

**BLASCO
IBÁÑEZ
VICENTE**

THE DEAD COMMAND

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Blasco Ibáñez V.

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Vicente Blasco Ibáñez

The Dead Command / From the Spanish Los Muertos Mandan

PART FIRST

CHAPTER I A MAJORCAN PALACE

Jaime Febrer arose at nine o'clock. Old Antonia, the faithful servant who cherished the memory of the past glories of the family, and who had attended upon Jaime from the day of his birth, had been bustling about the room since eight o'clock in the hope of awakening him. As the light filtering through the transom of a broad window seemed too dim, she flung open the worm-eaten blinds. Then she raised the gold-fringed, red, damask drapery which hung like an awning over the ample couch, the ancient, lordly, and majestic couch in which many generations of Febrers had been born and in which they had died.

The night before, on returning from the Casino, Jaime had charged her most earnestly to arouse him early, as he was invited to breakfast at Valldemosa. Time to get up! It was the finest of spring mornings; in the garden birds were singing in the flowery branches swayed by the breeze that blew over the wall from the sea.

The old servant, seeing that her master had at last decided to get out of bed, retreated to the kitchen. Jaime Febrer strolled about the room before the open window almost nude. There was no danger of his being seen. The dwelling opposite was an old palace like his own, a great house with few windows. From his room he could see a wall of indefinite color, with deep scars, and faint traces of ancient frescoes. It was so near, the street being extremely narrow, that it seemed as if he might touch it with his hand.

Nervous on account of an important event which was to take place in the morning, he had passed a restless night, and the heaviness following the short and indifferent sleep led him to seek eagerly the invigorating effect of cold water. Febrer made a sorry grimace as he bathed in the primitive, narrow, and uncomfortable tub. Ah poverty! His home was devoid of even the most essential conveniences despite its air of stately luxury, a stateliness which modern wealth can never emulate. Poverty with all its annoyances stalked forth to meet him at every turn in these halls which reminded him of splendidly decorated theaters he had seen in his European travels.

Febrer glanced over the grandiose room with its lofty ceiling as if he were a stranger entering the apartment for the first time. His powerful ancestors had built for giants. Each room in the palace was as large as a modern house. The windows were without glass all over the house and in winter they had to be closed by wooden shutters which admitted no light except that entering through the transoms, and these were studded with crystals cracked and dimmed by time. Lack of carpets disclosed floors of soft Majorcan sandstone cut in small rectangles like wooden blocks. The rooms still boasted the old-time splendor of vaulted ceilings, some dark, with skilfully fitted paneling, others with a faded and venerable gilding forming a background for the colored escutcheons which were emblazoned with the coat of arms of the house. In some rooms the high walls, simply whitewashed, were covered by rows of ancient paintings, and in others were concealed by rich hangings of gay colors which time had failed to destroy. The sleeping room was decorated with eight enormous tapestries of a shade of

dull green leaves representing gardens, broad avenues of trees in autumnal foliage leading to a small park where deer were frisking, or where solitary fountains dripped into triple basins. Above the doors hung old Italian paintings in soft brown tones representing nude, amber-hued babes fondling curly lambs. The arch dividing the alcove from the rest of the apartment suggested the triumphal order, its fluted columns sustaining a scroll-work of carved foliage with the softened luster of faded gilding, as if it were an ancient altar. Upon an eighteenth century table stood a polychrome statue of Saint George treading Moors beneath his charger; and beyond was the bed, the imposing bed, a venerable family monument. Antique chairs with curved arms, the red velvet so worn and threadbare as to disclose the white woof, jostled against modern cane-bottomed chairs and the wretched bathtub.

"Ah, poverty!" sighed the heir of the estate.

The old Febrer mansion, with its beautiful unglazed casements, its tapestry-filled halls, its carpetless floors, its venerable furniture jumbled with the meanest of chattels, reminded him of a poverty-stricken prince wearing his brilliant mantle and his glittering crown, but barefooted and destitute of underclothing.

Febrer himself was like this palace—this imposing and empty frame which in happier times had sheltered the glory and wealth of his ancestors. Some had been merchants, others soldiers, navigators all. The Febrer arms had floated on pennants and flags over more than fifty full-rigged ships, the pride of the Majorcan marine, which, after clearing from Puerto Pi, used to sail away to sell the oil of the island in Alexandria, taking on cargoes of spices, silks, and perfumes of the Orient in the ports of Asia Minor, trading in Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, or, passing the Pillars of Hercules, plunging into the fogs of Northern seas to carry to Flanders and the Hanseatic Republics the pottery of the Valencian Moors called majolica by foreigners because of its Majorcan origin. These voyages over pirate-infested seas had converted this family of rich merchants into a tribe of valorous warriors. The Febrers had now fought, now entered into alliances with Turkish corsairs, with Greeks, and with Algerines; they had sailed their fleets through Northern seas to face the English pirates, and, on one occasion, at the entrance of the Bosphorus, their galleys had rammed the vessels of Genoese merchants who were trying to monopolize the commerce of Byzantium. Finally, this family of soldiers of the sea, on retiring from maritime commerce, had rendered tribute of blood in the defense of Christian kingdoms and the Catholic faith by enlisting some of its scions in the holy Order of the Knights of Malta. The second sons of the house of Febrer, at the very moment of receiving the water of baptism, had the eight-pointed white cross, symbolizing the eight beatitudes, sewed to their swaddling-bands, and on reaching manhood they became captains of galleys of the warlike Order, and ended their days as opulent knights commanders of Malta recounting their deeds of prowess to the children of their nieces, being tended in their illnesses and having their wounds dressed by the slave women with whom they lived despite their vows of chastity. Renowned monarchs passing through Majorca would leave their sumptuous quarters in the Almudaina to visit the Febrers in their palace. Some members of this great family had been admirals in the king's armada; others governors of far distant lands; some slept the eternal sleep in the Cathedral of La Valette beside other illustrious Majorcans, and Jaime had done homage at their tombs during one of his visits to Malta.

La Lonja, the graceful Gothic structure near the sea at Palma, had been for centuries a feudal possession of his forefathers. Everything was for the Febrers which was flung upon the mole from the high-forecastled galleons, from Oriental cocas with their massive hulls, from fragile lighters, lateen-sailed settees, flat-bottomed tafureas, and other vessels of the epoch; and in the great columnar hall of La Lonja, near the Solomonic pillars which disappeared within the shadows of the vaulted ceilings, his ancestors in regal majesty used to receive voyagers from the Orient who came clad in wide breeches and red fezzes; Genoese and Provençals wearing capes with monkish hoods; and the valiant native captains of the island covered with their red Catalanian helmets. Venetian merchants sent their Majorcan friends ebony furniture delicately inlaid with ivory and lapis lazuli, or enormous, heavy plate-glass mirrors with bevelled edges. Seafarers returning from Africa brought ostrich feathers and

tusks of ivory; and these treasures and countless others added to the decoration of the halls, perfumed by mysterious essences, the gifts of Asiatic correspondents.

For centuries the Febrers had been intermediaries between the Orient and the Occident, making of Majorca a depository for exotic products which their ships afterward scattered throughout Spain, France, and Holland. Riches flowed in fabulous abundance to the house. On some occasions the Febrers had made loans to their sovereigns, but this did not prevent Jaime, the last of the family, after losing in the Casino the night before everything which he possessed—some hundreds of pesetas—from borrowing money for a journey to Valldemosa on the following morning from Toni Clapés, the smuggler, a rough fellow of keen intelligence, the most faithful and disinterested of his friends.

While Jaime stood combing his hair he intently studied his image in an antique mirror, cracked and dimmed. Thirty-six! He could not complain of his looks. He was ugly, but it was a grandiose ugliness, to adopt the expression of a woman who had exercised a peculiar influence over his life. This ugliness had yielded him some satisfactory adventures. Miss Mary Gordon, a blonde-haired idealist, daughter of the governor of an English archipelago in Oceanica, traveling through Europe accompanied only by a maid, had met him one summer in a hotel at Munich. She it was who first became impressed, and it was she who took the first steps. According to the young lady, the Spaniard was the living picture of Wagner in his youth. Smiling at the pleasant memory, Febrer contemplated the prominent brow which seemed to oppress his imperious, small, ironic eyes. His nose was sharp and aquiline, the nose common to all the Febrers, those daring birds of prey who haunted the solitudes of the sea. His mouth was scornful and receding, his lips and chin prominent and covered by the soft growth of the beard and mustache, thin and fine.

Ah, delicious Miss Mary! Their happy pilgrimage through Europe had lasted almost a year. She was madly enamored on account of his resemblance to a genius, and wished to marry him; she told him of the governor's millions, mingling her romantic enthusiasm with the practical tendencies of her race; but Febrer ran away at last, before the English woman should in her turn leave him for some orchestra director or other Who might be an even more striking double of her idol.

Ah, women!... Jaime straightened his figure which was manly, though the shoulders bent somewhat from his excessive stature. It had been some time since he had taken interest in women. A few gray hairs in his beard, a slight wrinkling around the eyes, revealed the fatigues of a life which, as he said, had whirled "at full speed." But even so he was popular, and it was love that should lift him out of his pressing situation.

Having finished his toilette he left the dormitory. He crossed a vast salon lighted by the sunshine filtering through shutters in the windows. The floor lay in shadow and the walls shone like a brilliant garden, covered as they were by interminable tapestries with figures of heroic size. They represented mythological and biblical scenes; arrogant dames with full pink flesh standing before red and green warriors; imposing colonnades; palaces hung with garlands; scimitars aloft, heads strewn over the ground, troops of big-bellied horses with one foot lifted; a whole world of ancient legends, but with colors fresh and vernal, despite their centuries, bordered with apples and foliage.

As Febrer passed through the stately hall he glanced ironically at these treasures, the inheritance from his ancestors. Not one of them was his! For more than a year these tapestries, and also those in the dormitory, and throughout the house, had been the property of certain usurers of Palma who had chosen to leave them hanging in their places. They were awaiting the chance visit of some wealthy collector who would pay more royally believing them to be purchased direct from their owner. Jaime was only their custodian, in danger of imprisonment should he prove false to his trust.

Reaching the center of the salon, he turned aside, impelled by habit, but seeing nothing to obstruct his passage, he burst into a laugh. A month ago a choice Italian marble table which the famous knight commander, Don Priamo Febrer, had brought back from one of his privateering expeditions had still stood here. Neither was there anything for him to stumble against farther on; the enormous hammered silver brazier resting on a support of the same metal, upheld by a circular row of cupids,

Febrer had also converted into cash, selling it by weight! The brazier reminded him of a gold chain presented by the Emperor Charles V to one of his ancestors which he had sold in Madrid years ago, also by weight, with the addition of two ounces of gold on account of its artistic finish and its antiquity. Afterward he had heard a vague rumor that the chain had been re-sold in Paris for a hundred thousand francs. Ah, poverty! Gentlemen could no longer exist in these times!

His gaze was drawn by the glitter of some enormous writing desks of Venetian workmanship, mounted upon antique tables sustained by lions. They seemed to have been made for giants; their innumerable deep drawers were inlaid in bright colors with representations of mythological scenes. They were four magnificent museum pieces, a feeble reminder of the ancient splendors of the house. Neither did these belong to him. They had shared the fate of the tapestries, and were here awaiting a purchaser. Febrer was merely the concierge of his own house. The Italian and Spanish paintings hanging on the walls of two adjoining rooms, the handsomely carved antique furniture, its silk upholstery now threadbare and torn, also belonged to his creditors—in fact, whatever there had been of value in his venerable heritage!

He passed into the reception hall, a cold, spacious room with elevated ceiling, in the center of the palace, which connected with the stairway. The years had tinged the white walls with the creamy shade of ivory. One must throw his head well back to see the black paneling of the ceiling. Casements near the cornice together with the lower windows lighted this immense, austere apartment. The furnishings were few and of romantic severity; broad armchairs with seats and backs of leather studded with nails; oak tables with twisted legs; dark chests with iron locks showing against upholstery of moth-eaten green cloth. The yellowish-white walls were only visible, as a sort of grill-work, between rows of canvases, many of them unframed. There were hundreds of paintings, all badly done, and yet interesting pictures painted for the perpetuation of the glories of the family, executed by old Italian and Spanish artists who chanced to be passing through Majorca. A traditional charm seemed to emanate from the portraits. Here was the history of the Mediterranean, traced by crude and ingenuous brushes; sea fights between galleys, assaults upon fortresses, naval battles enveloped in smoke. Above the clouds floated the pennants of the ships and rose the tower-like poops with flags bearing the Maltese cross or the crescents crinkling from the rail. Men were fighting on the decks of the ships or in small boats which floated near; the sea, reddened by blood and lurid from the flames of the burning vessels, was dotted with hundreds of little heads of men still fighting upon the waves. A mass of helmets and three-cornered Schomber hats mingled upon two vessels which grappled another where swarmed white and red turbans, and above them all rose hands grasping pikes, scimitars, and boarding-axes. Shots from cannons and blunderbusses rent the smoke of battle with long red tongues. In other canvases, no less dark, could be seen castles hurling firebrands from their embrasures, and at their bases warriors almost as big as the towers, distinguished by eight-pointed white crosses upon their cuirasses, were setting their ladders against the walls to clamber to the assault.

The paintings bore on one side white scrolls with the ends folded about coats of arms, on each of which was written in ill-formed capital letters, the story of the event; victorious encounters with the galleys of the Grand Turk or with privates from Pisa, Genoa and Vizcaya; wars in Sardinia, assaults on Bujia and on Tedeliz, and in every one of these enterprises a Febrer was leading the combatants or distinguishing himself for his heroism, the knight commander Don Priamo towering above them all, he who had been both the glory and the shame of the house.

Alternating with these warlike scenes were the family portraits. On the topmost row, crowding a line of old canvases depicting evangelists and martyrs in semblance of a frieze, were the most ancient Febrers, venerable merchants of Majorca, painted some centuries after their death, grave men with Jewish noses and piercing eyes, with jewels on their breasts, and wearing tall Oriental caps. Next came the men of arms, the sword-bearing navigators with short cropped hair and profiles like birds of prey, all clad in dark steel armor, and some displaying the white Maltese cross. From portrait to portrait the countenances grew more refined, but without losing the prominent forehead

and the imperious family nose. The wide, soft collar of the homespun shirt became transformed into starched folds of plaited ruffs; the cuirasses softened into jackets of velvet or silk; the stiff broad beards in imperial style changed to sharp goatees and to pointed mustaches, which, with the soft locks falling over the temples, served as a frame for the face. Among the rude men of war and the elegant caballeros, a few ecclesiastics with mustaches and small beards, wearing tasseled clerical hats, stood out conspicuously. Some were religious dignitaries of Malta, to judge by the white insignia adorning their breasts; others, venerable inquisitors of Majorca, according to the inscription which extolled their zeal for the spread of the faith. After all these dark gentlemen of imposing presence and metallic eyes, followed the procession of white wigs and of countenances rendered youthful by shaving; of coats resplendent with silk and gold, showy with sashes and decorations of honor. They were perpetual magistrates of the city of Palma; marquises whose marquise the family had lost through matrimonial complications, their titles becoming merged with others pertaining to the nobility of the Peninsula; governors, captain generals, and viceroys of American and Oceanian countries, whose names evoked visions of fantastic riches; enthusiastic "botiflers," partisans of the Bourbons from the start, who had been compelled to flee from Majorca, that final support of the house of Austria, and they boasted as a supreme title of nobility the nickname of butifarras, which had been given them by the hostile populace. Closing the glorious procession, hanging almost on a level with the furniture of the room, were the last Febrers of the early nineteenth century, officers of the Armada, with short whiskers, curls over their foreheads, high collars with anchors embroidered in gold, and black stocks, men who had fought off Cape Saint Vincent and Trafalgar; and after them Jaime's great grandfather, an old man with large eyes and disdainful mouth, who, when Ferdinand VII returned from his captivity in France, had sailed for Valencia to prostrate himself at his feet, beseeching, along with other great hidalgos, that he reestablish the ancient customs and crush the growing scourge of liberalism. He was a prolific patriarch, who had lavished his blood in various districts of the island in pursuit of peasant girls, without ever sacrificing his dignity; and as he offered his hand to be kissed by some one of his sons who lived in the house and bore his name, he would say with a solemn voice: "May God make you a good inquisitor!"

Among these portraits of the illustrious Febrers were a number of women, grand señoras with great hoops filling the whole canvas, like those painted by Valasquez. One of them, whose slender bust emerged from her flowered bell-like skirts with pale and pointed face, a faded knot of ribbon in her short hair, was the notable woman of the family, she who had been called "La Greca" on account of her knowledge of Hellenic letters. Her uncle, Fray Espiridion Febrer, prior of Santo Domingo, a great luminary of his epoch, had been her teacher, and the "Greek woman" could write in their own language to correspondents in the Orient who still maintained a dwindling commerce with Majorca.

Jaime's glance fell upon some canvases farther down (the distance representing the passing of a century) where hung the portrait of another famous woman of the family, a girl in a little white wig, dressed like a woman in the full skirt and great hoops of the ladies of the eighteenth century. She was standing beside a table, near a vase of flowers, holding in her bloodless right hand a rose as large as a tomato, looking straight before her with the little porcelain-like eyes of a doll. This woman had been styled "La Latina." In the pompous style of the epoch the lettering on the canvas told of her knowledge and wisdom, and lamented her death at the tender age of eleven years. The women were as dry shoots upon the vigorous trunk of the soldierly and exuberant Febrer stock. Scholarship quickly withered in this family of seamen and soldiers, like a plant which springs up by mistake in an adverse clime.

Preoccupied with his thoughts of the night before and of the contemplated trip to Valldemosa, Jaime stood in the reception hall gazing at the pictures of his forefathers. How much glory, and how much dust! It had been twenty years, perhaps, since a merciful cloth had passed over the illustrious family to furbish it up a little. The more remote grandfathers and the famous battles were covered with cobwebs... and to think that the pawnbrokers had declined to acquire this museum of glories

under the pretext that the paintings were poor! Jaime was surprised that it should be difficult to turn these relics over to wealthy people anxious to pretend an illustrious origin for themselves.

He crossed the reception hall and entered the apartments in the opposite wing. They were rooms with lower ceilings; above them was a second story occupied in other times by Febrer's grandfather; relatively modern rooms, with old furniture in the style of the Empire, and on the walls illuminated prints of the romantic period, representing the misfortunes of Atala, the love affairs of Matilde, and the achievements of Hernán Cortéz. Upon the swelling dressing tables were polychrome saints and ivory crucifixes, together with dusty artificial flowers beneath crystal bells. A collection of cross-bows, arrows, and knives recalled a Febrer, captain of a corvette belonging to the king, who made a voyage around the world near the close of the eighteenth century. Purplish bivalves and enormous nacre-lined conch shells lay upon the tables.

Following a corridor on the way to the kitchen he left on one side the chapel which had been closed for many years, and on the other the door of the archives, a huge apartment with windows opening upon the garden, where Jaime on his return from trips had spent many afternoons poring over bundles of papers kept behind the metal grating of many series of ancient bookshelves.

He peeped into the kitchen, an immense place where anciently were prepared the sumptuous banquets of the Febrers, who fed a swarm of parasites, and lavished generosity on all their friends who visited the island. Antonia looked dwarfed in this high-ceiled, spacious room, standing near a great fireplace which would hold an enormous pile of wood and was capable of roasting several animals at once. The ranks of ovens might serve for an entire community. The chill cleanliness of this adjunct of the palace showed lack of use. On the walls great iron hooks called attention to the absence of the copper vessels which used to be the splendrous glory of this conventional kitchen. The old servant did her cooking at a small hearth beside the trough where she kneaded her bread.

Jaime called to Antonia, to announce his presence and entered the adjoining room, the small dining room which had been utilized by the last of the Febrers, who, being in reduced circumstances, had abandoned the great hall where the old-time banquets used to take place.

Here, also, the presence of poverty was noticeable. The long table was covered with a cracked oil-cloth of blemished whiteness. The sideboards were almost empty. The ancient china, when it became broken, had been replaced by coarse platters and jars. Two open windows at the lower end of the room framed bits of sea, of intense and restless blue, palpitating beneath the fire of the sun. Near them swayed rhythmically the branches of palm trees. Out at sea the white wings of a schooner approaching Palma, slowly, like a wearied gull, broke the horizon line.

Mammy Antonia came in, setting upon the table a steaming bowl of coffee and milk and a great slice of buttered bread. Jaime attacked the breakfast with avidity, but as he bit into the bread he made a gesture of displeasure. Antonia assented with a nod of her head, breaking into speech in her Majorcan dialect.

"It is hard, isn't it? No doubt the bread does not compare with the tender little rolls the señor eats at the casino, but it is not my fault. I wanted to make bread yesterday, but I was out of flour, and I was expecting that the 'payés' of Son Febrer would come and bring his tribute. Ungrateful and forgetful people!"

The old servant persisted in her scorn of the peasant farmer of Son Febrer, the piece of land which constituted the remaining fortune of the house. The rustic owed all he had to the benevolence of the Febrer family, and now in these hard times he forgot his kind masters.

Jaime continued chewing, his thought centered upon Son Febrer. That was not his either, although he posed as owner. The farm, situated in the middle of the island, the choicest property inherited from his parents, that which bore the family name, he had heavily mortgaged, and he was about to lose it. The rent, paltry and mean, according to traditional custom, enabled him to pay off only a part of the interest on his loans; the rest of the interest due served to swell the amount of the debt. There were still the tributes, the payments in specie which the payés had to make to him,

according to ancient usage, and with these he and Mammy Antonia had managed to exist, almost lost in the immensity of the house which had been built to shelter a tribe. At Christmas and at Easter he always received a brace of lambs accompanied by a dozen fowl; in the autumn two well-fattened pigs ready to kill, and every month eggs and a certain amount of flour, as well as fruits in their season. With these contributions, partly consumed in the house, and in part sold by the servant, Jaime and Mammy Antonia managed to live in the solitude of the palace, isolated from public gaze, like castaways. The offerings in money were continually becoming more belated. The payés, with that rustic egoism which shuns misfortune, became indolent in fulfilling his obligations. He knew that the nominal possessor of the estate was not the real owner of Son Febrer, and frequently, on arriving at the city with his gifts, he changed his route and left them at the houses of his creditors, awe-inspiring personages whom he desired to propitiate.

Jaime glanced sadly at the servant who remained standing before him. She was an old payesa who still kept to the ancient style of dress peculiar to her people—a dark doublet with two rows of buttons on the sleeves, a light, full skirt, and the rebocillo covering her head, the white veil caught at the neck and at the bust, below which hung the heavy braid, which was false and very black, tied with long velvet bows.

"Poverty, Mammy Antonia," said the master in the same dialect. "Everybody shuns the poor, and some fine day if that rascal does not bring us what he owes us, we shall have to fall to and eat each other like shipwrecked mariners on a desert island."

The old woman smiled; the master was always merry. In this he was just like his grandfather, Don Horacio, ever solemn, with a face which frightened one, and yet always saying such jolly things!

"This will have to stop," continued Jaime, paying no heed to the servant's levity. "This must stop this very day. I have made up my mind. Let me tell you, Antonia, before the news gets abroad: I'm going to be married."

The servant clasped her hands in an attitude of devotion to express her astonishment, and turned her eyes toward the ceiling. "Santísimo Cristo de la sangre!" It was high time!... He should have done it long ago, and then the house would have been in a very different condition. Her curiosity was stirred, and she asked with the eagerness of a rustic:

"Is she rich?"

The master's affirmative gesture did not surprise her. Of course she must be rich. Only a woman who brought a great fortune with her could aspire to unite with the last of the Febrers, who had been the most noted men of the island, and perhaps of the whole world. Poor Antonia thought of her kitchen, instantly furnishing it in her imagination with copper vessels gleaming like gold, dreaming of its hearths all ablaze, the room filled with girls with rolled up sleeves, their rebocillos thrown back, their braids floating behind, and she in the center, seated in a great chair, giving orders and breathing in the savory odors from the casseroles.

"She must be young!" declared the old woman, trying to worm more news out of her master.

"Yes, much younger than I; too young; about twenty-two. I could almost be her father."

Antonia made a gesture of protest. Don Jaime was the finest man on the island. She said so, she who had worshipped him ever since she led him by the hand, in his short trousers, walking among the pines near the castle of Bellver. He was one of the family—of that family of arrogant grand seigniors, and no more could be said.

"And is she of good family?" she questioned in an effort to force her master's reticence. "Of a family of caballeros; undoubtedly the very best in the island—but no—from Madrid, perhaps. Some sweetheart you found when you lived there."

Jaime hesitated an instant, turned pale, and then said with rude energy to conceal his perturbation:

"No, Antonia—she's a—Chueta."

Antonia started to clasp her hands, as she had done a few moments before, invoking again the blood of Christ, so venerated in Palma, but suddenly the wrinkles of her brown face broadened, and she burst out laughing. What a jolly master! Just like his grandfather; he used to say the most stupendous and incredible things so seriously that he deceived everybody. "And I, poor fool, was ready to believe your nonsense! Perhaps it was also a joke that you were going to get married!"

"No, Antonia, I am going to marry a Chueta. I am going to marry the daughter of Benito Valls. That is why I am going to Valldemosa."

The stifled voice in which Jaime spoke, his lowered eyes, the timid accent with which he murmured these words, removed all doubt. The old servant stood open-mouthed, her arms fallen, without strength to raise either her hands or her eyes.

"Señor!... Señor!... Señor!"

She could say no more. She felt as if a thunderbolt had crashed upon the house, shaking it to its foundations; as if a dark cloud had swept before the sun obscuring the light; as if the sea had become a leaden mass dashing against the castle wall. Then she saw that everything remained as usual, that she alone had been stirred by this stupendous news, so startling as to change the order of all existence.

"Señor!... Señor!... Señor! A Chueta! An apostate Jewess!"

She grasped the empty cup and the remnants of the bread, and ran to take refuge in the kitchen. After hearing such horrors in this house she felt afraid. She imagined that someone must be stalking through the venerable halls at the other end of the palace; someone—she could not explain to herself who it might be—someone who had been aroused from the sleep of centuries! This palace undoubtedly possessed a soul. When the old woman was alone in it the furniture creaked as if people were moving about and conversing; the tapestries swayed as if stirred by invisible faces, a gilded harp which had belonged to Don Jaime's grandmother vibrated in its corner, yet she never felt terror, because the Febrers had been good people, simple and kind to their servants; but now, after hearing such things—! She thought uneasily of the portraits hanging on the walls of the reception hall. How severe those señores would look if the words of their descendant should reach their ears! How fiercely their eyes would flame!

Mammy Antonia finally grew calm and drank the coffee left by her master. She had laid fear aside, but she felt profound sorrow over the fate of Don Jaime, as if he were in peril of death. To bring the house of the Febrers to this! Could God tolerate such things? Then scorn for her master momentarily overcame her old-time affection. After all he was nothing but a wild fellow, heedless of religion, and destitute of good habits, who had squandered what had been left of the fortune of his house. What would his illustrious relatives have to say? How ashamed his aunt Juana would be—that noble lady, the most pious and aristocratic woman in the island, called by some in jest and by others in an excess of veneration, la Papisa—the Pope-ess!

"Good-bye, Mammy. I'll be back about sunset."

The old woman grunted a farewell to Jaime, who peeped into the kitchen before leaving. Then, finding herself alone, she raised her clasped hands invoking the aid of the Sangre de Cristo, of the Virgin of Lluch, patron saint of the island, and of the powerful San Vicente Ferrer, who had wrought so many miracles when he ministered in Majorca—a final and prodigious saint, who might avert the monstrosity her master contemplated! Let a rock from the mountains fall and forever close the way to Valldemosa; let the carriage upset, and let Don Jaime be carried home on a stretcher by four men—anything rather than that disgrace!

Febrer crossed the reception hall, opened the door to the stairway, and began to descend the worn steps. His forefathers, like all the nobles of the island, had builded on a grand scale. The stairway and the zaguán occupied a third of the lower story. A kind of loggia in Italian style, with five arches sustained by slender columns, extended to the foot of the stairway, the doors of which gave access to the two upper wings of the building opening at either end. Above the center of the stairway, facing the street door, were the Febrer arms cut in the stone, and a great lantern of wrought iron.

On his way down Jaime's cane struck against the sandstone steps, or touched the great glazed amphoræ decorating the landings which responded to the blow with the sonorous ring of a bell. The iron balustrade, oxidized by time and crumbling into scales of rust almost shook from its sockets with the jar of his footsteps.

As he reached the zaguán Febrer stood still. The extreme resolution which he had adopted, and which would forever cast its influence on the destiny of his name, caused him to look curiously at the very places which he had so often passed with indifference.

In no other part of the building was the old-time prosperity so evident as here. The zaguán, enormous as a plaza, could admit a dozen carriages and an entire squadron of horsemen. Twelve columns, somewhat bulging, of the nut-brown marble of the island, sustained the arches of cut undressed stone over which extended the roof of black rafters. The paving was of cobbles between which grew dank moss. A vault-like chill pervaded this gigantic and solitary ruin. A cat slunk through the zaguán, making its exit through a hole in a worm-eaten door of the old stables, disappearing into the deserted cellars which had held the harvests of former days. On one side was a well dating from the epoch when the palace was constructed, a hole sunk through rock, with a time-worn stone curb and a wrought-iron spout. Ivy was growing in fresh clusters between the crevices of the polished rock. Often as a child Jaime had peered over the curb at his reflection in the luminous round pupil of the sleeping waters.

The street was deserted. Down at its end, near the walls of the Febrer garden, was the city rampart, pierced by a broad gateway, with wooden bars in the arch like the teeth in the mouth of an enormous fish. Through this the waters of the bay trembled green and luminous with reflections of gold.

Jaime walked a short distance over the blue stones of the street which was destitute of sidewalks, and then turned to contemplate his house. It was but a small remnant of the past. The ancient palace of the Febrers occupied a whole square, but it had dwindled with the passing of the centuries and with the exigencies of the family. Now a part of it had become a residence for nuns, and other parts had been acquired by certain rich people who disfigured with modern balconies the original unity of the design, which was still suggested by the regular line of eaves and tile-covered roofs. The Febrers themselves who were living in that portion of the great house which looked upon the garden and the sea, had been compelled to let the lower stories to warehousemen and small shopkeepers, in order to augment their rents. Near the lordly portal, inside the glass windows, some girls who greeted Don Jaime with a respectful smile were busy ironing linen. He stood motionless contemplating the ancient house. How beautiful it was still in spite of its amputations and its age!

The foundation wall, perforated and worn by people and carriages, was cleft by several windows with grilles on a level with the ground. The lower story of the palace was worn, lacerated, and dusty, like feet which had been plodding for centuries.

As it rose above the mezzanine, a story with an independent entrance which had been rented to a druggist, the lordly splendor of the façade developed. Three rows of windows on a level with the arch of the portal, divided by double columns, had frames of black marble delicately carved. Stone thistles climbed over the columns which sustained the cornices, while above them were three great medallions—that in the center being the bust of the Emperor with the inscription DOMINUS CAROLUS IMPERATOR, 1541, in memory of his passing through Majorca on the unfortunate expedition against Algiers; those on either side bore the Febrer arms held by fish with bearded heads of men. Above the jambs and cornices of the great windows of the first story were wreaths formed of anchors and dolphins, testifying to the glories of a family of navigators. On their finials were enormous shells. Along the upper portion of the façade was a compact row of small windows with Gothic decorations, some plastered over, others open to admit light to the garrets, and above them the monumental eaves, such as are found only in Majorcan palaces, their masses of carved timbers blackened by time and supported by sturdy gargoyles projecting as far as the middle of the street.

Over the entire façade extended cleats of worm-eaten wood with nails and bands of rusted iron. They were the remains of the grand illuminations with which the household had commemorated certain feasts in its times of splendor.

Jaime seemed satisfied with this examination. The palace of his ancestors was still beautiful despite the broken panes in the windows, the dust and cobwebs gathered in the crevices, the cracks which centuries had opened in its plaster. When he should marry, and old Valls' fortune should pass into his hands, everyone would be astounded at the magnificent resurrection of the Febrers. And yet, would some people be scandalized at his decision, and did he himself not feel certain scruples? Courage, forward!

He turned in the direction of El Borne, a broad avenue which is the center of Palma, a stream bed which in ancient times divided the city into two villages and into two hostile factions—Can Amunt and Can Avall. There he would find a carriage to take him to Valldemosa.

As he entered the Paseo del Borne his attention was attracted by a group of people standing in the shade of the dense-crowned trees staring at a peasant family which had stopped before the display windows of a shop. Febrer recognized their dress, different from that worn by the peasants on the island. They were Ivizans. Ah, Iviza! The name of this island recalled the memory of a year he had spent there long ago in his youth. Seeing these people who caused the Majorcans to grin as if they were foreigners, Jaime smiled also, looking with interest at their dress and figures.

They were, undoubtedly, father, son and daughter. The elder rustic wore white hempen sandals, above which hung the broad bell of a pair of blue trousers. His jacket-blouse was caught across his breast by a clasp, affording glimpses of his shirt and belt. A dark mantle hung over his shoulders like a woman's shawl, and to complete this feminine garb, which contrasted strongly with his hard, brown, Moorish features, he wore a handkerchief knotted across his forehead beneath his hat, with the ends hanging down behind. The boy, who was about fourteen, was dressed like the father, with the same style of trousers, narrow in the leg and bell-shaped over the foot, but without the kerchief and mantle. A pink ribbon hung down his breast like a cravat, a spray of flowers peeped from behind one of his ears, and his hat with a flower-embroidered band, thrust back on his head, allowed a wave of curls to fall around his face, brown, spare and mischievous, animated by African eyes of intense lustrous black.

The girl it was who attracted the greatest attention with her accordeon-plaited green skirt beneath which the presence of other skirts could be divined, forming an inflated globe of several layers which seemed to make still smaller her fine and graceful feet encased in white sandals. The prominent curves of her breast were concealed beneath a small yellow jacket with red flowers. It had velvet sleeves of a different color decorated with a double row of filigree buttons, the work of the Chueta silversmiths. A triple shining gold chain, terminated by a cross, hung over her breast, but so enormous were the links, that, had they not been hollow, they must have borne her down by their weight. Her black and glossy hair was parted over her forehead and concealed beneath a white kerchief tied under her chin, appearing again behind in long heavy braids tied with multi-colored ribbons falling to the hem of her skirt.

The girl, with her basket over her arm, stood looking at the strange sights, admiring the tall houses and the terraces of the cafés. She was pink and white, without the hard coppery roughness of the country women. Her features had the delicacy of an aristocratic and well cared for nun, the pale texture of milk and roses, lightened by the luminous reflection of her teeth and the timid glow of her eyes, under a kerchief resembling a monastic head-dress.

Impelled by curiosity Jaime approached the father and son whose backs were turned to the girl and who were absorbed in contemplation of the show window. It was a gun store. The two Ivizans were examining the weapons exposed with ardent eyes and gestures of adoration, as if worshipping miraculous idols. The boy pressed his eager, Moorish face against the glass as if he would thrust it through the pane.

"Fluxas—pa're, fluxas!" he cried with the excitement of one who meets an unexpected friend, calling his father's attention to the display of huge Lefauchaux pistols.

The admiration of the two was concentrated upon the unfamiliar weapons, which seemed to them marvelous works of art—the guns with invisible locks, repeating rifles, pistols with magazines which could hurl shot after shot. What wonderful things men invent! What treasures the rich enjoy! These lifeless weapons seemed to them animate creatures with malignant souls and limitless power. Doubtless such as these could kill automatically, without giving their owner the trouble of taking aim!

The image of Febrer, reflected in the glass, caused the father to turn suddenly.

"Don Jaime! Ah, Don Jaime!"

Such was his astonishment and surprise, and so great his joy, that, grasping Febrer's hands, he almost knelt before him, while he spoke in a tremulous voice. He had been killing time along the Paseo del Borne so as to reach Don Jaime's house about the time he should arise. Of course he knew that gentlemen always retire late! What a joy to see him! Here were his children—let them take a good look at the Señor! This was Don Jaime; this was the master! He had not seen him for ten years, but he would have recognized him among a thousand.

Febrer, disconcerted by the peasant and by the deferential curiosity of the two children who stood planted before him, could not recall his name. The worthy fellow guessed this slip of memory from Jaime's hesitant glance. Truly did he not recognize him? Pèp Arabi, from Iviza! Even this did not tell much, because on that little island there were but six or seven surnames, and Arabi was borne by a fourth part of the inhabitants. He would explain more clearly—Pèp of Can Mallorquí.

Febrer smiled. Ah, Can Mallorquí! A poor predio in Iviza, a farm where he had passed a year when he was a boy, his sole inheritance from his mother. Can Mallorquí had not belonged to him for twelve years. He had sold it to Pèp, whose fathers and grandfathers had cultivated it. That was during the time when he still had money; but of what use was that land on a separate island to which he would never return? So with the geniality of a benevolent gran señor he had sold it to Pèp at a low figure, valuing it in accord with the traditional rents; and conceding easy terms for payment, sums which, when hard times pressed upon him, had often come as an unexpected joy. Years had passed since Pèp had satisfied the debt, and yet the good souls continued calling him master, and as they saw him now they experienced the sensation of one who is in the presence of a superior being.

Pèp Arabi introduced his family. The girl was the elder, and was called Margalida; quite a little woman, although but seventeen! The boy, who was almost a man, was thirteen. He wished to be a farmer like his father and grandfathers, but Pèp had determined that the boy should enter the Seminary at Iviza since he was clever at his letters. His lands he would hold for some good hard-working youth who might marry Margalida. Many young men of the island were already chasing after her, and as soon as they returned the season for the festeigs, the traditional courtship, would begin, so that she could choose a husband. Pepet was destined for a higher calling; he would become a priest and after singing his first mass he would join a regiment or embark for America, as had done many other Ivizans who made much money and sent it home to their fathers with which to buy lands on the island. Ah, Don Jaime, and how time passes! He had seen the señor, still a mere child, when he spent that summer with his mother at Can Mallorquí. Pèp had taught him to use the gun, and to shoot his first birds. "Does your lordship remember?" It was about the time that Pèp married, while his parents were still alive. Since then they had only met once in Palma, when they arranged the sale of the property (a great favor which he would never forget) and now, when he presented himself again, he was almost an old man, with children as tall as himself.

As he talked of his journey the rustic displayed his strong teeth in mischievous smiles. It was a wild adventure of which his friends there in Iviza would talk a long time! He had always been of a roving and venturesome disposition—a vicious habit formed when he was a soldier. The master of a small trading vessel, a great friend of his, had picked up a cargo for Majorca, and had invited him just for a joke to come along. But it was risky to joke with him. As soon as the idea was suggested

he accepted. The youngsters had never been in Majorca; in the entire parish of San José, in which he lived, there were not a dozen persons who had seen the capital. Many of them had visited America; one had been to Australia; some neighbor women talked of their trips to Algeria with smugglers in their feluccas; but no one ever came to Majorca, and with good reason! "They don't like us here, Don Jaime; they stare at us as if we were strange animals; they think we are savages, as if we are not all the children of God." And here he and his children had been subjected to the gaze of the curious throughout the whole morning just as if they were Moors. Ten hours of sailing on a magnificent sea! The girl had a basket of lunch for the three of them! They would return tomorrow at break of day, but before sailing he wished to speak to the master on a matter of business.

Jaime made a gesture of surprise, and listened more attentively. Pèp expressed himself with a certain timidity, stumbling over his words. The almond trees were the greatest source of wealth on Can Mallorquí. Last year the crop had been good, and this year it did not look unpromising. It was being sold to the padrones, who were bringing it to Palma and Barcelona. He had planted nearly all his fields to almonds, and now he was thinking of clearing and cleaning off the stones from certain lands belonging to the señor, and of raising wheat on them—no more than enough for the use of his own family.

Febrer did not conceal his surprise. What lands did he mean? Did he really have anything left in Iviza? Pèp smiled. They were not lands exactly; it was a stony hill, a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, but he might cultivate it by terracing the steep slopes. On its crest was the Pirate's Tower—did not the señor remember? It was a fortification dating from the time of the corsairs. Don Jaime had scrambled up to it many times when a child, shouting like a young warrior, flourishing a cudgel of juniper wood, giving orders for the assault upon an imaginary army.

The señor, who had hoped for an instant in the discovery of a forgotten estate, the last one of which he might be the real owner, smiled sadly. Ah! the Pirate's Tower! He remembered it. A bold limestone cliff, in the crevices of which sprung up bushes and shrubs, the refuge and sustenance of rabbits. The old stone fortress was a ruin, now slowly crumbling under the stress of time and wind. The stones were falling from their places, the corners of the merlons were wearing away. When Can Mallorquí was sold the tower had not been included in the contract, possibly through oversight because it seemed worthless. Pèp could do as he liked with it, Don Jaime assured him. Probably he would never return to the place, forgotten since the days of his youth.

When the peasant spoke of future remuneration, Don Jaime silenced him with the gesture of a gran señor. Then he glanced at the girl. She was very pretty; she looked like a señorita in disguise; the young fellows on the island must be wild over her. The father smiled, proud, yet disturbed by this praise. "Come, girl, what should you say to the master?" He spoke to her as if she were a child, and she, with lowered eyes, her face flushed, fingering a corner of her apron, stammered a few words in the Ivizan dialect: "No, I am not pretty. I am at your lordship's service."

Febrer brought the interview to a close, telling Pèp and his children to go to his house. The peasant knew Antonia, and the old woman would be very glad to see him. They must eat with her whatever—whatever there was to be had. He would see them again about sunset when he returned from Valldemosa. "Good-bye, Pèp! Good-bye, children!"

He made a signal with his cane to a driver seated on the box of a Majorcan carriage, a light vehicle mounted upon four slender wheels, with a cheerful canopy of white canvas, and drove toward Valldemosa and the wealthy Jewess whose dowry was to recoup his fortune.

CHAPTER II

BARTERING THE ANCESTRAL NAME

Having reached the outskirts of Palma and the open vernal fields, Jaime Febrer repented of his present way of existence. He had not been beyond the confines of Palma for a year, and he had been spending his afternoons in the cafés on the Paseo del Borne and his nights in the gambling hall of the Casino.

It had never occurred to him to go forth where he might see the fields clad in tender green, the waters murmuring in the acequias; the soft blue sky dotted with white, fleecy islets, the dark green hills where stood the windmills swinging their arms upon the summits, the abrupt sierras forming a rose-colored background to a landscape which everywhere smiled and whispered sweetly, as in the days when, it astounded the ancient navigators, causing them to name Majorca "the Fortunate Isle"! When, thanks to his marriage, he should acquire a fortune, and could redeem the fine estate of Son Febrer, he would spend a part of the year there, as his forefathers had done, leading the healthy, rural life of a gran señor, munificent and honored.

The horses were going at topmost speed and the carriage whirled past a string of peasants trudging along the road returning from the city. There were slender brown women wearing over their braids and white rebocillos broad straw hats with streamers and sprays of wild flowers; men dressed in striped drill, the so-called Majorcan cloth, their hats stuck on the backs of their heads like black or gray nimbuses around their shaven faces.

Febrer recalled the characteristics of the road although he had not passed over it for many years. He was like a stranger returning to the island after a dimly remembered visit. Farther on the road forked; one branch leading to Valldemosa and the other to Soller... Ah! Soller... Scenes of his boyhood rushed through his memory! Every year, in a carriage like this, the Febrer family used to journey to Soller where they owned an old structure with a spacious zaguan, the House of the Moon, so named on account of a hemisphere of stone having eyes and nose, representing the luminary of night which adorned the upper part of the portalón.

They habitually went early in May. When the carriage rolled along a narrow pass high up in the sierra, the little Jaime would shout with joy as he beheld, lying at his feet, the valley of Soller, the Garden of Hesperides of the island. The mountains, dark with their pine trees, and dotted with little white houses, lifted their crests bound about in turbans of vapor. Below, surrounding the village and stretching down the valley as far as the sea, were orange orchards. Spring burst over the happy land with an explosion of color and perfume. Wild flowers grew among the rocks; branches of the trees were decked in waving green; poor habitations of the peasants concealed ruinous poverty beneath canopies of climbing roses. Rustic families from towns far and near gathered at the fiesta of Soller: the women in white rebocillos, heavy mantillas, and with gold buttons on their sleeves; the men in gay waistcoats, homespun woolen cloaks, and hats with colored bands. Concertinas whined, calling to the dance; glasses of native sweet wine and of wine from Bañalbufar passed from hand to hand. It was joy and peace after a thousand years of piracy and of war against the infidel peoples of the Mediterranean; the joyful commemoration of the victory won by the peasants of Soller over a fleet of Turkish corsairs in the sixteenth century.

In the port, the fishermen, masquerading as Mussulmans, or as Christian warriors, held a sham naval battle on their little boats, firing off blunderbusses and flourishing swords, or pursuing one another up and down the roads along the shore. In the church a festival was celebrated to commemorate the miraculous victory, and Jaime, seated in a place of honor beside his mother, thrilled with emotion listening to the priest just as he did on reading an interesting tale in his uncle's library in the second story of the great house in Palma.

The inhabitants of Soller had risen in arms against Alaró and Buñola on learning from a boat which had come over from Iviza that a fleet of twenty-two Turkish galiots with many galleys was heading for their coast, threatening this the richest town of the island. Seventeen hundred Turks and Africans, formidable pirates, attracted by the riches of the town, and drawn on by the desire to attack a convent of nuns, where beautiful young women of noble families lived retired from the world, had landed upon the beach. Divided into two columns, one marched against the Christians who had gone out to resist them, while the other, making a detour, entered the town, capturing youths and maidens, pillaging churches and killing the priests. The Christians realized the extremity of the situation. Before them were a thousand advancing Turks; behind them the village in the hands of looters, their families subjected to violence and outrage calling to them in despair. They hesitated only a moment. A sergeant from Soller, a valorous veteran of the army of Charles V in the wars of Germany and against the Grand Turk, urged them on to attack the enemy. They fell upon their knees and invoked the Apostle St. James, and then attacked with their fire-locks, arquebuses, lances and axes, devoutly expecting a miracle. The Turks faltered; then turned their backs. Their terrible chieftain, Suffarais, Captain General of the sea, an ancient Turk of great obesity, famous for his courage and daring, exhorted them in vain. At the head of his body-guard, a squadron of negroes, he attacked, scimitar in hand, felling a circle of corpses around him, but at last a native of Soller pierced his breast with a lance, and as he fell the invaders fled, even forsaking their standard. Then a new enemy barred their way. While trying to reach the coast and take refuge aboard their ships, a band of robbers that had witnessed the battle from their caves in the crags, seeing the Turks in retreat, came out to meet them, firing their flintlocks and brandishing their daggers. They had with them a troop of mastiffs, ferocious companions of their infamous career, and these animals, according to the chroniclers of the epoch, "gave evidence of the excellence of the Majorcan breed." The troops under the command of the veteran sergeant turned back to the desolated village from which the looters fled as best they could in the direction of the sea, or fell decapitated in the streets.

The priest became exalted as he related the victorious defense, attributing the greater part of the success to the Queen of Heaven and to the Apostle warrior St. James. Then he eulogized Captain Angelats, the hero of the day, the Cid of Soller, and also the valiant doñas of Can Tamany, two women on an estate near the village who had been surprised by three Turks greedy to satiate their carnal appetites after long abstinence on the solitudes of the sea. The valiant doñas, arrogant and strong, as are all good peasants, neither cried out nor fled at sight of these three pirates, enemies both of God and of the saints. With the bar used for fastening the door they killed one of them and then locked themselves up in the house. Hurling the corpse out of a window upon the assailants, they broke the head of another, and they drove the third off with stones, like true descendants of the Majorcan slingers. Ah, the brave doñas, the forceful women of Can Tamany! The good people worshipped them as sainted heroines of the interminable war against the infidel, and they laughed tenderly over the deeds of these Joans of Arc, thinking with pride how perilous was the Mussulmans' task of supplying their harems with new flesh.

Then the preacher, following traditional custom, brought his harangue to a close by naming the families who had taken part in the battle; a list of a hundred, to which the rural audience listened attentively, each nodding his head with satisfaction when the name of one of his forefathers was pronounced. This lengthy enumeration seemed short to many, who made a gesture of protest when the preacher ceased. "There were others whom he did not mention," murmured the peasants whose names had not been read. All desired to be descendants of the warriors of Captain Angelats.

When the fiestas ended and Soller recovered its tranquillity, young Jaime used to spend his days racing through the orange orchards with Antonia, old Mammy Antonia of the present, who was then a fresh young woman with white teeth, full bust, and vigorous tread, widowed a few months after her marriage and followed by the ardent glances of all the peasantry. Together they went to the port, a peaceful, solitary basin, its entrance half concealed by a curving rocky arm of the sea. Only now and

then the masts of some sailing vessel coming to take on a load of oranges for Marseilles, appeared before this blue town with its surrounding waters. Flocks of old gulls, enormous as hens, fluttered with evolutions like a contredanse upon its glossy surface. The fishermen's boats came in at sunset, and beneath the sheds along the shore enormous fishes were left hanging, their tails sweeping the ground, bleeding like oxen; together with rays and octopuses from which dripped a white gelatinous slime like drops of palpitating crystal.

Jaime loved this quiet port and its brooding solitude with religious veneration. Then he recalled the miraculous stories with which his mother used to lull him to sleep—the great miracle wrought upon these waters by a servant of God to flout the hardened sinners. Saint Raymond of Peñafort, a virtuous and austere monk, became indignant with King Jaime of Majorca who was basely enamored of a certain lady, Doña Berenguela, and who remained deaf to holy counsels. The friar determined to abandon this recalcitrant, but the king sought to prevent his departure by laying an embargo upon all ships and vessels. Then the saint descended to the lonely port of Soller, spread his mantle upon the waves, stepped upon it, and sailed away to the coasts of Catalonia. Mammy Antonia had also told him of this miracle, but in Majorcan verse, in a primitive romance that breathed the simple confidence of centuries which clung trustfully to the marvelous. The saint, having embarked on his mantle, set up his staff for a mast and his hood for a sail; then a wind from heaven blew upon the strange vessel; in a few hours the servant of the Lord sailed from Majorca to Barcelona; the lookout at Montjuich announced with a flag the apparition of the prodigious craft, the bells of Seo rang, and the merchants rushed down to the sea-wall to welcome the sainted voyager.

Little Febrer, his curiosity aroused by these marvels, was eager to hear more, and his companion called the old fishermen who showed him the rock where the saint had stood while invoking the aid of Almighty God before setting sail. An inland mountain which could be seen from the port had the form of a hooded friar. Along the coast, at an inaccessible point, a cliff seen only by fishermen resembled a monk kneeling at prayer. These prodigies had been formed by God, according to the simple souls, to perpetuate the memory of the famous miracle.

Jaime still recalled the thrills of emotion with which he had listened to these tales. Ah, Soller! The epoch of holy innocence in which he had first opened his eyes upon life to the accompaniment of miraculous stories and commemorations of heroic struggles! The House of the Moon he had lost forever, and also the credulity and the innocence of youth. Only memories lingered. More than twenty years had rolled away since he had pressed foot on the paths of forgotten Soller; it now came back to his mind with all the smiling fancies of childhood.

The carriage reached the fork of the road taking the route to Valldemosa, and all his memories seemed left behind, motionless by the roadside, growing hazy in the distance.

The way to Valldemosa held no memory of the past. He had been over it only twice, after coming to manhood, having gone with friends to see the cells of the Cartuja—a once renowned Carthusian convent. He recalled the farmers' olive trees along the roadside, aged trees of strange, fantastic shapes which had served as inspiration for many artists, and he thrust his head through a window to look at them again. The ground was rising; here began the stony, unirrigated ground, the lowest of the foothills. The road wound steeply among the ancient groves. The first olive trees now passed before the carriage windows.

Febrer had seen them, had often spoken of them, and yet he felt the sensation of something extraordinary, as if looking at them for the first time. They were black, with enormous, knotted, open trunks, swelling with great excrescences, and the foliage was sparse. These were olive trees which had stood for centuries, which had never been pruned, in which age robbed the sap from the branches to distend the trunk with the protuberances of a slow and painful circulation. The region looked like the deserted studio of a sculptor littered with thousands of shapeless bulks, with monsters scattered over the ground, upon a green carpet dotted with bluebells and marguerites.

One of the trees resembled an enormous toad crouching ready to spring, holding a spray of leaves in its mouth; another was a great coiled boa with an olive crest upon his head. There were trunks open like ogives, through the orifices of which shone the blue sky; monstrous serpents coiled in groups like the spirals of a solomonic column; gigantic negroes, heads down and hands on the ground, the roots like fingers thrust deep into the soil, their feet in the air, grotesque stems with bunches of leaves springing from them. Some, vanquished by the centuries, were lying on the ground, sustained by forked branches, like old men trying to lift themselves with the aid of crutches.

It seemed as if a tempest had swept these fields, overthrowing and twisting everything out of shape, and afterward turning them to stone to hold this work of desolation under a spell forever. Some trees standing erect, and having softer outlines, seemed to have feminine faces and figures. They were Byzantine maidens, with tiaras of dainty leaves and trailing vestments of wood. Others were ferocious idols with protruding eyes and long flowing beards; fetiches of gloomy, barbaric cults capable of checking primitive humanity in its progress, forcing it to its knees with emotion as if at a meeting with divinity. In the calm of this frenzied, but motionless distortion, in the solitude of these fields peopled by startling and eternal specters, birds were singing, wild flowers crept to the foot of the worm-eaten trunks, and ants came and went, an infinite rosary, burrowing in the ancient roots like indefatigable miners.

Gustave Doré, according to report, had sketched his most fantastic conceptions in these olive orchards, steeped in the mysteries of centuries. Recollection of this artist recalled to Jaime's mind others more celebrated who had also passed along this road, and had lived and suffered in Valldemosa.

Twice he had visited the Cartuja merely to see the places immortalized by the sad and unhealthy love of a pair of famous persons. His grandfather had often told him of "the Frenchwoman" of Valldemosa and her companion "the musician."

One day the inhabitants of Majorca and the people of the Peninsula who had taken refuge on the island, fleeing from the horrors of civil war, saw a strange couple disembark, accompanied by a boy and girl. It was in 1838. When their luggage was landed the islanders were astounded by an enormous piano, an Erard instrument of which but few were to be seen in those days. The piano was held in the custom house while the tangle of certain administrative scruples was unraveled, and the travelers sought lodging at an inn, and later rented the estate of Son Vent, in the environs of Palma. The man seemed to be ill; he was younger than the woman, but wasted by suffering, pale, with the transparent pallor of the consecrated wafer, his limpid eyes glowing with fever, his narrow chest shaken by harsh and continuous coughing. A fine, silky beard shaded his cheeks; a black, shaggy head of hair like a lion's mane crowned his forehead and hung down behind in a cascade of curls. She was strong and vigorous and did all the work of the house like a good bourgeoisie more willing than skilled in such labors. She played with her children like a girl, and her kindly, smiling face clouded only when she heard the cough of the "beloved invalid." An atmosphere of exotism, of irregular existence, of protest against conventional custom, seemed to surround this vagabond family. She dressed in fantastic gowns, and wore a silver dagger thrust in her hair, a romantic ornament which scandalized the pious Majorcan dames. Besides, she did not go to mass in the city, nor make calls; she did not go out of her house except to play with her children or to entice the poor consumptive out into the sunshine, leaning on her arm. The children were as extraordinary as the mother. The girl went dressed like a boy that she might run with greater freedom.

Soon island curiosity ferreted out the names of these strangers of alarming peculiarities. She was a French woman, a writer of books; Aurore Dupin, the illustrious Baroness Dudevant separated from her husband, who made a world-wide reputation through her novels, which she signed with a masculine given name, and the surname of a political assassin, George Sand. The man was a Polish musician, of delicate constitution, who seemed to leave a portion of his existence in each one of his works, and who felt himself dying at twenty-nine years of age. He was called Frederic François Chopin. The children belonged to the novelist, who was about thirty-five.

Majorcan society, bound up in its traditional preoccupations, like a mollusk in its shell, and hostile by instinct to impious novelties from Paris, waxed indignant over this scandal. They were not married! And she wrote novels which startled respectable people by their audacity! Feminine curiosity wished to read them, but only Don Horacio Febrer, Jaime's grandfather, received books in Majorca, and the small volumes of "Indiana" and "Lelia," belonging to him, passed from hand to hand without being understood by their readers. A married woman who wrote books and lived with a man who was not her husband! Doña Elvira, Jaime's grandmother, a señora from Mexico, whose portrait he had so often seen, and whom he imagined always dressed in white with her eyes turned heavenward and her gilded harp between her knees, called upon the retiring woman at Son Vent. She enjoyed overwhelming the ladies of the island who did not know French with the superiority of the foreigner; she listened to the novelist's lyric eulogies of the originality of this African landscape, with its little white houses, spiny cacti, slender palms, and aged olive trees, in such striking contrast to the harmonious order of the broad fields of France. Then Doña Elvira, in the social gatherings at Palma, defended the authoress with fervor—a poor emotional woman, whose everyday life was more like that of a Sister of Charity, more full of care and sorrow than of passion and pleasure. The grandfather took it upon himself to intervene and prohibit his wife's calls in order to quiet neighborhood gossip.

The scandalous pair was completely ostracized. While the children were frolicking like young savages in the fields with their mother, the sick man sat at his dormitory window, or peeped out of his doorway, seeking a ray of sunshine. In the small hours of the night came the visit of the muse, and the man, sick and melancholy, seated himself at the piano, where, coughing and moaning, out of the bitterness of his spirit he improvised his voluptuous music.

The owner of the estate of Son Vent, a bourgeois of the city, ordered the foreigners to move, as if they were a band of gypsies. The pianist was a consumptive and the landlord did not wish to have his property infected. Where should they go? To return to their own country would be difficult since it was in the middle of winter, and Chopin trembled like a forsaken bird, thinking of the chill of Paris. He loved the island, despite the inhospitable people, because of the suavity of its climate. The Cartuja of Valldemosa offered itself as their sole refuge, a building devoid of architectural beauty, with no other charm than that of its medieval antiquity, situated in the mountains with pine-covered slopes, having, like delicate curtains tempering the sun's ardor, plantations of almond and palm, through the branches of which the eye could make out the green plain and the distant sea. It was a monument almost in ruins, a monastery suggesting melodrama, gloomy and mysterious, in the cloisters of which camped vagabonds and beggars. To enter it one must cross the old cemetery of the friars with its graves disturbed by the roots of forest trees thrusting bones up to the very surface. On moonlight nights a white phantom stalked through the cloisters, the shade of a wicked friar who haunted the place of his misdeeds, while awaiting the hour of redemption.

Thither went the fugitives one stormy winter day, buffeted by wind and rain, traveling along the same route which Febrer now followed, but by an old road which barely deserved the name. The wagons of the caravan climbed, as George Sand said, "with one wheel on the mountain and the other in the bed of a gully." The musician, wrapped in his cape, sat trembling and coughing under the canvas cover, throbbing with pain as the vehicle jolted over the rough ground. The novelist herself followed on foot over the worst places, leading her children by the hand on this vagabond journey.

They spent the entire winter in the isolation of the Cartuja. She, wearing Turkish slippers, the little dagger always thrust into her ill-combed hair, courageously did the cooking with the assistance of a young peasant girl who took advantage of every opportunity to gorge herself with the dainties intended for the "beloved invalid." The urchins of Valldemosa stoned the little French children, calling them Moors and disbelievers in God; the women cheated the mother when they sold her provisions, and moreover they dubbed her "the witch." They all made the sign of the cross when they met these "gypsies" who dared to live in a cell at the monastery, neighbors to the dead, in constant communication with the spectral friar who stalked through the cloister.

By day, while the invalid was resting, George Sand prepared the broth, and with her slender, white, artistic hands, helped the maidservant to peel the vegetables; then, with her two children she would race down to the abrupt, tree-covered beach of Miramar where Ramon Lull had established his school of oriental study. Only at the approach of night did her real existence begin.

Then the great gloomy cloister vibrated with mysterious music which seemed to float in from afar through the heavy walls. It was Chopin, bending over the piano composing his Nocturnes. The novelist, by the light of the candle was writing "Spiridion," the story of the monk who finally forsook his faith; but frequently she laid aside her work to rush to the musician's side and give him medicine, alarmed at the frequency of his cough. On moonlight nights, tempted by the thrill of the mysterious, in a voluptuosity of fear, she stole out into the cloister where the darkness was pierced by the milky spots of the window panes. Nobody!... Then she would sit down in the monks' cemetery vainly awaiting the apparition of the ghostly friar to enliven her monotonous existence with a novel adventure.

One night during Carnival season Cartuja was invaded by "Moors." They were young men from Palma, who, after having overrun the town disguised as Berbers, thought of the "French woman," ashamed, no doubt, at the isolation in which she was held by the townspeople. They arrived at midnight, with their songs and guitars breaking the mysterious calm of the monastery, frightening away the birds perched in the ruins. In one corner of the cell they danced Spanish dances which Chopin watched attentively with his fever-lighted eyes, while the novelist flitted from group to group, experiencing the simple joy of the bourgeoisie at finding herself not forgotten.

This was her single happy night in Majorca. Afterward, with the return of spring, the "beloved invalid" felt relief and they began a leisurely return to Paris. They were birds of passage, who, after wintering on this "Fortunate Isle," left no other trace than an undying tradition.

Jaime could not even find out with certainty which room she had occupied. The changes which had taken place in the monastery had obliterated every vestige. Many families from Palma now spent the summer at Cartuja, transforming the cells into handsome apartments, and each one wished it to be understood that his was the one which had been occupied by George Sand, she who had been defamed and ostracized by their grandmothers. Febrer had visited the monastery with a nonagenarian, who had been one of the youths that had gone dressed as Moors to serenade the Frenchwoman. He could not remember any details nor could he even recognize her room.

Don Horacio's grandson experienced a kind of retrospective affection for that extraordinary woman. He imagined her as she appeared in her youthful pictures, with expressionless face and deep enigmatic eyes beneath fluffy hair, with no other decoration than a rose over one temple. Poor George Sand! Love had been for her like the ancient Sphinx: each time that she ventured to interrogate it she had felt its merciless blow upon her heart. She had tasted all love's abnegations and perversities. The capricious woman of the Venetian nights, the unfaithful companion of de Musset, was the same nurse who cooked the meals and prepared the cough syrups for the dying Chopin in the solitudes of Valldemosa. If only Jaime had known a woman like that, a woman who combined within herself the natures of a thousand women, with all their infinite feminine variety of sweetness and cruelty!... To be loved by a superior woman upon whom he could impose his masculine will, and who at the same time would inspire him with respect for her was his dream.

Febrer sat as if stupefied by this thought, staring at the landscape without seeing it. Then he smiled ironically, as if realizing his own insignificance. The object of his journey flashed across his mind, and he pitied himself. He, who had been dreaming of a grand, unselfish, extraordinary love, was on his way to sell himself, offering his hand and his name to a woman whom he had barely seen, to contract an alliance which would scandalize the whole island... worthy end to a useless, unbridled life!

The emptiness of his existence was revealed to him clearly now, stripped of the deceptions of personal vanity, as he had never seen it before. The nearness of his sacrifice stirred him to re-live

the past in his memory, as if seeking justification for his present acts. What purpose had been served by his passing through the world?

He returned again to the childhood recollections which had been evoked on the road to Soller. He imagined himself in the venerable Febrer mansion with his parents and his grandfather. He was an only son. His mother, a pale lady of melancholy beauty, had been left an invalid as the result of his birth. Don Horacio lived in the second story, in the company of an old servant, as if he were a guest in the house, mingling with the family or isolating himself according to caprice. Jaime, in the midst of his childhood recollections, beheld his grandfather's figure in prominent relief. Never had he surprised a smile on that white-bearded face, which contrasted with his dark and imperious eyes. The members of the household were prohibited from ascending to his apartments. No one had ever seen him except when in street dress, which was always scrupulously neat. His grandson, who was the only one allowed in his dormitory at all hours, found him early in the morning in his blue coat with high, pointed collar and a black stock folded around his neck, ornamented with an enormous pearl. He maintained this correct old-time elegance until overtaken by illness. Whenever sickness compelled him to keep his bed he would give orders to his servant not to admit even his son.

Jaime used to pass many hours seated at his grandfather's feet, listening to his tales, and at the same time awed by the enormous number of books which overflowed the bookcases and littered the tables and chairs. He found him ever the same, wearing his coat lined with red silk, which seemed changeless, but which was renewed, nevertheless, once every six months. The seasons brought no other variation than that of converting the velvet winter waistcoat into another of embroidered silk. His pride was centered chiefly upon his linen and his books. He ordered from abroad dozens of shirts which frequently lay in the bottom of the clothes press forgotten and yellowing and never worn. The booksellers of Paris sent him enormous packages of recent volumes, and in view of his unceasing orders added "Bookseller" to the address, a title which Don Horacio displayed with playful satisfaction.

He talked to the last of the Febrers with grandfatherly kindness, trying to make him understand his tales, despite the fact that he was sparing of words and showed little patience in his relations with the rest of the family. He told of his journeys to Paris, and to London, sometimes in a sailing vessel as far as Marseilles and then by post-chaise; again by steam-engines along iron roadways, great inventions the infancy of which he had seen. He told of society at the court of Louis Philippe; of the great beginnings of the romanticist movement in which he had taken part; and he told of the barricades thrown up in the streets which he had watched from his room, not mentioning that, at the same time, his arm was encircling the waist of a grisette peeping out of the window beside him. His grandson, he would say, had been born in a glorious epoch, the best of all. Don Horacio recollected the disagreements with his terrible father that had compelled him to travel through Europe; that caballero who had gone out to meet King Ferdinand, to ask him for the reëstablishment of ancient usages, and who blessed his sons, saying: "May God make you a good inquisitor!"

Then he would display before Jaime great books containing views of splendid capitals in which he had lived, and which to the boy seemed like cities beheld in a dream. Sometimes he would remain lost in contemplation of the picture of "the grandmother with the harp," his wife, the interesting Doña Elvira, the same canvas which now hung in the reception hall among the other ladies of the family. He did not seem moved; he maintained the same grave demeanor which accompanied the jests to which he was addicted and the coarse words with which he sprinkled his conversations, but he said in a somewhat tremulous voice:

"Your grandmother was a great lady, with the soul of an angel, an artist. I seemed like a barbarian beside her. She was one of our family, but she came from Mexico to marry me. Her father was a sea-faring man, and he stayed over there with the insurgents. There is no one in all our race who resembles her."

At half past eleven in the morning he would dismiss his grandson, and putting on his tall hat, black silk in winter and beaver in summer, he would sally forth to take a stroll along the streets of Palma, always through the same locality and along identical pavements, rain or shine, insensible to cold and to heat, wearing his frock coat in every weather, continuing on his way with the regularity of a clock automaton which steps out, travels his little course, and then conceals himself at the stroke of certain hours.

Only once in thirty years had he varied his route through the white and deserted sunny streets. One morning he had heard a woman's voice issuing from the interior of a house:

"Atlota—twelve o'clock; Don Horacio is passing. Put on the rice."

He turned toward the door, saying with lordly gravity:

"I'm no wench's clock!" He jerked out the abusive words without sacrificing any of his dignity. From that day he changed his route to disappoint those whom he perceived had come to depend on his punctuality.

Sometimes he talked to his grandson about the ancient greatness of the house. Geographical discoveries had ruined the Febrers. The Mediterranean was no longer the highway to the Orient. The Portuguese and Spanish of the other sea had discovered new routes and the Majorcan ships lay rotting in idleness. There were no longer battles with pirates. The Holy Order of Malta was now only an honorable distinction. A brother of his father, knight commander at Valetta when Bonaparte conquered the island, had come to spend his last days in Palma with only the meagre pension of a half-pay officer. It had been two centuries since the Febrers, forgotten on the sea where there was no longer any commerce, and where only poor padrones and fishermen's sons now made war, had given themselves up to investing their name with a splendrous luxury, which gradually ruined them. The grandfather had witnessed the times of genuine seigniory, when to be a butifarra in Majorca was something which the people rated between God and caballeros. The arrival of a Febrer in the world was an event which was discussed throughout the entire city. The great parturient dame remained secluded in the palace forty days, and during all this time the doors were open, the zaguán filled with vehicles, the whole retinue of servants lined up in the ante-chamber, the salons filled with callers, the tables covered with sweets, cakes, and refreshments. Days of the week were set apart for the reception of each social class. Some were only for the butifarras, the aristocracy of the aristocrats, privileged houses, renowned families, all united by the relationship of continual inter-marriage; other days for caballeros, traditional nobility who were looked down upon by the former without knowing why; next the mossons were received, an inferior class, but in familiar contact with the grandes, the intellectual people of the epoch, doctors, lawyers, and scriveners, who loaned their services to illustrious families.

Don Horacio recalled the splendor of these receptions. The people of the olden time knew how to do things in the grand way.

"It was when your father was born," he said to his grandson, "that the last fiesta was held in this house. I paid a confectioner on the Paseo del Borne eight hundred Majorcan pounds for sweets, cakes, and refreshments."

Jaime actually remembered less about his father than about his grandfather. In his memory he was a sweet and sympathetic figure, but somewhat dim. When he thought of him he recalled only a soft, light beard like his own, a bald forehead, a happy smile, and eyeglasses which glittered as he bent over. It was said that when a boy he had a love affair with his cousin Juana, that austere señora whom everybody called the "Pope-ess," who lived like a nun, and who enjoyed enormous riches, making prodigal donations in former times to the pretender Don Carlos, and now to the ecclesiastics who surrounded her.

The rupture between his father and Juana the Popess was, no doubt, the reason why she held herself aloof from this branch of the family and treated Jaime with hostile frigidity.

His father had been an officer in the Navy, in accordance with family tradition. He was in the war on the Pacific coast of South America; he was a lieutenant on one of the frigates that bombarded

Callao, and, as if he only desired to give a proof of his valor, he immediately retired from the service. Then he married a señorita of Palma, of meager fortune, whose father was military governor of the island of Iviza. The Popess Juana, talking with Jaime one day, had tried to wound him by saying in her cold voice and with her haughty mien: "Your mother was noble; of a family of caballeros—but she was not a butifarra like ourselves!"

The early years of his life, when Jaime first began to take notice of the things about him, were passed without seeing his father save during hasty trips to Majorca. He was a progressive, and the reform party had made him a deputy. Later, when Amadis of Savoy was proclaimed king, this revolutionary monarch, execrated and deserted by the traditional nobility, had been compelled to turn to new historic names to form his court. The butifarra, Febrer, through a party demand, became a high palace functionary. When he insisted that his wife should remove to Madrid she refused to abandon the island. She go to the Court! How about his son? Don Horacio, steadily growing more slender and weak, but ever erect in his eternal new frock coat, continued taking his daily stroll, adjusting his life to the ticking of the clock of the ayuntamiento. An old time liberal, a great admirer of Martinez de la Rosa for his verses and the diplomatic elegance of his cravats, made a wry face when he read the newspapers and the letters from his son. What was all this leading to?

During the short period of the Republic the father returned to the island, considering his career ended. The Popess Juana, despite the fact of their relationship, refused to recognize him. She was much occupied during that epoch. She made journeys to the Peninsula; it was said that she turned over enormous sums to the partisans of Don Carlos who were carrying on the war in Catalonia and the northern provinces. Let no one mention Jaime Febrer, the old time naval officer in her presence! She was a genuine butifarra, a defender of their traditions, and she was making sacrifices in order that Spain might be governed by gentlemen. Her cousin was worse than a Chueta; he was a shirtless beggar. According to the gossips bitterness for certain deceptions in the past which she could not forget was mingled with this hatred of his political professions.

On the restoration of the Bourbons, this progressive, he who had been a palatine under Amadis, became a republican and a conspirator. He made frequent journeys; he received cipher letters from Paris; he went to Minorca to visit the squadron anchored in Port Mahon, and taking advantage of his former official friendships, he catechized his companions, planning an uprising of the navy. He threw into these revolutionary enterprises the adventurous ardor of the Febrers of old, the same cool daring, until he died suddenly in Barcelona, far from his kindred.

The grandfather received the news with impassive gravity, but the neighbor women of Palma who awaited his passing along the streets to set their rice over the fire, saw him no more. Eighty-six! He had strolled enough. He had seen enough of this world. He retired to the second story, where he admitted no one but his grandson. When his relatives came to see him he preferred to go down to the reception hall, in spite of his debility, correctly attired, wearing his new frock coat, the two white triangles of his collar peeping above the folds of his stock, always freshly shaven, his side whiskers carefully combed and his toupee brilliant with pomatum. At last came a day when he could not leave his bed, and the grandson found him between the sheets, looking as usual, still wearing his fine batiste shirt, the stock which his servant changed for him every day, and the flowered silk waistcoat. When a call from his daughter-in-law was announced Don Horacio made a gesture of annoyance.

"Jaimito,—the frock coat. It is a lady, and she must be received with decency."

This operation was repeated when the doctor came, or when the few callers he deigned to receive were admitted. He must maintain himself "under arms" until his last moment, as he had been seen all his life.

One afternoon he called with a weak voice to his grandson who sat by a window reading a book of travel. The boy might retire. He wished to be alone. Jaime left the room, and so the grandfather was able to die in solitude, free from the torment of having to pay attention to the neatness of his appearance, with no witnesses to the grimaces and contortions of the last agony.

Febrer and his mother being left alone, the boy grew eager for independence. His imagination was filled with the adventures and voyages of which he had read in his grandfather's library and he was inspired with the deeds of his forefathers immortalized in family history. He yearned to become a mariner or a warrior, like his father and like the majority of his ancestors. His mother opposed him with an agony of dread which turned her cheeks pale and her lips blue. The last Febrer leading a life of danger far from her side! No! There had been heroes enough in the family. He must be a señor on the island, a gentleman of tranquil life who would raise a family to perpetuate the name he bore.

Jaime yielded to the prayers of his mother, that eternal invalid, in whom the slightest opposition seemed to precipitate the danger of death. Since she did not wish him to be a sea-faring man he must study for another career. He must live as did the other youths of his age with whom he mingled in the lecture halls of the Institute. At sixteen he set sail for the Peninsula. His mother wished that he should be a lawyer in order that he might disentangle the family fortune, burdened and oppressed with mortgages and other indebtedness.

The luggage with which he started was enormous—enough to furnish a house—and likewise his pocket was well lined. A Febrer must not live like any poor student! First he went to Valencia, his mother believing that city less dangerous for the young. For the next course of lectures he passed on to Barcelona, and thus several years were spent flitting from one University to another, according to the notions of the professors and their ready connivance with the students. He made no great progress in his career. He sneaked through certain courses by the cool audacity with which he talked of things of which he knew nothing, and passed examinations by some lucky chance. In others he flunked completely. His mother accepted his explanations in good faith on his return to Majorca. She consoled him, advising him not to exert himself too much over his studies, and she railed against the injustice of the times. Her implacable enemy, the Popess Juana, was right. These were no times for gentlemen; war had been declared against them; all manner of injustices were committed to keep them in the background.

Jaime enjoyed a certain popularity in the clubs and cafés of Barcelona and Valencia where he gambled. They called him "the Majorcan of the ounces," because his mother remitted his gold in gold ounces, which rolled with scandalous glitter across the green tables. Adding to the prestige given by this extravagance was his strange title of *butifarra*, which caused a smile in the Peninsula, yet at the same time it evoked in the imagination a picture of feudal authority, accompanied with the rights of a sovereign lord in those distant islands.

Five years passed. Jaime was now a man, but he had not yet compassed the half of his studies. His fellow-students from the island, when they came home in summer, entertained their cronies in the cafés on the Paseo del Borne with stories of Febrer's adventures in Barcelona; how he was frequently seen on the streets with luxurious women clinging to his arm; how the rude people who frequented the gambling houses showed respect for the "Majorcan of the ounces" on account of his strength and courage; they told how, one night, he had laid hands on a certain bully, lifting him off his feet in his athletic arms, and hurling him out of the window. The peaceful Majorcans, on hearing this, smiled with local pride. He was a Febrer, a genuine Febrer! The island still produced valiant youths as of old!

Good Doña Purificación, Jaime's mother, experienced grave displeasure and at the same time maternal joy on hearing that a certain scandalous woman had followed her son to the island. She understood it, and she forgave her. A youth as attractive as her Jaime! But with her dresses and her habits the young woman disturbed the tranquil customs of the city; the staid families became indignant, and, Doña Purificación, making use of intermediaries, came to an understanding with her, giving her money on the condition that she should leave the island. At other vacation times the scandal was even greater. Jaime, who had gone to Son Febrer on a hunting trip, had an affair with a pretty peasant girl and was on the point of shooting a rustic swain who pretended to her hand. His rural love adventures helped him to pass his summer exile. He was a true Febrer, like his grandfather. The poor lady had known how to deal with that ever grave and dignified father-in-law who nevertheless

chucked young peasant girls under the chin without losing his sedate and lordly fridity. In the vicinity of the estate of Son Febrer were many youths who bore the features of Don Horacio, but his wife, the Mexican lady, poetic soul, lived above such vulgarities, while, with her, harp between her knees and her eyes dilated she recited Ossian's poems. The rustic beauties with their snowy rebocillos, their hanging braids, and white hempen sandals, attracted the immaculate and lordly Febrers with an irresistible force.

When Doña Purificación complained of the long hunting excursions which her son took throughout the island, he would stay in the city and spend the day in the garden, practising shooting with a pistol. He called his mother's attention to a sack lying in the shade of an orange tree.

"Do you see that? It is a quintal of powder. I shall not stop until I have used it all up."

Mammy Antonia was afraid to peep out of her kitchen windows, and the nuns who occupied a portion of the ancient palace showed their white hoods for an instant, and then hid themselves immediately like doves frightened by the continual popping.

The garden with its battlemented enclosure, contiguous to the sea wall, rang from morning till night with the sound of the detonations. The astonished birds flew away; green lizards crept over the cracked walls hiding in the shelter of the ivy; cats leaped along the paths in terror. The trees were very old, venerable as the palace itself; centenarian oranges with twisted trunks, leaning on the support of a circle of forked sticks to hold up their ancient limbs; gigantic magnolias with more wood than leaves; unfruitful palms lifting themselves into blue space, seeking the sea which they greeted above the merlons with the fluttering plumes of their crested heads.

The sun made the bark of the trees creak, and forgotten seeds on the ground burst forth; insects buzzing across the bars of light which shot through the foliage danced like golden sparks; ripe figs loosened from the branches fell with soft patter; in the distance rose the murmur of the sea lashing the rocks at the foot of the wall. This calm was broken only by Febrer who continued firing his pistol. He had become a master shot. When he aimed at the figure sketched on the wall he lamented that it was not a man, some hated enemy whom he must needs exterminate. Bang! That ball pierced his heart! He smiled with satisfaction at seeing the bullet hole outlined on the very spot at which he had aimed. The noise of the shooting, the smoke of the powder, aroused in his imagination warlike fancies, stories of struggle and death in which he was always the victorious hero. Twenty years old and yet he had never fought a duel! He must have a fight with someone to prove his courage. It was a disgrace that he had no enemies, but he would try to make some when he returned to the Peninsula. Continuing these vagaries of his imagination, excited by the cracking detonations, he pretended an affair of honor. His adversary wounded him with the first shot and he fell. He still had his pistol in his hand; he must defend himself while stretched on the ground; and to the great scandal of his mother and of Mammy Antonia who thought him crazy as they peeped out of the window, he continued lying face downward shooting in this position, preparing for the time when he should be wounded.

When he returned to the Peninsula to continue his interminable studies, he went refreshed by the country life, sure of himself after his practice in the garden and eager to have the longed for duel with the first man who should give him the slightest pretext. But as he was a courteous person, incapable of unjust provocation, with manners that inspired respect from the insolent, time passed and the duel did not take place. His exuberant vitality, his impulsive strength, were consumed in dark adventures, of which his fellow students afterward told on the island with admiration.

While in Barcelona he received a telegram announcing that his mother was seriously ill. He was delayed two days before sailing; there was no boat ready. When he reached the island his mother was dead. Of the ancient family which he had seen in his childhood none remained. Only Mammy Antonia could recall the past.

Jaime was twenty-three when he found himself master of the Febrer fortune, and in absolute liberty. The fortune had been diminished by the ostentation of his ancestors and burdened with encumbrances. The Febrer house was big. It was like vessels which when wrecked and lost forever

enrich the coast where they are dashed to pieces. The remains and spoils, upon which his ancestors would have looked with scorn, still represented a fortune. Jaime did not wish to think. He did not wish to know. He must live; he must see the world! So he gave up his studies. What need had he for law, and for Roman customs, and for ecclesiastical canons, in order to lead a gay existence? He knew enough. In reality, the most delightful of his accomplishments he owed to his mother. When he was a child still living in the palace, before he had ever seen a schoolmaster, she had taught him something of French and had given him a little instruction on an ancient piano with yellow keys and a great red silk reredos almost touching the ceiling. Others knew less than he, and yet they were just as gentlemanly and they were much happier. Now for life! He stayed two years in Madrid; where he affected mistresses who gave him a certain notoriety, and drove famous horses. He became the intimate friend of a celebrated bull-fighter, and he gambled heavily in the clubs on Alcalá Street. He fought a duel, but with swords, instead of lying on the ground, pistol in hand, as he had formerly pictured to himself, and he came out of the affair with a scratch on his arm, something in the nature of a pin prick in the epidermis of an elephant. He was no longer "the Majorcan with the ounces." The hoard of round gold pieces treasured by his mother had vanished. He now flung bank bills prodigally upon the gaming tables, and when bad luck assailed him he wrote to his administrator, a lawyer, the scion of a family of old time mossons, retainers of the Febrers during many centuries.

Jaime wearied of Madrid, where he felt himself essentially a stranger. The soul of the ancient Febrers lingered within him—those travelers through all countries except Spain, for they had ever lived with their backs turned upon their sovereigns. Many of his ancestors were familiar with every one of the important Mediterranean cities, they had visited the princes of the small Italian states, they had been received in audience by the Pope and by the Grand Turk, but never had it occurred to them to visit Madrid. Moreover, Febrer was often irritated with his relatives in the court city—youths proud of their noble titles who smiled at his odd appellation of *butifarra*. With what indifference his family had allowed various marquisates to descend to relatives on the Peninsula while they clung to their supreme title of island nobility and the high knightly rank of Malta!

He began to run over Europe, fixing his residence in the autumn and during part of the winter in Paris; spending the cold months on the Blue Coast; spring in London; summer in Ostend; with various trips to Italy, Egypt, and Norway to see the midnight sun. In this new existence he was barely known. He was one traveler more, an insignificant circulating globule in the great arterial network which desire for travel extends over the Continent; but this life of continual movement, of tedious monotony, and unexpected adventures, satisfied his hereditary instinct, the inclinations transmitted from his remote ancestors, constant visitors among new peoples. This wandering existence, also, satiated his longing for the extraordinary. In the hotels at Nice, phalansteries of the most polite and hypocritical worldly corruption, he had been flattered in the seclusion of his room by unexpected visits. In Egypt he had been compelled to flee from the caresses of a decadent Hungarian countess, a withered flower of elegance, with moist eyes and violent perfume.

He passed his twenty-eighth birthday in Munich. A short time before he had gone to Bayreuth to hear the Wagnerian operas, and now in the capital of Bavaria he attended the theater of the Residence, where the Mozart festival was celebrated. Jaime was not a melomaniac, but his vagrant existence forced him with the crowd, and his accomplishment as an amateur pianist had led him to make his musical pilgrimage for two consecutive years.

In the hotel in Munich he met Miss Mary Gordon, whom he had seen before at the Wagner theater. She was an English girl, tall, slender, with firm flesh and the body of a gymnast which exercise had developed into agreeable feminine curves, giving her a youthful figure, and the wholesome, asexual appearance of a handsome boy. Her beautiful head was that of a court page, with skin as transparent as porcelain, pink nostrils like those of a toy dog, deep blue eyes and blonde hair, pale gold on the surface and dark gold beneath. Her beauty was adorable but fragile; that British beauty which is lost at thirty beneath purplish flushes and blotches on the skin.

In the restaurant Jaime had several times surprised the gaze of her blue eyes, frankly, tranquilly bold, fixed upon him. She was attended by a fat, spongy woman with rouged cheeks, a traveling companion dressed in black with a red straw hat and a broad belt of the same color, which divided the bulky hemispheres of her breast and abdomen. Young and graceful, Mary Gordon resembled a flower of gold and nacre in her white flannel suits of masculine cut with a mannish cravat, and a Panama with drooping brim around which she wound a blue veil.

Febrer met the pair at every turn; in the picture gallery, standing before Durer's Evangelists; in the hall of sculpture examining Egina's marbles; in the rococo theater of the Residence, where Mozart was sung, an audience hall of a former century, with decorations of porcelain and garlands which seemed to require that the spectators wear the purple heel and the white wig. Accustomed to meeting each other, Jaime greeted her with a smile and she seemed to answer timidly with the flash of her eyes.

One morning, on coming out of his room, he met the English girl on a landing of the stairway. She was bending her boyish breast over the balustrade.

"Lift! Lift!" she called with her birdlike voice, summoning the elevator man to bring it up.

Febrer bowed as he entered the movable cage with her, and said a few words in French to start a conversation. The English girl stared at him in silence with her light blue eyes in which a star of gold seemed to be floating. She remained silent as if she did not understand, yet Jaime had seen her in the reading room turning the leaves of the Parisian dailies.

Stepping out of the elevator she turned with hasty step toward the office where sat the hotel clerk, pen in hand. He listened with obsequious mien, like a polyglot quick to understand each of his guests, and coming out from his enclosure he made straight toward Jaime, who, still embarrassed by his unsuccessful venture, was pretending to read the advertisements in the vestibule. Febrer at first did not realize that it was he who was being addressed.

"Señor, this lady asks me to introduce you to her," said the clerk.

Turning toward the English girl he added with Teutonic composure, like one fulfilling a duty, "Monsieur the hidalgo Febrer, Marquis of Spain."

He understood the part he was playing. Everyone who travels with good valises is an hidalgo and a marquis until the contrary be proven.

Then, with his eyes, he indicated the English girl who stood stiff and grave during the ceremony without which no well-bred woman may exchange a word with a man: "Miss Gordon, doctor of the University of Melbourne."

The young lady extended her white gloved hand and shook Febrer's with gymnastic vigor. Not till then did she venture to speak:

"Oh, Spain! Oh, 'Don Quixote'!"

Unconsciously they strolled out of the hotel together discussing the afternoon performances which they had attended. There was to be no function at the theaters that day and she was thinking of going to the park called Theresienwiese, at the foot of the statue of Bavaria, to see the Tyrolese fair and to listen to the folk-songs. After breakfasting at the hotel they went to the fair grounds; they climbed upon an enormous statue and viewed the Bavarian plain, its lakes and its distant mountains; they explored the Memorial Hall, filled with busts of celebrated Bavarians, most of whose names they read for the first time, and they finished by going from booth to booth, admiring the costumes of the Tyrolese, their gymnastic dances, their birdlike warbling and trilling.

They went about as if they had known each other all their lives, Jaime admiring the masculine liberty of Saxon girls who are not afraid of associating with men and who feel strong in their ability to take care of themselves. From that day they visited together museums, academies, old churches, sometimes alone, and again with the companion, who made strenuous exertions to keep pace with them. They were comrades who communicated their impressions without thinking of difference of sex. Jaime was disposed to take advantage of this intimacy by making gallant speeches, by risking

little advances, but he restrained himself. With women like this action might be dangerous, they remain impassive, proof against all manner of impressions. He must wait until she should take the initiative. These were women who could go alone around the world, likely to interrupt passionate advances with the blows of a trained boxer. He had seen some in his travels who carried diminutive nickel-plated revolvers in their muffs or in their handbags along with powder box and handkerchief.

Mary Gordon told of the distant Oceanic archipelago in which her father exercised authority like a viceroy. She had no mother, and she had come to Europe to complete studies begun in Australia. She held the degree of Doctor from the University of Melbourne; a doctor of music. Jaime, suppressing his astonishment at this news from a distant world, told of himself, of his family, of his native land, of the curiosities of the island, of the cavern of Arta, tragically grand, chaotic as an ante-chamber of the inferno; of the Dragon's caves with their forests of stalactites, glistening like an ice palace, of its thousand placid lakes, from the deep crystal depths of which it seemed as if nude sirens would arise like those Rhine maidens who guarded the treasure of the Niebelungs. Mary listened to him, entranced. Jaime seemed to grow greater before her eyes, as she learned that he was a son of that isle of dreams, where the sea is always blue, where the sun is ever shining, and where blooms the orange flower.

Febrer began to spend his afternoons in the room of the English girl. The performances of the Mozart festival were ended. Miss Gordon needed daily the spiritual uplift of music. She had a piano in her reception room, and a roll of opera scores which accompanied her on her travels. Jaime sat near, before the keyboard, trying to accompany the pieces she was interpreting, ever those of the same author, the god, the only! The hotel was near the station, and the noise of drays, carriages and street cars annoyed the English woman and she closed the windows. Her stout companion had gone to her own apartment, rejoiced at being free from that musical tempest, the delights of which could not compare with those of making a good bit of Irish point lace. Miss Gordon, alone with the Spaniard, treated him as if she were a master.

"Come, do that again; let us repeat the theme of the sword. Pay attention!"

But Jaime was distracted, peeping out of the corner of his eye at the girl's long, white neck bristling with little golden locks, at the network of blue veins delicately outlined beneath the transparency of her pearly skin.

One afternoon it rained; the leaden sky seemed to graze the roofs of the houses; in the reception room there was the diffused light of a cellar. They were playing almost in the dark, bending their heads forward to read the score. Forth rolled the music of the forest of enchantments, moving its green and whispering tree tops before the rude Siegfried, the innocent child of Nature, eager to know the language of the soul and of inanimate things. The master-bird sang, his voice rising above the murmur of the foliage. Mary was trembling with excitement.

"Ah, poet! Poet!"

She continued playing. Then, in the growing darkness of the room, sounded the strong chords which accompanied the hero to the tomb; the funeral march of the warriors bearing upon the shield the muscular body of Siegfried, with his golden hair, interrupting the melancholy phrase of the God of gods. Mary continued trembling, until suddenly her hands fell from the keyboard and her head rested on Jaime's shoulder, like a bird folding its wings.

"Oh, Richard!... Richard, *mon bien aimée*!"

The Spaniard saw her wandering eyes and her tremulous lips offering themselves to him; in his grasp he felt her cold hands; her breath floated about him. Against his bosom were pressed hidden curves of firm elastic plumpness, the existence of which he had not suspected.

There was no more music that afternoon.

At midnight when Febrer retired, he had not yet recovered from his astonishment. After so many fears, this was the way things had happened, with the greatest simplicity, as one is offered a hand, without exertion on his part.

Another surprise had been to hear himself called by a name which was not his. Who could that Richard be? But in the hour of sweet and dreamy explanations which follow those of madness and forgetfulness, she had told him of the impression she had received in Bayreuth when she saw him for the first time among the thousand heads which filled the theater. It was he, the great musician, as he was portrayed in his youthful pictures! When she met him again in Munich beneath the same roof, she had felt that the die was cast and that it was useless to resist this attraction.

Febrer examined himself with ironical curiosity in the mirror in his room. What ideas a woman is capable of conceiving! Yes, he was something like that other one—the heavy forehead, the drooping hair, the beaked nose, and the prominent chin, which, in years to come would turn inward, seeking each other, and give him a certain witchlike profile.... Excellent and glorious Richard! By what miracle had Wagner brought to him one of the greatest joys of his existence! What an original woman was this!

Astonishment, mingled with a shade of annoyance, grew upon Febrer as the days passed. She seemed to forget what had taken place, and to grow constantly more unapproachable. She received him with grave rigidity, as if nothing had occurred, as if the past had left no trace upon her mind, as if the day before had never been. Only when music evoked the memory of the other man came tenderness and submission.

Jaime was irritated, and he determined to dominate her; he would prove himself a man! At last he triumphed to such an extent that the piano was heard less and she began to see in him something more than a living picture of her idol.

In their happy intoxication Munich and the hotel in which they had seen each other as strangers seemed to them offensive. They felt the need of flying far away, where they could make love freely, and one day they found themselves in a port which had a stone lion at its entrance, while beyond spread the liquid surface of an immense lake which mingled with the sky on the horizon. They were in Lindau. One steamer could convey them to Switzerland, another to Constance, but they preferred the tranquil German city of the famous Ecumenical Council, establishing themselves in the Island Hotel, an ancient Dominican Monastery.

Febrer was stirred as he contemplated this epoch, the happiest of his existence! Mary continued for him ever an original woman, in whom there was always something left to conquer; tolerant at certain hours, repellant and austere throughout the rest of the day. He was her lover, and yet she would not permit the slightest familiarity, nor any liberty which might reveal the confidence of their common life. The least allusion to their intimacy caused her to flush in protest. "Shocking!" Yet, every morning at daybreak Febrer sneaked into his room along the corridors of the old convent, unmade his bed so that the servants would not suspect, and he would show himself on the balcony. The birds were singing in the tall rose bushes in the garden below his feet. Beyond, the immense sheet of Lake Constance was flushing with purple tints caught from the rising sun. The first fishing barks were cleaving the orange tinted waters; in the distance sounded the cathedral bells, softened by the damp, morning breeze; the cranes began to creak on the quay where the waters cease to be a lake, and narrowing into a channel become the river Rhine; the footsteps of the servants and the swish of cleaning startled the monastic cloister with the noises of the hotel.

Near the balcony, adjoining the wall, and so close that Jaime could touch it with his hand, was a small tower with a slate roof and with ancient coats of arms on the circular wall. It was the tower in which John Huss had been imprisoned before going to the stake.

The Spaniard thought of Mary. At this time she must be in the perfumed shadows of her room, her blonde head clasped in her arms, sleeping her first real sleep of the night, her tired body still vibrant from fatigue. Poor John Huss! Febrer sympathized with him as if he had been his friend. To burn him in the presence of such a beautiful landscape, perhaps on a morning like this! To cast one's self into the wolf's mouth, and to give up one's life over the question whether the Pope were good or bad, or whether laymen should receive the sacrament with wine the same as priests! To

die for such absurdities when life is so beautiful and the heretic might have enjoyed it so richly with any of the plump-breasted, big-hipped blonde women, friends of the cardinals, who witnessed his torture! Unhappy apostle! Jaime ironically pitied the simplicity of the martyr. He looked at life through different eyes. *Viva el amor!* Love was the only thing worth while in life.

They remained nearly a month in the ancient episcopal city, strolling out in the gloaming through the lonely, grass-grown streets with their crumbling palaces of the time of the Council; floating with the current down the river Rhine along its forest-clad banks; stopping to look at the tiny houses with red roofs and spacious arbors beneath which sang the bourgeoisie, stein in hand, with the Germanic joy of a subchanter, grave and reposeful.

From Constance they passed on to Switzerland and afterward to Italy. They traveled together for a year viewing landscapes, seeing museums, visiting ruins, the windings and sheltered nooks in which Jaime made use of for kissing Mary's pearly skin, reveling in the rush of color and the gesture of annoyance with which she protested "Shocking!"

The old traveling companion, unconscious as a suitcase of the points of interest in their journey, continued making the cloak of Irish point, beginning in Germany, and working at it while crossing the Alps, along the whole length of the Apennines, and in sight of Vesuvius and Ætna. Unable to talk with Febrer, who spoke no English, she greeted him with the yellowish glitter of her teeth and returned to her task, forming a conspicuous figure in the hotel lobbies.

The two lovers spoke of marriage. Mary summed up the situation with energetic decision. She need only write a few lines to her father. He was very far away, and besides she never consulted him in regard to her affairs. He would approve whatever she did, sure of her wisdom and prudence.

They were in Sicily, a land which reminded Febrer of his own island. The ancient members of his family had been here also, but with cuirasses on their breasts, and in worse company. Mary spoke of the future, arranging the financial side of the anticipated partnership with the practical sense of her race. It did not matter to her that Febrer had little fortune; she was rich enough for both; and she enumerated her worldly goods, lands, houses, and stocks like an administrator with accurate memory. On their return to Rome they would be married in the evangelical chapel and also in a Catholic church. She knew a cardinal who had arranged for her an audience with the Pope. His Eminence would manage everything.

Jaime passed a sleepless night in a hotel in Syracuse. Marriage? Mary was agreeable; she made life pleasant, and she would bring with her a fortune. But should he really marry her? Then the other man began to annoy him, the illustrious shade which had appeared in Zurich, in Venice, in every place visited by them which held memories of the maestro's past. Jaime would grow old, and music, his formidable rival, would be ever fresh. In a little while, when marriage should have robbed his relations of the charm of illegality, of the delight of the prohibited, Mary would discover some orchestra leader who bore a still greater resemblance to the other man, or some ugly violinist with long hair and possessed of youth who would remind her of Beethoven in his boyhood. Besides, he was of different race, different customs and passions; he was tired of her shamefaced reserve in love, of her resistance to final submission which had pleased him at first, but which had come at last to bore him. No; there was yet time to save himself.

"I regret it on account of what she will think of Spain. I regret it on account of Don Quixote," he said to himself while packing his suitcase one morning at sunrise.

He fled, losing himself in Paris, where the English woman would never seek him. She hated that ungrateful city for its hissing of Tannhäuser many years before she was born.

Of these relations, which had lasted a year, Jaime cherished only the memory of a felicity, increased and sweetened by the passing of time and by a lock of golden hair. Then, too, he must have somewhere among his papers, guide books, and post cards, lying forgotten in an old secretary in the great house, a photograph of the feminine doctor of music, strangely adorable in her long-sleeved toga with a square plate-like cap from which hung a tassel.

Of the rest of his life he remembered little; a void of tedium broken only by monetary worries. The administrator was slow and grudging in sending his remittances. Jaime would ask him for money and he would reply with grumbling letters, telling of interest which must be met, of second mortgages on which he could barely realize a loan, of the precariousness of a fortune in which nothing was left free of incumbrance.

Febrer, believing that his presence might disentangle this wretched situation, made short trips to Majorca, which always resulted in the sale of property, yielding him scarcely enough money to take flight again, heedless of his administrator's advice. Money aroused in him a smiling optimism. Everything would turn out all right. As a last resort he counted on recourse to matrimony. Meanwhile, —he would live!

He managed to exist a few years longer, sometimes in Madrid, or again in the great foreign cities, until at last his administrator brought this period of merry prodigality to an end by sending his resignation, with his accounts and his refusal to continue forwarding money.

He had spent one year on the island, buried, as he said, with no other diversion than nights of gambling in the Casino and afternoons on the Paseo del Borne, sitting around a table with a company of friends, sedentary islanders who reveled in the stories of his travels. Misery and want—this was the reality of his present life. His creditors threatened him with immediate legal process. He still outwardly retained possession of Son Febrer and of other estates derived from his forefathers, but property yielded little on the island; the rents, according to traditional custom, were no higher than in the time of his ancestors, for the families of the original renters inherited the right to farm the lands. They made payments directly to his creditors, but even this did not satisfy half of the interest due. The palace was but a storehouse for its rich decorations. The noble mansion of the Febrers was submerged, and no one could float it. Sometimes Jaime calmly considered the convenience of slipping out of his wretched predicament with neither humiliation nor dishonor by letting himself be found some afternoon in the garden asleep forever under an orange tree with a revolver in his hand.

One day in this frame of mind, a crony gave him an idea as he was leaving the Casino in the small hours of the night, one of those moments in which nervous insomnia causes a person to see things in an extraordinary light in which they stand out clearly. Don Benito Valls, the rich Jew, was very fond of him. Several times he had intervened, unsought, in his affairs, saving him from immediate ruin. It was due to personal liking for Febrer and to respect for his name. Valls had a single heiress, and, moreover, he was an invalid; the prolific exuberance characteristic of his race had not been fulfilled in him. His daughter Catalina, when she was younger, had wished to be a nun, but, now that she was past twenty, she felt a strong desire for the pomps and vanities of this world, and she expressed tender sympathy for Febrer whenever his misfortunes were discussed in her hearing.

Jaime recoiled from the proposition with almost as much astonishment as Mammy Antonia. A Chuerta! The idea, however, began to fasten itself upon his mind, lubricated in its incessant hammering by the ever increasing poverty and necessity which grew with the passing days. Why not? Valls' daughter was the richest heiress on the island, and money possessed neither blood nor race.

At last he had yielded to the urging of his friends, officious mediators between himself and the family of the girl, and that morning he was on his way to breakfast at the house in Valldemosa where Valls resided the greater part of the year for relief from the asthma which was choking him.

Jaime made an effort to remember Catalina. He had seen her several times on the streets of Palma—a good figure, a pleasant face! When she should live far from her kindred and should dress better, she would be quite presentable. But—could he love her?

Febrer smiled skeptically. Was love indispensable to marriage? Matrimony was a trip in double harness for the rest of life, and one only needed to seek in the woman those qualities demanded of a traveling companion; good disposition, identical tastes, the same likes and dislikes in eating and drinking. Love! Every one believed he had a right to it, while love was like talent, like beauty, like fortune, a special gift which only rare and privileged persons might enjoy. By good luck, deception

came to conceal this cruel inequality, and all human beings ended their days, thinking of their youth with melancholy longing, believing they had really known love, when they had in reality experienced nothing but a youthful delirium.

Love was a beautiful thing, but not indispensable to matrimony nor to existence. The important thing was to choose a good companion for the rest of the journey; to set the pace of the two to the same tune, so that there should be no kicking over the traces nor collisions; to dominate the nerves so that there should be no jar during the continual contact of the common existence; to be able to lie down together like good comrades, with mutual respect, without wounding each other with the knees nor jabbing each other in the ribs with the elbows. He expected to find all these things and to consider himself well content.

Suddenly Valldemosa appeared before his eyes above the crest of a hill, surrounded by mountains. The tower of La Cartuja, with its decorations of green tiles, rose above the foliage of the gardens and the cells.

Febrer saw a carriage standing in a turn of the road. A man alighted from it, waving his arms so that Jaime's driver would stop his horses. Then he opened the carriage door and climbed in, smiling, taking a seat beside Febrer.

"Hello Captain!" exclaimed Jaime in astonishment.

"You didn't expect me, eh? I'm going to the breakfast, too; I have invited myself. What a surprise it will be for my brother!"

Jaime pressed his hand. It was one of his most loyal friends, Captain Pablo Valls.

CHAPTER III

JEW AND GENTILE

Pablo Valls was known throughout all Palma. When he seated himself on the terrace of a café on the Paseo del Borne a compact circle of listeners would form around him, smiling at his forceful gestures and at his loud voice, which was ever incapable of discreet tones.

"I am a Chueta, and what of that? A Jew of the Jews! All of my family come from 'the street.' When I was in command of the Roger de Lauria, being one day in Algiers, I stopped before the door of the Synagogue, and an old man, after looking me over, said: 'You may enter; you are one of us!' I gave him my hand and answered: 'Thanks, fellow-believer.'"

His hearers laughed, and Captain Valls, proclaiming in a loud voice his Chuetan ancestry, glanced in every direction, as if defying the houses, the people, and the soul of the island, hostile to his race through the fanatical hatred of centuries.

His physiognomy revealed his origin. His gray-tinged ruddy side whiskers denoted the retired sea-faring man, but between these shaggy adornments projected his Semitic profile, the heavy, aquiline nose, the prominent chin, the eyes with elongated lids, and pupil of amber and gold according to the play of light, and in which here and there floated tobacco-colored spots.

He had been much on the sea; he had lived for long periods in England and in the United States; and as a result of his contact with those lands of liberty, free from religious tolerance, he had brought back a belligerent frankness which impelled him to defy the traditional prejudices of the island, socially and politically, unprogressive and stagnant. The other Chuetas, cowed by centuries of persecution and scorn, concealed their origin, or tried to make it forgotten through their humble demeanor. Captain Valls took advantage of every occasion to discuss the matter, parading the name of Chueta as a title of nobility, as a challenge which he hurled at the popular bias.

"I am a Jew, and what of that?" he shouted again. "A co-religionist of Jesus, of Saint Paul, of the other saints who are venerated on the altars. The butifarras boast of their ancestors, but they date scarcely further back than yesterday. I am more noble, more ancient! My forefathers were the patriarchs of the Bible!"

Then, waxing indignant over the antipathy to his race, he again became aggressive.

"In all Spain," he announced gravely, "there is not a Christian who can lift a finger. We are all descendants of Jews or of Moors. And he who is not—he who is not—"

Here he stopped, and after a brief pause affirmed resolutely, "He who is not, is the descendant of a priest!"

On the Peninsula the traditional odium for the Jew which still separates the population of Majorca into two antagonistic races, does not exist. Pablo Valls became furious discussing his fatherland. Openly orthodox Jews did not exist there. The last synagogue had been dissolved centuries ago. The Jews had all been "converted" en masse, and the recalcitrant were burned by the Inquisition. The Chuetas of the present day were the most fervent Catholics of Majorca, bringing to their profession of faith a Semitic zealotry. They prayed aloud, they made priests of their sons, they sought influence to place their daughters in the convents, they figured as moneyed people among the partisans of the most conservative ideas, and yet, against them lay the same antipathy as in former centuries, and they lived ostracized, with no allies in any social class.

"For four hundred and fifty years we have had the water of baptism on our pates," Captain Valls continued in loud tones, "and yet we are still the accursed, the reprobates, as before the conversion. Isn't that queer? The Chuetas! Look out for them! Bad people! In Majorca there are two Catholicisms—one for our people, and another for the rest."

Then with the concentrated odium gathered from centuries of persecution, the sailor said, referring to his racial brethren, "They are doing their best through cowardice, through too great love

for the island, for this little rock, this Roqueta on which we were born; to not forsake it, they became Christians, and now, when they are really Christians at heart they are paid for it with kicks. Had they continued to be Jews, dispersing throughout the world as others have done, perhaps at this moment they would be great personages, bankers to kings, instead of sticking in their little shops on 'the street,' making silver hand bags."

Himself a skeptic, he scorned or attacked them all—the Jews faithful to their old beliefs, the converts, the Catholics, the Mussulmans, with whom he had lived on his journeys to the coasts of Africa and in the ports of Asia Minor. Again he would be dominated by an atavistic tenderness, displaying a certain religious respect toward his race.

He was a Semite; he declared it with pride, beating his chest: "The greatest people in the world!"

"We were a lousy, starving crowd when we were in Asia, because there was no one in that land with whom to traffic, nor to whom we could loan our money. But no race has given the human flock more actual shepherds than has ours, which shall yet be for centuries and centuries masters of men. Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed are from my country. Three strong champions, eh, caballeros? And now we have given the world a fourth prophet, also of our race and of our blood, only that this one has two faces and two names. On the obverse he is called Rothschild, and is the captain of all who lay up money; on the reverse he is Carl Marx—the apostle of those who wish to wrest it from the rich!"

The history of the race on the island Valls condensed after his fashion into brief words. The Jews were many, very many in former times. Nearly all the commerce was in their hands; most of the ships were theirs. The Febrers, and other Christian potentates, had no objection to being their associates. The ancient times might be called the times of liberty; persecution and cruelty were relatively modern. Jews were the treasurers of kings, doctors, the courtiers of the courts of the Peninsula. When religious feuds broke out, the richest and most astute Hebrews of the island were wise enough to become converted in time, voluntarily, mixing with the native families, and sinking their origin into oblivion. These new Catholics were the very ones who, later on, with the fervor of the neophyte, had instigated the persecution against their former brethren. The Chuetas of the present time, the only Majorcans of recognized Jewish origin, were the descendants of the last to be converted, the offspring of the families persecuted by the Inquisition.

To be a Chueta, to spring from the street of the Silversmiths, which by antonomasia is called "the street," is the greatest disgrace which can happen to a Majorcan. In vain had revolutions been made in Spain, in vain had liberal laws been passed which recognized the equality of all Spaniards; the Chueta when he passed on to the Peninsula was a citizen like other people, but in Majorca he was a reprobate, a kind of pest who could marry none but his own kindred.

Valls commented ironically upon the social order, resembling the steps of a stairway, in which the different classes of the island had dwelt for centuries and where many steps still remained intact. Aloft, on the vortex, the proud butifarras; then the nobles, the caballeros; afterward the mossons; trailing along behind these came the merchants, the artisans, and finally the cultivators of the soil. Here opened an enormous gap in the order established by God in creating the classes; a vast open space which each one could people according to his caprice. Undoubtedly after the Majorcan nobles and plebeians came hogs, dogs, asses, cats, rats, and, at the tail of all these beasts of the Lord, the despised citizen of "the street," the Chueta, the pariah of the island. It mattered nothing if he were rich, like the brother of Captain Valls, or intellectual, like others. Many Chuetas who attained the dignity of state functionaries, army officers, magistrates, landed proprietors on the Peninsula, found on returning to Majorca that the meanest beggar considered himself superior to them, and on the slightest excuse poured insults upon their persons and their families. The isolation of this bit of Spain, surrounded by the sea, served to keep intact the spirit of earlier epochs.

In vain the Chuetas, fleeing from this odium which flourished despite the new era of progress, exaggerated their devotion to Catholicism with a blind and vehement faith, largely influenced by the fear absorbed into their souls and into their flesh during centuries of persecution. In vain they

continued in imitation of their forefathers to recite their prayers in loud voices in their houses so that passersby might hear, and they cooked their food in their windows so that all should see that they ate pork. The traditional barriers could not be overcome. The Catholic Church, which entitles itself universal, was cruel and harsh with the Jews on the island, repaying their adherence with disdainful repulsion. The sons of the Chuetas who desired to become priests found no room in the seminary. The convents closed their doors against every novice proceeding from "the street." On the Peninsula the daughters of Chuetas married men of distinction and men of great fortune, but on the island they scarcely ever found one who would accept their hand and their riches.

"Bad people!" continued Valls sarcastically. "They are industrious, they lay up money, they live at peace in the bosoms of their families, they are more fervent Catholics even than the rest, but they are Chuetas; there must be something the matter with them to be so despised! Something there must be about them, do you understand? Something! He who wishes to know more let him find out for himself."

The seaman laughingly told of the poor peasants from the country who until a few years ago declared in good faith that the Chuetas were covered with grease and had tails, taking advantage of an occasion when they found a lonely child from "the street" to disrobe him and convince themselves whether the story of the caudal appendage were true.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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