

The tendency of his mind, however, as he grew old, was naturally to graver subjects; and, finding there was no hope of his being recalled to court, he established himself in unambitious retirement at Granada his native city. But his spirit was not one that would easily sink into inactivity; and, if it had been, he had not chosen a home that would encourage such a disposition. For it was a spot, not only full of romantic recollections, but intimately associated with the glory of his own family,—one where he had spent much of his youth, and become familiar with those remains and ruins of the Moorish power which bore witness to days when the plain of Granada was the seat of one of the most luxurious and splendid of the Mohammedan dynasties. Here, therefore, he naturally turned to the early studies of his half-Arabian education, and, arranging his library of precious Arabic manuscripts, devoted himself to the literature and history of his native city, until, at last, apparently from want of other occupation, he determined to write a part of its annals.

The portion he chose was one very recent; that of the rebellion raised by the Moors in 1568–1570, * 480 when they * were no longer able to endure the oppression of Philip the Second; and it is much to Mendoza's honor, that, with sympathies entirely Spanish, he has yet done the hated enemies of his faith and people such generous justice, that his book could

Don B. José Gallardo, in his "Crítico" (1835, No. 3), shows, I think, satisfactorily, that the letter on the *Catariberas* was written by Eugenio de Salazar y Alarcon, giving at the same time a more correct copy of it.

Some of Mendoza's private letters are to be found in Dormer, *Progresos de la Historia de Aragon* (fol. 1680), and others in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Tom. XXI. 1852, pp. xxiv, ec.); but the greater part are unpublished, and must be sought in the Na-

tional Library at Madrid, and in the Library of the Academy of History. They should be looked up, for those that we have give an appetite for more. To what we possess of him may now be added a small, pleasant work, written in 1547, entitled *Dialogo entre Caronte y el anima de Pedro Luis Farnesio hijo del Papa Paulo III.* It is noticed by Gayangos in his translation (Tom. II. 506), and is published for the first time in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Tomo XXXVI., 1855.

not be published till many years after his own death,—not, indeed, till the unhappy Moors themselves had been finally expelled from Spain. His means for writing such a work were remarkable. His father, as we have noticed, had been a general in the conquering army of 1492, to which the story of this rebellion necessarily often recurs, and had afterwards been governor of Granada. One of his nephews had commanded the troops in this very war. And now, after peace was restored by the submission of the rebels, the old statesman, as he stood amidst the trophies and ruins of the conflict, soon learned from eye-witnesses and partisans whatever of interest had happened on either side that he had not himself seen. Familiar, therefore, with everything of which he speaks, there is a freshness and power in his sketches that carry us at once into the midst of the scenes and events he describes and make us sympathize in details too minute to be always interesting, if they were not always marked with the impress of a living reality.¹⁹

But, though his history springs, as it were, vigorously from the very soil to which it relates, it is a sedulous and well-considered imitation of the ancient masters, and entirely unlike the chronicle spirit of the preceding period. The genius of antiquity, indeed, is impressed on its very first sentence.

"My purpose," says the old soldier, "is to record that war of Granada which the Catholic King of

¹⁹ The first edition of the "Guerra de Granada" is of Madrid, 1610, 4to; but it is incomplete, and, in the edition of Lisbon, 1627, which is better printed than the first one, the omission at the end of Book III. is boldly supplied by Joaõ Silva, Count Portalegre,—"vere purpuram auctoris purpure attexens," says Antonio, with courtly flattery. But the true conclusion of the book

was found, and the first complete editions are one of 1730 and the beautiful one by Monfort (Valencia, 1776, 4to); since which there have been several others; among the rest, one in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Tom. XXI., 1852), which is worth consulting (p. 110, note), on the subject of the omissions.

* 481 Spain, * Don Philip the Second, son of the unconquered Emperor Don Charles, maintained in the kingdom of Granada, against the newly converted rebels; a part whereof I saw, and a part heard from persons who carried it on by their arms and by their counsels."

Sallust was undoubtedly Mendoza's model. Like the War against Catiline, the War of the Moorish Insurrection is a small work, and like that, too, its style is generally rich and bold. But sometimes long passages are evidently imitated from Tacitus, whose vigor and severity the wise diplomatist seems to approach more nearly than he does the exuberant style of his prevalent master. Some of these imitations are as happy, perhaps, as any that can be produced from the class to which they belong; for they are often no less unconstrained than if they were quite original. Take, for instance, the following passage, which has often been noticed for its spirit and feeling, but which is partly a translation from the account given by Tacitus, in his most effective and condensed manner, of the visit made by Germanicus and his army to the spot where lay, unburied, the remains of the three legions of Varus, in the forests of Germany, and of the funeral honors that army paid to the memory of their fallen and almost forgotten countrymen;—the circumstance described by the Spanish historian being so remarkably similar to that given in the Annals of Tacitus, that the imitation becomes perfectly natural.²⁰

During a rebellion of the Moors in 1500–1501, it was thought of consequence to destroy a fort in the

²⁰ The passage in Tacitus is *Annales*, Lib. I. c. 61, 62; and the imitation in Mendoza is Book IV. ed. 1776, pp. 300–302. See Syllabus of my Spanish Lectures, 1823, Section 90.

mountains that lay towards Málaga. The service was dangerous, and none came forward to undertake it, until Don Alonso de Aguilar, one of the principal nobles in the army of Ferdinand and Isabella, offered himself for the enterprise. His attempt, as had been foreseen, failed, and hardly a man survived to relate the details of the disaster; but Aguilar's enthusiasm and self-devotion created a great sensation at the time, and * were afterwards recorded in * 482 more than one of the old ballads of the country.²¹

At the period, however, when Mendoza touches on this unhappy defeat, nearly seventy years had elapsed, and the bones of both Spaniards and Moors still lay whitening on the spot where they had fallen. The war between the two races was again renewed by the insurrection of the conquered; a military expedition was again undertaken into the same mountains; and the Duke of Arcos, its leader, was a lineal descendant of some who had fallen there, and intimately connected with the family of Don Alonso de Aguilar himself. While, therefore, the troops for this expedition were collecting, the Duke, from a natural curiosity and interest in what so nearly concerned him, took a small body of soldiers and visited the melancholy spot.

"The Duke left Casares," says Mendoza, "examining and securing the passes of the mountains as he went; a needful providence, on account of the little certainty there is of success in all military adventures."²¹ They then began to ascend the range of

²¹ The accounts may be found in Mariana (Lib. XXVII. c. 5), and at the end of Hita, "Guerras de Granada," where two of the ballads are inserted.

²¹ "In rebus bellicis maxime dominatur fortuna." Mendoza imitated

with great skill. Here he thought of Caesar, *De Bello Civili*, Lib. III. "Fortuna que plurimum potest, cum in aliis rebus, tum præcipue in bello, in parvis momentis magnas rerum mutationes efficit."

heights where it was said the bodies had remained unburied, melancholy and loathsome alike to the sight and the memory.²² For there were among those who now visited it both kinsmen and descendants of the slain, or men who knew by report whatever related to the sad scene. And first they came to the spot where the vanguard had stopped with its leader, in consequence of the darkness of the night; a broad opening between the foot of the mountain and the Moorish fortress, without defence of any sort but such as was afforded by the nature of the place. Here lay human skulls and the bones of horses, heaped confusedly together or scattered about, just as they had chanced to fall, mingled with fragments of arms and bridles and the rich trappings of the cavalry.²³

* 483 * Farther on, they found the fort of the enemy, of which there were now only a few low remains, nearly levelled with the surface of the soil. And then they went forward talking about the places where officers, leaders, and common soldiers had perished together; relating how and where those who survived had been saved, among whom were the Count of Ureña and Pedro de Aguilar, elder son of Don Alonso; speaking of the spot where Don Alonso had retired and defended himself between two rocks; the wound the Moorish captain first gave him on the head, and then another in the breast as he fell; the words he uttered as they closed in the fight, 'I am Don Alonso,' and the answer of the chieftain as he struck him down, 'You are Don Alonso, but I am the chieftain of Benastepár'; and of the wounds Don Alonso

²² "Incedunt," says Tacitus, "mœstos locos, visuque ac memoriâ deformes."

²³ "Medio campi albertia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disjecta vel

aggerata; adiacebant fragmina telorum, equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora."

gave, which were not fatal, as were those he received. They remembered, too, how friends and enemies had alike mourned his fate; and now, on that same spot, the same sorrow was renewed by the soldiers,—a race sparing of its gratitude, except in tears. The general commanded a service to be performed for the dead; and the soldiers present offered up prayers that they might rest in peace, uncertain whether they interceded for their kinsmen or for their enemies,—a feeling which increased their rage, and the eagerness they felt for finding those upon whom they could now take vengeance."²⁴

There are several instances like this, in the course of the work, that show how well pleased Mendoza was to step aside into an episode and indulge himself in appropriate ornaments of his subject. The main direction of his story, however, is never unnaturally deviated from; and wherever he goes, he is almost always powerful and effective. Take, for example, the following speech of El Zaguer, one of the principal conspirators, exciting his countrymen to break out into open rebellion, by exposing to them the long series of affronts and cruelties they had suffered from their Spanish *oppressors. It reminds us * 484 of the speeches of the indignant Carthaginian leaders in Livy.

"Seeing," says the historian, "that the greatness of the undertaking brought with it hesitation, delays, and exposure to accident and change of opinion, this conspirator collected the principal men together in the house of Zinzan in the Albaycin, and addressed them,

²⁴ "Igitur Romanus, qui aderat, exercitus, sextum post cladis annum, trium legionum ossa, nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo te-

geret, omnes, ut conjunctos ut consanguineos, auctâ in hostem irâ, mœsti simul et infensi condebant."

setting forth the oppression they had constantly endured, at the hands both of public officers and private persons, till they were become, he said, no less slaves than if they had been formally made such,—their wives, children, estates, and even their own persons, being in the power and at the mercy of their enemies, without the hope of seeing themselves freed from such servitude for centuries; exposed to as many tyrants as they had neighbors, and suffering constantly new impositions and new taxes; deprived of the right of sanctuary in places where those take refuge who, through accident or (what is deemed among them the more justifiable cause) through revenge, commit crime; thrust out from the protection of the very churches at whose religious rites we are yet required, under severe penalties, to be present; subjected to the priests to enrich them, and yet held to be unworthy of favor from God or men; treated and regarded as Moors among Christians, that we may be despised, and as Christians among Moors, that we may neither be believed nor consoled. 'They have excluded us, too,' he went on, 'from life and human intercourse; for they forbid us to speak our own language, and we do not understand theirs. In what way, then, are we to communicate with others, or ask or give what life requires,—cut off from the conversation of men, and denied what is not denied even to the brutes? And yet may not he who speaks Castilian still hold to the law of the Prophet, and may not he who speaks Moorish hold to the law of Jesus? They force our children into their religious houses and schools, and teach them arts which our fathers forbade us to learn, lest the purity of our own law should be corrupted, and its very truth be made a subject of doubt and

quarrels. They threaten, too, to tear these our children * from the arms of their mothers and * 485 the protection of their fathers, and send them into foreign lands, where they shall forget our manners, and become the enemies of those to whom they owe their existence. They command us to change our dress and wear clothes like the Castilians. Yet among themselves the Germans dress in one fashion, the French in another, and the Greeks in another; their friars, too, and their young men, and their old men, have all separate costumes; each nation, each profession, each class, has its own peculiar dress, and still all are Christians;—while we—we Moors—are not to be allowed to dress like Moors, as if we wore our faith in our raiment, and not in our hearts.' ”²⁵

This is certainly picturesque; and so is the greater part of the whole history, both from its subject and from the manner in which it is treated. Nor is it lacking in dignity and elevation. Its style is bold and abrupt, but true to the idiom of the language; and the current of thought is deep and strong, easily carrying the reader onward with its flood. Nothing in the old chronicling style of the earlier period is to be compared to it, and little in any subsequent period is equal to it for manliness, vigor, and truth.²⁶

The war of Granada is the last literary labor its author undertook. He was, indeed, above seventy years old when he finished it; and, perhaps to signify that he now renounced the career of letters, he collected his library, both the classics and manuscripts he had procured with so much trouble in Italy and Greece, and

²⁵ The speech of El Zaguer is in the first book of the History.

²⁶ There are some acute remarks on the style of Mendoza in the Preface

to Garcés, "Vigor y Elegancia de la Lengua Castellana," Madrid, 1791, 4to, Tom. II.

the curious Arabic works he had found in Granada, and presented the whole to his severe sovereign for his favorite establishment of the Escorial, among whose untold treasures they still hold a prominent place. At any rate, after this we hear nothing of the old statesman, except that, for some reason or other, Philip the Second permitted him to come to court again; and that, a few days after he arrived at Madrid, he was * 486 seized with * a violent illness, of which he died in April, 1575, seventy-two years old.²⁷

On whatever side we regard the character of Mendoza, we feel sure that he was an extraordinary man; but the combination of his powers is, after all, what is most to be wondered at. In all of them, however, and especially in the union of a life of military adventure and active interest in affairs with a sincere love of learning and elegant letters, he showed himself to be a genuine Spaniard; — the elements of greatness which his various fortunes had thus unfolded within him being all

²⁷ Pleasant glimpses of the occupations and character of Mendoza, during the last two years of his life, may be found in several letters he wrote to Zurita, the historian, which are preserved in Dormer, "Progresos de la Historia de Aragon" (Zaragoza, 1680, folio, pp. 501, etc.). The way in which he announces his intention of giving his books to the Escorial Library, in a letter, dated at Granada, 1 December, 1573, is very characteristic: "I keep collecting my books and sending them to Alcalá, because the late Doctor Velasco wrote me word that his Majesty would be pleased to see them, and perhaps put them in the Escorial. And I think he is right; for, as it is the most sumptuous building of ancient or modern times that I have seen, so I think that nothing should be wanting in it, and that it ought to contain the most sumptuous library in the world." In another letter, a few months only before his death, he says, "I go on dusting my books

and examining them, to see whether they are injured by the rats, and am well pleased to find them in good condition. Strange authors there are among them, of whom I have no recollection; and I wonder I have learned so little, when I find how much I have read." (Letter of November 18, 1574.) The above strong phrase about the Escorial recalls one by Mariana (De Rege, 1599, p. 340) still stronger and more striking: "insana atque regia substructio ejus templi quod a Laurentio Martyre nomen habet." Both show how completely this sombre and magnificent mass of building was in harmony with the national character in the time of Philip II. It was begun in 1563, for one hundred Hieronymite monks. The humble derivation of the proud name is given by Mariana (De Rege, III. 9): "Scorialis ex eo nomine quod iis locis ferrariam," etc. It reminds one of the equally humble derivation of Tuilleries.

among the elements of Spanish national poetry and eloquence, in their best age and most generous development. The loyal old knight, therefore, may well stand forward with those who, first in the order of time, as well as of merit, are to constitute that final school of Spanish literature which was built on the safe foundations of the national genius and character, and can, therefore, never be shaken by the floods or convulsions of the ages that may come after it.

END OF VOL. I.

