstances attending her deliverance.

Alvar, transported with joy, flew to embrace him, and hailed him as the preserver of all that was dear to him. The Spaniard, after returning his salutations, with a momentary joy beaming upon his countenance, caught him in his arms, and eagerly exclaimed, "While the dawn now invites us to pursue our journey, delay may be attended with danger. Thou mayest stand in need of my further assistance—I must attend thee!"—Alvar consented, and they pursued their journey. As they silently proceeded through the wood, a band of troops suddenly rushed out from a thicket and attacked them. Alvar and the Spaniard, unable to defend themselves from their assailants, were forced to retreat, leaving Seraphina in the hands of the Moors. What was the agony of Alvar, on seeing his beloved Seraphina placed



on horseback behind one of the Moors, and the whole body gallop off across the forest. He followed at a distance, and saw them enter a large building situated upon an eminence, which, from the soldiers around it, appeared to be a garrison of the Moors.

The Spaniard stood petrified with agony at the sight; and, when he had at last recovered the power of utterance, with a deep sigh, he exclaimed—"Alas! Seraphina, to what fresh miseries art thou doomed! while thy wretched Alvar is thus denied the means of yielding thee aid." "Denied! No!" cried Alvar, "I will instantly fly to succour my beloved, even though I perish in the attempt." Then turning from the Spaniard, his eyes met the body of one of the Moors who had fallen beneath his sword, and a sudden thought took possession of his mind. "Yes!" cried he, "that dress may enable me to behold my Seraphina once more." In vain did the Spaniard endeavour to display the rashness of the attempt; but finding him firm in his determination, he assisted him in stripping the body of the Moor. Alvar, after having put on the Moorish dress, thought of staining his face a deep brown. This he easily effected, by the assistance of berries, which he found in the woods, while a clear stream served to view himself in.

Bidding the Spaniard farewell, he pursued his way towards the building in which Seraphina was confined, while the Spaniard continued to gaze after him until his figure was lost amongst the woods, and then hurried on in a different direction, muttering curses and vengeance on the heads of those who had dared to snatch her from them. With hurried step, and lost in thought,

he wandered so far, that the night began to obscure the horizon, which soon grew so dark, that he knew not which way to proceed farther; but perceiving a light at a distance, he bent his steps toward it, and found it to issue from the window of a cottage. Arriving at the door, he knocked loudly for admittance; and a voice from within demanded what he wanted. He answered that he had lost his way, and wished shelter for the night; on which the door was opened by an old woman, who, perceiving by her light that he was a Spaniard, bade him enter.

On his entrance, he perceived a man seated over a few nearly-extinguished embers, who desired him to rest himself. Observing a gloom of melancholy to cloud their brows, he asked the cause of it. The woman with a sigh said, their dejected appearance proceeded from the loss of a beloved boy, who was the prop of their feeble age. "A son!" cried the Spaniard. "No! we cannot say he was our own, but he was reared by us from his childhood, and his great affection to us," said she, "rendered him as dear as if he had." The Spaniard begged to know how they had lost him.

"Thou shalt hear, signior," replied the woman. "It is now many years since my husband, whom you now see before you, and myself resided in a cottage far distant from this spot, where we supported ourselves by selling such refreshments as were necessary to the traveller. Soon after the arrival of the Moors, a party of them, mounted, arrived at our house; behind one of whom was a lady, richly attired, who, in the utmost agitation, and bathed in tears, clasped an infant fondly to her breast. They forced her to alight, and entering the house with her, called for liquor, of which they drank freely, and it was not long before a

violent contention arose amongst them for the possession of her. Amid their struggling she swooned away—I caught the infant from her arms, to preserve it for her; and gave it into the hands of a young girl who assisted us in our business, while I gave its unfortunate mother all the aid in my power. But as soon as she had somewhat recovered, one of the most furious amongst them, catching her in his arms, rushed out with her, and placing her on his horse, sprung up behind her, and rode swiftly away, while with her utmost strength she called eagerly for her child—and the rest, mounting their horses, as speedily followed him. The child had a crucifix set with diamonds round his neck. We trained him up as our son, and named him Henriquez; but at the age of eighteen we lost him. We suspect he joined the army, and have long feared that he must have lost his life in some of the engagements with the Infidels, having never since heard any thing of him. A few hours after his departure, looking for the crucifix, I found it gone; but recollecting that I had told him all the particulars respecting himself, and had shown it to him, I suspect he took it away with him when he left us.”

The Spaniard appeared deeply agitated during the whole of her narrative; and when she had finished, clasping his hands upon his bosom, he gave a deep groan, and remained for a long time in profound musing.

Alvar in the meantime had arrived at the foot of the garrison, where he beheld none but the centinels, who were pacing silently before it. After calling to them, he informed them that he wished to take shelter within. He was conducted immediately to the officer on guard; to whom, on being questioned, he related a story which he

had previously fabricated for the purpose ; and told that his name was Elbrahaud. After congratulating him upon his arrival among them, they led him to a chamber, and placed before him their choicest wines, together with a variety of other refreshments, of which they all partook. Universal mirth now prevailed, except in the bosom of Alvar, which heaved for a sight of his beloved Seraphina, and he was deeply impressed with sorrow, notwithstanding the outward joy which he was under the necessity of assuming. From his companions he learned, that Alphonso was hourly expected to assault the castle, that the women a few hours before had quitted the fortress under a strong guard to the royal seraglio, and that the prisoners were conveyed to a strong dungeon beneath the court. Alvar having expressed a wish to see the enemies of his faith groaning in captivity, one of the Moors, who was the gaoler, with a smile bade him follow him, led him to the place of their confinement. He unlocked the gate, and the heart of Alvar shuddered as he beheld the pitiable state of those unfortunate Spaniards.

Some were reclining upon heaps of straw ; others, silently, and with downcast eyes, paced with heavy step the dungeon's narrow bounds. Pale and dejected, they all seemed to long, amid the loud and terrifying clanking of their chains, for the arm of the executioner, to relieve them from the horrors of their confinement, and the noxious air they were forced to breathe.

At length the hour of rest came, and each sought his repose, leaving Alvar to follow their example, by retiring to the spot assigned for him. He now conceived Seraphina to be lost to him for ever. Busy thought drove away sleep, and he spent several hours in an agitation of mind which bordered

upon frenzy, when he was suddenly roused by the loud shouts of those who surrounded the castle; while the Moors, grasping their arms, flew to its defence. It was hemmed in on all sides by a large party of Spaniards, who furiously assaulted it.

Alvar, fired by the occasion, longed to join his countrymen; but this was at present impossible. On the first alarm he therefore made a show of engaging on the side of the Moors; but while doing this, he eagerly sought an opportunity of taking his advantage for executing what he had resolved upon.

The Spaniards had by this time gained the ramparts, where the conflict became desperate. The determined valour of the Moors, however, was such, as at length to repulse their enemies in every attempt to enter the castle; and now Alvar judged the time to be arrived for striking a decisive blow.

Hastening therefore to the dungeon, he undrew the bolts, and called the prisoners forth; and then leading them to the armoury, bade them arm themselves. The prisoners, in fearful amazement obeyed; while he, placing himself at their head, displayed the brilliant cross upon his bosom, which he had so long concealed, as the pledge of his superior birth. With these, his desperate countrymen, he charged upon the rear of the infidels, just as Alphonso and his old friend the Spaniard, who headed the attack, were on the point of giving way.

The Moors were astonished, and confounded at this unexpected assault, which thus placed them in the midst of their fierce assailing foes. The Spaniards at their front seeing this timely aid, and being hailed, with loud shouts, by their long suffering countrymen, who, struggling for freedom, had

hastened thus to their assistance, flew with redoubled ardour to the attack. Now a dreadful carnage ensued; the Moors were slaughtered on all sides; yet they continued the contest with a vigour which was heightened by despair.

At this moment the perturbed Spaniard, who was rushing impetuously among the infidels, dealing slaughter around him, on beholding Alvar with the glittering cross suspended on his bosom heaping destruction on every side, started at the sight of this badge, while his uplifted arm hung in the air, and spared the daunted foe. But speedily recovering himself, he no longer paused from his victorious career; and Alphonso following with his chosen band, a complete route ensued.

Immediately after their final success, the Spaniard, whose attention during the battle had been so powerfully arrested by the sight of Alvar under his Moorish disguise, and particularly by the sparkling cross which shone upon his bosom, sprung to him, and catching him in his arms, with strong emotion and eager tone, exclaimed, "Oh! my son—my son! that precious emblem, which adorns thy bosom, proclaims thee mine! long hast thou been lost, but I now behold thee, even under that disguise, and survey a hero!" He then, after many endearments, related to the astonished Alvar all that he had learned at the cottage; to which he added, "That cross which is now before thee I gave thy mother!" Alvar, happy in beholding his sire, dropped upon his knee, and grasping the hand of a parent, hitherto known to him only as a sincere friend, kissed it with filial reverence and transport; while the Spaniard, whose reason seemed to have recovered its perfect state on the restoration of his child, hung over him, and with tears of joy tenderly embraced him.

Alphonso, who beheld this scene, felt deeply affected; yet he stood looking with surprise at Alvar's Moorish habit and appearance, until the Spaniard perceiving it, led Alvar to him, and thus spoke: "Behold, great prince, my son clothed in this disguise, to whom we owe the bright success this day hath witnessed. My name is Don Manuel D'Aranda, and he was baptized by the name of Ferdinando.—Yes, beneath this Moorish semblance, behold that Alvar, so well known to both. Under this disguise hath he sought through numerous perils his persecuted Seraphina, to release whom he had entered this castle." Alphonso, after clasping the brave Ferdinando to his heart, anxiously enquired for Seraphina. The unhappy Ferdinando related his misfortunes, and they tenderly sympathised with him in his loss.

Then, Alphonso, after leaving with Ferdinando a sufficient number of soldiers, together with those who had joined Don Manuel on his way to his camp, created him governor of the castle, and one of his chief generals. Don Manuel would by no means quit his beloved son; and Alphonso, accompanied by the remainder of his troops, returned to his encampment.

As Ferdinando was returning from one of those expeditions in which he had subdued a numerous party of the infidels, he passed over a wide extending forest; where, as he and his followers eagerly pursued their track, the darkened firmament proclaimed a storm at hand; and while they strove, by increasing their speed, to elude its vengeance, a deep gloom surrounded them, and they beheld with terror the vivid flash of the lightning, which shone with reflected lustre on their burnished armour.

A heavy torrent accompanied the awful scene,

and poured its fury on their heads; but a neighbouring wood at length afforded them shelter under its spreading branches.

At length the heavens, freed from the raging elements, began to re-assume their blue serenity. —While Ferdinando and his troops beheld with joy the increasing splendour of the scene, they observed, at a small distance from them, a prostrate female, who had fallen at the foot of a scorched elm. They hastened to the spot, and raising her from the earth, saw a pale and emaciated visage, unblasted by the fire of heaven, but which had become the prey of famine. With refreshments, which they brought with them, they strove to recall her nearly departed life. In vain they strove to cheer her, as returning thought poured the stream of sorrow down her wan and hollow cheek; yet she suffered them at length to bear her from the spot, and place her on one of their steeds; where, secured by the protection of its rider, they conveyed her to the castle.

They no sooner arrived, than Don Manuel hastened to welcome his son's return; but he no sooner beheld the distressed female than he started back. While his eyes were fixed on her in amazement, the violent agitation of his mind shook his whole frame, and he stood rivetted to the spot. But the object of his wonder no sooner beheld him, than summoning all her remaining strength, she rushed forward, and throwing her arms around his neck, sunk motionless upon his bosom.

On her recovery, and after their mutual endearments on so blessed and unexpected a meeting had ceased, "Behold, my son!" said Don Manuel, "that parent who yielded thee to the light of heaven, and whom, while to thee a stranger, thy tender



care hath snatched from surrounding perils, and sufferings long sustained. At these words the wife of Don Manuel fixed her eyes on Ferdinando; and, hurrying to him with strong emotion, caught him in her arms, while joy, which in vain struggled for utterance, heaved within her bosom.

Meantime, Don Manuel, impatient to learn by what means his consort had escaped from those dangers which surrounded her amidst the fury of the Moors, requested her to satisfy his anxious curiosity; which she did in the following words:

“While you,” said she to Don Manuel, “was absent in the army of our King Sebastian, which strove, in various engagements, to repel the incursions of the Moors, your castle was attacked by a large body of them. Notwithstanding the brave resistance made by those whom you left to guard it, they gained possession, and with unrelenting fury put to the sword all its intrepid defenders who survived the fierce assault. Catching up our child, I flew in terror to the apartments most remote from the dreadful scene of carnage. But it was in vain, for the leader of the Moors pursued me, and catching me in his arms, heedless of my cries and those of my infant, whom I sheltered closely in my bosom, bore me to his victorious band, and placing me upon his horse, held me before him, while he swiftly led them from the spot.

“They flew with rapidity across the country, until they came to a small cottage where wine was sold; here they stopped for refreshment, and the liquor which they drank enflaming some of the party to gain possession of me, a violent contention arose amongst them. The sight of them drawing their sabres, together with the fatigue and agitation of mind which I had endured, caused me to swoon.

“ On my recovery, seeing my child in the arms of a woman near me, I eagerly stretched out my arms for him, but the Moor who had first seized me caught me up, and regardless of my entreaties for my infant, placed me again on his steed, and rode swiftly away; the rest, mounting their horses, followed him. Afterwards, dismissing his party, he conveyed me to an old mansion, surrounded on every side by lofty trees, where he committed me to the care of an old woman, bidding her see me well attended; he then spurred his steed, and was in a moment out of sight. A raging fever seized me, and from that instant all recollection forsook my mind: and, I was afterwards informed, insanity possessed me. In the end, however, the power of medicine recovered my faculties, and I was soon enabled to leave my bed. The Moor then sent me notice, that on the approaching evening he had determined on visiting me; my heart sunk within me at this intelligence, and I saw no means of escaping the ruin that awaited me. The windows of my apartment were covered with a close lattice-work, and looked into an adjoining wood. They were securely fastened, yet my desperate situation, which urged me to any attempt, made me resolve to burst one of them open.

“ My strength proved for a long time unavailing, but despair giving me additional power, I at length succeeded, and gazed around me with a rising hope; which, however, was soon damped, on beholding beneath, and close to the base of the mansion, a narrow river.

“ However desperation seized me, and, dreading nothing but of the designs which the Moor had upon my person, I threw myself headlong from the window. The water received me on my fall, and on recovering, I saw a man standing over me,

anxiously affording me every assistance in his power. I surveyed him with gratitude, and as soon as I was able to rise he led me to a cottage. He informed me that he had seen me throw myself into the river, and had immediately sprung in and saved me. I remained for sometime with this good peasant and his wife, until my strength permitted me to travel ; then bidding them farewell, I wandered through the woods in search of my infant. My misfortunes again bereft me of reason, and when the fit went off, I found myself in the house of a peasant, surrounded by his smiling family, Here I passed many tedious and mournful hours, until happening to lose my way, I had wandered long without sustenance, when the storm laid me senseless on the earth, where I was found by you, my dear and long lamented son."

Roderigo and Perez, on leaving the ruin in the forest, proceeded to Murad's court and entered his army, where Roderigo's prowess soon obtained him promotion ; and with pleasure he beheld Seraphina arrive with the other slaves, at the royal seraglio. Murad, kept in constant alarm by the daily accounts of Ferdinando's success and encreasing power, determined upon collecting his forces together, and to conquer him, ere his adherents were farther multiplied ; he therefore appointed Roderigo, under the assumed name of Valentio, to guard the palace during his absence, while he set forward on this expedition with the flower of his troops.

The aged Sebastian who had been long confined in a gloomy dungeon, one day discovered a secret door, held by a bolt, which he undrew, and passed into a large chamber. At the further end he saw a passage, and on the floor lay a bar of iron ; this he took up, and entered the passage.

Meantime Roderigo, under the title of Valentio, finding all his love revive at having Seraphina in his power, had entered her apartment, and seizing her in his arms, was resolved to delay his desires no longer. Her strength was exhausted, for in vain her cries echoed throughout the apartment, and Roderigo had her completely in his power, when a door at the further end of the room burst open, and the aged Sebastian entered. Roderigo instantly started from his prey; while Sebastian, beholding his base attempt, rushed upon him, brandishing his bar of iron. The foul ravisher fled with dismay, and Sebastian no sooner saw him depart than he hurried to Seraphina, and used every effort to comfort her; but recollecting the danger of remaining too long from his dungeon, he bade her adieu.

Meantime Murad advanced rapidly against Ferdinando; the two armies met, and a bloody conflict ensued. Early in the engagement Murad attacked the brave Ferdinando, who soon laid the proud infidel lifeless on the ground, and rout and universal slaughter ensued, until the Moors were at last forced to lay down their arms.

This happy kingdom was now free. The joy of their deliverance appeared on every face, and while the Prince embraced Ferdinando, he publicly hailed him the Spanish champion—the deliverer of his country.

Surrounded by loud shouts of victory, Alphonso and Ferdinando hastened to the palace, and found their aged sovereign. They told him the events of the day; but he resigned his crown to his son.

Ferdinando soon found Seraphina, and the universal joy was increased by the union of these two lovers.

FINIS.