

THE STORY OF THE NATIONS

THE MOORS IN SPAIN

BY

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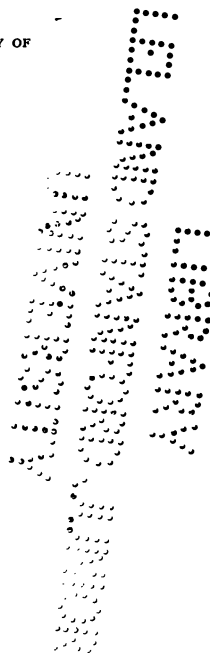
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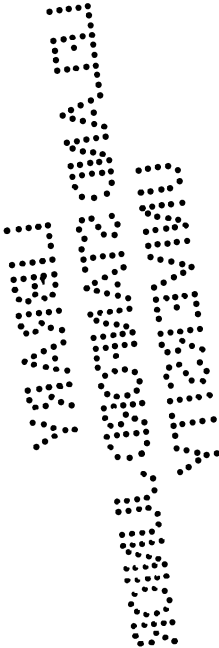
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PREFACE.

THE history of Spain offers us a melancholy contrast. Twelve hundred years ago, Tarik the Moor added the land of the Visigoths to the long catalogue of kingdoms subdued by the Moslems. For nearly eight centuries, under her Mohammedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened State. Her fertile provinces, rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors, bore fruit an hundredfold. Cities innumerable sprang up in the rich valleys of the Guadelquivir and the Guadiana, whose names, and names only, still commemorate the vanished glories of their past. Art, literature, and science prospered, as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science: women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study, and the lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, as-

tronomy and botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and shipbuilding, the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by the Spanish Moors. In the practice of war no less than in the arts of peace they long stood supreme. Their fleets disputed the command of the Mediterranean with the Fatimites, while their armies carried fire and sword through the Christian marches. The Cid himself, the national hero, long fought on the Moorish side, and in all save education was more than half a Moor. Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain.

In 1492 the last bulwark of the Moors gave way before the crusade of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with Granada fell all Spain's greatness. For a brief while, indeed, the reflection of the Moorish splendour cast a borrowed light upon the history of the land which it had once warmed with its sunny radiance. The great epoch of Isabella, Charles v., and Philip II., of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro, shed a last halo about the dying moments of a mighty State. Then followed the abomination of desolation, the rule of the Inquisition, and the blackness of darkness in which Spain has been plunged ever since. In the land where science was once supreme, the Spanish doctors became noted for nothing but their ignorance and incapacity, and the discoveries of Newton and

Harvey were condemned as pernicious to the faith. Where once seventy public libraries had fed the minds of scholars, and half a million books had been gathered together at Cordova for the benefit of the world, such indifference to learning afterwards prevailed, that the new capital, Madrid, possessed no public library in the eighteenth century, and even the manuscripts of the Escorial were denied in our own days to the first scholarly historian of the Moors, though himself a Spaniard. The sixteen thousand looms of Seville soon dwindled to a fifth of their ancient number; the arts and industries of Toledo and Almeria faded into insignificance; the very baths—public buildings of equal ornament and use—were destroyed because cleanliness savoured too strongly of rank infidelity. The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of the Moors, grew impoverished and neglected; the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted; most of the populous cities which had filled every district of Andalusia fell into ruinous decay; and beggars, friars, and bandits took the place of scholars, merchants, and knights. So low fell Spain when she had driven away the Moors. Such is the melancholy contrast offered by her history.

Happily we have here only to do with the first of these contrasted periods, with Spain in her glory under the Moors, not with Spain in her degradation under the Bourbons. We have endeavoured to present the most salient points in the eight centuries of Mohammedan rule without prejudice or extenuation, and while not neglecting the heroic characters and

legends which appeal to the imagination of the reader, we have especially sought to give a clear picture of the struggle between races and creeds which formed the leading cause of political movement in mediæval Spain. The student who wishes to pursue the subject further than it has been possible to carry it in the limits of this volume should read the following authorities, to which we are deeply indebted. The most important is the late Professor Dozy's *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (4 vols., Leyden, 1861), and the same scholar's *Récherches sur l'histoire et la littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge* (2 vols., 3rd ed., Paris and Leyden, 1881). These works are full of valuable information presented in a form which, though somewhat fragmentary, is equally pleasing to the literary and the historical sense. Professor Dozy was an historian as well as an Orientalist, and his volumes are at once judicious and profound. Very useful, too, is Don Pasqual de Gayangos's translation of El-Makkary's *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (2 vols., London, 1843), which has been exposed to some needlessly acrimonious criticism by Professor Dozy and others on the score of certain minor inaccuracies, but which none the less deserves the gratitude of all students who would rather have half a loaf than no bread, and are glad to be able to read an Arabic writer, even imperfectly, in a European tongue. Don Pasqual's notes, moreover, present a mass of valuable material which can be obtained nowhere else. Beyond these two authorities there are many Arabic historians, whose works have been consulted in the composition of the present

volume, but who can hardly be recommended to the general student, as very few of them have found translators. A slight but very readable and instructive sketch of Arab civilization, with a glance at the Spanish development, is found in August Bebel's *Die Mohammedanisch-arabische Kulturperiode* (Stuttgart, 1884). For the last days of the Moorish domination, Washington Irving's picturesque *Conquest of Granada*, and Sir W. Stirling Maxwell's admirable *Don John of Austria*, largely drawn upon in this volume, deserve separate reading. All histories of the Moors written before the works of Gayangos and Dozy should be studiously avoided, since they are mainly founded upon Conde's *Dominacion de los Arabes in España*, a book of considerable literary merit but very slight historical value, and the source of most of the errors that are found in later works. Whether it has been in any degree the foundation of Miss Yonge's *Christians and Moors in Spain* (the only popular history of this period in English of which I have heard), I cannot determine: for a glance at her pages, while exciting my admiration, showed me that her book was written so much on the lines which I had drawn for my own work that I could not read it without risk of involuntary imitation.

Besides my indebtedness to the works of Dozy and Gayangos, and to the kind collaboration of Mr. Arthur Gilman, I have gratefully to acknowledge the assistance of my friend Mr. H. E. Watts, especially in matters of Spanish orthography.

In conclusion, those who are inclined to infer, from the picture here given of Moorish civilization, that

Mohammedanism is always on the side of culture and humanity, must turn to another volume in this series, my *Story of the Turks*, to see what Mohammedan barbarism means. The fall of Granada happened within forty years of the conquest of Constantinople; but the gain to Islam in the east made no amends for the loss to Europe in the west: the Turks were incapable of founding a second Cordova.

S. L.-P.

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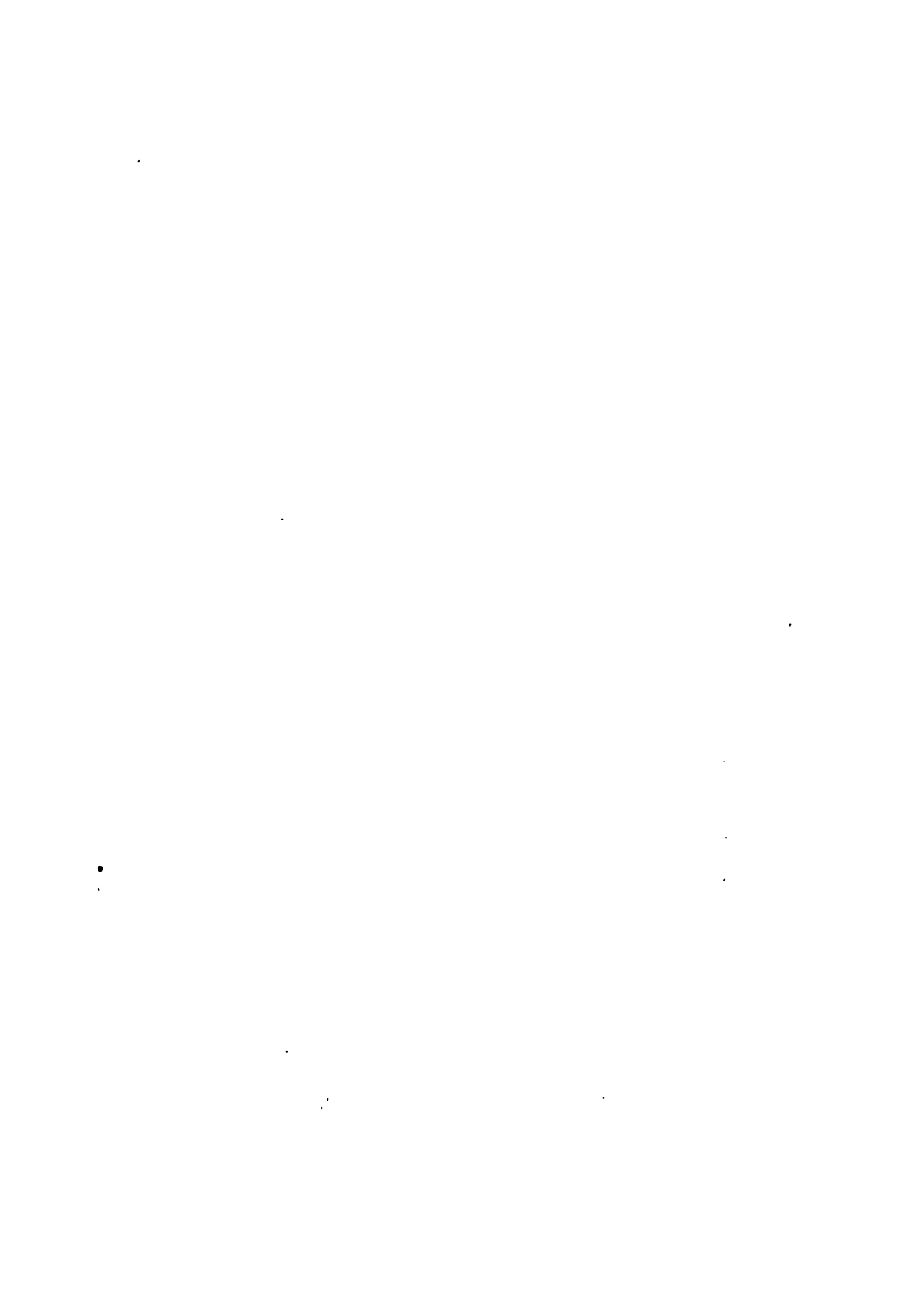
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THE STORY OF THE MOORS IN SPAIN.

I.

THE LAST OF THE GOTHs.

WHEN the armies of Alexander the Great were trampling upon the ancient empires of the East, one country remained undisturbed and undismayed. The people of Arabia sent no humble embassies to the conqueror. Alexander resolved to bring the contemptuous Arabs to his feet: he was preparing to invade their land when death laid its hand upon him, and the Arabs remained unconquered.

This was more than three hundred years before Christ, and even then the Arabs had long been established in independence in their great desert peninsula. For nearly a thousand years more they continued to dwell there in a strange solitude. Great empires sprang up all around them; the successors of Alexander founded the Syrian kingdom of the Seleucids and the Egyptian dynasty of the Ptolemies; Augustus was crowned Emperor at Rome; Constantine became the first Christian emperor at Byzantium;

the hordes of the barbarians bore down upon the wide-reaching provinces of the Cæsars—and still the Arabs remained undisturbed, unexplored, and unsubdued. Their frontier cities might pay homage to Chosroes or Cæsar, the legions of Rome might once and again flash across their highland wastes; but such impress was faint and transitory, and left the Arabs unmoved. Hemmed in as they were by lands ruled by historic dynasties, their deserts and their valour ever kept out the invader, and from the days of remote antiquity to the seventh century of the Christian era hardly anything was known of this secluded people save that they existed, and that no one attacked them with impunity.

Then suddenly a change came over the character of the Arabs. No longer courting seclusion, they came forth before the world, and proceeded in good earnest to conquer it. The change had been caused by one man. Mohammed the Arabian Prophet began to preach the religion of *Islam* in the beginning of the seventh century, and his doctrine, falling upon a people prone to quick impulses and susceptible of strong impressions, worked a revolution. What he taught was simple enough. He took the old faith of the Hebrews, which had its disciples in Arabia, and, making such additions and alterations as he thought needful, he preached the worship of One God as a new revelation to a nation of idolaters. It is difficult for us in the present time to understand the irresistible impulse which the simple and unemotional creed of Mohammed gave to the whole people of Arabia; but we know that such religious revolutions

have been, and that there is always a mysterious and potent fascination in the personal influence of a true prophet. Mohammed was so far true, that he taught honestly and strenuously what he believed to be the only right faith, and there was enough of sublimity in the creed and of enthusiasm in the Prophet and his hearers to produce that wave of overmastering popular feeling which people call fanaticism. The Arabs before the time of Mohammed had been a collection of rival tribes or clans, excelling in the savage virtues of bravery, hospitality, and even chivalry, and devoted to the pursuit of booty. The Prophet turned the Arab tribes, for the nonce, into the Moslem people, filled them with the fervour of martyrs, and added to the greed of plunder the nobler ambition of bringing all mankind to the knowledge of the truth.

Before Mohammed died he was master of Arabia, and the united tribes who had embraced the Moslem or Mohammedan faith were already spreading over the neighbouring lands and subduing the astonished nations. Under his successors the Khalifs, the armies of the Mussulmans overran Persia and Egypt and North Africa as far as the Pillars of Hercules; and the Muezzins chanted the Call to Prayer to the Faithful over all the land from the river Oxus in Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Mohammedans, or Saracens (a word which means "Easterns"), were checked in Asia Minor by the forces of the Greek Emperor; and it was not till the fifteenth century that they at last obtained the long-coveted possession of Constantinople, by the valour of the Ottoman Turks. So, too, at the oppo-

site extremity of the Mediterranean, it was an officer of the Greek Emperor who for a while held the Arab advance in check. The conquerors swept over the provinces of North Africa, and, after a long struggle, reduced the turbulent Berber tribes for a while to submission, till only the fortress of Ceuta held out against them. Like the rest of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, Ceuta belonged to the Greek Emperor ; but it was so far removed from Constantinople that it was thrown upon the neighbouring kingdom of Spain for support, and, while still nominally under the authority of the Emperor, looked really to the King of Toledo for assistance and protection. It is not likely that all the aid that Spain could have given would have availed against the surging tide of Saracen invasion ; but, as it happened, there was a quarrel at that time between Julian the governor of Ceuta and Roderick the King of Spain, which opened the door to the Arabs.

Spain was then under the rule of the Visigoths, or West Goths, a tribe of barbarians, like the many others who overran the provinces of the Roman Empire in its decline. The Ostrogoths had occupied Italy ; and their kinsmen the Visigoths, displacing or subduing the Suevi (or Swabians) and other rude German tribes, established themselves in the Roman province of Iberia (Spain) in the fifth century after Christ. They found the country in the same condition of effeminate luxury and degeneracy that had proved the ruin of other parts of the empire. Like many warlike peoples, the Romans, when their work was accomplished and the world was at their feet, had