

**DEBORAH
ALCOCK**

THE SPANISH
BROTHERS

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The Spanish Brothers

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Deborah Alcock

The Spanish Brothers A Tale of the Sixteenth Century

I. Boyhood

"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Longfellow.

On one of the green slopes of the Sierra Morena, shaded by a few cork-trees, and with wild craggy heights and bare brown wastes stretching far above, there stood, about the middle of the sixteenth century, a castle even then old and rather dilapidated. It had once been a strong place, but was not very spacious; and certainly, according to our modern ideas of comfort, the interior could not have been a particularly comfortable dwelling-place. A large proportion of it was occupied by the great hall, which was hung with faded, well-repaired tapestry, and furnished with oaken tables, settles, and benches, very elaborately carved, but bearing evident marks of age. Narrow unglazed slits in the thick wall admitted the light and air; and beside one of these, on a gloomy autumn morning, two boys stood together, watching the rain that pored down without intermission.

They were dressed exactly alike, in loose jackets of blue cloth, homespun, indeed, but so fresh and neatly-fashioned as to look more becoming than many a costlier dress. Their long stockings were of silk, and their cuffs and wide shirt-frills of fine Holland, carefully starched and plaited. The elder – a very handsome lad, who looked fourteen at least, but was really a year younger – had raven hair, black sparkling eager eyes, good but strongly-marked features, and a complexion originally dark, and well-tanned by exposure to sun and wind. A broader forehead, wider nostrils, and a weaker mouth, distinguished the more delicate-looking younger brother, whose hair was also less dark, and his complexion fairer.

"Rain – rain! Will it rain for ever?" cried, in a tone of impatience, the elder, whose name was Juan; or rather, his proper style and title (and very angry would he have felt had any part been curtailed or omitted) was Don Juan Rodrigo Alvarez de Santillanos y Menaya. He was of the purest blood in Spain; by the father's side, of noblest Castilian lineage; by the mother's, of an ancient Asturian family. Well he knew it, and proudly he held up his young head in consequence, in spite of poverty, and of what was still worse, the mysterious blight that had fallen on the name and fortunes of his house, bringing poverty in its train, as the least of its attendant evils.

"'Rising early will not make the daylight come sooner,' nor watching bring the sunshine," said the quick-witted Carlos, who, apt in learning whatever he heard, was already an adept in the proverbial philosophy which was then, and is now, the inheritance of his race.

"True enough. So let us fetch the canes, and have a merry play. Or, better still, the foils for a fencing match."

Carlos acquiesced readily, though apparently without pleasure. In all outward things, such as the choice of pursuits and games, Juan was the unquestioned leader; Carlos never dreamed of disputing his fiat. Yet in other, and really more important matters, it was Carlos who, quite unconsciously to himself, performed the part of guide to his stronger-willed but less thoughtful brother.

Juan now fetched the carefully guarded foils with which the boys were accustomed to practise fencing; either, as now, simply for their own amusement, or under the instructions of the gray-haired Diego, who had served with their father in the Emperor's wars, and was now mayor-domo, butler, and seneschal, all in one. He it was, moreover, from whom Carlos had learned his store of proverbs.

"Now stand up. Oh, you are too low; wait a moment." Juan left the hall again, but quickly returned with a large heavy volume, which he threw on the floor, directing his brother to take his stand upon it.

Carlos hesitated. "But what if the Fray should catch us using our great Horace after such a fashion?"

"I just wish he might," answered Juan, with a mischievous sparkle in his black eyes.

The matter of height being thus satisfactorily adjusted, the game began, and for some time went merrily forward. To do the elder brother justice, he gave every advantage to his less active and less skilful companion; often shouting (with very unnecessary exertion of his lungs) words of direction or warning about fore-thrust, side-thrust, back-hand strokes, hitting, and parrying. At last, however, in an unlucky moment, Carlos, through some awkward movement of his own in violation of the rules of the game, received a blow on the cheek from his brother's foil, severe enough to make the blood flow. Juan instantly sprang forward, full of vexation, with an "Ay de mi!" on his lips. But Carlos turned away from him, covering his face with both hands; and Juan, much to his disgust, soon heard the sound of a heavy sob.

"You little coward!" he exclaimed, "to weep for a blow. Shame – shame upon you."

"Coward yourself, to call me ill names when I cannot fight you," retorted Carlos, as soon as he could speak for weeping.

"That is ever your way, little tearful. *You* to talk of going to find our father! A brave man you would make to sail to the Indies and fight the savages. Better sit at home and spin, with Mother Dolores."

Far too deeply stung to find a proverb suited to the occasion, or indeed to make any answer whatever, Carlos, still in tears, left the hall with hasty footsteps, and took refuge in a smaller apartment that opened into it.

The hangings of this room were comparatively new and very beautiful, being tastefully wrought with the needle; and the furniture was much more costly than that in the hall. There was also a glazed window, and near this Carlos took his stand, looking moodily out on the falling rain, and thinking hard thoughts of his brother, who had first hurt him so sorely, then called him coward, and last, and far worst of all, had taunted him with his unfitness for the task which, child as he was, his whole heart and soul were bent on attempting.

But he could not quarrel very seriously with Juan, nor indeed could he for any considerable time do without him. Before long his anger began to give way to utter loneliness and discomfort, and a great longing to "be friends" again.

Nor was Juan much more comfortable, though he told himself he was quite right to reprove his brother sharply for his lack of manliness; and that he would be ready to die for shame if Carlos, when he went to Seville, should disgrace himself before his cousins by crying when he was hurt, like a baby or a girl. It is true that in his heart he rather wished he himself had held his peace, or at least had spoken more gently; but he braved it out, and stamped up and down the hall, singing, in as cheery a voice as he could command, —

"The Cid rode through the horse-shoe gate, Omega like it stood,
A symbol of the moon that waned before the Christian rood.
He was all sheathed in golden mail, his cloak was white as shroud;
His vizor down, his sword unsheathed, corpse still he rode, and proud."

"Ruy!" Carlos called at last, just a little timidly, from the next room – "Ruy!"

Ruy is the Spanish diminutive of Rodrigo, Juan's second name, and the one by which, for reasons of his own, it pleased him best to be called; so the very use of it by Carlos was a kind of overture for peace. Juan came right gladly at the call; and having convinced himself, by a moment's inspection, that his brother's hurt signified nothing, he completed the reconciliation by putting his arm, in familiar boyish fashion, round his neck. Thus, without a word spoken, the brief quarrel was at an end. It happened that the rain was over also, and the sun just beginning to shine out again. It was, indeed, an effect of the sunlight which had given Carlos a pretext for calling Juan again to his side.

"Look, Ruy," he said, "the sun shines on our father's words!"

These children had a secret of their own, carefully guarded, with the strange reticence of childhood, even from Dolores, who had been the faithful nurse of their infancy, and who still cast upon their young lives the only shadow of motherly love they had ever known – a shadow, it is true, pale and faint, yet the best thing that had fallen to their lot: for even Juan could remember neither parent; while Carlos had never seen his father's face, and his mother had died at his birth.

Yet it happened that in the imaginary world which the children had created around them, and where they chiefly lived, their unknown father was by far the most important personage. All great nations in their childhood have their legends, their epics, written or unwritten, and their hero, one or many of them, upon whose exploits Fancy rings its changes at will during the ages when national language, literature, and character are in process of development. So it is with individuals. Children of imagination – especially if they are brought up in seclusion, and guarded from coarse and worldly companionship – are sure to have their legends, perhaps their unwritten epic, certainly their hero. Nor are these dreams of childhood idle fancies. In their time they are good and beautiful gifts of God – healthful for the present, helpful for after-years. There is deep truth in the poets words, "When thou art a man, reverence the dreams of thy youth."

The Cid Campeador, the Charlemagne, and the King Arthur of our youthful Spanish brothers, was no other than Don Juan Alvarez de Menaya, second and last Conde de Nuera. And as the historical foundation of national romance is apt to be of the slightest – nay, the testimony of credible history is often ruthlessly set at defiance – so it is with the romances of children; nor did the present instance form any exception. All the world said that their father's bones lay bleaching on a wild Araucanian battle-field; but this went for nothing in the eyes of Juan and Carlos Alvarez. Quite enough to build their childish faith upon was a confidential whisper of Dolores – when she thought them sleeping – to the village barber-surgeon, who was helping her to tend them through some childish malady: "Dead? Would to all the Saints, and the blessed Queen of Heaven, that we only had assurance of it!"

They had, however, more than this. Almost every day they read and re-read those mysterious words, traced with a diamond by their father's hand – as it never entered their heads to doubt – on the window of the room which had once been his favourite place of retirement: —

"El Dorado

Yo hé trovato."

"I have found El Dorado."

No eyes but their own had ever noticed this inscription; and marvellous indeed was the superstructure their fancy contrived to raise on the slight and airy foundation of its enigmatical five words. They had heard from the lips of Diego many of the fables current at the period about the "golden country" of which Spanish adventurers dreamed so wildly, and which they sought so vainly in the New World. They were aware that their father in his early days had actually made a voyage to the Indies: and they had thoroughly persuaded themselves, therefore, of nothing less than that he was the fortunate discoverer of El Dorado; that he had returned thither, and was reigning there as a king, rich and happy – only, perhaps, longing for his brave boys to come and join him. And join him one

day they surely would, even though unheard of dangers (of which giants twelve feet high and fiery dragons – things in which they quite believed – were among the least) might lie in their way, thick as the leaves of the cork-trees when the autumn winds swept down through the mountain gorges.

"Look, Ruy," said Carlos, "the light is on our father's words!"

"So it is! What good fortune is coming now? Something always comes to us when they look like that."

"What do you wish for most?"

"A new bow, and a set of real arrows tipped with steel. And you?"

"Well – the 'Chronicles of the Cid,' I think."

"I should like that too. But I should like better still – "

"What?"

"That Fray Sebastian would fall ill of the rheum, and find the mountain air too cold for his health; or get some kind of good place at his beloved Complutum."

"We might go farther and fare worse, like those that go to look for better bread than wheaten," returned Carlos, laughing. "Wish again, Juan; and truly this time – your wish of wishes."

"What else but to find my father?"

"I mean, next to that."

"Well, truly, to go once more to Seville, to see the shops, and the bull-fights, and the great Church; to tilt with our cousins, and dance the cachuca with Doña Beatriz."

"That would not I. There be folk that go out for wool, and come home shorn. Though I like Doña Beatriz as well as any one."

"Hush! here comes Dolores."

A tall, slender woman, robed in black serge, relieved by a neat white head-dress, entered the room. Dark hair, threaded with silver, and pale, sunken, care-worn features, made her look older than she really was. She had once been beautiful; and it seemed as though her beauty had been burned up in the glare of some fierce agony, rather than had faded gradually beneath the suns of passing years. With the silent strength of a deep, passionate heart, that had nothing else left to cling to, Dolores loved the children of her idolized mistress and foster-sister. It was chiefly her talent and energy that kept together the poor remains of their fortune. She surrounded them with as many inexpensive comforts as possible; still, like a true Spaniard, she would at any moment have sacrificed their comfort to the maintenance of their rank, or the due upholding of their dignity. On this occasion she held an open letter in her hand.

"Young gentlemen," she said, using the formal style of address no familiarity ever induced her to drop, "I bring your worships good tidings. Your noble uncle, Don Manuel, is about to honour your castle with his presence."

"Good tidings indeed! I am as glad as if you had given me a satin doublet. He may take us back with him to Seville," cried Juan.

"He might have stayed at home, with good luck and my blessing," murmured Carlos.

"Whether you go to Seville or no, Señor Don Juan," said Dolores, gravely, "may very probably depend on the contentment you give your noble uncle respecting your progress in your Latin, your grammar, and your other humanities."

"A green fig for my noble uncle's contentment!" said Juan, irreverently. "I know already as much as any gentleman need, and ten times more than he does himself."

"Ay, truly," struck in Carlos, coming forward from the embrasure of the window; "my uncle thinks a man of learning – except he be a fellow of college, perchance – not worth his ears full of water. I heard him say such only trouble the world, and bring sorrow on themselves and all their kin. So, Juan, it is you who are likely to find favour in his sight, after all."

"Señor Don Carlos, what ails your face?" asked Dolores, noticing now for the first time the marks of the hurt he had received.

Both the boys spoke together.

"Only a blow caught in fencing; all through my own awkwardness. It is nothing," said Carlos, eagerly.

"I hurt him with my foil. It was a mischance. I am very sorry," said Juan, putting his hand on his brother's shoulder.

Dolores wisely abstained from exhorting them to greater carefulness. She only said, —

"Young gentlemen who mean to be knights and captains must learn to give hard blows and take them." Adding mentally – "Bless the lads! May they stand by each other as loyally ten or twenty years hence as they do now."

II. The Monk's Letter

"Quoth the good fat friar,
Wiping his own mouth – 'twas refection time."

R. Browning.

Fray Sebastian Gomez, to the Honourable Señor Felipe de Santa Maria, Licentiate of Theology, residing at Alcala de Henarez, commonly called Complutum.

"Most Illustrious and Reverend Señor, —

"In my place of banishment, amidst these gloomy and inhospitable mountains, I frequently solace my mind by reflections upon the friends of my youth, and the happy period spent in those ancient halls of learning, where in the morning of our days you and I together attended the erudite prelections of those noble and most orthodox Grecians, Demetrius Ducas and Nicetus Phaustus, or sat at the feet of that venerable patriarch of science, Don Fernando Nuñez. Fortunate are you, O friend, in being able to pass your days amidst scenes so pleasant and occupations so congenial; while I, unhappy, am compelled by fate, and by the neglect of friends and patrons, to take what I may have, in place of having what I might wish. I am, alas! under the necessity of wearing out my days in the ungrateful occupation of instilling the rudiments of humane learning into the dull and careless minds of children, whom to instruct is truly to write upon sand or water. But not to weary your excellent and illustrious friendship with undue prolixity, I shall briefly relate the circumstances which led to my sojourn here."

(The good friar proceeds with his personal narrative, but by no means briefly; and as it has, moreover, little or nothing to do with our story, it may be omitted with advantage.)

"In this desert, as I may truly style it" (he continues), "nutriment for the corporeal frame is as poor and bare as nutriment for the intellectual part is altogether lacking. Alas! for the golden wine of Xerez, that ambery nectar wherewith we were wont to refresh our jaded spirits! I may not mention now our temperate banquets: the crisp red mullet, the succulent pasties, the delicious ham of Estremadura, the savoury olla podrida. Here beef is rarely seen, veal never. Our olla is of lean mutton (if it be not rather of the flesh of goats), washed down with bad vinegar, called wine by courtesy, and supplemented by a few naughty figs or roasted chestnuts, with cheese of goat's milk, hard as the heads of the rustics who make it. Certainly I am experiencing the truth of the proverb, 'A bad cook is an inconvenient relation.' And marvellously would a cask of Xerez wine, if, through the kindness of my generous friends, it could find its way to these remote mountains, mend my fare, and in all probability prolong my days. The provider here is an antiquated, sour-faced duenna, who rules everything in this old ruin of a castle, where poverty and pride are the only things to be found in plenty. She is an Asturian, and came hither in the train of the late unfortunate countess. Like all of that race, where the very shepherds style themselves nobles, she is proud; but it is just to add that she is also active, industrious, and thrifty to a miracle.

"But to pass on to affairs of greater importance. I have presumed, on the part of my illustrious friend, some acquaintance with the sorrowful history of my young pupils' family. You will remember the sudden shadow that fell, like the eclipse of one of the bright orbs of heaven, upon the fame and fortunes of the Conde de Nuera, known, some fifteen years ago or more, as a brilliant soldier and courtier, and personal favourite of his Imperial Majesty. There was a rumour of some black treason, I know not what, but men said it even struck at the life of the great Emperor, his friend and patron. It is supposed that the Emperor (whom God preserve!), in his just wrath remembered mercy, and generously saved the honour, while he punished the crime, of his ungrateful servant. At all events, the world was told that the Count had accepted a command in the Indies, and that he sailed thither from some port in the Low Countries to which the Emperor had summoned him, without returning to Spain. It is believed that, to save his neck from the axe and his name from dire disgrace, he signed away, by his own act, his large property to the Emperor and to Holy Church, reserving only a pittance for his children. One year afterwards, his death, in battle with the Araucanian savages, was announced, and, if I am not mistaken, His Majesty was gracious enough to have masses said for his soul. But, at the time, the tongue of rumour whispered a far more dreadful ending to the tale. Men hinted that, upon the discovery of his treason, he despaired alike of human and divine compassion, and perished miserably by his own hand. But all possible pains were taken, for the sake of the family, to hush up the affair; and nothing certain has ever, or probably will ever, transpire. I am doubtful whether I am not a transgressor in having committed to paper what is written above. Still, as it is written, it shall stand. With you, most illustrious and honourable friend, all things are safe.

"The youths whom it is my task to instruct are not deficient in parts. But the elder, Don Juan, is idle and insolent; and withal, of so fiery a temper, that he will brook no manner of correction. The younger, Don Carlos, is more toward in disposition, and really apt at his humanities, were it not that his good-for-nothing brother is for ever leading him into mischief. Don Manuel Alvarez, their uncle and guardian, who is a shrewd man of the world, will certainly cause him to enter the Church. But I pray, as I am bound in Christian charity, that it may not occur to him to make the lad a Minorite friar, since, as I can testify from sorrowful experience, such go barely enough through this wicked and miserable world.

"In conclusion, I entreat of you, most illustrious friend, with the utmost despatch and carefulness, to commit this writing to the flames; and so I pray our Lady and the blessed St. Luke, upon whose vigil I write, to have you in their good keeping. —

Your unworthy brother,

"Sebastian."

Thus, with averted face, or head shaken doubtfully, or murmured "Ay de mi," the world spoke of him, of whom his own children, happy at least in this, knew scarce anything, save words that seemed like a cry of joy.

III.

Sword and Cassock

"The helmet and the cap make houses strong."

Spanish Proverb.

Don Manuel Alvarez stayed for several days at Nuera, as the half-ruined castle in the Sierra Morena was styled. Grievous, during this period, were the sufferings of Dolores, and unceasing her efforts to provide suitable accommodation, not merely for the stately and fastidious guest himself, but also for the troop of retainers he saw fit to bring with him, comprising three or four personal attendants, and half a score of men-at-arms – the last perhaps really necessary for a journey through that wild district. Don Manuel scarcely enjoyed the situation more than did his entertainers, but he esteemed it his duty to pay an occasional visit to the estate of his orphan nephews, to see that it was properly taken care of. Perhaps the only member of the party quite at his ease was the worthy Fray Sebastian, a good-natured, self-indulgent friar, with a better education and more refined tastes than the average of his order; fond of eating and drinking, fond of gossip, fond of a little superficial literature, and not fond of troubling himself about anything. He was comforted by the improved fare Don Manuel's visit introduced; and was, moreover, soon relieved from his very natural apprehensions that the guardian of his pupils might express discontent at the slowness of their progress. He speedily discovered that Don Manuel did not care to have his nephews made good scholars: he only cared to have them ready, in two or three years, to go to the University of Complutum, or to that of Salamanca, where they might remain until they were satisfactorily provided for – one in the Army, the other in the Church.

As for Juan and Carlos, they felt, with the sure instinct of children, in this respect something like that of animals, that their uncle had little love for them. Juan dreaded, more than under the circumstances he need have done, too careful inquiries into his progress; and Carlos, while he stood in great outward awe of his uncle, all the time contrived to despise him in his heart, because he neither knew Latin, nor could repeat any of the ballads of the Cid.

On the third day of his visit, after dinner, which was at noon, Don Manuel solemnly seated himself in the great carved armchair that stood on the estrada at one end of the hall, and summoned his nephews to his side. He was a tall, wiry-looking man, with a narrow forehead, thin lips, and a pointed beard. His dress was of the finest mulberry-coloured cloth, turned back with velvet; everything about him was rich, handsome, and in good keeping, but without extravagance. His manner was dignified, perhaps a little pompous, like that of a man bent upon making the most of himself, as he had unquestionably made the most of his fortune.

He first addressed Juan, whom he gravely reminded that his father's *imprudence* had left him nothing save that poor ruin of a castle, and a few barren acres of rocky ground, at which the boy's eyes flashed, and he shrugged his shoulders and bit his lip. Don Manuel then proceeded, at some length, to extol the noble profession of arms as the road to fame and fortune. This kind of language proved much more acceptable to his nephew, and looking up, he said promptly, "Yes, señor my uncle, I will gladly be a soldier, as all my fathers were."

"Well spoken. And when thou art old enough, I promise to use my influence to obtain for thee a good appointment in His Imperial Majesty's army. I trust thou wilt honour thine ancient name."

"You may trust me," said Juan, in slow, earnest tones. Then raising his head, he went on more rapidly: "Beside his own name, Juan, my father gave me that of Rodrigo, borne by the Cid Ruy Diaz, the Campeador, meaning no doubt to show –"

"Peace, boy!" Don Miguel interrupted, cutting short the only words that his nephew had ever spoken really from his heart in his presence, with as much unconsciousness as a countryman might set his foot on a glow-worm. "Thou wert never named Rodrigo after thy Cid and his idle romances. Thy father called thee so after some madcap friend of his own, of whom the less spoken the better."

"My father's friend must have been good and noble, like himself," said Juan proudly, almost defiantly.

"Young man," returned Don Manuel severely, and lifting his eyebrows as if in surprise at his audacity, "learn that a humbler tone and more courteous manners would become thee in the presence of thy superiors." Then turning haughtily away from him, he addressed himself to Carlos: "As for thee, nephew Carlos, I hear with pleasure of thy progress in learning. Fray Sebastian reports of thee that thou hast a good ready wit and a retentive memory. Moreover, if I mistake not, sword cuts are less in thy way than in thy brother's. The service of Holy Mother Church will fit thee like a glove; and let me tell thee, boy, for thou art old enough to understand me, 'tis a right good service. Churchmen eat well and drink well – churchmen sleep soft – churchmen spend their days fingering the gold other folk toil and bleed for. For those who have fair interest in high places, and shuffle their own cards deftly, there be good fat benefices, comfortable canonries, and perhaps – who knows? – a rich bishopric at the end of all; with a matter of ten thousand hard ducats, at the least, coming in every year to save or spend, or lend, if you like it better."

"Ten thousand ducats!" said Carlos, who had been gazing in his uncle's face, his large blue eyes full of half-incredulous, half-uncomprehending wonder.

"Ay, my son, that is about the least. The Archbishop of Seville has sixty thousand every year, and more."

"Ten thousand ducats!" Carlos repeated again in a kind of awe-struck whisper. "That would buy a ship."

"Yes," said Don Manuel, highly pleased with what he considered an indication of precocious intelligence in money matters. "And an excellent thought that is of thine, my son. A good ship chartered for the Indies, and properly freighted, would bring thee back thy ducats *well perfumed*.¹ For a ship is sailing while you are sleeping. As the saying is, Let the idle man buy a ship or marry a wife. I perceive thou art a youth of much ingenuity. What thinkest thou, then, of the Church?"

Carlos was still too much the child to say anything in answer except, "If it please you, señor my uncle, I should like it well."

And thus, with rather more than less consideration of their tastes and capacities than was usual at the time, the future of Juan and Carlos Alvarez was decided.

When the brothers were alone together, Juan said, "Dolores must have been praying Our Lady for us, Carlos. An appointment in the army is the very thing for me. I shall perform some great feat of arms, like Alphonso Vives, for instance, who took the Duke of Saxony prisoner; I shall win fame and promotion, and then come back and ask my uncle for the hand of his ward, Doña Beatriz."

"Ah, and I – if I enter the Church, I can never marry," said Carlos rather ruefully, and with a vague perception that his brother was to have some good thing from which he must be shut out for ever.

"Of course not; but you will not care."

"Never a whit," said the boy of twelve, very confidently. "I shall ever have thee, Juan. And all the gold my uncle says churchmen win so easily, I will save to buy our ship."

"I will also save, so that one day we may sail together. I will be the captain, and thou shalt be the mass-priest, Carlos."

¹ With good interest.

"But I marvel if it be true that churchmen grow rich so fast. The cura in the village must be very poor, for Diego told me he took old Pedro's cloak because he could not pay the dues for his wife's burial."

"More shame for him, the greedy vulture. Carlos, you and I have each half a ducat; let us buy it back."

"With all my heart. It will be worth something to see the old man's face."

"The cura is covetous rather than poor," said Juan. "But poor or no, no one dreams of *your* being a beggarly cura like that. It is only vulgar fellows of whom they make parish priests in the country. You will get some fine preferment, my uncle says. And he ought to know, for he has feathered his own nest well."

"Why is he rich when we are poor, Juan? Where does he get all his money?"

"The saints know best. He has places under Government. Something about the taxes. I think, that he buys and sells again."

"In truth, he's not one to measure oil without getting some on his fingers. How different from him our father must have been."

"Yes," said Juan. "*His* riches, won by his own sword and battle-axe, and his good right hand, will be worth having. Ay, and even worth seeing; will they not?"

So these children dreamed of the future – that future of which nothing was certain, except its unlikeness to their dreams. No thing was certain; but what was only too probable? That the brave, free-hearted boy, who had never willingly injured any one, and who was ready to share his last coin with the poor man, would be hardened and brutalized into a soldier of fortune, like those who massacred tribes of trusting, unoffending Indians, or burned Flemish cities to the ground, amidst atrocities that even now make hearts quail and ears tingle. And yet worse, that the fair child beside him, whose life still shone with that child-like innocence which is truly the dew of youth, as bright and as fleeting, would be turned over, soul and spirit, to a system of training too surely calculated to obliterate the sense of truth, to deprave the moral taste, to make natural and healthful joys impossible, and unlawful and degrading ones fearfully easy and attainable; to teach the strong nature the love of power, the mean the love of money, and all alike falsehood, cowardice, and cruelty.

IV. Alcala de Henarez

"Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning,
Her tears and her smiles are worth evening's best light."

Moore.

Few are the lives in which seven years come and go without witnessing any great event. But whether they are eventful or no, the years that change children into men must necessarily be important. Three years of these important seven, Juan and Carlos Alvarez spent in their mountain home; the remaining four at the University of Alcala, or Complutum.

The university training was of course needful for the younger brother, who was intended for the Church. That the elder was allowed to share the privilege, although destined for the profession of arms, was the result of circumstances. His guardian, Don Manuel Alvarez, although worldly and selfish, still retained a lingering regard for the memory of that lost brother whose latest message to him had been, "Have my boy carefully educated." And, moreover, he could scarcely have left the high-spirited youth to wear out the years that must elapse before he could obtain his commission in the dreary solitude of his mountain home, with Diego and Dolores for companions, and for sole amusement, a horse and a few greyhounds. Better that he should take his chance at Alcala, and enjoy himself there as best he might, with no obligation to severe study, and but one duty strongly impressed on him – that of keeping out of debt.

He derived real benefit from the university training, though no academic laurels rested on his brow, nor did he take a degree. Fray Sebastian had taught him to read and write, and had even contrived to pass him through the Latin grammar, of which he afterwards remembered scarcely anything. To have urged him to learn more would have required severity only too popular at the time; but this Fray Sebastian was too timid, perhaps too prudent, to employ; while of interesting him in his studies he never thought. At Alcala, however, he *was* interested. He did not care, indeed, for the ordinary scholastic course; but he found in the college library all the books yet written in his native language, and it was then the palmy age of Spanish literature. Beginning with the poems and romances relating to the history of his country, he read through everything; poetry, romance, history, science, nothing came amiss to him, except perhaps theology. He studied with especial care all that had reference to the story of the New World, whither he hoped one day to go. He attended lectures; he even acquired Latin enough to learn anything he really wanted to know, and could not find except in that language.

Thus, at the end of his four years' residence, he had acquired a good deal of useful though somewhat desultory information; and he had gained the art of expressing himself in the purest Castilian, by tongue or pen, with energy, vigour, and precision.

The sixteenth century gives us many specimens of such men – and not a few of them were Spaniards – men of intelligence and general cultivation, whose profession was that of arms, but who can handle the pen with as much ease and dexterity as the sword; men who could not only do valiant deeds, but also describe them when done, and that often with singular effectiveness.

With his contemporaries Juan was popular, for his pride was inaggressive, and his fiery temper was counterbalanced by great generosity of disposition. During his residence at Alcala he fought three duels; one to chastise a fellow-student who had called his brother "Doña Carlotta," the other two on being provoked by the far more serious offence of covert sneers at his father's memory. He also caned severely a youth whom he did not think of sufficient rank to honour with his sword, merely for

observing, when Carlos won a prize from him, "Don Carlos Alvarez unites genius and industry, as he would need to do, who is the *son of his own good works*." But afterwards, when the same student was in danger, through poverty, of having to give up his career and return home, Juan stole into his chamber during his absence, and furtively deposited four gold ducats (which he could ill spare) between the leaves of his breviary.

Far more outwardly successful, but more really disastrous, was the academic career of Carlos. As student of theology, most of his days, and even some of his nights, were spent over the musty tomes of the Schoolmen. Like living water on the desert, his young bright intellect was poured out on the dreary sands of scholastic divinity (little else, in truth, than "bad metaphysics"), to no appreciable result, except its own utter waste. The kindred study of casuistry was even worse than waste of intellect; it was positive defilement and degradation. It was bad enough to tread with painful steps through roads that led nowhere; but it became worse when the roads were miry, and the mud at every step clung to the traveller's feet. Though here the parallel must cease; for the moral defilement, alas! is most deadly and dangerous when least felt or heeded.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, according as we look on the things seen or the things not seen, Carlos offered to his instructors admirable raw material out of which to fashion a successful, even a great Churchman. He came to them a stripling of fifteen, innocent, truthful, affectionate. He had "parts," as they styled them, and singularly good ones. He had just the acute perception, the fine and ready wit, which enabled him to cut his way through scholastic subtleties and conceits with ease and credit. And, to do his teachers justice, they sharpened his intellectual weapon well, until its temper grew as exquisite as that of the scimitar of Saladin, which could divide a gauze kerchief by the thread at a single blow. But how would it fare with such a weapon, and with him who, having proved no other, could wield only that, in the great conflict with the Dragon that guarded the golden apples of truth? The question is idle, for truth was a luxury of which Carlos was not taught to dream. To find truth, to think truth, to speak truth, to act truth, was not placed before him as an object worth his attainment. Not the *True*, but the *Best*, was always held up to him as the mark to be aimed at: the best for the Church, the best for his family, the best for himself.

He had much imagination, he was quick in invention and ready in expedients; good gifts in themselves, but very perilous where the sense of truth is lacking, or blunted. He was timid, as sensitive and reflective natures are apt to be, perhaps also from physical causes. And in those rough ages, the Church offered almost the only path in which the timid man could not only escape infamy, but actually attain to honour. In her service a strong head could more than atone for weak nerves. Power, fame, wealth, might be gained in abundance by the Churchman without stirring from his cell or chapel, or facing a single drawn sword or loaded musket. Always provided that his subtle, cultivated intellect could guide the rough hands that wielded the swords, or, better still, the crowned head that commanded them.

There may have been even then at that very university (there certainly were a few years earlier), a little band of students who had quite other aims, and who followed other studies than those from which Carlos hoped to reap worldly success and fame. These youths really desired to find the truth and to keep it; and therefore they turned from the pages of the Fathers and the Schoolmen to the Scriptures in the original languages. But the "Biblists," as they were called, were few and obscure. Carlos did not, during his whole term of residence, come in contact with any of them. The study of Hebrew, and even of Greek, was by this time discouraged; the breath of calumny had blown upon it, linking it with all that was horrible in the eyes of Spanish Catholics, summed up in the one word, heresy. Carlos never even dreamed of any excursion out of the beaten path marked out for him, and which he was travelling so successfully as to distance nearly all his competitors.

Both Juan and Carlos still clung fondly to their early dream; though their wider knowledge had necessarily modified some of its details. Carlos, at least, was not quite so confident as he had once been about the existence of El Dorado; but he was as fully determined as Juan to search out the

mystery of their father's fate, and either to clasp his living hand, or to stand beside his grave. The love of the brothers, and their trust in each other, had only strengthened with their years, and was beautiful to witness.

Occasional journeys to Seville, and brief intervals of making holiday there, varied the monotony of their college life, and were not without important results.

It was the summer of 1556. The great Carlos, so lately King and Kaiser, had laid down the heavy burden of sovereignty, and would soon be on his way to pleasant San Yuste, to mortify the flesh, and prepare for his approaching end, as the world believed; but in reality to eat, drink, and enjoy himself as well as his worn-out body and mind would allow him. Just then our young Juan, healthy, hearty, hopeful, and with the world before him, received the long wished-for appointment in the army of the new King of all the Spains, Don Felipe Segunde.

The brothers have eaten their last temperate meal together, in their handsome, though not very comfortable, lodging at Alcala. Juan pushes away the wine-cup that Carlos would fain have refilled, and toys absently with the rind of a melon. "Carlos," he says, without looking his brother in the face, "remember that thing of which we spoke;" adding in lower and more earnest tones, "and so may God remember thee."

"Surely, brother. You have, however, little to fear."

"Little to fear!" and there was the old quick flash in the dark eyes. "Because, forsooth, to spare my aunt's selfishness and my cousin's vanity, she must not be seen at dance, or theatre, or bull-feast? It is enough for her to show her face on the Alameda or at mass to raise me up a host of rivals."

"Still, my uncle favours you; and Doña Beatriz herself will not be found of a different mind when you come home with your promotion and your glory, as you will, my Ruy!"

"Then, brother, watch thou in my absence, and fail not to speak the right word at the right moment, as thou canst so well. So shall I hold myself at ease, and give my whole mind to the noble task of breaking the heads of all the enemies of my liege lord the king."

Then, rising from the table, he girt on his new Toledo sword with its embroidered belt, threw over his shoulders his short scarlet cloak, and flung a gay velvet montero over his rich black curls. Don Carlos went out with him, and mounting the horses a lad from their country-home held in readiness, they rode together down the street and through the gate of Alcala; Don Juan followed by many an admiring gaze, and many a hearty "Vaya con Dios,"² from his late companions.

² Go with God.

V. **Don Carlos Forgets Himself**

"A fair face and a tender voice had made me mad and blind."

E.B. Browning.

Don Carlos Alvarez found Alcala, after his brother's departure, insupportably dull; moreover, he had now almost finished his brilliant university career. As soon, therefore, as he could, he took his degree as Licentiate of Theology. He then wrote to inform his uncle of the fact; adding that he would be glad to spend part of the interval that must elapse before his ordination at Seville, where he might attend the lectures of the celebrated Fray Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, Professor of Divinity in the College of Doctrine in that city. But, in fact, a desire to fulfil his brother's last charge weighed more with him than an eagerness for further instruction; especially as rumours that his watchfulness was not unnecessary had reached his ears at Alcala.

He received a prompt and kind invitation from his uncle to make his house his home for as long a period as he might desire. Now, although Don Manuel was highly pleased with the genius and industry of his younger nephew, the hospitality he extended to him was not altogether disinterested. He thought Carlos capable of rendering what he deemed an essential service to a member of his own family.

That family consisted of a beautiful, gay, frivolous wife, three sons, two daughters, and his wife's orphan niece, Doña Beatriz de Lavella. The two elder sons were cast in their father's mould; which, to speak truth, was rather that of a merchant than of a cavalier. Had he been born of simple parents in the flats of Holland or the back streets of London, a vulgar Hans or Thomas, his tastes and capabilities might have brought him honest wealth. But since he had the misfortune to be Don Manuel Alvarez, of the bluest blood in Spain, he was taught to look on industry as ineffably degrading, and trade and commerce scarcely less so. Only one species of trade, one kind of commerce, was open to the needy and avaricious, but proud grandee. Unhappily it was almost the only kind that is really degrading – the traffic in public money, in places, and in taxes. "A sweeping rain leaving no food," such traffic was, in truth. The Government was defrauded; the people, especially the poorer classes, were cruelly oppressed. No one was enriched except the greedy jobber, whose birth rendered him infinitely too proud to work, but by no means too proud to cheat and steal.

Don Manuel the younger, and Don Balthazar Alvarez, were ready and longing to tread in their father's footsteps. Of the two pale-faced dark-eyed sisters, Doña Inez and Doña Sancha, one was already married, and the other had also plans satisfactory to her parents. But the person in the family who was not of it was the youngest son, Don Gonsalvo. He was the representative, not of his father, but of his grandfather; as we so often see types of character reproduced in the third generation. The first Conde de Nuera had been a wild soldier of fortune in the Moorish wars, fierce and fiery, with strong unbridled passions. At eighteen, Gonsalvo was his image; and there was scarcely any mischief possible to a youth of fortune in a great city, into which he had not already found his way. For two years he continued to scandalize his family, and to vex the soul of his prudent and decorous father.

Suddenly, however, a change came over him. He reformed; became quiet and regular in his conduct; gave himself up to study, making extraordinary progress in a very short time; and even showed what those around him called "a pious disposition." But these hopeful appearances passed as suddenly and as unaccountably as they came. After an interval of less than a year, he returned to his former habits, and plunged even more madly than ever into all kinds of vice and dissipation.

His father resolved to procure him a commission, and send him away to the wars. But an accident frustrated his intentions. In those days, cavaliers of rank frequently sought the dangerous triumphs of the bull-ring. The part of matador was performed, not, as now, by hired bravos of the lowest class, but often by scions of the most honourable houses. Gonsalvo had more than once distinguished himself in the bloody arena by courage and coolness. But he tempted his fate too often. Upon one occasion he was flung violently from his horse, and then gored by the furious bull, whose rage had been excited to the utmost pitch by the cruel arts usually practised. He escaped with life, but remained a crippled invalid, apparently condemned for the rest of his days to inaction, weakness, and suffering.

His father thought a good canonry would be a decent and comfortable provision for him, and pressed him accordingly to enter the Church. But the invalided youth manifested an intense repugnance to the step; and Don Manuel hoped that the influence of Carlos would help to overcome this feeling; believing that he would gladly endeavour to persuade his cousin that no way of life was so pleasant or so easy as that which he himself was about to adopt.

The good nature of Carlos led him to fall heartily into his uncle's plans. He really pitied his cousin, moreover, and gladly gave himself to the task of trying in every possible way to console and amuse him. But Gonsalvo rudely repelled all his efforts. In his eyes the destined priest was half a woman, with no knowledge of a man's aims or a man's passions, and consequently no right to speak of them.

"Turn priest!" he said to him one day; "I have as good a mind to turn Turk. Nay, cousin, I am not pious – you may present my orisons to Our Lady with your own, if it so please you. Perhaps she may attend to them better than to those I offered before entering the bull-ring on that unlucky day of St. Thomas."

Carlos, though not particularly devout, was shocked by this language.

"Take care, cousin," he said; "your words sound rather like blasphemy."

"And yours sound like the words of what you are, half a priest already," retorted Gonsalvo. "It is ever the priest's cry, if you displease him, 'Open heresy!' 'Rank blasphemy!' And next, 'the Holy Office, and a yellow Sanbenito.' I marvel it did not occur to your sanctity to menace me with that."

The gentle-tempered Carlos did not answer; a forbearance which further exasperated Gonsalvo, who hated nothing so much as being, on account of his infirmities, borne with like a woman or a child. "But the saints help the Churchmen," he went on ironically. "Good simple souls, they do not know even their own business! Else they would smell heresy close enough at hand. What doctrine does your Fray Constantino preach in the great Church every feast-day, since they made him canon-magistral?"

"The most orthodox and Catholic doctrine, and no other," said Carlos, roused, in his turn, by the attack upon his teacher; though he did not greatly care for his instructions, which turned principally upon subjects about which he had learned little or nothing in the schools. "But to hear thee discuss doctrine is to hear a blind man talking of colours."

"If I be the blind man talking of colours, thou art the deaf prating of music," retorted his cousin. "Come and tell me, if thou canst, what are these doctrines of thy Fray Constantino, and wherein they differ from the Lutheran heresy? I wager my gold chain and medal against thy new velvet cloak, that thou wouldst fall thyself into as many heresies by the way as there are nuts in Barcelona."

Allowing for Gonsalvo's angry exaggeration, there was some truth in his assertion. Once out of the region of dialectic subtleties, the champion of the schools would have become weak as another man. And he could not have expounded Fray Constantino's preaching; – because he did not understand it.

"What, cousin!" he exclaimed, affronted in his tenderest part, his reputation as a theological scholar. "Dost thou take me for a barefooted friar or a village cura? Me, who only two months ago was crowned victor in a debate upon the doctrines taught by Raymondus Lullius!"

But whatever chagrin Carlos may have felt at finding himself utterly unable to influence Gonsalvo, was soon effectually banished by the delight with which he watched the success of his diplomacy with Doña Beatriz.

Beatriz was almost a child in years, and entirely a child in mind and character. Hitherto, she had been studiously kept in the background, lest her brilliant beauty should throw her cousins into the shade. Indeed, she would probably have been consigned to a convent, had not her portion been too small to furnish the donative usually bestowed by the friends of a novice upon any really aristocratic establishment. "And pity would it have been," thought Carlos, "that so fair a flower should wither in a convent garden."

He made the most of the limited opportunities of intercourse which the ceremonious manners of the time and country afforded, even to inmates of the same house. He would stand beside her chair, and watch the quick flush mount to her olive, delicately-rounded cheek, as he talked eloquently of the absent Juan. He was never tired of relating stories of Juan's prowess, Juan's generosity. In the last duel he fought, for instance, the ball had passed through his cap and grazed his head. But he only smiled, and re-arranged his locks, remarking, while he did so, that with the addition of a gold chain and medal, the spoiled cap would be as good, or better than ever. Then he would dilate on his kindness to the vanquished; rejoicing in the effect produced, a tribute as well to his own eloquence as to his brother's merit. The occupation was too fascinating not to be resorted to once and again, even had he not persuaded himself that he was fulfilling a sacred duty.

Moreover, he soon discovered that the bright dark eyes which were beginning to visit him nightly in his dreams, were pining all day for a sight of that gay world from which their owner was jealously and selfishly excluded. So he managed to procure for Doña Beatriz many a pleasure of the kind she most valued. He prevailed upon his aunt and cousins to bring her with them to places of public resort; and then he was always at hand, with the reverence of a loyal cavalier, and the freedom of a destined priest, to render her every quiet unobtrusive service in his power. At the theatre, at the dance, at the numerous Church ceremonies, on the promenade, Doña Beatriz was his especial charge.

Amidst such occupations, pleasant weeks and months glided by almost unnoticed by him. Never before had he been so happy. "Alcala was well enough," he thought; "but Seville is a thousand times better. All my life heretofore seems to me only like a dream, now I am awake."

Alas! he was not awake, but wrapped in a deep sleep, and cradling a bright delusive vision. As yet he was not even "as those that dream, and know the while they dream." His slumber was too profound even for this dim half-consciousness.

No one suspected, any more than he suspected himself, the enchantment that was stealing over him. But every one remarked his frank, genial manners, his cheerfulness, his good looks. Naturally, the name of Juan dropped gradually more and more out of his conversation; as at the same time the thought of Juan faded from his mind. His studies, too, were neglected; his attendance upon the lectures of Fray Constantino became little more than a formality; while "receiving Orders" seemed a remote if not an uncertain contingency. In fact, he lived in the present, not caring to look either at the past or the future.

In the very midst of his intoxication, at slight incident affected him for a moment with such a chill as we feel when, on a warm spring day, the sun passes suddenly behind a cloud.

His cousin, Doña Inez, had been married more than a year to a wealthy gentleman of Seville, Don Garçia Ramirez. Carlos, calling one morning at the lady's house with some unimportant message from Doña Beatriz, found her in great trouble on account of the sudden illness of her babe.

"Shall I go and fetch a physician?" he asked, knowing well that Spanish servants can never be depended upon to make haste, however great the emergency may be.

"You will do a great kindness, amigo mio," said the anxious young mother.

"But which shall I summon?" asked Carlos. "Our family physician, or Don Garçia's?"

"Don García's, by all means, – Dr. Cristobal Losada. I would not give a green fig for any other in Seville. Do you know his dwelling?"

"Yes. But should he be absent or engaged?"

"I must have him. Him, and no other. Once before he saved my darling's life. And if my poor brother would but consult him, it might fare better with him. Go quickly, cousin, and fetch him, in Heaven's name."

Carlos lost no time in complying; but on reaching the dwelling of the physician, found that though the hour was early he had already gone forth. After leaving a message, he went to visit a friend in the Triana suburb. He passed close by the Cathedral, with its hundred pinnacles, and that wonder of beauty, the old Moorish Giralda, soaring far up above it into the clear southern sky. It occurred to him that a few Aves said within for the infant's recovery would be both a benefit to the child and a comfort to the mother. So he entered, and was making his way to a gaudy tinselled Virgin and Babe, when, happening to glance towards a different part of the building, his eyes rested on the physician, with whose person he was well acquainted, as he had often noticed him amongst Fray Constantino's hearers. Losada was now pacing up and down one of the side aisles, in company with a gentleman of very distinguished appearance.

As Carlos drew nearer, it occurred to him that he had never seen this personage in any place of public resort, and for this reason, as well as from certain slight indications in his dress of fashions current in the north of Spain, he gathered that he was a stranger in Seville, who might be visiting the Cathedral from motives of curiosity. Before he came up the two men paused in their walk, and turning their backs to him, stood gazing thoughtfully at the hideous row of red and yellow Sanbenitos, or penitential garments, that hung above them.

"Surely," thought Carlos, "they might find better objects of attention than these ugly memorials of sin and shame, which bear witness that their late miserable wearers – Jews, Moors, blasphemers, or sorcerers, – have ended their dreary lives of penance, if not of penitence."

The attention of the stranger seemed to be particularly attracted by one of them, the largest of all. Indeed, Carlos himself had been struck by its unusual size; and upon one occasion he had even had the curiosity to read the inscription, which he remembered because it contained Juan's favourite name, Rodrigo. It was this: "Rodrigo Valer, a citizen of Lebrixa and Seville; an apostate and false apostle, who pretended to be sent from God." And now, as he approached with light though hasty footsteps, he distinctly heard Dr. Cristobal Losada, still looking at the Sanbenito, say to his companion, "Yes, señor; and also the Conde de Nuera, Don Juan Alvarez."

Don Juan Alvarez! What possible tie could link his father's name with the hideous thing they were gazing at? And what could the physician know about him of whom his own children knew so little? Carlos stood amazed, and pale with sudden emotion.

And thus the physician saw him, happening to turn at that moment. Had he not exerted all his presence of mind (and he possessed a great deal), he would himself have started visibly. The unexpected appearance of the person of whom we speak is in itself disconcerting; but it deserves another name when we are saying that of him or his which, if overheard, might endanger life, or what is more precious still than life. Losada was equal to the occasion, however. The usual greetings having been exchanged, he asked quietly whether Señor Don Carlos had come in search of him, and hoped that he did not owe the honour to any indisposition in his worship's noble family.

Carlos felt it rather a relief, under the circumstances, to have to say that his cousin's babe was alarmingly ill. "You will do us a great favour," he added, "by coming immediately. Doña Inez is very anxious."

The physician promised compliance; and turning to his companion, respectfully apologized for leaving him abruptly.

"A sick child's claim must not be postponed," said the stranger in reply. "Go, señor doctor, and God's blessing rest on your skill."

Carlos was struck by the noble bearing and courteous manner of the stranger, who, in his turn, was interested by the young man's anxiety about a sick babe. But with only a passing glance at the other, each went his different way, not dreaming that once again at least their paths were destined to cross.

The strange mention of his father's name that he had overheard filled the heart of Carlos with undefined uneasiness. He knew enough by that time to feel his childish belief in his father's stainless virtue a little shaken. What if a dreadful unexplained something, linking his fate with that of a convicted heretic, were yet to be learned? After all, the accursed arts of magic and sorcery were not so far removed from the alchemist's more legitimate labours, that a rash or presumptuous student might not very easily slide from one into the other. He had reason to believe that his father had played with alchemy, if he had not seriously devoted himself to its study. Nay, the thought had sometimes flashed unbidden across his mind that the "El Dorado" found might after all have been no other than the philosopher's stone. For he who has attained the power of producing gold at will may surely be said, without any stretch of metaphor, to have discovered a golden country. But at this period of his life the personal feelings of Carlos were so keen and absorbing that almost everything, consciously or unconsciously, was referred to them. And thus it was that an intense wish sprang up in his heart, that his father's secret might have descended to *him*.

Vain wish! The gold he needed or desired must be procured from a less inaccessible region than El Dorado, and without the aid of the philosopher's stone.

VI. Don Carlos Forgets Himself Still Further

"The not so very false, as falsehood goes, —
The spinning out and drawing fine, you know;
Really mere novel-writing, of a sort,
Acting, improvising, make-believe, —
Surely not downright cheater!"

R. Browning

It cost Carlos some time and trouble to drive away the haunting thoughts which Losada's words had awakened. But he succeeded at length; or perhaps it would be more truthful to say the bright eyes and witching smiles of Doña Beatriz accomplished the work for him.

Every dream, however, must have a waking. Sometimes a slight sound, ludicrously trivial in its cause, dispels a slumber fraught with wondrous visions, in which we have been playing the part of kings and emperors.

"Nephew Don Carlos," said Don Manuel one day, "is it not time you thought of shaving your head? You are learned enough for your Orders long ago, and 'in a plentiful house supper is soon dressed.'"

"True, señor my uncle," murmured Carlos, looking suddenly aghast. "But I am under the canonical age."

"But you can get a dispensation."

"Why such haste? There is time yet and to spare."

"That is not so sure. I hear the cura of San Lucar has one foot in the grave. The living is a good one, and I think I know where to go for it. So take care you lose not a heifer for want of a halter to hold it by."

With these words on his lips, Don Manuel went out. At the same moment Gonsalvo, who lay listlessly on a sofa at one end of the room, or rather court, reading "Lazarillo de Tormes," the first Spanish novel, burst into a loud paroxysm of laughter.

"What may be the theme of your merriment?" asked Carlos, turning his large dreamy eyes languidly towards him.

"Yourself, amigo mio. You would make the stone saints of the Cathedral laugh on their pedestals. There you stand, pale as marble, a living image of despair. Come, rouse yourself! What do you mean to do? Will you take what you wish, or let your chance slip by, and then sit and weep because you have it not? Will you be a *priest* or a *man*? Make your choice this hour, for one you must be, and both you cannot be."

Carlos answered him not; in truth, he dared not answer him. Every word was the voice of his own heart; perhaps it was also, though he knew it not, the voice of the great tempter. He withdrew to his chamber, and barred and bolted himself in it. This was the first time in his life that solitude was a necessity to him. His uncle's words had brought with them a terrible revelation. He knew himself now too well; he knew what he loved, what he desired, or rather what he hungered and thirsted for with agonizing intensity. No; never the priest's frock for him. He must call Doña Beatriz de Lavella his — his before God's altar — or die.

Then came a thought, stinging him with sharp, sudden pain. It was a thought that should have come to him long ago, — "Juan!" And with the name, affection, memory, conscience, rose up together within him to combat the mad resolve of his passion.

Fiery passions slumbered in the heart of Carlos. Such are sometimes found united with a gentle temper, a weak will, and sensitive nerves. Woe to their possessor when they are aroused in their strength!

Had Carlos been a plain soldier, like the brother he was tempted to betray, it is possible he might have come forth from this terrible conflict still holding fast his honour and his brotherly affection. It was his priestly training that turned the scale. He had been taught that simple truth between man and man was a thing of little consequence. He had been taught the art of making a hundred clever, plausible excuses for whatever he saw best to do. He had been taught, in short, every species of sophistry by which, to the eyes of others, and to his own also, wrong might be made to seem right, and black to appear the purest white.

His subtle imagination forged in the fire of his kindled passions chains of reasoning in which no skill could detect a flaw. Juan had never loved as he did; Juan would not care; probably by this time he had forgotten Doña Beatriz. "Besides," the tempter whispered furtively within him, "he might never return at all; he might die in battle." But Carlos was not yet sunk so low as to give ear for a single instant to this wicked whisper; though certainly he could not henceforth look for his brother's return with the joy with which he had been wont to anticipate that event. But, in any case, Beatriz herself should be the judge between them. And he told himself that he knew (how did he know it?) that Beatriz preferred *him*. Then it would be only right and kind to prepare Juan for an inevitable disappointment. This he could easily do. Letters, carefully written, might gradually suggest to his brother that Beatriz had other views; and he knew Juan's pride and his fiery temper well enough to calculate that if his jealousy were once aroused, these would soon accomplish the rest.

Ere we, who have been taught from our cradles to "speak the truth from the heart," turn with loathing from the wiles of Carlos Alvarez, we ought to remember that he was a Spaniard – one of a nation whose genius and passion is for intrigue. He was also a Spaniard of the sixteenth century; but, above all, he was a Spanish Catholic, educated for the priesthood.

The ability with which he laid his plans, and the enjoyment which its exercise gave him, served in itself to blind him to the treachery and ingratitude upon which those plans were founded.

He sought an interview with Fray Constantino, and implored from him a letter of recommendation to the imperial recluse at San Yuste, whose chaplain and personal favourite the canon-magistral had been. But that eloquent preacher, though warm-hearted and generous to a fault, hesitated to grant the request. He represented to Carlos that His Imperial Majesty did not choose his retreat to be invaded by applicants for favours, and that the journey to San Yuste would therefore be, in all probability, worse than useless. Carlos answered that he had fully weighed the difficulties of the case; but that if the line of conduct he adopted seemed peculiar, his circumstances were so also. He believed that his father (who died before his birth) had enjoyed the special regard of His Imperial Majesty, and he hoped that, for his sake, he might now be willing to show him some kindness. At all events, he was sure of an introduction to his presence through his mayor-domo, Don Luis Quixada, lord of Villagarçia, who was a friend of their house. What he desired to obtain, through the kindness of His Imperial Majesty, was a Latin secretaryship, or some similar office, at the court of the new king, where his knowledge of Latin, and the talents he hoped he possessed, might stand him in good stead, and enable him to support, though with modesty, the station to which his birth entitled him. For, although already a licentiate of theology, and with good prospects in the Church, he did not wish to take orders, as he had thoughts of marrying.

Fray Constantino felt a sympathy with the young man; and perhaps the rather because, if report speaks true, he had once been himself in a somewhat similar position. So he compromised matters by giving him a general letter of recommendation, in which he spoke of his talents and his blameless manners as warmly as he could, from the experience of the nine or ten months during which he had been acquainted with him. And although the attention paid by Carlos to his instructions had been slight, and of late almost perfunctory, his great natural intelligence had enabled him to stand

his ground more creditably than many far more diligent students. The Fray's letter Carlos thankfully added to the numerous laudatory epistles from the doctors and professors of Alcala that he already had in his possession.

All these he enclosed in a cedar box, which he carefully locked, and consigned in its turn to a travelling portmanteau, along with a fair stock of wearing apparel, sufficiently rich in material to suit his rank, but modest in colour and fashion. He then informed his uncle that before he took Orders it would be necessary for him, in his brother's absence, to take a journey to their little estate, and set its concerns in order.

His uncle, suspecting nothing, approved his plan, and insisted on providing him with the attendance of an armed guard to Nuera, whither he really intended to go in the first instance.

VII. The Desengaño

"And I should evermore be vexed with thee
In vacant robe, or hanging ornament,
Or ghostly foot-fall lingering on the stair."

Tennyson

The journey from the city of oranges to the green slopes of the Sierra Morena ought to have been a delightful one to Don Carlos Alvarez. It was certainly bright with hope. He scarcely harboured a doubt of the ultimate success of his plans, and the consequent attainment of all his wishes. Already he seemed to feel the soft hand of Doña Beatriz in his, and to stand by her side before the high altar of the great Cathedral.

And yet, as days passed on, the brightness within grew fainter, and an acknowledged shadow, ever deepening, began to take its place. At last he drew near his home, and rode through the little grove of cork-trees where he and Juan had played as children. When last they were there together the autumn winds were strewing the leaves, all dim and discoloured, about their paths. Now he looked through the fresh green foliage at the deep intense blue of the summer sky. But, though scarcely more than twenty, he felt at that moment old and worn, and wished back the time of his boyish sports with his brother. Never again could he feel quite happy with Juan.

Soon, however, his sorrowful fancies were put to flight by the joyous greeting of the hounds, who rushed with much clamour from the castle-yard to welcome him. There they were, all of them – Pedro, Zina, Pepe, Grullo, Butron – it was Juan who had named them, every one. And there, at the gate, stood Diego and Dolores, ready to give him joyful welcome. Throwing himself from his horse, he shook hands with these faithful old retainers, and answered their kindly but respectful inquiries both for himself and Señor Don Juan. Then, having caressed the dogs, inquired for each of the under-servants by name, and given orders for the due entertainment of his guard, he passed on slowly into the great deserted hall.

His arrival being unexpected, he merely surrendered his travelling cloak into the hands of Diego, and sat down to wait patiently while the servants, always dilatory, prepared for him suitable accommodation. Dolores soon appeared with a flask of wine and some bread and grapes; but this was only a *merienda*, or slight afternoon luncheon, which she laid before her young master until she could make ready a supper fit for him to partake of. Carlos spent half an hour listening to her tidings of the household and the village, and felt sorry when she quitted the room and left him to his own reflections.

Every object on which his eyes rested reminded him of his brother. There hung the cross-bow with which, in old days, Juan had made such vigorous war on the rooks and the sparrows. There lay the foils and the canes with which they had so often fenced and played; Juan, in his unquestioned superiority, usually so patient with the younger brother's timidity and awkwardness. And upon that bench he had carved, with a hunting-knife, his name in full, adding the title that had expired with his father, "Conde de Nuera."

The memories these things recalled were becoming intrusive; he would fain shake them off. Gladly would he have had recourse to his favourite pastime of reading, but there was not a book in the castle, to his knowledge, except the breviary he had brought with him. For lack of more congenial occupation, he went out at last to the stable to look at the horses, and to talk to those who were grooming and feeding them.

Later in the evening Dolores told him that supper was ready, adding that she had laid it in the small inner room, which she thought Señor Don Carlos would find more comfortable than the great hall.

That inner room was, even more than the hall, haunted by the shadowy presence of Juan. But it was usually daylight when the brothers were there together. Now, a tapestry curtain shaded the window, and a silver lamp shed its light on the well-spread table with its snowy drapery, and cover laid for one.

A lonely meal, however luxurious, is always apt to be somewhat dreary; it seems a provision for the lowest wants of our nature, and nothing more. Carlos sought to escape from the depressing influence by giving wings to his imagination, and dreaming of the time when wealth enough to repair and refurnish that half-ruinous old homestead might be his. He pleased himself with pictures of the long tables in the great hall, groaning beneath the weight of a bountiful provision for a merry company of guests, upon whom the sweet face of Doña Beatriz might beam a welcome. But how idle such fancies! The castle, after all, was Juan's, not his. Unless, indeed, more difficulties than one should be solved by Juan's death upon some French or Flemish battle-field. This thought he could not bear to entertain. Grown suddenly sick at heart, he pushed aside his plate of stewed pigeon, and, regardless of the feelings of Dolores, sent away untasted her dessert of sweet butter-cakes dipped in honey. He was weary, he said, and he would go to rest at once.

It was long before sleep would visit his eyelids; and when at last it came, his brother's dark reproachful eyes haunted him still. At daybreak he awoke with a start from a feverish dream that Juan, all pale and ghostlike, had come to his bedside, and laying his hand on his arm, said solemnly, "I claim the jewel I left thee in trust."

Further sleep was impossible. He rose, and wandered out into the fresh air. As yet no one was astir. Fair and sweet was all that met his gaze: the faint pearly light, the first blush of dawn in the quiet sky, the silvery dew that bathed his footsteps. But the storm within raged more fiercely for the calm without. There was first an agonizing struggle to repress the rising thought, "Better, after all, *not* to do this thing." But, in spite of his passionate efforts, the thought gained a hearing, it seemed to cry aloud within him, "Better, after all, not to betray Juan!" "And give up Beatriz for ever? *For ever!*" he repeated over and over again, beating it

"In upon his weary brain,
As though it were the burden of a song."

He had climbed, almost unawares, to the top of a rocky hill; and now he stood, looking around him at the prospect, just as if he saw it. In truth, he saw nothing, felt nothing outward, until at last a misty mountain rain swept in his face, refreshing his burning brow with a touch as of cool fingers.

Then he descended mechanically. Exchanging salutations (as if nothing were amiss with him) with the milk-maid and the wood-boy, he crossed the open courtyard and re-entered the hall. There Dolores, and a girl who worked under her, were already busy, so he passed by them into the inner room.

Its darkness seemed to stifle him; with hasty hand he drew aside the heavy tapestry curtain. As he did so something caught his eye. For the hundredth time he re-read the mystic inscription on the glass:

"El Dorado
Yo hé trovato."

And, as an infant's touch may open a sluice that lets in the mighty ocean, those simple words broke up the fountains of the great deep within. He gave full course to the emotions they awakened.

Again he heard Juan's voice repeat them; again he saw Juan's deep earnest eyes look into his; not now reproachfully, but with full unshaken trust, as in the old days when first he said, "We will go forth together and find our father."

"Juan – brother!" he cried aloud, "I will never wrong thee, so help me God!" At that moment the morning sun, having scattered the mists with the glory of its rising, sent one of its early beams to kiss the handwriting on the window-pane. "Old token for good," thought Carlos, whose imaginative nature could play with fancies even in the hours of supreme emotion. "And true still even yet. Only the good is all for Juan; for me – nothing but despair."

And so Don Carlos found his "desengaño," or disenchantment, and it was a very thorough one.

Body and mind were well-nigh exhausted with the violence of the struggle. Perhaps this was fortunate, in so far that it won for the decision of his better nature a more rapid and easy acceptance. In a sense and for a season any decision was welcome to the weary, tempest-tossed soul.

It was afterwards that he asked himself how were long years to be dragged on without the face that was the joy of his heart and the life of his life? How was he to bear the never-ending pain, the aching loneliness, of such a lot? Better to die at once than to endure this slow, living death. He knew well that it was not in his nature to point the pistol or the dagger at his own breast. But he might pine away and die silently – as many thousands die – of blighted hopes and a ruined life. Or – and this was more likely, perhaps – as time passed on he might grow dead and hard in soul; until at last he would become a dry, cold, mechanical mass-priest, mumbling the Church's Latin with thin, bloodless lips, a keen eye to his dues, and a heart that might serve for a Church relic, so much faith would it require to believe that it had been warm and living once.

Still, laudably anxious to provide against possible future waverings of the decision so painfully attained, he wrote informing his uncle of his safe arrival; adding that he had fully made up his mind to take Orders at Christmas, but that he found it advisable to remain in his present quarters for a month or two. He at once dispatched two of the men-at-arms with the letter; and much was the thrifty Don Manuel surprised that his nephew should spend a handful of silver reals in order to inform him of what he knew already.

Gloomily the day wore on. The instinctive reserve of a sensitive nature made Carlos talk to the servants, receive the accounts, inspect the kine and sheep – do everything, in short, except eat and drink – as he would have done if a great sorrow had not all the time been crushing his heart. It is true that Dolores, who loved him as her own son, was not deceived. It was for no trivial cause that the young master was pale as a corpse, restless and irritable, talking hurriedly by fitful snatches, and then relapsing into moody silence. But Dolores was a prudent woman, as well as a loving and faithful one; therefore she held her peace, and bided her time.

But Carlos noticed one effort she made to console him. Coming in towards evening from a consultation with Diego about some cork-trees which a Morisco merchantman wished to purchase and cut down, he saw upon his table a carefully sealed wine-flask, with a cup beside it. He knew whence it came. His father had left in the cellar a small quantity of choice wine of Xeres; and this relic of more prosperous times being, like most of their other possessions, in the care of Dolores, was only produced very sparingly, and on rare occasions. But she evidently thought "Señor Don Carlos" needed it now. Touched by her watchful, unobtrusive affection, he would have gratified her by drinking; but he had a peculiar dislike to drinking alone, while he knew he would only render his sanity doubtful by inviting either her or Diego to share the luxurious beverage. So he put it aside for the present, and drew towards him a sheet of figures, an ink-horn, and a pen. He could not work, however. With the silence and solitude, his great grief came back upon him again. But nature all this time had been silently working for him. His despair was giving way to a more violent but less bitter sorrow. Tears came now: a long, passionate fit of weeping relieved his aching heart. Since his early childhood he had not wept thus.

An approaching footstep recalled him to himself. He rose with haste and shame, and stood beside the window, hoping that his position and the waning light might together shield him from observation. It was only Dolores.

"Señor," she said, entering somewhat hastily, "will it please you to see to those men of Seville that came with your Excellency? They are insulting a poor little muleteer, and threatening to rob his packages."

Yanguesian carriers and other muleteers, bringing goods across the Sierra Morena from the towns of La Mancha to those of Andalusia, often passed by the castle, and sometimes received hospitality there. Carlos rose at once at the summons, saying to Dolores —

"Where is the boy?"

"He is not a boy, señor, he is a man; a very little man, but with a greater spirit, if I mistake not, than some twice his size."

It was true enough. On the green plot at the back of the castle, beside which the mountain pathway led, there were gathered the ten or twelve rough Seville pikemen, taken from the lowest of the population, and most of them of Moorish blood. In their midst, beside the foremost of his three mules, with one arm thrown round her neck and the other raised to give effect by animated gestures to his eager oratory, stood the muleteer. He was a very short, spare, active-looking man, clad from head to foot in chestnut-coloured leather. His mules were well laden; each with three large alforjas, one at each side and one laid across the neck. But they were evidently well fed and cared for also; and they presented a gay appearance, with their adornments of bright-coloured worsted tassels and tiny bells.

"You know, my friends," the muleteer was saying, as Carlos came within hearing, "an arriero's alforjas³ are like a soldier's colours, — it stands him upon his honour to guard them inviolate. No, no! Ask him for aught else — his purse, his blood — they are at your service; but never touch his colours, if you care for a long life."

"My honest friend, your colours, as you call them, shall be safe here," said Carlos, kindly.

The muleteer turned towards him a good-humoured, intelligent face, and, bowing low, thanked him heartily.

"What is your name?" asked Carlos; "and whence do you come?"

"I am Juliano; Juliano el Chico (Julian the Little) men generally call me — since, as your Excellency sees, I am not very great. And I come last from Toledo."

"Indeed! And what wares do you carry?"

"Some matters, small in bulk, yet costly, which I am bringing for a Seville merchant — Medel de Espinosa by name, if your worship has heard of him? I have mirrors, for example, of a new kind; excellent in workmanship, and true as steel, as well they may be."

"I know the shop of Espinosa well. I have been much in Seville," said Carlos, with a sudden pang, caused by the recollection of the many pretty trifles that he had purchased there for Doña Beatriz. "But follow me, my friend, and a good supper shall make you amends for the rudeness of these fellows. — Andres, take the best care thou canst of his mules; 'twill be only fair penance for thy sin in molesting their owner."

"A hundred thousand thanks, señor. Still, with your worship's good leave, and no offence to friend Andres, I had rather look to the beasts myself. We are old companions; they know my ways, and I know theirs."

"As you please, my good fellow. Andres will show you the stable, and I shall tell my mayor-domo to see that you lack nothing."

"Again I render to your Excellency my poor but hearty thanks."

Carlos went in, gave the necessary directions to Diego, and then returned to his solitary chamber.

³ *Arriero*, muleteer; *alforjas*, bags.

VIII. The Muleteer

"Are ye resigned that they be spent
In such world's help? The spirits bent
Their awful brows, and said, 'Content!'

"Content! It sounded like Amen
Said by a choir of mourning men:
An affirmation full of pain

"And patience, – ay, of glorying,
And adoration, as a king
Might seal an oath for governing."

E.B. Browning.

When Carlos stood once more face to face with his sorrow – as he did as soon as he had closed the door – he found that it had somewhat changed its aspect. A trouble often does this when some interruption from the outer world makes us part company with it for a little while. We find on our return that it has developed quite a new phase, and seldom a more hopeful one.

It now entered the mind of Carlos, for the first time, that he had been acting very basely towards his brother. Not only had he planned and intended a treason, but by endeavouring to engage the affections of Doña Beatriz, he had actually committed one. Heaven grant it might not prove irreparable! Though the time that had passed since his better self gained the victory was only measured by hours, it represented to him a much longer period. Already it enabled him to look upon what had gone before from the vantage-ground that some degree of distance gives. He now beheld in true, perhaps even in exaggerated colours, the meanness and the treachery of his conduct. He, who prided himself upon the nobility of his nature matching that of his birth – he, Don Carlos Alvarez de Santillanos y Menaya, the gentleman of stainless manners, of reputation untarnished by a single blot – he, who had never yet been ashamed of anything, – in his solitude he blushed and covered his face in shame, as the villany he had planned rose up before his mind. It would have broken his heart to be scorned by any man; and was it not worse a thousand-fold to be thus scorned by himself? He thought even more of the meanness of his plan than of its treachery. Of its sin he did not think at all. Sin was a theological term which he had been wont to handle in the schools, and to toss to and fro with the other materials upon which he showed off his dialectic skill; but it no more occurred to him to take it out of the scholastic world and to bring it into that in which he really lived and acted, than it did to talk Latin to Diego, or softly to whisper quotations from Thomas Aquinas into the ear of Doña Beatriz between the pauses of the dance.

Scarcely any consideration, however, could have made him more miserable than he was. Past and future – all alike seemed dreary. Not a happy memory, not a cheering anticipation could he find to comfort him. He was as one who goes forth to face the driving storm of a wintry night: not strong in hope and courage – a warm hearth behind him, and before him the pleasant starry glimmer that tells of another soon to be reached – but chilled, weary, forlorn, the wind whistling through thin garments, and nothing to meet his eye but the bare, bleak, shelterless moor stretching far out into the distance.

He sat long, too crushed in heart even to finish his slight, unimportant task. Sometimes he drew towards him the sheet of figures, and for a moment or two tried to fix his attention upon it; but soon

he would push it away again, or make aimless dots and circles on its margin. While thus engaged, he heard a cheery and not unmelodious voice chanting a fragment of song in some foreign tongue. Listening more attentively, he believed the words were French, and supposed the singer must be his humble guest, the muleteer, on his way to the stable to take a last look at the beloved companions of his toils before he lay down to rest. The man had probably exercised his vocation at some former period in the passes of the Pyrenees, and had thus acquired some knowledge of French.

Half an hour's talk with any one seemed to Carlos at that moment a most desirable diversion from the gloom of his own thoughts. He might converse with this stranger when he dared not summon to his presence Diego or Dolores, because they knew and loved him well enough to discover in two minutes that something was seriously wrong with him. He waited until he heard the voice once more close beneath his window; then softly opening it, he called the muleteer. Julianio responded with ready alertness; and Carlos, going round to the door, admitted him, and led him into his sanctum.

"I believe," he said, "that was a French song I heard you sing. You have been in France, then?"

"Ay, señor; I have crossed the Pyrenees more than once. I have also been in Switzerland."

"You must, then, have visited many places worthy of note; and not with your eyes shut, I think. I wish you would tell me, for pastime, the story of your travels."

"Willingly, señor," said the muleteer, who, though perfectly respectful, had an ease and independence of manner that made Carlos suspect it was not the first time he had conversed with his superiors. "Where shall I begin?"

"Have you ever crossed the Santillanos, or visited the Asturias?"

"No, señor. A man cannot be everywhere; 'he that rings the bells does not walk in the procession.' I am only master of the route from Lyons here; knowing a little also, as I have said, of Switzerland."

"Tell me first of Lyons, then. And be seated, my friend."

The muleteer sat down, and began his story, telling of the places he had seen with an intelligence that more and more engaged the attention of Carlos, who failed not to draw out his information by many pertinent questions. As they conversed, each observed the other with gradually increasing interest. Carlos admired the muleteer's courage and energy in the prosecution of his calling, and enjoyed his quaint and shrewd observations. Moreover, he was struck by certain indications of a degree of education and even of refinement not usual in his class. Especially he noticed the small, finely-formed hand, which was sometimes in the warmth of conversation laid on the table, and which looked as if it had been accustomed to wield some implement far more delicate than a riding-whip. Another thing he took note of. Though Julianio's language abounded in proverbs, in provincialisms, in quaint and racy expressions, not a single oath escaped his lips. "I never saw an *arriero* before," thought Carlos, "who could get through two sentences without half a dozen of them."

Juliano, on the other hand, was observing his host, and with a far shrewder and deeper insight than Carlos could have imagined. During supper he had gathered from the servants that their young master was kind-hearted, gentle, easy-tempered, and had never injured any one in his life; and knowing all this, he was touched with genuine sympathy for the young noble, whose haggard face and sorrowful looks told but too plainly that some great grief was pressing on his heart.

"Your Excellency must be weary of my stories," he said at length. "It is time I left you to your repose."

And so indeed it was, for the hour was late.

"Ere you go," said Carlos kindly, "you shall drink a cup of wine with me."

He had no wine at hand but the costly beverage Dolores had produced for his own especial use. Wondering a little what Julianio would think of such a luxurious beverage, he sought a second cup, for the proud Castilian gentleman was too "finely courteous" not to drink with his guest, although that guest was only a muleteer.

Juliano, evidently a temperate man, remonstrated: "But I have already tasted your Excellency's hospitality."

"That should not hinder your drinking to my good health," said Carlos, producing a small hunting-cup, forgotten until now, from the pocket of his doublet.

Then filling the larger cup, he handed it to Juliano. It was a very little thing, a trifling act of kindness. But to the last hour of his life, Carlos Alvarez thanked God that he had put it into his heart to offer that cup of wine.

The muleteer raised it to his lips, saying earnestly, "God grant you health and happiness, noble señor."

Carlos drank also, glad to relieve a painful feeling of exhaustion. As he set down the cup, a sudden impulse prompted him to say, with a bitter smile, "Happiness is not likely to come my way at present."

"Nay, señor, and wherefore not? With your good leave be it spoken, you are young, noble, amiable, with much learning and excellent parts, as they tell me."

"All these things may not prevent a man being very miserable," said Carlos frankly.

"God comfort you, señor."

"Thanks for the good wish," said Carlos, rather lightly, and conscious of having already said too much. "All men have their troubles, I suppose, but most men contrive to live through them. So shall I, no doubt."

"But God *can* comfort you," Juliano repeated with a kind of wistful earnestness.

Carlos, surprised at his manner, looked at him dreamily, but with some curiosity.

"Señor," said Juliano, leaning forward and speaking in a low tone full of meaning. "Let your worship excuse a plain man's plain question – Señor, *do you know God?*"

Carlos started visibly. Was the man mad? Certainly not; as all his previous conversation bore witness. He was evidently a very clever, half-educated man, who spoke with just the simplicity and unconsciousness of an intelligent child. And now he had asked a true child's question; one which it would exhaust a wise man's wisdom to answer. Thoroughly perplexed, Carlos at last determined to take it in its easiest sense. He said, "Yes; I have studied theology, and taken out my licentiate's degree at the University of Alcala."

"If it please your worship, what may that fine word theology mean?"

"You have said so many wise things, that I marvel you know not. Science about God."

"Then, señor, your Excellency knows *about God*. But is it not another thing *to know God*? I know much about the Emperor Carlos, now at San Yuste; I could tell you the story of all his campaigns. But I never saw him, still less spoke with him. And far indeed am I from knowing him to be my friend; and so trusting him that if my mules died, or the Alguazils seized me at Cordova for bringing over something contraband, or other mishap befell me, I should go or send to him, certain that he would help and save me."

"I begin to understand you," said Carlos; and a suspicion crossed his mind that the muleteer was a friar in disguise. But that could scarcely be, since his black abundant hair showed no marks of the tonsure. "After the manner you speak of, only great saints know God."

"Indeed, señor! Can that be true? For I have heard that our Lord Christ" – (at the mention of the name Carlos crossed himself, a ceremony which the muleteer was so engrossed by his argument as to forget) – "that our Lord Christ came into the world to make men know the Father; and that, to all that believe on him, he truly reveals him."

"Where did you get this strange learning?"

"It is simple learning; and yet very blessed, señor," returned Juliano, evading the question. "For those who know God are happy. Whatever sorrows they have without, within they have joy and peace."

"You are advising me to seek peace in religion?"

It was singular certainly that a muleteer should advise *him*; but then this was a very uncommon muleteer. "And so I ought," he added, "since I am destined for the Church."

"No, señor; not to seek peace in religion, but to seek peace from God, and in Christ who reveals him."

"It is only the words that differ, the things are the same."

"Again I say, with all submission to your Excellency, not so. It is Christ Jesus himself – Christ Jesus, God and man – who alone can give the peace and happiness for which the heart aches. Are we oppressed with sin? He says, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee!' Are we hungry? He is bread. Thirsty? He is living water. Weary? He says, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!'"

"Man! who or what are you? You are quoting the Holy Scriptures to me. Do you then read Latin?"

"No, señor," said the muleteer humbly, casting his eyes down to the ground.

"No?"

"No, señor; in very truth. But – "

"Well? Go on!"

Juliano looked up again, a steady light in his eyes. "Will you promise, on the faith of a gentleman, not to betray me?" he asked.

"Most assuredly I will not betray you."

"I trust you, señor. I do not believe it would be possible for *you* to betray one who trusted you."

Carlos winced, and rather shrank from the muleteer's look of hearty, honest confidence.

"Though I cannot guess your reason for such precautions," he said, "I am willing, if you wish it, to swear secrecy upon the holy crucifix."

"It needs not, señor; your word of honour is as much as your oath. Though I am putting my life in your hands when I tell you that I have dared to read the words of my Lord Christ in my own tongue."

"Are you then a heretic?" Carlos exclaimed, recoiling involuntarily, as one who suddenly sees the plague spot on the forehead of a friend whose hand he has been grasping.

"That depends upon your notion of a heretic, señor. Many a better man than I has been branded with the name. Even the great preacher Don Fray Constantino, whom all the fine lords and ladies in Seville flock to hear, has often been called heretic by his enemies."

"I have resided in Seville, and attended Fray Constantino's theological lectures," said Carlos.

"Then your worship knows there is not a better Christian in all the Spains. And yet men say that he narrowly escaped a prosecution for heresy. But enough of what men say. Let us hear what God says for once. His words cannot lead us astray."

"No; not the Holy Scriptures, properly expounded by learned and orthodox doctors. But heretics put their own construction upon the sacred text, which, moreover, they corrupt and interpolate."

"Señor, you are a scholar; you can consult the original, and judge for yourself how far that charge is true."

"But I do not want to read heretic writings."

"Nor I, señor. Yet I confess that I have read the words of my Saviour in my own tongue, which some misinformed or ignorant persons call heresy; and through them, to my soul's joy, I have learned to know Him and the Father. I am bold enough to wish the same knowledge yours, señor, that the same joy may be yours also." The poor man's eye kindled, and his features, otherwise homely enough, glowed with an enthusiasm that lent them true spiritual beauty.

Carlos was not unmoved. After a moment's pause he said, "If I could procure what you style God's Word in my own tongue, I do not say that I would refuse to read it. Should I discover any heretical mistranslation or interpolation, I could blot out the passage; or, it necessary, burn the book."

"I can place in your hands this very hour the New Testament of our Saviour Christ, lately translated into Castilian by Juan Perez, a learned man, well acquainted with the Greek."

"What! have you got it with you? In God's name bring it then; and at least I will look at it."

"Be it truly in God's name, señor," said Julianio, as he left the room.

During his absence Carlos pondered upon this singular adventure. Throughout his lengthened conversation with him, he had discerned no marks of heresy in the muleteer, except his possession of the Spanish New Testament. And being very proud of his dialectic acuteness, he thought he should certainly have discovered such had they existed. "He had need to be a clever heretic that would circumvent *me*," he said, with the vanity of a young and successful scholar. Moreover, his ten months' attendance on the lectures of Fray Constantino had, unconsciously to himself, somewhat imbued his mind with liberal ideas. He could have read the Vulgate at Alcala if he had cared to do so (only he never had); where then could be the harm of glancing, out of mere curiosity, at a Spanish translation from the same original?

He regarded the New Testament in the light of some very dangerous, though effective, weapon of the explosive kind; likely to overwhelm with terrible destruction the careless or ignorant meddler with its intricacies, and therefore wisely forbidden by the authorities; though in able and scientific hands, such as his own, it might be harmless and even useful.

But it was a very different matter for the poor man who brought it to him. Was he, after all, a madman? Or was he a heretic? Or was he a great saint or holy hermit in disguise? But whatever his spiritual peril might or might not be, it was only too evident that he was incurring temporal dangers of a very awful kind. And perhaps he was doing so in the simplicity of ignorance. Carlos could not do less than warn him of them.

He soon returned; and drawing a small brown volume from beneath his leathern jerkin, handed it to the young nobleman.

"My friend," said Carlos kindly, as he took it from him, "do you know what you dare by offering this to me, or even by keeping it yourself?"

"I know it well, señor," was the calm reply; and the muleteer's dark eye met his undauntedly.

"You are playing a dangerous game. This time you are safe. But take care. You may try it once too often."

"I shall not, señor. I shall witness for my Lord just so often as he permits. When he has no more need of me, he will call me home."

"God help you. I fear you are throwing yourself into the fire. And for what?"

"For the joy of bringing food to the perishing, water to the thirsty, light to those that sit in darkness, rest to the weary and heavy-laden. Señor, I have counted the cost, and I shall pay the price right willingly."

After a moment's silence he continued: "I leave within your hands the treasure brought at such cost. But God alone, by his Divine Spirit, can reveal to you its true worth. Señor, seek that Spirit. Nay, be not offended. You are very noble and very learned; and it is a poor and ignorant man who speaks to you. But that poor man is risking his life for your soul's salvation; and thus he proves, at least, how true his desire to see you one day at the right hand of Christ, his King and Master. Adios, señor."

He bowed low; and before Carlos had sufficiently recovered from his astonishment to say a word in answer, he had left the room and closed the door behind him.

"Strange being!" thought Carlos; "but I shall talk with him again to-morrow." And ere he was aware, his eyelids were wet; for the courage and self-sacrifice of the poor muleteer had stirred some answering chord of emotion in his heart. Probably, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, he was a madman; or else he was a heretical fanatic. But he was a man willing to brave numberless sufferings (of which a death of torture was the last and least), to bring his fellow-men something which he imagined would make them happy. "The Church has no more orthodox son than I," said Don Carlos Alvarez; "but I shall read his book for all that."

Then, the hour being late, he retired to rest, and slept soundly.

He did not rise exactly with the sun, and when he came forth from his chamber breakfast was already in preparation.

"Where is the muleteer who was here last night?" he asked Dolores.

"He was up and away at sunrise," she answered. "Fortunately, it is not my custom to stop in bed and see the sunshine; so I just caught him loading his mules, and gave him a piece of bread and cheese and a draught of wine. A smart little man he is, and one who knows his business."

"I wish I had seen him ere he left," said Carlos aloud. "Shall I ever look upon his face again?" he added mentally.

Carlos Alvarez saw that face again, not by the ray of sun or moon, nor yet by the gleam of the student's lamp, but clear and distinct in a lurid awful light more terrible than Egyptian darkness, yet fraught with strange blessing, since it showed the way to the city of God, where the sun no more goes down, neither doth the moon withdraw herself.

Juliano el Chico, otherwise Julian Hernandez, is no fancy sketch, no "character of fiction." It is matter of history that, cunningly stowed away in his alforjas, amongst the ribbons, laces, and other trifles that formed their ostensible freight, there was a large supply of Spanish New Testaments, of the translation of Juan Perez. And that, in spite of all the difficulties and dangers of his self-imposed task, he succeeded in conveying his precious charge safely to Seville.

Our cheeks grow pale, our hearts shudder, at the thought of what he and others dared, that they might bring to the lips of their countrymen that living water which was truly "the blood of the men that went for it in jeopardy of their lives." More than jeopardy. Not alone did Juliano brave danger, he encountered certain death. Sooner or later, it was impossible that he should not fall into the pitiless grasp of that hideous engine of royal and priestly tyranny, called the Holy Inquisition.

We have no words in which to praise such heroism as his. We leave that – and we may be content to leave it – to Him whose lips shall one day pronounce the sublime award, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But in the view of such things done and suffered for his name's sake, there is another thought that presses on the mind. How real and great, nay, how unutterably precious, must be that treasure which men were found willing, at such cost, not only to secure for themselves, but even to impart to others.

IX. El Dorado Found

"So, the All-Great were the all-loving too —
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of mine:
But love I gave thee with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

R. Browning.

Three silent months stole away in the old castle of Nuera. No outward event affecting the fortunes of its inmates marked their progress. And yet they were by far the most important months Don Carlos had ever seen, or perhaps would ever see. They witnessed a change in him, mysterious in its progress but momentous in its results. An influence passed over him, mighty as the wind in its azure pathway, but, like it, visible only by its effects; no man could tell "whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

Again it was early morning, a bright Sunday morning in September. Already Carlos stood prepared to go forth. He had quite discarded his student's habit, and was dressed like any other young nobleman, in a doublet and short cloak of Genoa velvet, with a sword by his side. His Breviary was in his hand, however, and he was on the point of taking up his hat when Dolores entered the room, bearing a cup of wine and a manchet of bread.

Carlos shook his head, saying, "I intend to communicate. And you, Dolores," he added, "are you not also going to hear mass?"

"Surely, señor; we will all attend our duty. But there is still time to spare; your worship sets us an example in the matter of early rising."

"It were shame to lose such fair hours as these. Prithee, Dolores, and lest I forget, hast thou something savoury in the house for dinner?"

"Glad I am to hear you ask, señor. Hitherto it has seemed alike to your Excellency whether they served you with a pottage of lentils or a stew of partridges. But since Diego had the good fortune to kill that buck on Wednesday, we are better than well provided. Your worship shall dine on roast venison to-day."

"That will do. And if thou wouldst add some of the batter ware, in which thou art so skilful, it would be better still; for I intend to bring home a guest."

"Now, the Saints help me, that is news! Without meaning offence, your worship might have told me before. Any noble caballero coming to these parts to visit you must needs have bed as well as board found him. And how can I, in three hours, more or less – "

"Nay, be not alarmed, Dolores; no stranger is coming here. Only I wish to bring the cura home to dinner."

Even the self-restrained Dolores could not repress an exclamation of surprise. For both the brothers had been accustomed to regard the ignorant vulgar cura of the neighbouring village with unmitigated dislike and contempt. In old times Dolores herself had sometimes tried to induce them to show him some trifling courtesies, "for their soul's health." They were willing enough to send "that beggar" – as Don Juan used to call him – presents of meat or game when they could, but these they would not have grudged to their worst enemy. To converse with him, or to seat him at their table,

was a very different matter. He was "no fit associate for noblemen," said the boys; and Dolores, in her heart, agreed with them. She looked at her young master to see whether he were jesting.

"He likes a good dinner," Carlos added quietly. "Let us for once give him one."

"In good faith, Señor Don Carlos, I cannot tell what has come to you. You must be about doing penance for your sins, though I will say no young gentleman of your years has fewer to answer for. Still, to please your whim, the cura shall eat the best we have, though beans and bacon would be more fitting fare for him."

"Thank you, mother Dolores," said Carlos kindly. "In truth, neither Don Juan nor I had ever whim yet you did not strive to gratify."

"And who would not do more than that for so pleasant and kind a young master?" thought Dolores, as she withdrew to superintend the cooking operations. "God's blessing and Our Lady's rest on him, and in sooth I think they do. Three months ago he came here looking like a corpse out of the grave, and fitter, as it seemed to me, to don his shroud than his priest's frock. But the free mountain air wherein he was born is bringing back the red to his cheek and the light to his eye, thank the holy Saints. Ah, if his lady mother could only see her gallant sons now!"

Meanwhile Don Carlos leisurely took his way down the hill. Having abundance of time to spare, he chose a solitary, devious path through the cork-trees and the pasture land belonging to the castle. His heart was alive to every pleasant sight and sound that met his eye and ear; although, or rather because, a low, sweet song of thankfulness was all the while chanting itself within him.

During his solitary walk he distinctly realized for the first time the stupendous change that had passed over him. For such changes cannot be understood or measured until afterwards, perhaps not always then. Drawing from his pocket Julian's little book, he clasped it in both hands. "*This*, God be thanked, has done it all, under him. And yet, at first, it added to my misery a hundred-fold." Then his mind ran back to the dreary days of helpless, almost hopeless wretchedness, when he first began its perusal. Much of it had then been quite unintelligible to him; but what he understood had only made his darkness darker still. He who had but just learned from that stern teacher, Life, the meaning of sorrow, learned from the pages of his book the awful significance of that other word, Sin. Bitter hours, never to be remembered without a shudder, were those that followed. Already prostrate on the ground beneath the weight of his selfish sorrow for the love that might never be his, cruel blows seemed rained upon him by the very hand to which he turned to lift him up. "All was his own fault," said conscience. But had conscience, enlightened by his book, said no more, he could have borne it. It was a different thing to recognize that all was his own *sin*— to feel more keenly every day that the whole current of his thoughts and affections was set in opposition to the will of God as revealed in that book, and illustrated in the life of him of whom it told.

But this sickness of heart, deadly though it seemed, was not unto death. The Word had indeed proved a mirror, in which he saw his own face reflected with the lines and colours of truth. But it had a farther use for him. As he did not fling it away in despair, but still gazed on, at length he saw in its clear depths another Face — a Face radiant with divine majesty, yet beaming with tender love and pity. He whom the mirror thus gave back to him had been "not far" from him all his life; had been standing over against him, watching and waiting for the moment in which to reveal himself. At last that moment came. He looked up from the mirror to the real Face; from the Word to him whom the Word revealed. He turned himself and said unto him, "Rabboni, which is to say, My Master." He laid his soul at his feet in love, in trust, in gratitude. And he knew then, not until then, that this was the "coming" to him, the "believing" on him, the receiving him, of which He spoke as the condition of life, of pardon, and of happiness.

From that hour he possessed life, he knew himself forgiven, he was *happy*. This was no theory, but a fact — a fact which changed all his present and was destined to change all his future.

He longed to impart the wonderful secret he had found. This longing overcame his contempt for the cura, and made him seek to win him by kindness to listen to words which perhaps might open for him also the same wonderful fountain of joy.

"Now I am going to worship my Lord, afterwards I shall speak of him," he said, as he crossed the threshold of the little village church.

In due season the service was over. Its ceremonies did not pain or offend Carlos in any way; he took part in them with much real devotion, as acts of homage paid to his Lord. Still, if he had analyzed his feelings (which he did not), he would have found them like those of a king's child, who is obliged, on days of courtly ceremonial, to pay his father the same distant homage as the other peers of the realm, and yet knows that all this for him is but an idle show, and longs to throw aside its cumbrous pomp, and to rejoice once more in the free familiar intercourse which is his habit and his privilege. But that the ceremonial itself could be otherwise than pleasing to his King, he had not the most distant suspicion.

He spoke kindly to the priest, and inquired by name after all the sick folk in the village, though in fact he knew more about them himself by this time than did Father Tomas.

The cura's heart was glad when the catechism came to a termination so satisfactory as an invitation to dine at the castle. Whatever the fare might be – and his expectations were not extravagantly high – it could scarce fail to be an improvement on the olla of which he had intended to make his Sunday repast. Moreover, one favour from the castle might be the earnest of others; and favours from the castle, poor though its lords might be, were not to be despised. Nor was he ill at ease in the society of an accomplished gentleman, as a man just a little better bred would probably have been. A wealthy peasant's son, and with but scanty education, Father Tomas was so hopelessly vulgar that he never once imagined he was vulgar at all.

Carlos bore as patiently as he could with his coarse manners, and conversation something worse than commonplace. Not until the repast was concluded did he find an opportunity of bringing forward the topic upon which he longed to speak. Then, with more tact than his guest could appreciate, he began by inquiring – as one himself intended for the priesthood might naturally do – whether he could always keep his thoughts from wandering while he was celebrating the holy mysteries of the faith.

Father Tomas crossed himself, and answered that he was a sinner like other men, but that he tried to do his duty to our holy Mother Church to the best of his ability.

Carlos remarked, that unless we ourselves know the love of God by experience we cannot love him, and that without love there is no acceptable service.

"Most true, señor," said the priest, turning his eyes upwards. "As the holy St. Augustine saith. Your worship quotes from him, I believe."

"I have quoted nothing," said Carlos, beginning to feel that he was speaking to the deaf; "but I know the words of Christ." And then he spoke, out of a full heart, of Christ's work for us, of his love to us, and of the pardon and peace which those receive that trust him.

But his listener's stolid face betrayed no interest, only a vague uneasiness, which increased as Carlos proceeded. The poor parish cura began to suspect that the clever young collegian meant to astonish and bewilder him by the exhibition of his learning and his "new ideas." Indeed, he was not quite sure whether his host was eloquently enlarging all the time upon Catholic truths, or now and then mischievously throwing out a few heretical propositions, in order to try whether he would have skill enough to detect them. Naturally, he did not greatly relish this style of entertainment. Nothing could be got from him save a cautious, "That is true, señor," or, "Very good, your worship;" and as soon as his notions of politeness would permit, he took his leave.

Carlos marvelled greatly at his dulness; but soon dismissed him from his mind, and took his Testament out to read under the shade of the cork-trees. Ere long the light began to fade, but he sat there still in the fast deepening twilight. Thoughts and fancies thronged upon his mind; and dreams of the past sought, as even yet they often did, to reassert their supremacy over his heart. One of

those apparently unaccountable freaks of memory, which we all know by experience, brought back to him suddenly the luscious perfume of the orange-blossoms, called by the Spaniards the azahar. Such fragrance had filled the air, and such flowers had been strewed upon his pathway, when last he walked with Donna Beatriz in the fairy gardens of the Alcazar of Seville.

Keen was the pang that shot through his heart at the remembrance. But it was conquered soon. As he went in-doors he repeated the words he had just been reading, "'He that cometh unto me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' And *this* hunger of the soul, as well as every other, He can stay. Having him, I have all things.

'El dorado
Yo hé trovato.'

Father, dear, unknown father, I have found the golden country! Not in the sense thou didst fondly seek, and I as fondly dream to find it. Yet the only true land of gold I have found indeed – the treasure unfailing, the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me."

X. Dolores

"Oh, hearts that break and give no sign,
Save whitening lip and fading tresses;
Till death pours out his cordial wine,
Slow dropped from misery's crushing presses,
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven."

O. W. Holmes.

A great modern poet has compared the soul of man to a pilgrim who passes through the world staff in hand, never resting, ever pressing onwards to some point as yet unattained, ever sighing wearily, "Alas! that *there* is never *here*." And with deep significance adds his Christian commentator, "In Christ *there* is *here*."

He who has found Christ "is already at the goal." "For he stills our innermost fears, and fulfils our utmost longings." "In him the dry land, the mirage of the desert, becomes living water." "He who knows him knows the reason of all things." Passing all along the ages, we might gather from the silent lips of the dead such words as these, bearing emphatic witness to what human hearts have found in him. Yet, after all, we would come back to his own grand and simple words, as best expressing the truth: "I am the bread of life;" "I will give you rest;" "In me ye shall have peace."

With the peace which he gave there came to Carlos a strange new knowledge also. The Testament, from its first page to its last, became intelligible to him. From a mere sketch, partly dim and partly blurred and blotted, it grew into a transparency through which light shone upon his soul, every word being itself a star.

He often read his book to Dolores, though he allowed her to suppose it was Latin, and that he was improvising a translation for her benefit. She would listen attentively, though with a deeper shade of sadness on her melancholy face. Never did she volunteer an observation, but she always thanked him at the end in her usual respectful manner.

These readings were, in fact, a trouble to Dolores. They gave her pain, like the sharp throbs that accompany the first return of consciousness to a frozen member, for they awakened feelings that had long been dormant, and that she thought were dead for ever. But, on the other hand, she was gratified by the condescension of her young master in reading aloud for her edification. She had gone through the world giving very largely out of her own large loving heart, and expecting little or nothing in return. She would most gladly have laid down her life for Don Juan or Don Carlos; yet she did not imagine that the old servant of the house could be to them much more than one of the oak tables or the carved chairs. That "Señor Don Carlos" should take thought for her, and trouble himself to do her good, thrilled her with a sensation more like joy than any she had known for years. Little do those whose cups are so full of human love that they carry them carelessly, spilling many a precious drop as they pass along, dream how others cherish the few poor lees and remnants left to them.

Moreover Carlos, in the eyes of Dolores, was half a priest already, and this lent additional weight, and even sacredness, to all that he said and did.

One evening he had been reading to her, in the inner room by the light of the little silver lamp. He had just finished the story of Lazarus, and he made some remark on the grateful love of Mary,

and the costly sacrifice by which she proved it. Tears gathered in the dark wistful eyes of Dolores, and she said with sudden and, for her, most unusual energy, "That was small wonder. Any one would do as much for him that brought the dear dead back from the grave."

"He has done a greater thing than even that for each of us," said Carlos.

But Dolores withdrew into her ordinary self again, as some timid creature might shrink into its shell from a touch. "I thank your Excellency," she said, rising to withdraw, "and I also make my acknowledgments to Our Lady, who has inspired you with such true piety, suitable to your holy calling."

"Stay a little, Dolores," said Carlos, as a sudden thought occurred to him; "I marvel it has so seldom come into my mind to ask you about my mother."

"Ay, señor. When you were both children, I used to wonder that you and Don Juan, while you talked often together of my lord your father, had scarce a thought at all of your lady mother. Yet if she had lived *you* would have been her favourite, señor."

"And Juan my father's," said Carlos, not without a slight pang of jealousy. "Was my noble father, then, more like what my brother is?"

"Yes, señor; he was bold and brave. No offence to your Excellency, for one you love I warrant me *you* could be brave enough. But he loved his sword and his lance and his good steed. Moreover, he loved travel and adventure greatly, and never could bear to abide long in the same place."

"Did he not make a voyage to the Indies in his youth?"

"He did; and then he fought under the Emperor, both in Italy, and in Africa against the Moors. Once His Imperial Majesty sent him on some errand to Leon, and there he first met my lady. Afterwards he crossed the mountains to our home, and wooed and won her. He brought her, the fairest young bride eyes could rest on, to Seville, where he had a stately palace on the Alameda."

"You must have grieved to leave your mountains for the southern city."

"No, señor, I did not grieve. Wherever your lady mother dwelt was home to me. Besides, 'a great grief kills all the rest.'"

"Then you had known sorrow before. I thought you lived with our house from your childhood."

"Not altogether; though my mother nursed yours, and we slept in the same cradle, and as we grew older shared each other's plays. At seven years old I went home to my father and mother, who were honest, well-to-do people, like all my forbears – good 'old Christians,' and noble – they could wear their caps in the presence of His Catholic Majesty. They had no girl but me, so they would fain have me ever in their sight. For ten years and more I was the light of their eyes; and no blither lass ever led the goats to the mountain in summer, or spun wool and roasted chestnuts at the winter fire. But, the year of the bad fever, both were stricken. Christmas morning, with the bells for early mass ringing in my ears, I closed my father's eyes; and three days afterwards, set the last kiss on my mother's cold lips. Nigh upon five-and-twenty years ago, – but it seems like yesterday. Folks say there are many good things in the world, but I have known none so good as the love of father and mother. Ay de mi, señor, *you* never knew either."

"When your parents died, did you return to my mother?"

"For half a year I stayed with my brother. Though no daughter ever shed truer tears over the grave of better parents, I was not then quite broken-hearted. There was another love to whisper hope, and to keep me from desolation. He – Alphonso ('tis years and years since I uttered the name save in my prayers) had gone to the war, telling me he would come back and claim me for his bride. So I watched for him hour by hour, and toiled and spun, and spun and toiled, that I might not go home to him empty-handed. But at last a lad from our parish, who had been a comrade of his, returned and told me all. *He* was lying on the bloody field of Marignano, with a French bullet in his heart. Señor, the sisters you read of could 'go to the grave and weep there.' And yet the Lord pitied them."

"He pities all who weep," said Carlos.

"All good Christians, he may. But though an old Christian, I was not a good one. For I thought it bitter hard that my candle should be quenched in a moment, like a wax taper when the procession is done. And it came often into my mind how the Almighty, or Our Lady, or the Saints, could have helped me if they would. May they forgive me; it is hard to be religious."

"I do not think so."

"I suppose it is not hard to learned gentlemen who have been at the colleges. But how can simple men and women tell whether they are keeping all the commandments of God and Holy Church? It well may be that I had done something, or left something undone, whereby Our Lady was displeased."

"It is not Our Lady, but our Lord himself, who holds the keys of hell and of death," said Carlos, gaining at the moment a new truth for his own heart. "None enter the gates of death, as none shall come forth through them, save at his command. But go on, Dolores, and tell me how did comfort come to you?"

"Comfort never came to me, señor. But after a time there came a kind of numbness and hardness that helped me to live my life as if I cared for it. And your lady mother (God rest her soul!) showed me wondrous kindness in my sorrow. It was then she took me to be her own maiden. She had me taught many things, such as reading and various cunning kinds of embroidery, that I might serve her with them, she said; but I well knew they were meant to turn my heart away from its own aching. I went with her to Seville. I could be glad for her, señor, that God had given her the good thing he had denied to me. At last it came to be almost like joy to me to see the great deep love there was between your father and her."

This was a degree of unselfishness beyond the comprehension of Carlos just then. He felt his own wound throb painfully, and was not sorry to turn the conversation. "Did my parents reside long in Seville?" he asked.

"Not long, señor. Their life there was a gay one, as became their rank and wealth (for, as your worship knows, your father had a noble estate then). But soon they both grew tired of the gay world. My lady ever loved the free mountains, and my lord – I scarce can tell what change passed over him. He lost his care for the tourney and the dance, and betook himself instead to study. Both were glad to withdraw to this quiet spot. Here your brother Don Juan was born; and for nigh a year afterwards no lord and lady could have led a happier and, at the same time, more pious and orderly life, than did your noble parents."

The thoughtful eye of Carlos turned to the inscription on the window, and kindled with a strange light. "Was not this room my father's favourite place of study?" he asked.

"It was, señor. Of course, the house was not then as it now is. Though simple enough, after the Seville palace with its fountains and marble statues, and doors grated with golden network, it was still a seemingly dwelling-place for a noble lord and lady. There was glass in all the windows then, though through neglect and carelessness it has been broken (even your worship may remember how Don Juan sent an arrow through a quarrel-pane in the west window one day), so we thought it best to remove the traces."

"My parents led a pious life, you say?"

"Truly they did, señor. They were good and charitable to the poor; and they spent much of their time reading holy books, as you do now. Ay de mi! what was wrong with them I know not, save that perhaps they were scarce careful enough to give Holy Church all her dues. And I used sometimes to wish that my lady would show more devotion to the blessed Mother of God. But she *felt* it all, no doubt; only it was not her way, nor my lord's either, to be for ever running about on pilgrimage or offering wax candles, nor yet to keep the father confessor every instant with his ear to their lips."

Carlos started, and turned an earnest inquiring gaze upon her. "Did my mother ever read to you as I have done?" he asked.

"She sometimes read me good words out of the Breviary, señor. All thing went on thus, until one day when a letter came from the Emperor himself (as I believe), desiring your father to go to

him, to Antwerp. The matter was to be kept very private, but my lady used to tell me everything. My lord thought he was to be sent on some secret mission where skill was needed, and perchance peril was to be met. For it was well known that he loved such affairs, and was dexterous in the management of them. So he parted cheerily from my lady, she standing at the gate yonder, and making little Don Juan kiss hands to him as he rode down the path. Woe for the poor babe, that never saw his father's face again! And worse woe for the mother! But death heals all things, except sin.

"After three weeks or a month, more or less, two monks of St. Dominic rode to the gates one day. The younger stayed without in the hall with us; while the elder, a man of stern and stately presence, had private audience of my lady in this chamber where we sit now – a place of death it has seemed to me ever since. For the audience had not lasted long until I heard a cry – such a cry! – it rings in my ears even now. I hastened to my lady. She had swooned – and long, long was it before sense returned again. Do not keep looking at me, señor, with eyes so like hers, or I cannot tell you more."

"Did she speak? Did she reveal anything to you?"

"*Nothing*, señor. During the days that followed, only things without meaning or connection, such as those in fever speak, or broken words of prayer, were on her lips. Until the very last, and then she was worn and weak, and could but receive the rites of the Church, and whisper a few directions about the poor babes. She bade us give you the name you bear, since *he* had said that his next boy should be called for the great Emperor. Then she prayed very earnestly, 'Lord, take him Thyself – take him Thyself!' Doctor Marco, who was present, thought she meant the poor little new-born babe – supposing, and no wonder, that it would be better tended in heaven by Our Lady and the angels, than here on earth. But I *know* it was not you she thought of."

"My poor mother – God rest her soul! Nay, I doubt not that now she rests in God," Carlos added, softly.

"And so the curse fell on your house, señor; and in such sorrow were you born. Yet you grew up merry lads, you and Don Juan."

"Thanks to thy care and kindness, well-beloved and faithful nurse. But, Dolores, tell me truly – have you never heard anything further of, or from, my father?"

"From him, never. Of him, that I believed, *never*."

"And what do you believe?" Carlos asked, eagerly.

"I know nothing, señor. I have heard all that your worship has heard, and no more."

"Do you think it is true – what we have all been told – of his death in the Indies?"

"I know nothing, señor," Dolores repeated, with the air of a person determined to *say* nothing.

But Carlos would not allow her to escape thus. Both had gone too far to leave the subject without probing it to its depths. And both felt instinctively that it was not likely again to be discussed between them. Laying his hand on her arm, and looking steadily in her face, he asked, —

"Dolores, are you sure my father is dead?"

Seemingly relieved by the form the question had taken, she met his gaze without flinching, and answered in tones of evident sincerity, "Sure as that I sit here – so help me God." After a long pause she added, as she rose to go, "Señor Don Carlos, be not offended if I counsel you this once, since I held you a babe in my arms, and you will find none that loves you better – if a poor old woman may say so to a young and noble caballero."

"Say all you think to me, my dear and kind nurse."

"Then, señor, I say, leave vain thoughts and questions about your father's fate. 'There are no birds in last year's nests;' and 'Water that has run by will turn no mill.' And I entreat of you to repeat the same to your noble brother when you find opportunity. Look before you, señor, and not behind; and God's best blessings rest on you!"

Dolores turned to go, but turning back again, stood irresolute.

"What is it, Dolores?" Carlos asked; hoping, perhaps, for some further glimmer of light upon that dark past, from which she implored him to turn his thoughts.

"If it please you, Señor Don Carlos – " and she paused and hesitated.

"Can I do anything for you?" said Carlos, in a kind, encouraging tone.

"Ay, señor, that you can. With your learning and your good Book, surely you can tell me whether the soul of my poor Alphonso, dead on the battle-field without shrift or sacrament, has yet found rest with God?"

Thus the true woman's heart, though so full of sympathy for others, still turned back to its own sorrow, which lay deepest of all.

Carlos felt himself unexpectedly involved in a difficulty. "My book tells me nothing on the subject," he said, after some thought. "But I am sure you may be comforted, after all these years, during which you have diligently prayed, and sought the Church's prayers for him."

The long eager gaze of her wistful eyes asked mournfully, "Is this *all* you can tell me?" But her lips only said, "I thank your Excellency," as she withdrew.

XI. The Light Enjoyed

"Doubt is slow to clear and sorrow is hard to bear,
And each sufferer has his say, his scheme of the weal and the woe;
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians *know*."

R. Browning.

Bewildering were the trains of thought which the conversation just narrated awakened in the mind of Carlos. On the one hand, a gleam of light was shed upon his father's career, suggesting a possible interpretation of the inscription on the window, that thrilled his heart with joy. On the other, the termination of that career was involved in even deeper obscurity than before; and he was made to feel, more keenly than ever, how childish and unreal were the dreams which he and his brother had been wont to cherish upon the subject.

Moreover, Dolores, just before she left him, had drawn a bow at a venture, and most unintentionally sent a sharp arrow through a joint in his harness. Why could he find no answer to a question so simple and natural as the one she had asked him? Why did the Book, which had solved so many mysteries for him, shed not a ray of light upon this one? Whence this ominous silence of the apostles and evangelists upon so many things that the Church most loudly proclaimed? Where, in his Book, was purgatory to be found at all? Where was the adoration of the Virgin and the saints? Where were works of supererogation? But here he started in horror, as one who suddenly saw himself on the brink of a precipice. Or rather, as one dwelling secure and contented within a little circle of light and warmth, to whom such questions came as intimations of a chaos surrounding it on every side, into which a chance step might at any moment plunge him.

Most earnestly he entreated that the Lord of his life, the Guide of his spirit, would not let him go forth to wander there. He prayed, expressly and repeatedly, that the doubts which began to trouble him might be laid and silenced. His prayer was answered, as all true prayer is sure to be, but it was not *granted*. He whose love is strong and deep enough to work out its good purpose in us even against the pleadings of our own hearts, saw that his child must needs pass through "a land of darkness" to reach the clearer light beyond. Conflicts fierce and terrible must be his portion, if indeed he were to take his place amongst those "called and chosen and faithful" ones who, having stood beside the Lamb in his contest with Antichrist, shall stand beside him on the sea of glass mingled with fire.

Already Carlos was in training for that contest – though as yet he knew not that there was any contest before him, save the general "striving against sin" in which all Christians have to take part. For the joy of the Lord is the Christian's strength in the day of battle. And he usually prepares those faithful soldiers whom he means to set in the forefront of the hottest battle, by previously bestowing that joy upon them in very full measure. He who is willing to "sell all that he hath," must first have found a treasure, and what "the joy thereof" is none else may declare.

In this joy Carlos lived now; and it was as yet too fresh and new to be greatly disturbed by haunting doubts or perplexing questions. These, for the present, came and passed like a breath upon a surface of molten gold, scarcely dimming its lustre for a moment.

It had become his great wish to receive Orders as soon as possible, that he might consecrate himself more entirely to the service of his Lord, and spread abroad the knowledge of his love more widely. With this view, he determined on returning to Seville early in October.

He left Nuera with regret, especially on account of Dolores, who had taken a new place in his consideration, and even in his affections, since he had begun to read to her from his Book. And, though usually very calm and impassive in manner, she could scarcely refrain from tears at the parting. She entreated him, with almost passionate earnestness, to be very prudent and careful of himself in the great city.

Carlos, who saw no special danger likely to menace him, save such as might arise from his own heart, felt tempted to smile at her foreboding tone, and asked her what she feared for him.

"Oh, Señor Don Carlos," she pleaded, with clasped hands, "for the love of God, take care; and do not be reading and telling your good words to every one you meet. For the world is an ill place, your worship, where good is oftentimes evil-spoken of."

"Never fear for me," returned Carlos, with his frank, pleasant smile. "I have found nothing in my Book but the most Catholic verities, which will be useful to all and hurtful to none. But of course I shall be prudent, and take due care of my words, lest by any extraordinary chance they might be misinterpreted. So that you may keep your mind at peace, dear Mother Dolores."

XII.

The Light Divided from the Darkness

"I felt and feel, what'er befalls,
The footsteps of thy life in mine."

Tennyson.

In the glorious autumn weather, Don Carlos rode joyfully through cork and chestnut groves, across bare brown plains, and amidst gardens of pale olives and golden orange globes shining through dark glossy leaves. He had long ago sent back to Seville the guard with which his uncle had furnished him, so that his only companion was a country youth, trained by Diego to act as his servant. But although he passed through the very district afterwards immortalized by the adventures of the renowned Don Quixote, no adventure fell to his lot. Unless it may count for an adventure that near the termination of his journey the weather suddenly changed, and torrents of ruin, accompanied by unusual cold, drove him to seek shelter.

"Ride on quickly, Jorge," he said to his attendant, "for I remember there is a venta⁴ by the roadside not far off. A poor place truly, where we are little likely to find a supper. But we shall find a roof to shelter us and fire to warm us, and these at present are our most pressing needs."

Arrived at the venta, they were surprised to see the lazy landlord so far stirred out of his usual apathy as to busy himself in trying to secure the fastening of the outer door, that it might not swing backwards and forwards in the wind, to the great discomfort of all within the house. The proud indifferent Spaniard looked calmly up from his task, and remarked that he would do all in his power to accommodate his worship. "But unfortunately, señor and your Excellency, a *very* great and principal nobleman has just arrived here, with a most distinguished train of fine caballeros – his lordship's gentlemen and servants; and kitchen, hall, and chamber are as full of them as a hive is full of bees."

This was evil news to Carlos. Proud, sensitive, and shy, there could be nothing more foreign to his character than to throw himself into the society of a person who, though really only his equal in rank, was so much his superior in all that lends rank its charm in the eyes of the vulgar. "We had better push on to Ecija," said he to his reluctant attendant, bravely turning his face to the storm, and making up his mind to ten miles more in drenching rain.

At that moment, however, a tall figure emerged from the inner door, opening into the long room behind the stable and kitchen, that formed the only tolerable accommodation the one-storied venta afforded.

"Surely, señor, you do not intend to go further in this storm," said the nobleman, whose fine thoughtful countenance Carlos could not but fancy that he had seen before.

"It is not far to Ecija, señor," returned Carlos, bowing. "And 'First come first served,' is an excellent proverb."

"The first-comer has certainly one privilege which I am not disposed to waive – that of hospitably welcoming the second. Do me the favour to come in, señor. You will find an excellent fire."

Carlos could not decline an invitation so courteously given. He was soon seated by the wood fire that blazed on the hearth of the inner room, exchanging compliments, in true Spanish fashion, with the nobleman who had welcomed him so kindly.

⁴ An inn.

Though no one could doubt for an instant the strangers possession of the pure "sangre azul,"⁵ yet his manners were more frank and easy and less ceremonious than those to which Carlos had been accustomed in the exclusive and privileged class of Seville society – a fact accounted for by the discovery, afterwards made, that he was born and educated in Italy.

"I have the pleasure of recognizing Don Carlos Alvarez de Santillanos y Meñaya," said he. "I hope the babe about whom his worship showed such amiable anxiety recovered from its indisposition?"

This then was the personage whom Carlos had seen in such close conversation with the physician Losada. The association of ideas immediately brought back the mysterious remark about his father he had overheard on that occasion. Putting that aside, however, for the present, he answered, "Perfectly, I thank your grace. We attribute the recovery mainly to the skill and care of the excellent Dr. Cristobal Losada."

"A gentleman whose medical skill cannot be praised too highly, except, indeed, it were exalted at the expense of his other excellent qualities, and particularly his charity to the poor."

Carlos heartily acquiesced, and added some instances of the physician's kindness to those who could not recompense him again. They were new to his companion, who listened with interest.

During this conversation supper was laid. As the principal guest had brought his own provisions with him, it was a comfortable and plentiful repast. Carlos, ere he sat down, left the room to rearrange his dress, and found opportunity to ask the innkeeper if he knew the noble stranger's name.

"His Excellency is a great noble from Castile," returned mine host, with an air of much importance. "His name, as I am informed, is Don Carlos de Seso; and his illustrious lady, Doña Isabella, is of the blood royal."

"Where does he reside?"

"His gentlemen tell me, principally at one of his fine estates in the north, Villamediana they call it. He is also corregidor⁶ of Toro. He has been visiting Seville upon business of importance, and is now returning home."

Pleased to be the guest of such a man (for in fact he was his guest), Carlos took his seat at the table, and thoroughly enjoyed the meal. An hour's intercourse with a man who had read and travelled much, but had thought much more, was a rare treat to him. Moreover, De Seso showed him all that fine courtesy which a youth so highly appreciates from a senior, giving careful attention to every observation he hazarded, and manifestly bringing the best of his powers to bear on his own share of the conversation.

He spoke of Fray Constantino's preaching, with an enthusiasm that made Carlos regret that he had been hitherto such an inattentive hearer. "Have you seen a little treatise by the Fray, entitled 'The Confession of a Sinner'?" he asked.

Carlos having answered in the negative, his new friend drew a tract from the pocket of his doublet, and gave it to him to read while he wrote a letter.

Carlos, after the manner of eager, rapid readers, plunged at once into the heart of the matter, disdaining beginnings.

Almost the first words upon which his eyes fell arrested his attention and drew him irresistibly onwards. "Such has been the pride of man," he read, "that he aimed at being God; but so great was thy compassion towards him in his fallen state, that thou abasedst thyself to become not only of the rank of men, but a true man, and the least of men, taking upon thee the form of a servant, that thou mightest set me at liberty, and that by means of thy grace, wisdom, and righteousness, man might obtain more than he had lost by his ignorance and pride... Wast thou not chastised for the iniquity of others? Has not thy blood sufficient virtue to wash out the sins of all the human race? Are not thy

⁵ "Blue blood."

⁶ Mayor.

treasures more able to enrich me than all the debt of Adam to impoverish me? Lord, although I had been the only person alive, or the only sinner in the world, thou wouldst not have failed to die for me. O my Saviour, I would say, and say it with truth, that I individually stand in need of those blessings which thou hast given to all. What though the guilt of all had been mine? thy death is all mine. Even though I had committed all the sins of all, yet would I continue to trust thee, and to assure myself that thy sacrifice and pardon is all mine, though it belong to all."

So far he read in silence, then the tract fell from his hand, and an involuntary exclamation broke from his lips – "Passing strange!"

De Seso paused, pen in hand, and looked up surprised. "What find you 'passing strange,' señor?" he asked.

"That he – that Fray Constantino should have felt precisely what – what he describes here."

"That such a holy man should feel so deeply his own utter sinfulness? But you are doubtless aware that the holiest saints in all ages have shared this experience. St. Augustine, for instance, with whose writings so ripe a theological scholar is doubtless well acquainted."

"Such," returned Carlos, "are not worse than others; but they know what they are as others do not."

"True. Tried by the standard of God's perfect law, the purest life must appear a miserable failure. We may call the marble of our churches and dwellings white, until we see God's snow, pure and fresh from heaven, upon it."

"Ay, señor," said Carlos, with joyful eagerness; "but the Hand that points out the stains can cleanse them. No snow is half so pure as the linen clean and white which is the righteousness of saints."

It was De Seso's turn to be astonished now. In the look that, half leaning over the table, he bent upon the eager face of Carlos, surprise and emotion blended. For a moment their eyes met with a flash, like that which flint strikes from steel, of mutual intelligence and sympathy. But it passed again as quickly. De Seso said, "I suspect that I see in you, Señor Don Carlos, one of those admirable scholars who have devoted their talents to the study of that sacred language in which the words of the holy apostles are handed down to us. You are a Grecian?"

Carlos shook his head. "Greek is but little studied at Complutum now," he said, "and I confined myself to the usual theological course."

"In which, I have heard, your success has been brilliant. But it is a sore disgrace to us, and a heavy loss to the youth of our nation, that the language of St. John and St. Paul should be deemed unworthy of their attention."

"Your Excellency is aware that it was otherwise in former years," returned Carlos. "Perhaps the present neglect is owing to the suspicion of heresy which, truly or falsely, has attached itself to most of the accomplished Greek scholars of our time."

"A miserable misapprehension; the growth of monkish ignorance and envy, and popular superstition. Heresy is a convenient stigma with which men oftentimes brand as evil the good they are incapable of comprehending."

"Most true, señor. Even Fray Constantino has not escaped."

"His crime has been, that he has sought to turn the minds of men from outward acts and ceremonies to the great spiritual truths of which these are the symbols. To the vulgar, Religion is nothing but a series of shows and postures."

"Yes," answered Carlos; "but the heart that loves God, and truly believes in our Lord and Saviour, is taught to put such in their proper place. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

"Señor Don Carlos," said De Seso, with surprise he could no longer suppress, "you are evidently a devout and earnest student of the Scriptures."

"I search the Scriptures; in them I think I have eternal life. And they testify of Christ," promptly responded the less cautious youth.

"I perceive that you do not quote the Vulgate."

Carlos smiled. "No, señor. To a man of your enlightened views I am not afraid to acknowledge the truth. I have seen – nay, why should I hesitate? – I possess a rare treasure – the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in our own noble Castilian tongue."

Even through the calm and dignified deportment of his companion Carlos could perceive the thrill that this communication caused. There was a pause; then he said softly, "And your treasure is also mine." The low quiet words came from even greater depths of feeling than the eager tremulous tones of Carlos. For *his* convictions, slowly reached and dearly purchased, were "built below" the region of the soul that passions agitate, —

"Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity."

The heart of Carlos glowed with sudden ardent love towards the man who shared his treasure, and, he doubted not, his faith also. He could joyfully have embraced him on the spot. But the force of habit and the sensitive reserve of his character checked this impetuous demonstrativeness. He only said, with a look that was worth an embrace, "I knew it. Your Excellency spoke as one who held our Lord and his truth in honour."

*"Ella es pues honor a vosotros que creéis."*⁷

It would have been hard to begin a verse that Carlos could not at this time have instantly completed. He went on: "*Mas para los que no creen, la piedra que los edificadores reprobaron.*"⁸

"A sorrowful truth," said De Seso, "which my young friend must needs bear in mind. His Word, like himself, is rejected by the many. Its very mention may expose to obloquy and danger."

"Only another instance, señor, of those lamentable prejudices about heresy about which we spoke anon. I am aware that there are those that would brand me (*me*, a scholar too!) with the odious name of heretic, merely for reading God's Word in my own tongue. But how utterly absurd the charge! The blessed Book has but confirmed my faith in all the doctrines of our holy Mother Church."

"Has it?" said De Seso, quietly, perhaps a little drily.

"Most assuredly, señor," Carlos rejoined, with warmth. "In fact I never understood, or, I may say, truly believed those holy verities until now. Beginning with the Credo itself, and the orthodox Catholic faith in our Lord's divinity and atonement."

Here their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the attendants, who removed supper, replenished the lamp, and heaped fresh chestnut logs on the fire. But as soon as the room was cleared they returned eagerly to subjects so interesting to both.

"Our salvation rests," said De Seso, "upon the great cardinal truths you have named. By the faith which receives into your heart the atonement of Christ as a work done for you, you are justified."

"I am forgiven, and I shall be justified."

"Pardon me, señor; Scripture teaches that your justification is already complete. Therefore, *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God."

"But that cannot surely be the apostle's meaning," said Carlos, "Ay de mi! I know too well that I am not yet completely justified. Far from it; evil thoughts throng my heart; and not with heart alone, but with lips, eyes, hands, I transgress daily."

"Yet, you see, peace can only be consequent on justification. And peace you have."

⁷ Unto you who believe he is precious," or "an honour."

⁸ "But unto those that believe not, the stone that the builders reject."

Carlos looked perplexed. Misled by the teaching of his Church, he confused justification with sanctification; consequently he could not legitimately enjoy the peace that ought to flow from the one as a complete and finished work, because the other necessarily remained imperfect.

De Seso explained that the word justify is never used in Scripture in its derivative sense, to *make* righteous; but always in its common and universally accepted sense, to *account* or *declare* righteous. Quite easily and naturally he glided into the teacher's place, whilst Carlos gladly took that of the learner; not, indeed, without astonishment at the layman's skill in divinity, but with too intense an interest in what he said to waste much thought upon his manner of saying it.

Hitherto he had been like an unlearned man, who, without guide or companion, explores the trackless shores of a newly-discovered land. Should such an one meet in his course a scientific explorer, who has mapped and named every mountain, rock, and bay, who has traced out the coast-line, and can tell what lies beyond the white hills in the distance, it is easy to understand the eagerness with which he would listen to his narrative, and the intentness with which he would bend over the chart in which the scene of his own journeyings lies portrayed.

Thus De Seso not only taught Carlos the true meaning of Scripture terms, and the connection of Scripture truths with each other; he also made clear to him the facts of his own experience, and gave names to them for him.

"I think I understand now," said Carlos after a lengthened conversation, in which, moving from point to point, he had suggested many doubts and not a few objections, and these in turn had been taken up and answered by his friend. "God be thanked, there is no more condemnation, no more punishment for us. Nothing, either in act or suffering, can be added to the work of Christ, which is complete."

"Ay, now you have grasped the truth which is the source of our joy and strength."

"It must then be our sanctification which suffering promotes, both in this life and in purgatory."

"All God's dealings with us in this life are meant to promote our sanctification. Joy may do it, by his grace, as well as sorrow. It is written, not alone, 'He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger,' but also, 'He fed thee with manna, to teach the secret of life in him, from him, and by him.'"

"But suffering is purifying – like fire."

"Not in itself. Criminals released from the galleys usually come forth hardened in their crimes by the lash and the oar."

Having said this, De Seso rose and extinguished the expiring lamp, while Carlos remained thoughtfully gazing into the fire. "Señor," he said, after a long pause, during which the stream of thought ran continuously underground, to reappear consequently in an unexpected place – "Señor, do you think God's Word, which solves so many mysteries, can answer every question for us?"

"Scarcely. Some questions we may ask, of which the answers, in our present state, would be beyond our comprehension. And others may indeed be answered there, but we may miss the answers, because through weakness of faith we are not yet able to receive them."

"For instance?"

"I had rather not name an instance – at present," said De Seso, and Carlos thought his face had a sorrowful look as he gazed at it in the firelight.

"I would not willingly miss anything my Lord meant to teach. I desire to know *all* his will, and to follow it," Carlos rejoined earnestly.

"It may be that you know not what you desire. Still, name any question you wish; and I will tell you freely whether in my judgment God's Word contains an answer."

Carlos stated the difficulty suggested by the inquiry of Dolores. Who can tell the exact moment when his bark leaves the gently-flowing river for the great deep ocean? That of Carlos, on the instant when he put this question, was met by the first wave of the mighty sea upon which he was to be tossed by many a storm. But he did not know it.

"I agree with you as to the silence of God's Word about purgatory," returned his friend; and for some time both gazed into the fire without speaking.

"This and similar discoveries have sometimes given me, I own, a feeling of blank disappointment, and even of terror," said Carlos at length. For with him it was one of those rare hours in which a man can bear to translate into words the "dark misgivings" of the soul, usually unacknowledged even to himself.

"I cannot say," was the answer, "that the thought of passing through the gate of death into the immediate presence of my glorified Lord affects me with 'blank disappointment' or 'terror.'"

"How? – What do you say?" cried Carlos, starting visibly.

"Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' 'To depart and to be with Christ is far better.'"

"But it was San Pablo, the great apostle and martyr, who said that. For us, – we have the Church's teaching," Carlos rejoined in quick, anxious tones.

"Nevertheless, I venture to think that, in the face of all you have learned from God's Word, you will find it a task somewhat of the hardest to prove purgatory."

"Not at all," said Carlos; and immediately he bounded into the arena of controversy, laid his lance in rest, and began an animated tilting-match with his new friend, who was willing (of course, thought Carlos, for argument's sake alone, and as an intellectual exercise) to personate a Lutheran antagonist.

But not a few doughty champions have met the stern reality of a bloody death in the mimic warfare of the tilting-field. At every turn Carlos found himself answered, baffled, confounded. Yet, how could he, how dared he, acknowledge defeat, even to himself, when with the imperilled doctrine so much else must fall? What would become of private masses, indulgences, prayers for the dead? Nay, what would become of the infallibility of Mother Church herself?

So he fought desperately. Fear, ever increasing, quickened his preceptions, baptized his lips with eloquence, made his sense acute and his memory retentive. Driven at last from the ground of Scripture and reason, he took his stand upon that of scholastic divinity. Using the weapons with which he had been taught to play so deftly for once in terrible earnest, he spun clever syllogisms, in which he hoped to entangle his adversary. But De Seso caught the flimsy webs in the naked hand of his strong sense, and crushed them to atoms.

Then Carlos knew that the battle was lost. "I can say no more," he acknowledged, sorrowfully bowing his head.

"And what I have said – is it not in accordance with the Word of God?"

With a cry of dismay on his lips, Carlos turned and looked at him – "God help us! Are we then Lutherans?"

"It may be Christ is asking another question – Are we amongst those who follow him *whithersoever* he goeth?"

"Oh, not *there* – not to *that*!" cried Carlos, rising in his agitation and beginning to pace the room. "I abhor heresy – I eschew the thought. From my cradle I have done so. Anywhere but that!"

Pausing at last in his walk before the place where De Seso sat, he asked, "And you, señor, have you considered whither this would lead?"

"I have. I do not ask thee to follow. But this I say: if Christ bids any man leave the ship and come to him upon these dark and stormy waters, he will stretch out his own right hand to uphold and sustain him."

"To leave the ship – his Church? That would be leaving him. And leaving him, I am lost, soul and body – lost – lost!"

"Fear not. At his feet, clinging to him, soul of man was never lost yet."

"I will cleave to him, and to the Church too."

"Still, if one must be forsaken, let not that one be Christ."

"Never, *never*— so help me God!" After a pause he added, as if speaking to himself, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

He stood motionless, wrapt in thought; while De Seso rose softly, and going to the window, put aside the rude shutter that had been fastened across it.

"The night is bright," said Carlos dreamily. "The moon must have risen."

"That is daylight you see," returned his companion with a smile. "Time for wayfarers to seek rest in sleep."

"Prayer is better than sleep."

"True, and we who own the same precious faith can well unite in prayer."

With the willing consent of Carlos, his new friend laid their common desires and perplexities before God. The prayer was in itself a revelation to him; he forgot even to wonder that it came from the lips of a layman. For De Seso spoke as one accustomed to converse with the Unseen, and to enter by faith to the inner sanctuary, the very presence of God himself. And Carlos found that it was good thus to draw nigh to God. He felt his troubled soul returning to its rest, to its quiet confidence in Him who, he knew, would guide him by his counsel, and afterwards receive him into glory.

When they rose, instinctively their right hands sought each other, and were locked in that strong grasp which is sometimes worth more than an embrace.

"We have confidence each in the other," said De Seso, "so that we need exchange no pledge of faithfulness or secrecy."

Carlos bowed his head. "Pray for me, señor," he said. "Pray that God, who sent you here to teach me, may in his own time complete the work he has begun."

Then both lay down in their cloaks; one to sleep, the other to ponder and pray.

In the morning each went his several way. And never was it given to Carlos, in this world, to look upon that face or to grasp that hand again.

He who had thus crossed his path, as it were for a moment, was perhaps the noblest of all the heroic band of Spanish martyrs, that forlorn hope of Christ's army, who fought and fell "where Satan's seat was." His high birth and lofty station, his distinguished abilities, even those more superficial graces of person and manner which are not without their strong fascination, were all – like the precious ointment with the odour of which the house was filled – consecrated to the service of the Lord for whom he lived and died. The eye of imagination lingers with special and reverential love upon that grand calm figure. But our simple story leads us far away amongst other scenes and other characters. We must now turn to a different part of the wide missionary harvest-field, in which the lowly muleteer Juliano Hernandez, and the great noble Don Carlos de Seso, were both labouring. Was their labour in vain?

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