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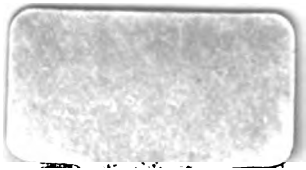

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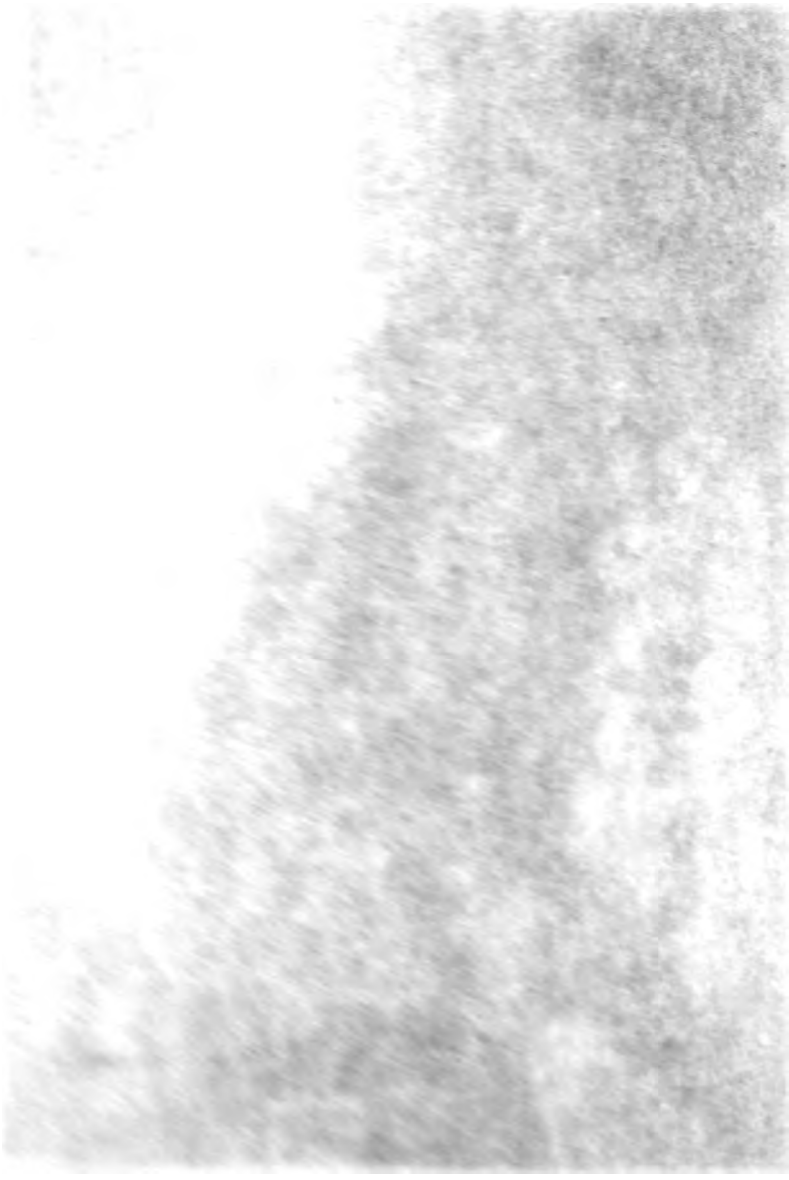

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SIXTEEN YEARS

OF

AN ARTIST'S LIFE

IN

Morocco, Spain, and the Canary Islands.

BY

MRS. ELIZABETH MURRAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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is as gay and pleasant as it can be, and far more frequented than one unacquainted with the island would imagine. As you pass on, you are met at short intervals by numbers of handsome country girls, who salute you with their friendly greeting, their manner being easy and agreeable. They are all engaged in some industrious occupation, some carrying loads of grass, some baskets of fruit, and some collections of pottery-ware. Conveyances of all sorts are on the road; public and private carriages are passing along with gay parties of well dressed ladies; and troops of camels stretch their long arched necks over everything in their way, as they proceed in zig-zag lines down the uneven road. At every step in our progress we are charmed with beauties similar to those by which we had been delighted in other parts of the island. There is no desolation here, for every thing is gay with life and motion. Every successive valley is dotted, as far as the eye can reach, with clean white villages and quintas, reposing under the shadow of the palms and bananas. There are also several patches of ground over which once were hung rich garlands of grapes and myrtles, but which are now invariably covered by the hideous prickly pear, anything but an agreeable change.

In close contiguity to the road is the fragment of

what was once a complete botanical garden, which is now in a sadly neglected state, though still conveying some idea of what it formerly was in the lovely spots that still remain. Some of the gigantic plants and trees that have been brought from all parts of the world are still flourishing, but uncared for and untended, the grass growing about their trunks in luxuriant abundance. The potatoes, of which there were several patches, appeared to be the only thing to which any attention was paid by those who were supposed to look after the place. Since the preceding remarks were written, however, the gardens have again become the object of greater care and interest. They have been placed under better superintendence, and it is to be hoped that the fine and rare plants will now be carefully tended, and that everything that is calculated to impede their growth, or to impair their beauty, may be removed, and the place once more become an ornament and a credit to the island.

The valley is bounded by a line of hills, perforated in several places by caves, which are said to have been the refuge of the aborigines in remote periods, and during the wars of the Spanish invasion. As you descend the road, you perceive to the left, in the midst of corn-fields and gardens, all loaded with the richest fruits of the earth, two gigantic

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blisters on the surface of the ground. They are still red and scorched, an appearance produced by those fires, now extinct, which raged in the island when it exhibited all the symptoms of an active volcanic agency, of which even the stones on the road still bear the unmistakable impress.

The sunny and cheerful-looking town standing on the brink of the sea, with the big waves lashing against it, is Port, or, as the Spaniards term it, "El Puerto de la Orotava." It was from this place that the favourite wine of our jolly forefathers, of which so much is said in old plays, and which is frequently referred to in Shakespere, the sweet Canary sack, was brought to warm the heart and loosen the tongue of the good old English gentleman in his hall. This was the very sack, with a jug of which by his side, that worthy old knight, Sir John Falstaff, used to delight in taking his ease at his inn.

El Puerto was once a place of very little importance, being only a paltry fishing town, without trade or commerce, except such as was carried on in the small island vessels which found it convenient for disembarking the cargoes they brought to supply the wants of the district of Orotava. These consisted chiefly of articles brought from Garachico, a town to the west of Port, to which they carried

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back in return the wines of the latter. But when the terrible disaster that destroyed the port of Garachico occurred, its commerce was transported to El Puerto.

In the year 1706, the terrible lateral eruption of the Peak destroyed the greater part of that unfortunate town, laying the houses in ruins, and completely filling up the harbour, which being no longer in a state to accommodate the numerous merchant vessels that previously resorted thither in quest of cargoes of the favourite wine, the merchants of the place, who were principally British subjects, were compelled to look out for another locality to which they might transfer their commercial establishments, and where they might continue to carry on their traffic.

With the exception of its anchorage, which never was good, a place more appropriate for their purpose than Port Orotava could not have been found. Its situation was favourable for the trade on which the inhabitants of that part of the island and the foreign merchants chiefly depended. Being situated in the centre of the northern side of the island, it afforded the greatest facility for the collection and shipment of the wine that was almost exclusively made on this side of the country, and formed the staple of its commerce with foreign parts. The commercial

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part of the inhabitants of Garachico transferred themselves and their business to Port Orotava, and the latter, as a natural consequence, rapidly increased in extent and in consideration. Its population gradually became more numerous, the little fishing village soon presenting the appearance of a port, in which all the activity and stir of commercial life might be constantly witnessed.

The British merchants and traders who had established themselves here formed a very small community. Though there were in all about thirty or forty British subjects, there were only three or four of them who transacted business to more than a trifling extent. They still continued to use the denomination of British Factory, which had been granted to their predecessors in the reign of our Charles II., and they were under the immediate jurisdiction of the Captain General of the island in his capacity of "Juez de Estrangeros," or "Judge of Foreigners." It is also worthy of remark that they were the first body of Englishmen who were ever allowed to establish a Protestant cemetery in any port in the Spanish dominions. The burial-ground of this small community is at the western extremity of the town, and was bought and enclosed by the Factory within a few years after they had established themselves in Port Orotava.

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During the latter years of the last century and the early ones of the present, the entire import, and the greatest part of the export, trade of these islands, with the exception only of that arising from the Spanish West Indies and South America, may be said to have been concentrated in El Puerto. It is true that Santa Cruz was the principal town of the island, being at that time, as it is to this day, the seat of the military and financial government of the Canaries, but there was scarcely ever any mercantile house there unconnected with those in Orotava, where their principal affairs were transacted. Indeed, there was scarcely any business done in Santa Cruz beyond supplying such ships of war, Indiamen, and other merchantmen as put in there in search of the provisions of which they were in need. Port Orotava, meanwhile, having the trade almost entirely in her own hands, furnished the islands with such articles of foreign growth and manufacture as they required.

The island of Teneriffe continued to be the only one of the islands open to the foreign import trade till 1809, when Grand Canary was admitted to a share of the privileges bestowed on her sister island. But before this period the number of the British merchants had begun to diminish greatly, and when this change took place, they could

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scarcely be said to exist as a distinct community. The smaller traders had been unable to maintain their position in face of the competition into which they were forced with the larger and more wealthy houses, and they had given up business one after another. Others had withdrawn from the country at different periods when England and Spain were ranged in hostility against each other; and not a few Irish and Scotch Catholics, having foresworn their nation, became naturalised subjects of Spain. Still, the town had been in a prosperous condition, and had gone on increasing in extent and population, the latter, in 1811, amounting to about 3,600 souls.

But in the autumn of the same year, a melancholy change came over this hitherto populous and prosperous little town. It was devastated by a pestilence. The yellow fever, which for the second time had been committing frightful havoc in Santa Cruz, unfortunately found its way to Port Orotava, carrying with it the sword of death, by which many were laid low during a period of no less than four months. On the first alarm, and previous to the establishment of sanitary cordons by the adjacent towns and villages, almost all the inhabitants who were able to do so fled from the town, and about eight hundred took refuge in the higher

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districts of the island, where the fever was never known to penetrate. But of the two thousand, eight hundred, whom circumstances compelled to remain and brave the angel of death, seven hundred and thirty-one were carried off by the fever, and the voice of desolation and weeping only was heard in the streets of Orotava.

The effects of this disastrous visitation were felt for a considerable time. The prosperity of the town, and the commercial spirit of its inhabitants, had received a check from which they did not speedily recover. However, in the course of time, the vestments of its mourning were shaken off; it began again to exhibit something like its former activity; its streets were once more active with commerce; and the inhabitants who had fled to the hills had all returned to resume their former occupations.

In the years 1812 and 1815, Port Orotava may be said to have been at the height of its commercial activity. The wines of the island were in high favour, and between the two years last mentioned, from eight to eleven thousand pipes were annually shipped from it to Great Britain and America, the East and West Indies, and other places. Orchilla weed, and other articles of island produce, were exported in considerable quantities. The

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value of the imports from the various countries that traded with the Canary Islands was also very considerable.

The declaration of peace in Europe, in 1815, gave another severe blow to the trade of Teneriffe, from which it can hardly be said to have ever recovered. After that period the wine trade gradually fell to a very low figure, and with the appearance of that fatal disease in the vines which has been experienced for the last four successive years, the average annual produce fell from twenty-four or twenty-five thousand, to barely a twentieth part of that quantity. Besides, in more recent times, Santa Cruz became a serious rival to Orotava; various large mercantile establishments, doing a considerable amount of business, having been established, one after another, in the capital. The few remaining merchants in Orotava soon lost all their former commercial spirit, and one mercantile disaster was followed by another, until El Puerto sank almost to its former insignificance, and the era of its activity was brought to an end.

The once busy town has now a very desolate and lonely appearance; the grass grows freely in the principal streets, and the sight of a human being is so rare, that a cannon ball might sweep from one end of the town to the other without doing any

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injury. There is nothing stirring all day long, and except the north-east wind, which blows right bravely through the town for nearly nine months in the year, there is nothing to make itself either felt or seen.

The insides of the houses present a very different appearance from those of any other part of the island. There is a good deal of English comfort to be found in them, and in the furniture with which they are decorated may be observed an agreeable combination of Spanish simplicity and English luxury. There is even something English in the habits and manners of the inmates—something that is very perceptibly different from the appearance and customs of the other inhabitants of the islands. On entering a house, one is invariably received, in Port Orotava, in a kind, courteous, and well-bred manner, and a stranger may always depend on a warm and hearty welcome.

Notwithstanding the dull and sombre aspect of the town on ordinary occasions, it sometimes still assumes an appearance of its former vitality and gaiety, although not in the way of business. There are so many fiestas or holidays, which the inhabitants consider it almost or altogether a matter of conscience to keep, that the poor deserted town appears nearly as often under its gay as under its

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gloomy aspect. Were a stranger to arrive in the midst of some of these frequent festivities, he would imagine it to be one of the most lively spots on the face of the earth. One of these festivals is regularly held on the 23rd of June. As this happens to be St. John's day, all the inhabitants annually meet to do honour to the Baptist, some from one motive, and some from another—some from the spirit of religion, more in the ignorance of superstition, and probably the greatest number of all with the hope of amusement. One who has seen Orotava only when it is dull and sombre would be quite amazed by its aspect on the eve previous to St John's day. Its streets then become as busy as they were previously deserted, and the silent air rings with the clatter of a multitude of joyous voices. The country people, all in their brightest costumes, are hurrying into the town, laden with branches of the palm and of other trees, and with innumerable baskets full of the most exquisite flowers, all fresh and fragrant. These are intended as presents for their various employers and acquaintances bearing the name of Juan or Juana, and as offerings to the saint in whose honour the festival is held.

As night gradually closes in, and darkness deepens over the earth, the scene becomes almost

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magical. The whole face of the country appears spangled over with joyous lights, and their gleam is reflected on the dark vault of heaven. Hundreds are now carrying lighted torches about, and numerous bonfires have sprung up into a blaze almost simultaneously. These all mark the dwelling of various persons bearing the same name, that of the saint. No more beautiful or interesting sight, on a dark night, can be imagined, than the appearance of the various fires at different distances from the spectator, the nearest throwing up a bright and ruddy glare, and the more remote gradually diminishing, until those high up in the mountains appear like the distant twinkle of the glow-worm in the grass. They are observed until the flame gradually diminishes in size and intensity, the fuel is burnt out, and the shade of night is again drawn darkly over the scene.

The people then retire to their several homes, but not to rest, for a night of labour is before them, or at any rate before their domestics. The greater part of the silent hours is spent in constructing out of the branches and flowers with which they have been provided, arches and other ornaments to hang about the doors of the sleeping-rooms of Don Juan or Doña Juana, or of any little Juanita that the various families may be blessed

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with. The designs are often very pretty, and the palm leaves, the branches, and the flowers, are arranged together in many a beautiful and tasteful shape, equal judgment being displayed in their disposal in different parts of the house. Then presents of various kinds, such as fruit and cakes, and sometimes even live pigeons and rabbits, are attached to them, and complimentary verses in honour of the foresaid Juans, Juanas and Juanita's, are fixed to the doors of their apartments. All these honours, even though anticipated, are expected to elicit an abundance of looks and words of gratified surprise when the individual for whom they are intended makes his or her appearance in the morning. It makes no difference that he may have been kept awake the greater part of the night by the constant hammering and the noisy din of preparation. It is intended that he should be surprised, and he is expected to show that he is so.

These customs are not confined to St John's day, although parts of the celebration are peculiar to it. The eves and the days of St. Anthony, St. Peter, St. Iago, and Santa Ana are all ushered in with similar honours and rejoicings. But there are certain superstitious practices, particularly that of divination, in the genuineness of which all the

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lower class, and many even in the middle ranks of life, entirely believe, which are confined to the celebration of St. John's eve. On this occasion, for instance, all unmarried women, if so disposed, and most of them are so, may ascertain with infallible certainty (at least so they believe) who is to be their future husband, and what are their prospects of happiness in that state into which they all hope to enter. The following is the method by which they succeed in obtaining this information. As soon as the blaze of the first bonfire that is kindled becomes visible, the aspirant to the blessings of the matrimonial life takes her place at the window, and listens with the most eager attention in the hope of hearing some of the persons that are passing along the street at the time pronounce a Christian name. Whatever that name may be, supposing her patience has been rewarded by hearing one, her future husband will assuredly bear the same.

A second act of divination on St. John's eve is thus performed. A freshly laid egg is procured, and the shell being broken, the contents are poured into a glassful of pure water. This is left exposed to the dew throughout the night. As soon as the morning of St. John's day dawns, the lady gets up, and at once proceeds to observe the appearance

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presented by her divining egg. While she is doing so, she recites the following verses:—

San Juan bendito,
Por ser tu dia,
Di que sirva
La fortuna mia.

Blessed St. John,
Since this is thy day,
What will my lot be,
Come tell me, I pray.

In answer to the petition conveyed in these lines, St. John is supposed to coagulate the water into some shape indicative of the trade or profession of her future spouse; and it is by no means difficult, with the exercise of a little ingenuity, to interpret a shape that may stand for anything or nothing into something accordant with the wishes or expectations of the divining damsel. If her interpretation should not be verified by the great event, she wisely concludes that she has not properly observed the phenomenon, that she has not acted up to the Baconian rule that all appearances should be taken into account before coming to a conclusion, and thus the credit of the saint is saved.

Another method by which information of the same important nature may be obtained is by taking a nosegay at dawn of day, and throwing it, as certain

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purists elegantly express it, promiscuously into the street. The young lady remains anxiously on the watch until some individual picks up her flower, and having as soon as possible ascertained his name and avocation, she is fully convinced that he whom she is destined to marry will either bear the same name or follow the same occupation.

But accidents of various kinds may happen to the precious nosegay on which so much depends, and these also are subject to certain rules of interpretation, for fate has strange ways, as an Irishman might say, of giving us an insight into the back-scenes of futurity. For instance, if a pig on a foraging expedition should be wandering through the streets at the very moment the flowers are cast forth, and, in the belief that they were kindly thrown as a *bonne bouche* to him, should speedily dispose of them, what would that indicate? That she is to remain in a state of single blessedness? Oh no; but only that, as she is not to be so fortunate as to obtain a Spaniard for her husband, she must make up her mind to be satisfied with a Portuguese one, for in this not very complimentary way is such an alliance indicated. Again, without giving him time to pick up the nosegay, the passer-by is frequently stopped, and his name verbally inquired. In this case, his name will have the

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same significance as if he had actually picked up the flower.

Among the questions put to the oracular St. John, there is one which is accompanied with certain ceremonies, the performance of which is occasionally attended with dangerous, and even fatal, consequences. A large pan is procured, and being filled with water, it is left exposed in the open air throughout the night. On the dawn of St. John's day it is looked into, in the anxious hope of beholding the spectator's own face reflected in the water. If the distinct reflection is not perceptible, it is regarded as a positive and unfailing sign that he or she will not live throughout the year. This conviction, acting upon weak and disordered minds, ready to give credence to every indication that their superstitious awe has invested with some solemnity, has been known to produce the result so much dreaded, even although the failure of the experiment could be satisfactorily explained by natural causes, as, for example, when some accidental circumstance has disturbed the transparency of the water, and rendered it unfit to return a clear and faithful reflection.

St. John's day is also celebrated for certain cures, which, as the inhabitants of the island believe, can be most efficaciously performed on

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this day. Some of them are of a very curious nature. In the case of children suffering from hernia, the following proceedings are taken, some of them being of a very round-about nature. A man, rejoicing of course in the saint's name of Juan, and three women, named respectively Isabel, Ana, and Juana, are entrusted with the ceremonies, which must be regularly performed in order to effect the desired object. In the first place, the man takes a long green rush into his hands, and, without splitting it entirely, opens it up lengthways to the end, by which he continues to hold it, while Juana spins from a distaff a thread of flax, and Isabel and Ana pass the infant, entirely undressed, three times from the one to the other, making it pass each time through the opening in the rush. While they are doing this, it is necessary to continue reciting certain prayers, without which the charm is ineffective. By the time the infant has been passed the orthodox number of times from hand to hand, Juana has finished the spinning of her thread, and taking the rush from the man, she binds it carefully round and round again with the thread of flax. The important matter is so to bind together the edges of the rush, that they may be entirely reunited, and grow together again as perfectly and symmetrically

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as if they had never been separated. If this is successfully done, and the rush grows as desired, the infant patient may be expected to baffle the power of the disease, and to be restored to perfect health before next St. John's day. If, however, after a fair trial during twelve months, the expected result is not realized, the case is considered hopeless, and the child may be resigned to the fate which there is now no means of averting. The lower classes in the Canary Islands, and especially the country people, place a reliance that nothing can shake in the verity of these indications. Their faith in the rush is irresistible. However absurd this may appear to the educated among ourselves, and, indeed, it is to be hoped, to the majority of our population, all who have resided in the Canaries, and who have been witnesses of the ceremonies of St. John's day, can bear testimony to the sincere conviction with which such ridiculous rites are performed by the people, and to the anxiety with which they look forward to the consequences that are to follow.

They also believe that the virtues which are so efficacious on that day may be extended to their flocks. In the early morning, the goatherds bring down their charge from the mountains, and bathe them in the sea, as a preventive against disease.

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This is supposed to be an old Guanche custom, though we know of no records from which any information on the subject can be obtained, and all that is now known is that the custom can be traced back from year to year for a considerable period. There are also church services on the occasion, after the termination of which, the beach is crowded with numbers of people. As they stroll about in their parti-coloured robes, and give themselves up to the enjoyment of the hour, the sands appear to be covered by one continuous pic-nic party. The peasantry even venture out to sea in innumerable boats, with which the bay is entirely covered. Having enjoyed themselves throughout the day in such a manner as their several dispositions prompt, they wind up the proceedings in the afternoon and evening with a merry dance and a noisy jollification at the house of some hospitable host whose doors are open to all comers.

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CHAPTER II.

The Storm of 1826—The Barrancos—Ships driven from their Anchorage—Intense Darkness—Devastation of the Valley of Orotava—Wreck of a French East Indiaman—La Plaza de la Constitucion—Destruction of the Battery San Carlos—The Fearful Loss of Life—Effects of the Hurricane in other Parts of the Island—The Loss of Lives and Property at Santa Cruz—Liberal Subscription in London for the Sufferers by this Disaster—Apathy of the Spanish Government and People—Upper and Lower Realixo—The Ravines—Final Submission of the Guanche Menceys at Upper Realixo—The Patriotism and Sufferings of the Aborigines—The Modorra—Discovery of the Dried and Shrivelled Corpses of the Guanches in Mountain Caves—The Ruined Convent and the Ancient Nun—Ycod el Alto—Savage Dogs—Frightful Ravine—An Awkward Position.

IN the year 1826, the Canary Islands suffered under a dreadful visitation, the effects of which, though felt to a greater or less extent in all, were experienced with the greatest severity in Teneriffe.

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The morning of Tuesday, the 7th of November, broke in with a strong breeze of wind from the south-east in Orotava. At 9 A.M. it began to rain smartly in the town, and, as was indicated by the heaviness of the clouds that hung over the higher parts of the country in the interior, the rain was falling with even greater violence there. In about an hour after the commencement of the storm, for such it was, the barrancos or ravines that bound both extremities of the town, were running with great force, and all the vessels which were at the island at the time were driven, by the violence of the wind and the agitation of the waves, from their anchorage, and carried far out to sea. In the course of the day the weather continued getting worse and worse. There was not even a moment's intermission in its fury. At sunset it began to blow a perfect hurricane, and the rain descended in even greater quantities. The storm continued equally violent throughout the whole night. Although the moon was in its second quarter, the darkness was unusually intense, adding to the disastrous state of affairs, both at sea and on land. At 2 o'clock, A.M., on the 8th, the wind, in a single instant, and without the intervention of the slightest lull in its violence, flew suddenly round from the south-east to due north, and seemed to

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blow, if possible, even more dreadfully than before, both the quantity and the force of the rain being apparently increased rather than diminished by the unexpected change.

When morning dawned, and it became light enough to look about and see what had happened, it soon became apparent that the injury that had been inflicted, and the loss both of life and property that had been sustained, were very great. On the north side of the island of Teneriffe, in particular, the loss of lives had been very melancholy, and property to an immense amount, particularly in that part comprised within the valley of Orotava, had been completely destroyed. A more disastrous scene of ruin and destruction it was impossible to imagine.

On looking towards the shore, the wreck of a French East Indiaman was discovered on the rocks, with the boiling and agitated waves dashing fiercely over it. It was lying at the distance of a furlong from the landing-place. Her crew and passengers, with the exception of four seamen, had all met with a watery grave. The survivors of this melancholy disaster were found clinging to the roof of a house, towards which they had been dashed by the resistless breakers immediately after the unfortunate ship had been thrown headlong on the rocks. From the

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wretched sailors it was learned that the vessel was bound from Bordeaux to the Isle of Bourbon with a valuable cargo, and that she was no less than two hundred miles out of her reckoning when the light of torches moving about the town gave them the first intimation of danger, and in five minutes all was over with them. The captain and fourteen sailors and passengers had perished.

The Plaza de la Constitucion was like a small lake, having been deluged, not only with the water which descended from above, but also with that which had rolled in from the sea. The houses that surrounded it all appeared to rest on the water as if they were afloat. The upper part of the square was encumbered with immense quantities of earth, rocks, trees, broken furniture, doors, shutters, and other wrecks of the houses that had been dashed down by the invading torrents of water. The barrancos were now running with inconceivable fury, the resistless waters hurling before them in their course rocks of vast size, lofty trees, that had been torn up by their roots, and fragments of all kinds of wreck. In the course of the forenoon, great apprehension was entertained that the one to the eastward of the town would carry away the street called La Loya, of which it had already destroyed the two outermost houses. The two ravines

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enclosing the town on its eastern and western sides and the road to the south being impassable from the quantity of wreck and ruins of all kinds heaped up in them, and from the water rushing along with great violence, prevented those who were desirous of obtaining information from learning any particulars throughout the day regarding the amount of damage sustained beyond the precincts of the place itself. Many houses were washed away; others were completely filled with immense quantities of sand, which smothered many of their inmates during the sleep which was destined to have no waking; several vineyards were destroyed by the furious overflow of the waters which overwhelmed them; at the eastermost barranco, the swelling flood was carried against the four-gun battery, San Carlos, that stood near the seaside, into which three out of the four soldiers who guarded it were driven along with the guns under their charge, not a vestige being left to mark where it had stood. On this side, as well as at the other extremity of the town, at the castle of St. Philip, the boundary of the barranco was extended more than three hundred yards beyond its former limits by the quantity of stones and earth washed into the sea.

On the 9th the weather gave the first indications

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of moderation. In the course of the day it had calmed down so far as to make it possible to obtain information regarding the lives that had been lost in the adjacent parts of the valley. The opportunity was also taken to collect and bury the numerous corpses that were found on the wash of the sea at the outlets of the barrancos. An immense number of carcasses of horses, oxen, and other cattle were also found heaped up at the same places, and these were all burnt, and their ashes scattered to the winds. The devastation in the country had been awful; entire estates had been utterly ruined, their dwelling-houses washed away, and stores full of new wine completely destroyed. An official account of the losses sustained in the four jurisdictions into which the valley of Orotava is divided was afterwards published. According to this statement, the truth of which may be relied on, two hundred and twenty-five houses were destroyed, and the lives of two hundred and thirty-five human beings were lost. The number of cattle destroyed amounted to eight hundred and four.

In other parts of the north side of the island, the destruction was also very great. The damage done to the hamlets of La Guancha and Ycod el Alto was so great that it was almost tantamount to their utter ruin, and fifty-one of the inhabitants

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perished. At San Juan de la Rambla, a whole row of houses was swept away at once, and thirteen persons met their death among the ruins. The Augustine convent was included in the list of property destroyed at Ycod, where several houses were also levelled with the ground, and much landed property was laid waste. At the village of La Guerra, a Tuscan schooner, on its voyage to Puerto Rico, was driven on shore and became a complete wreck, the lives of its crew and passengers being sacrificed to the rage of the elements. Many estates about Laguna were carried away, and an immense quantity of valuable property was for ever lost to its owners.

On the south side of the island, Santa Cruz suffered severely from the effects of this unparalleled storm. Part of the battery of San Miguel and two twenty-four pounders were carried into the sea, and a small redoubt suffered as severely as if it had been the long-continued mark of cannon-shot. Three brigs, two of them Spanish, and one American, were also utterly wrecked at the same place, unfortunately with the loss of many valuable lives. Candelaria suffered very severely. Many houses, the battery with all its inmates, and the Dominican convent were carried into the sea. The celebrated chapel to which so many of the inhabitants used to

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resort, attracted by the very ancient image of the Virgin which was sheltered within its walls, and was so long an object of the superstitious veneration of the natives, was swept away and completely disappeared. The amount of property destroyed in the island of Teneriffe, according to the most trustworthy estimates, exceeded half a million of dollars.

All the other islands, as already mentioned, participated in the ruin and destruction caused by this eventful storm; but, in comparison with Teneriffe, their loss of life and property was to no great extent. In Grand Canary, two boats engaged in the fishing traffic were driven to sea, and with their crews, amounting in all to about forty men, were never more heard of.

The information of this unparalleled disaster was received with great sympathy in England, and a liberal subscription was raised in London with the view of affording relief to those who had sustained the most serious losses, and who were in a state of the greatest distress in consequence of this heartrending calamity. What a contrast there was between the generous conduct of the English nation and the cold-hearted apathy of their own fellow-countrymen. I cannot blush for humanity when I remember the profuse and voluntary benevolence of so many

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feeling hearts in my own nation; but I do blush for Spain, when truth compels me to state that neither the Spanish Government, nor any of its subjects in the Peninsula, ever came forward in any way to relieve the sufferings of their island brethren. Their hearts and their purses were equally closed to that cry of distress that came across the ocean from their own distant islands of the sea. If their priests ever allowed them to read the parable of the good Samaritan, they had read it in vain.

Looking from El Puerto to the western extremity of the valley, two little towns may be perceived, nestling high up among the beautiful wooded hills under the Tagaiya range. These are upper and lower Realixo, the church spire of which is also seen clearly defined in the transparent atmosphere. They are situated about the distance of a mile from each other, and between them is a deep barranco, by which they are separated. Down this ravine the agitated waters of a fierce mountain torrent rush resistlessly, while its steep sides are adorned with the sweetest scented flowers, which are matted together in inextricable confusion, each succeeding season of the year the flowers of various kinds following each other, and giving a gay and pleasing aspect to a scene that has also its wild features. These beautiful ravines constitute a re-

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markable feature in the scenery of Teneriffe. They may be observed intersecting the island in every direction, generally springing from the Peak, or from some of the other high lands, and continuing uninterruptedly down to the sea-shore. The two towns above mentioned are poor and insignificant in themselves, and of no commercial importance; but they are invested with a considerable amount of interest in consequence of the important place which they hold in the historical annals of the island. The ground on which the upper town is now built was the scene of the final submission of the Guanche Menceys, or petty kings, who had longest protracted their resistance to the invaders, with whom some of their equals had formed alliance. The aborigines are known to have suffered great losses in the defence of the island, having been more than decimated by the losses they sustained in their successive encounters with the strangers. Great numbers of the captives that had been taken by the stronger party had also been sold into captivity in Europe. Nor had their sufferings from famine been less. The sword or the pestilence could not have cut them down more remorselessly. The latter cause of disaster had originated in their inability to cultivate the land which had been overrun by the enemy.

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The strange and terrible epidemic called the Modorra also fearfully thinned the already greatly decreased numbers in their several tribes. The ravages of this disease were very fatal. It was a sort of drowsiness or lethargy, accompanied by a state of melancholy so profound and hopeless, that they sat down in their huts, by the roadside, and in the fields, and died by hundreds. Most ample and convincing evidence of the exceedingly fatal results of this visitation has been obtained in recent times by the discovery, in the central range of mountains, of several caverns filled with the dried and shrivelled corpses of the natives in a sitting posture. They were found in a position which indicated clearly enough the state in which they were when they resignedly sat down to await the coming of the dread messenger of death. Their arms were crossed over their knees, and their heads reclined upon their arms,—a melancholy sight, to behold so many human beings, ranged stiff and cold, still telling the story of the sadness and despair that welcomed death as the most desired relief.

On the site, then, of the upper town, the camp of the enemy, guarded by the most renowned, skilled, and seasoned soldiers of Europe, was established, its position marked by the royal standard of Spain that drooped on the flag-staff, only occasion-

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ally expanding to the gentle breeze its ample folds. With crushed hopes, with no expectation of being able to resist the power of the European conqueror, the last and noblest of the Guanche kings, with a scanty remaining force, retreated to the lofty crest above, to brood in sadness and discouragement over the strength of the enemy, his own baffled efforts, and the ruin of his loved and smiling land. On the eve of that fatal morrow which was to behold the utter destruction of the last remnant of his power, the death, dispersion, or captivity of his warrior chiefs, Bencomo sat watching the glimmering camp-fires, their lurid glare communicating a more fierce and sinister expression to the hard countenances of the tried soldiers who were grouped around them. If the island king lay down to rest at all that night, sleep must have come late to his eyes. What a contrast to the fierce passions and hopeless despair of man was afforded by the calm sublimity of nature, the stillness of the almost tropical night, the stars shedding their soft and radiant light over the valley, the gentle ripple of the sea, whose slightly agitated waves sparkled in the moonlight like the scales on the coils of a snake. Then over some regions the mighty volcanic mountains threw their gigantic shadows, leaving them in a state of darkness and coldness that was only partially em-

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blematic of the hopeless gloom that paralysed the energies of the Guanche tribes; and the light tremors of the feathery palm, as it quivered in the gentle breeze, was but a mockery of the throbbing fever that agitated the heart and soul of the troubled barbarian king. His peace and hope for ever vanished, did he now think how soon he was to be a helpless captive in the hands of the Spaniard, destined to be exhibited as a humbled warrior before the exulting court of the monarch of Spain? The morrow came, and witnessed the speedy defeat of the defenders of their native island. The king, his lovely daughter Dacilla, and the few retainers who still remained about his person were made prisoners, compelled to embrace the religion of their conquerors, and baptised in the Christian faith on the very spot where that distant spire indicates that the first parochial church in the island was erected.

In commemoration of the above event, General Lugo founded the two towns respectively called Upper and Lower Realixo. Beyond their historical interest, there is little in these towns to excite the curiosity of the visitor. There are one or two very ancient convents, whose walls are now crumbling to the ground. In one of them is a very old nun, who seems almost as ancient as the place itself, and who, as far as appearance indicates, may drag

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out her miraculous existence as long as the sacred walls among which she is accustomed to wander, and which, when entire, as she doubtless remembers, were devoted to other purposes than those by which they are now desecrated. In fact, the convent is now devoted to a multiplicity of purposes. Pigs may be seen grubbing up roots among the ruins; fowls picking up seeds; and numbers of children are constantly at play throughout the long day, making the place, once dedicated to the solemn quiet of religion, resound with their cries. The empty cells, which were formerly the dormitories of pious nuns, are now transformed into store-houses for dried figs, Indian corn, and anything that can be stowed away in them. The old nun, who has probably seen the full round of a century, can still recollect the companions of her consecrated youth, who were then girls like herself, but have been spared the sight of their desecrated sanctuary. I always look upon these fragmentary monuments of other times with a feeling of melancholy; but they are in perfect keeping with the state of Catholicism in those countries at least, where, without pronouncing any opinion upon its merits or demerits, it is now in a state of decay.

I soon managed to get on friendly terms with the poor old nun. She was a worthy creature, and I

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often used to enjoy some easy conversation with her. Although one might have imagined her heart to be buried in recollections of the past, she still had a quick eye to the wants of the present also. We never met but she had some new commission with which to entrust me. She would be in want, for instance, of fine linen, &c., which she was anxious I should procure for her from England, along with anything that might be coming to myself; for, as she truly remarked, things were very dear in Realixo, and she had not much money to expend. Her income was indeed very small, being no more, as she informed me herself, than fourpence a-day. In such circumstance, it certainly was desirable that she should procure what was wanted wherever it could be obtained at the most moderate price.

I have already often referred to the view of the valley of Orotava from different points. It is always beautiful, and every new prospect, from some station not before tried, only impresses the mind more and more with a sense of its unequalled loveliness. I had now an opportunity of looking down upon it from the road that winds with many a rapid turning up the face of the Tagaiya mountains to Ycod el Alto. I shall not attempt to describe it. In many respects I should only repeat

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what I have already said in former descriptions of it, and even the most effective word-painting would certainly fall far short of its transcendent beauty. I have often been highly amused when hearing people attempting to describe its appearance by comparing it with every imaginable object with which beautiful views are generally compared. But how seldom did their comparisons really bear any resemblance to the reality, or convey any idea of it? In many cases, indeed, they were quite ridiculous. I have heard one lady express her opinion that it was exactly like a Turkey carpet or a beautiful piece of embroidery. Another rather thought that a profusely ornamented India shawl would convey a good representation of it. All I can say of it is, that it is truly lovely and delightful. A more brilliant, sparkling, sunny scene is not to be found on the face of the earth, for where else will you see such a combination of the beauties of nature, with its variegated flowers, its trees with their gorgeous foliage, and its enamelled slopes, with its towns and villages revealing themselves here and there amid the forests and gardens, and the church spires glittering in the bright rays of a noonday sun? From the eminence on which I am standing, we look abroad on corn-fields with their rich crops of

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golden grain, upon vineyards, with the ripening bunches of the luscious grape, and upon peaceful hermitages, embowered amid leaves, and shaded by the abundant foliage of the dragon or the palm tree. Then, even although I could never tire of gazing upon the rich luxuriance of nature, what an ever-pleasing change to the eye it was to turn to the glowing expanse of the sea, shining like a polished mirror, the numerous boats lying motionless on the waters, and the boatmen resting on their oars, while the gentle waves broke in light foam on the many jutting headlands that stood as a bulwark to the invading march of the ocean.

However, we must again make our way to Ycod el Alto, which is situated at the top of this road, and may often be seen enveloped in a dense mist. It is only a poor village, exceedingly dilapidated in appearance, with a small and miserable population, whose wretched huts can hardly be distinguished from the ground on which they are built. When one reaches the desolate and ruined-looking place, he cannot help experiencing a disagreeable revulsion of feeling. The aspect of everything is gloomy, cold, and hopeless. There are no pleasant embowered cottages, no welcoming voices, no benevolent looks, no merry children. The only welcome you will most probably receive will be

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from some savage dogs, who will fly out and bark fiercely at you, while you cannot help trembling with dread at their fierce appearance, as they station themselves in much nearer proximity to your person than you consider desirable. Their incessant clamour soon rouses numbers of the beggars and children who abound here, and they precede you on the path, inviting you to follow, as if with the design of pointing out to you some remarkable prospect. We were, at first, at a loss to account for this unusual circumstance, for our expectation was that they would have surrounded us, eagerly demanding alms. However, we soon had an explanation of their peculiar conduct. We had not gone very far, before we were compelled to come to a halt, as we found we had reached the brink of a tremendous ravine, on which we were now standing. Extremely wise in their generation, these exacting savages had the tact to await us there in preference to any other position, in the conviction that, on finding ourselves in such a predicament, we should be much more ready to open our purse-strings, and more liberal in distributing their contents among the haggard and noisy petitioners. Their calculation, probably, was founded on good grounds, for there are few who, on finding themselves unexpectedly in such a dilemma in a

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strange country, would not take the easiest way to get out of it.

When we were able to take a calm view of the scene before us, it certainly exhibited some very remarkable features, and was well worth undergoing some uneasiness for the sake of seeing it. There were, first of all, two great rents in the earth, springing from near the road, along which we had to pass. As they were filled with a vapoury mist when we first looked down into them, we regarded them with a certain degree of dread and uncertainty. But as the fog was, fortunately, dispersed by the powerful rays of the sun while we were still upon the spot, we had an opportunity of seeing, before we left, what the mist had obscured. And truly, never did the rising of the curtain in a brilliant theatre disclose to the eager eyes of some expectant child a more brilliant and enchanting scene than that which was unveiled before us, as if by magic, when the vapours cleared away. The ravine immediately beneath us was thickly wooded with the Spanish chestnut. The rocky sides which projected here and there, beyond the trees, in all their naked ruggedness, were hung with garlands of the most brilliant creepers. The ravine was so profound, that even yet we could not penetrate its misty depths, but the occasional sparkling of the

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waters of a winding stream indicated where the bottom was. Above our heads, crowning this awful abyss, the vapours still lingered, although they were evidently destined to disperse before the powerful rays of the noonday sun. As the light broke in among them, it diffused around a beautiful rosy gleam, the tints of which assumed a pearly softness, as the fog was lifted, almost like a transparent gauze curtain, from the earth. The light became more and more irresistible every moment, the last vestige of the encompassing fog was dispersed, and the whole wonderful scene was spread out before us in all its magical beauty, while in the distance, against the intense azure sky, the Peak rose, in its unparalleled magnificence, like a Titanic pillar to heaven.

But what of the beggars all this time? When we had time to look towards them, the expression of their faces was so plain, that we could read their thoughts as clearly as if they were printed in a book, for the eye has a sort of daguerrotypic power by which it can faithfully transmit the thoughts that are passing in one soul, and impress them with unfailing certainty on another. What, then, said the speaking visage, the expressive eyes of those around us who were watching our every motion? No manager of a theatre, no peripatetic showman, ever

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declared in more unmistakable terms, all this is my property, it is an undertaking got up by me for your amusement, the scenery, the decorations, and the accessories, ourselves included, have all been unveiled and displayed for your especial gratification, and now we expect your cuartos in return. What reply could be given to an appeal, the argument of which was so irresistible?

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CHAPTER III.

The Farm-house—The Medianero—Primitive Supper—The Evening Blessing—The Distaff—Conversation with my Host—Ignorance of the Peasantry—The Language of Flowers—The Sprig of Thyme—Rosemary—The Conversation of Lovers—Popping the Question—What it is "to give Pumpkins"—Condition of Agriculturists in Teneriffe—Cochineal Plantations—Tenants at Will—Marriages in the Agricultural Class—Contrast of Scenery—Ycod—Clean and Pleasant Appearance of the Town—Fountains in the Midst of Trees—The Streets and Shops of Ycod—The Hotel—Lilliputian Landlady—French Travelling Merchants—The Suburbs of Ycod—The Wealthy Proprietors in the Neighbourhood—The Dripping Cavern—The Carnival at Ycod—The Cuadrillo—Popular Spanish Dances—The Ruins of Garachico—Its Destruction by Lava—The Town Rebuilt—Conventual Buildings—Family Friars—Strange Story of One—The Curse on Garachico—Its Fulfilment.

On the side of this ravine we observed a house, built, according to all appearance externally, in a very rambling sort of style. As we perceived that

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the inmates had been attracted to the window by our presence, we thought we could not have a better opportunity of obtaining quarters for the night, and asked if we could be allowed to put up there. We considered ourselves fortunate when our entreaty met with a prompt assent. Proceeding immediately, therefore, to unload our camel, the crowd of beggars looked on with wondering eyes while article after article with which we had taken care to provide ourselves against any emergency was brought to the ground. We had even been so provident as to bring our beds with us. When these were revealed, it was to the undisguised astonishment and admiration of the surrounding crowd of ragamuffins, old and young. On entering the house, we had still to go through the ordeal of a good deal of catechising. Everything that excited the wonder of these primitive people, either about ourselves or about any object we had brought with us, had to be explained, and when no more questions could be asked, we were invited to join the family circle at supper. This offer we were very glad to accept for two good reasons, the first and principal being because we were hungry after our day's exertions in pleasure-seeking and sight-seeing, and the second, because we were desirous of observing the manners and customs of the people among the

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class to which our worthy host and his family belonged.

Our host was the farmer, or "medianero," of a gentleman of property, who resides in the town of El Puerto. We found that he was disposed to oblige us not only by extending his hospitality for the night, but by doing anything else he could for our gratification, answering such questions as we in our curiosity put, and showing us freely whatever we were anxious to see. The first sight of him, indeed, gave us a very favourable impression of the man. We had been shown into a large kitchen when he entered. He had evidently been out shooting, as his gun was in his hand, and two fine dogs were following close at his heels. He had also two rabbits in his hand, the result doubtless of his sport. He was a fine, stalwart, hale old man, dressed in the ancient costume of the island, and one evidently disposed to maintain inviolate all the old, simple, and primitive customs of the people, as we saw enough to prove, for we had our eyes open, and were observing all that took place, a penalty that all who receive curious travellers, must make up their minds to submit to.

Having laid aside his gun, our host took his seat at the head of a long narrow table, along which, on benches, about twenty of his farm-labourers had

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ranged themselves, all, after their day's work, prepared to do ample justice to the meal, frugal in quality, but abundant in quantity, before them. It consisted of three large dishes of some kind of pottage, which were placed on the table, the several dishes at equal distances from each other, so that every one might be conveniently supplied. The good old custom of pronouncing a blessing was first observed, and then all went to work with coarse wooden spoons, six or seven eating out of the same dish till they had disposed of its contents. There was besides a small table arranged for the accommodation of three, with an ample dish of the same simple kind of fare, and similar wooden spoons upon it. This was intended for the hostess, myself, and her son, who from the hour of his birth had been regarded in the light of a gentleman, enjoyed the privilege of dining at a table separate from that at which the labourers were seated, and was considered good company for any visitor. The mode of partaking of our food was certainly somewhat new to me, and although I cannot say I think it the most desirable, still one must accommodate himself to the different customs of the countries in which he travels, and avoid as much as possible offending the prejudices of the people. I therefore thought it

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advisable to do as the others did, and as every one took his spoonful in turn, I also waited patiently for mine as it came at each little interval.

The master and his labourers in the meantime had finished their supper, and were waiting till we also got to an end of it. Then all stood up, and joined with the host in a thanksgiving. An Ave Maria was said, all joining in the responses. On the conclusion of this duty, the servants left the apartment, going out one by one, each asking a blessing of the hostess, and kissing her hand as he passed. I looked on the proceedings with much interest; and perhaps the mutual kind feelings which seemed to connect master and mistress with their labourers and servants touched me the more, because it afforded such a strong contrast to the state of things among ourselves, where, even in many remote country places, this sentiment of mutual confidence and good-will has almost entirely disappeared, and the line of demarcation is so strongly drawn that one would scarcely think that both belonged to the same race of beings.

The whole scene in the kitchen, even although it took place in an almost tropical latitude, reminded me as much as any scene I had ever witnessed, of all that is most simple, peculiar, and primitive in a Dutch painting. The fitful glare of the pitch

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pine-torches which were burning in the crevices of the wall lighted up the corners to which the dogs had retired to gnaw their bones, while the chickens and various other little animals that kindness and familiarity had made tame, came in to pick up whatever happened to fall in their way. There was also an old hag, a domestic of some sort, who, totally regardless of all that was going on around her, continued unweariedly to discharge her own duties, scrubbing the pots and pans, or stirring her pottage with most untiring zeal.

Nor did the hostess allow herself to be idle any more than her servants. As soon as supper was finished, her distaff was in her hands again, and she was busily engaged in spinning her flaxen thread. In the meantime, as the host was disposed to be communicative, we entered into conversation with him. We not only learned much that we desired to know regarding the people, the country, and the customs; but we also made him acquainted with much that was new to him, the account of which filled him with undisguised amazement. I descanted on the wonders of railways, and the mysterious communings of distant friends by means of the electric telegraph, these astonishing appliances of modern science which were so far beyond all that he was in

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general called to comprehend, that I have no doubt, however respectfully he listened to my account, his faith in my veracity was very severely tested. My communications must have failed in exciting so much wonder as they were calculated to inspire, from the inability of my listener, cooped up in his little island, to form an adequate conception of the distances of which I had to speak. Indeed, the geographic knowledge of the people in general was sadly defective, and my worthy host, on this point, was no better than his neighbours.

The peasantry in this part of the island are extremely ignorant of the most elementary branches of knowledge, the instances in which they are able either to read or write being very rare. If necessity were not the mother of invention, this would be rather awkward in their love-communings, which would of necessity be confined to personal interviews, which are not always convenient. In their ignorance, therefore, of one of the three important Rs, indeed of all of them, they have invented a kind of flower language by which they can express most eloquently every secret thought and every tender feeling, the utterances of these beautiful symbols being perfectly comprehended by the one to whom they are addressed. Specific feelings are ascribed to different flowers, to their

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various arrangements, to leaves, to buds, and blossoms, a complete alphabet and vocabulary of love being thus made up, which must at least be a more romantic method of communicating the feelings of the heart than our direct and matter-of-fact way.

The lover has many opportunities of presenting his mistress with some flower, the language of which is quite intelligible.

On the "ferias" and other merry meetings of a similar nature, of which there are very many, the lover has excellent opportunities, of which he generally takes care to avail himself, of presenting his "moza" with a sprig of thyme, to the Spanish name of which, "tomillo," a certain meaning is made to jingle in rhyme in the established phrase, "a tus pies mi humillo," the simple interpretation of which is, "I humble myself at your feet." If a piece of rosemary, called by the people "romero," is returned, it is taken as an unfavourable answer to the poor lover's suit, for "romero," rhyming with "mojadero," means in plain language, "You are a bore, sir." But if a flower with a more compassionate meaning is returned, the suit is considered to have made a good commencement, and the gratified lover seeks such opportunities as he can find of holding light chat with the fair one at her window

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as he passes to and from his daily labour. The conversation, it must be confessed, is not quite of such a nature as one would imagine likely to be indulged in by the victims of the tender passion. If one were to listen to a dialogue between two young persons in such a Romeo and Juliet-like position, he would be astonished to hear that the deepest sighs of an ardent passion were breathed forth as the accompaniment to questions about the price of potatoes, the appearance of the crops, the labour of the farm, the work of the household, and indeed, anything but the great, the all-important subject that brings them together. That, in fact, which is nearest their hearts is never once alluded to. It must not be supposed, however, that this domestic and agricultural conversation serves no good purpose. By such interviews, repeated as often as possible, the love-smit Lothario is enabled to form a very adequate judgment of the domestic capacities of the lady, and of her fitness to be a useful helpmate to him in the daily business of life, for they know there is little or no honeymoon of listless indolence for them. Having satisfied himself as to her qualifications, and, after all the reflection that so important a step demands, having made up his own mind, he goes one evening to their accustomed interview with a green sprig or flower, which,

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during the conversation, he fixes in some chink of the window, in full view of his innamorata, to whom it conveys an important question. This operation is much facilitated by the circumstance that all the houses of the peasantry consist only of a ground floor. The lady is allowed time for consideration, and takes the night to consider what reply she shall make to the proposal.

The next morning, the anxious lover, who has doubtless passed a sleepless night, at least we may imagine so, proceeds to learn his fate, eagerly fixing his eye upon the window as he approaches. If the symbol of his affection has been taken in, great is his joy, for he knows that he is an accepted lover, and that matters may now proceed *en regle* to their legitimate issue. If, on the contrary, the symbol of his affection has been disregarded, and allowed to wither on the outside, it is understood as an unequivocal announcement that his suit is not acceptable, and that he may carry his love to some other market. If the lady jilts her suitor, she is said, in a style of similar imagery, "to have given him pumpkins," *Da le calabazas*, a phrase not uncommon even among the higher and more educated classes.

The husbandmen in Teneriffe are not generally in flourishing circumstances, their means being very

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limited. Their poverty is mainly owing to the custom which prevails among the large landowners of cultivating their estates on the principle they call "da medios," or by halves, the only exception to this system being the cochineal plantations, which they cultivate entirely on their own account. They also follow the French *Metayer* system, according to which the *medianero*, or farmer, bears all the necessary expenses that seed, labourers, and the payment of half the taxes involve, besides many other exactions too often insisted on by the proprietors. In lieu of rent, the latter regularly receive one-half of the gross produce of the farm; and the tenant, holding only at will, having no security of continuously possessing the land which he cultivates for any length of time, considers that he is only doing what his own interest requires and justifies in taking as much as he can get out of it at the least possible cost to himself. He never thinks for a moment of endeavouring in any way to improve the property of which he has so insecure a hold, his interest in which is only temporary, and the increased fertility of which might benefit a stranger at the cost of his labour and exertions.

The agricultural class, although generally poor, is not destitute of certain ideas of its own importance and respectability. The individuals belonging to it

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profess to be very nice in all that touches their honour, all having a considerable share of family pride. Marriages are generally arranged with great punctilio in this respect, such alliances never being formed without the exercise of the most commendable caution. They would not, for anything in the world, commit themselves or their children by agreeing to marriage with persons whom they consider of a class inferior to their own, even although these persons should be possessed of much superior resources—resources so ample that, in their opinion, they ought to equalize all such differences of position or rank without any difficulty.

The road that leads to Ycod, the district of the vine, presents an ever-changing variety of scenery. In some parts, the eye is appalled by regions of the most savage grandeur, scenes where nature shows only the ruined fragments of what she once was, where the eruption of volcanic fires in former days has thrown rocks and hills into inextricable confusion, making the land a picture of cheerless desolation. In others, we behold the order, the beauty, and the cheerful aspect produced by the presence of man and the careful cultivation he has bestowed on the ground that literally seems to be accursed in every place except where his hand has called order from confusion, and beauty from savage deso-

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lation. How cheering and attractive are these bright spots of verdure, enamelled with numberless peeping flowers, amid the wild uncultivated desert that surrounds them! How beautiful are those patches of land where the vine shoots forth its fruit-laden branches, contrasting so remarkably with the red volcanic soil, the great fields of lava, and the wild disorderly masses of igneous rock that have shot forth in all directions, deforming the landscape and desolating the land. The variety of this contrasting scenery is increased by the quaint little villages, of which the white painted walls gleam forth from among the foliage wherever there is a tree to shelter them, and by the "hollow-sounding" sea, whose sparkling waves, looking over the brink of some fearful cliff, you may observe dashing in foam upon the rocks many hundred feet below.

Ycod I found to be a very agreeable and pretty town. When everything looks bright, and clean, and gay on your entrance, it gives you a prepossession in favour of a place. Here we observed much that was pleasing and attractive. The aspect of the whole town was picturesque in the extreme. Every turn in the old-fashioned streets disclosed some unexpected prospect, some interesting building, some attractive group. Here were fine

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new houses, and there old tumble-down convents, where monks for ages told their beads and read their breviaries. The refreshing sound of fountains is heard among the trees, while the sparkle of their waters glittering in the sun delights the eye. The orange and the dragon trees grow around the houses, their verdant foliage producing an agreeable mixture of town and country scenery. Then there are the usual signs of life, the sound of merry voices, the echo of joyous peals of laughter, without which the most beautiful scenery would become dull and inanimate. We quickly reach the quarter whence the laughter and the voices come, and we perceive a number of peasant girls, in their bright scarlet petticoats, crowding and scrambling together, in order that each one may be the first to draw her water from the well.

The streets have a busy aspect, for the town is by no means without life. It has its fair proportion of trade and commerce, and the people have an active and spirited appearance as they move bustling about. The shops are as trim and smart as one could desire, their gayest articles being displayed so as to attract those, especially from the inland country districts, of whom they are anxious to make purchasers. In the midst of these scenes of busy life on a small scale, what a strange impression is

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produced when, looking beyond the town, the everlasting Peak may still be seen, lifting its towering head far above the clouds, and making the works of man appear so puny in comparison with one of the greatest masterpieces of the Creator.

We were much amused at the hotel where we put up—which is one of the best and cleanest in the island, and which deserves every commendation we can bestow upon it—by the appearance and manners of our hostess. We were rather astonished on first seeing her, not being prepared to find such an establishment in the hands of one who was a perfect dwarf in size. The hotel also, it must be acknowledged, though its arrangements were excellent, was rather Lilliputian in its proportions, though still a gigantic concern for the management of so diminutive a hostess, who was as merry and talkative as if she had known us all her life. The rooms, we found, were all occupied by a band of French itinerant merchants, who went about the country selling muslins, and jewelry, and novels, and indeed every article in which a lady could delight. They were accompanied in their peregrinations by a poor overworked donkey, which groaned all day, in a broiling sun, under a burden with which it could hardly make any progress. This, however, I must say in favour of the Frenchmen, that they afterwards

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placed the poor animal at my disposal, and with the greatest civility vacated the best room in the hotel that it might be free for me to occupy. Indeed, I was altogether treated with a courtesy such as it had never been my fortune to meet with when travelling in their own country, for there are hundreds who know France well who will be ready, I have no doubt, to confirm my statement that the notions which we generally entertain regarding the kindness and courtesy of the French are very much exaggerated. Frenchmen can be, and often are, as selfish, as boorish, and as unaccommodating as any nation on the face of the earth. The exceptional kindness and civility of these strangers was not sufficient to revive my faith in the chivalry of a nation which very often, in all that concerns the *bianséances* of life, falls far behind many whom it professes to lead.

The little hotel, of course, had its patio, where we could linger all day in sunshine or in shade. It was surrounded by open galleries and balconies, and shaded by the huge leaves of the banana, which, in these houses, reaches to the roof, shading the rooms in the upper story, and affording a cool shelter for the cattle beneath, for the live stock of all kinds are accustomed to congregate without impediment about the base of the buildings. We had

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them here in great numbers, quietly enjoying the cool shade, which they seem to like as well as ourselves. Here was the Frenchmen's ass and our own young camel; here were horses browsing, pigs grubbing, and chickens pecking. Their owners at the same time were lounging in the galleries, lazy and listless, pretending to be looking after the animals under their charge, while their most serious occupation was to smoke their cigarettes in listless apathy.

The neighbourhood of Ycod is one of the most flourishing and wealthy spots in the island. On all sides of it there is a considerable number of proprietors living on their estates, and by their presence there contributing to the prosperity of the town, which has an appearance of activity and comfort much greater than is to be seen in any other part of Teneriffe, the suburbs being inhabited by persons in easy circumstances. There are many also who rejoice in the blue blood (sangre azul) of the island congregated in this quarter, whose circumstances enable them to maintain a life of generous hospitality. They are particularly courteous to strangers, whom they are always delighted to receive under their roof, contributing by all the means in their power to their entertainment. We shall never forget the kindness and hospitality which it was our fortune

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to receive from some of these generous and agreeable families.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Ycod is a very remarkable cave, which is considered one of the lions of the place, and which every stranger is expected to visit. I have no doubt it may prove very interesting to those who are intimate with the details of geological science, and who lose no opportunity of witnessing all the phenomena that may illustrate the history of our earth at remote periods. I am free to confess that I saw it with no pleasure. On the contrary, I found it an exceedingly disagreeable place, and visited it more to gratify my friends than to please myself. The only satisfaction I now have in looking back to my visit is that I am able to say I have seen it, for it would have been awkward to know nothing of a lion that everybody is expected to visit. This remarkable cave is said to ascend to the pumice plains of the Peak at one end, and to extend almost to the brink of the sea at the other. It is stated to be about eleven thousand feet in length. It appears to have been used as a place of sepulture by the aborigines, for a number of niches in the sides of the cavern are pointed out as having held mummies similar to those which are found in other parts of the island. It is a cold, gloomy, cheerless, deso-

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late place. The sides are constantly dripping with streams of water; drops are ever descending from the roof on your head; and there were several pools beneath our feet which had to be jumped over successively. Then, as the roof sometimes sloped very much, so as almost to touch the ground, we could only make our way by crawling, a position which the martyrs of science may perhaps be expected to tolerate, but which is very disagreeable to the votaries of pleasure, or to mere sight-seers like myself. All this, too, had to be endured after a long walk under a broiling midday sun. I was very glad to get well out of the place again, and even now, after the lapse of some time, I enjoy much more satisfaction in being able to say "I have seen it," than I should in the prospect of having to see it again. If the inhabitants of the place will insist on making a lion of their cave, they should give a fair description of it, and add that it it is interesting only to scientific or geological visitors.

I had already had many opportunities of witnessing the manner in which the people of Teneriffe celebrate their saints' days and holidays. I was favoured with another similar opportunity in Ycod, for it happened to be the time of the carnival when I was there, and there was a great deal of mirth

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and fun going on in the town. Indeed, in every part of it, the spirit of enjoyment, as they understand it, was breaking out, and in some tending, as Burns says, to become "fast and furious." Before one of the principal houses I observed a cuadrillo, a party of eight or ten young men, all habited in the showy old costume of the island, with a number of gay parti-coloured ribbons flaunting from their hats. One of them sustained a long pole, about twelve feet high, to the summit of which several silk ribbons were attached, their number being exactly equal to that of the dancers who were to join in that exhilarating and ever welcome exercise around it. Each ribbon also was about twelve or eighteen feet long, the lower half, next the dancer, being rolled up into a ball, one of which is appropriated to each of the votaries of the gay and sprightly art. All the dancers first forming a circle at a short distance round the pole and its bearer, the musicians who accompany them having commenced to play rather slowly, each one facing two parties alternately, they then all began to move in opposite directions, keeping time to the cadence of the music, and, when they met, turning round each other, thereby entwining the upper part of the ribbon they carry in their hands. They do the same with each succeeding partner they face in their progress, repeat-

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ing these movements in six successive rounds, constantly widening the circles as they allow the ribbon to slip off the ball in their hands, the music gradually increasing in vivacity until they get to the end of their tether, by which time the ribbons have been wrought up into a regular open net-work of various colours. A momentary pause ensues at this point. On again commencing, each dancer reverses his position, and, with the same precision as before, moves in the direction exactly opposite to his former one, undoing, at each encounter with his partners, the confused mesh he had previously woven, and gathering, as he proceeds, the slack ribbon in his hand, until, arriving at the place from which the start was first made, each dancer again occupies his original place. The pole, with its pendent streamers, is then lowered, the dance concludes, and the party proceed to repeat it before the inmates of some other favoured dwelling. When this dance is well performed, and correct time is kept, as it generally is, it has a very lively effect. Sometimes women mingle in the dance; and, when this is the case, the figure is more complicated and the steps more difficult and elaborate. Long and careful drilling is required before it can be performed with the degree of excellence expected and required. It is generally, however, well and

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skilfully executed, as none but those who are familiar with its movements ever think of attempting it.

The youthful portion of the inhabitants of the island are very fond of dancing, and all the well-known Spanish dances are popular among them, the Iga, the Malagueña, and the Fandango being constantly practised.

Proceeding from Ycod for an hour's ride along the sea-shore, no scenery can present a more pleasing and beautiful appearance. All around us the vine was flourishing, and there was an abundance of tempting fruit and the finest flowers. The face of nature was clad with the richest vegetation. Such, indeed, was the diversity of colours and the glowing richness of the spectacle on which the eye rested, that, however imperfect such a comparison may be, and however superior the beauty of nature, it certainly had the appearance of a splendid carpet spread forth as if for some floral festival. Even the rocks that appeared here and there were so covered with a profusion of verdure that they looked like huge banks of velvety green, spotted over with brilliant patches of flowers watered by the refreshing streams of the mountain torrent, and alive with the song of birds that trilled their joyous lays all day long. After such a scene as this, when, as is so

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often the case in this island, a great expanse, marked only by utter blankness and desolation, is unexpectedly disclosed to view, it comes upon one almost like a sudden electric shock, so violent is the contrast between the wild masses of rock and the fragments of ruin compared with the scene we have just left. The cliffs upon which we had been gazing were as beautiful as imagination could conceive, the bright soft verdure being thrown over them as a mantle of matchless beauty. All this is now abruptly changed. The verdure has all been swept away by a devastating river of lava, the marks of which are still as fresh as if it were only yesterday that its boiling stream had rushed past, transforming the garden into a wilderness.

Immediately beneath this scene of desolation are the ruins of Garachico. It was once a busy and commercial town, its streets all alive with the sounds of life and labour; but in the year 1706, it was nearly destroyed by the fearful stream of red-hot lava that flowed from a lateral eruption of the Peak. The town was soon in flames, and it appeared as if nothing could save it or its inhabitants from utter annihilation. It is said, however, that the lava stream approached so gradually that the terror-struck people, recovering their presence of mind, perceived that they had yet time to save

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their lives and property. By their unwearied activity they succeeded in both objects. When the population returned to the unfortunate town which they had abandoned for a time, they not only restored it to its former condition, but even increased it to some extent, houses and streets being built on spots that were formerly washed by the waves of the sea.

Garachico is filled with conventual buildings. They are more numerous and more spacious even than the barracks in Gibraltar, and *los Religiosos* must have constituted of themselves a considerable army. It was an old Spanish custom for a family of any distinction to keep a pet friar as a sort of domestic chaplain and confessor. He was also the confidential friend of the family, and so great was the influence acquired by these reverend officials that their power in the household often became unlimited. Wherever their rule was once firmly established, they exercised it with despotic sway, tyrannizing even over the patron to whom they were indebted for their maintenance. This custom prevailed in all the towns where monasteries were established. Of course in Garachico, where there was an unusual number of them, and where also so many of the "Blue Blood" of the island had their residence, the influence of these individuals, who

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combined in their own persons the characters of domestic chaplains, father confessors, and chiefs of the household, was very great. Many stories and traditions are current regarding them, and a popular legend, believed by many to this day, attributes the destruction of the place to the following incident, in which one of them performs an important part.

One of these venerable dependents, a brother of one of the Franciscan orders, had managed to obtain unbounded sway over the minds of the heads of the household by whom he was maintained. As is often the case with individuals of this description, he made a most tyrannical use of the influence he possessed. So domineering, indeed, became his tone towards the entire household of his patron, such was the presuming insolence with which he took every family matter, even the most important, under his own direction, that the poor Hidalgo finding all his authority as husband, father, and master, daily slipping away from him, and passing as certainly into the hands of the friar, his situation at last became so intolerable that he could bear it no longer; the patience with which he had so long submitted to the dictation of his ghostly friend was exhausted; and, acting at length like a man of spirit, he determined to assert and maintain his rights as the lord

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of his own house. So one day, when the worthy father had probably been assuming a manner and exercising an authority to which he had no right, his master read him a sharp lesson on his presumption, and then dismissed him in disgrace from his house. The passionate anger of the friar was instantly roused by so unexpected a manifestation of spirit, believing himself to have received an insult to which it would be weak to submit without ample revenge. His heart accordingly being filled with the most bitter hatred, not only against the master who had so grossly insulted him, but also against those who had witnessed his disgrace, and even against the whole town to which it must soon be known, he resolved that all should be included in one sweeping act of revenge, which he hoped he should succeed in inflicting on them. In wending his way therefore—his heart boiling with anger—from the scene of his humiliation, he stopped at the last turn of the road from which the town was visible, whence he poured forth his whole soul in anathemas against it, the very words which he employed being preserved :—

Garachico, pueblo rico,
Gastadero de dinero
Mal risco te caiga encima!

Rich town of Garachico,
Squanderer of riches,
May an evil rock fall upon thee!

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The utterance of this curse was followed in a few days by the volcanic eruption of 1706, which was so destructive. The lava from the Peak either buried or burnt great part of the town, totally ruining the harbour and anchorage that had previously been the resort of all the trade and commerce of the seven islands. The succession of the two events was so immediate that he would be a daring sceptic, indeed, who would venture to doubt the connection of the curse and the destruction of the town as cause and effect. It is true the benign prayer of the Padre was that an "evil rock might fall upon the town," a prayer which was exactly answered, for what is lava but rock—rock in a state of fusion, and therefore in a most dangerous condition, so that, in the most literal sense, the curse, as hurled against the wicked city, was inflicted. This was a great feather in the cap of the Franciscan friars; it was a sort of capital from which they well knew how to obtain good interest. A tradition that assigned to them such terrible influence was of immense value. They therefore took good care to promulgate the story far and wide, and to confirm the faith of the multitude in it. Few would run the risk of again offending them, with such a fearful example of the consequences to reflect on.

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CHAPTER IV.

San Cristoval de la Laguna—Its Quaint and Ancient Aspect—Silence of the Streets—Alonzo de Lugo—Laguna the Former Capital of the Canaries—Its Churches—Chapel of San Benito—Sweating Portrait of St John the Evangelist—San Cristofer—Church of Los Remedios—The Fleas of Tenerife—Ode by Peter Pindar—The Pandorga—Procession of Illuminated Figures—Athletic Sports—Cock-fighting and Card-Playing—The Guitar—The Dances of Teneriffe—Abstemious Habits of the People—A Glass of Brandy *para Espantar el Diabolo*—Laxity of Morals—Melancholy Love Story.

AT the distance of a league from Santa Cruz, and about fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, is the old city of San Cristoval de la Laguna. It is an exceedingly quaint, antique-looking place, and its appearance as dismal and gloomy as it is possible to imagine. I once doubted if solitude was really to be found in the world, but the sight of St. Cristoval destroyed my doubts, for it certainly reigns supreme over this

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most remarkable town. You feel its influence creeping over you as you enter into its gloomy streets, which are covered with dark weeds, and look upon its mouldy churches, the grass growing up to their very doors, and noxious herbs abounding all around them. Even the very roofs of the houses are covered with a dark unwholesome vegetation, and damp moss is growing in the crevices of the armorial bearings that surmount the ponderous doors of ancient mansions. Decay, dampness, and mildew reign supreme amid these relics of an age that is long passed, and you momentarily expect to see them sink into ruins at your feet.

Several of these houses with such imposing fronts, and with the armorial bearings of the great families of Spain sculptured over the door, have no magnificent interior to correspond with an external display of grandeur so well calculated to lead you to the belief that you are standing before some great family mansion, adorned with all that wealth and power can collect to make it attractive. The fact is that, like many other things in Spain, these buildings have been commenced on too grand a scale, and the funds having been exhausted on the external part of the erection, in giving it a magnificent frontage, the result is a mere shell, enclosing often

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an empty space and masses of weeds and ruins. Still there is something impressive in the venerable old place. One feels, in wandering through these silent and solitary streets, that he is surrounded by the genuine relics of a past age. The echo of your own footsteps sounds mysteriously as you proceed along the deserted pathway where there are no passengers hurrying past intent on business, the only human being that crosses your path being some silent and solitary figure wrapped in the ample folds of his blanket. You feel, too, that the remains of past grandeur by which you are surrounded are made more touching and impressive by the agency of time. Even the greatest leveller of modern times cannot help regarding with a species of hushed awe these noble, though decaying, memorials of the great old families of Spain. Under the influence of associations that carry your mind back to distant ages, you almost expect to see some stately hidalgo step forth from their portals in velvet suit and feathered cap, with solemn and stately mien, his hand resting on the hilt of his trusty rapier.

Laguna, as the old chronicles of the island tell us, was founded by Alonzo de Lugo about three years after the conquest of Teneriffe. It enjoyed preeminence as the capital of the Canary Islands until

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about a quarter of a century ago, when the dignity of principal city and seat of government was transferred to Santa Cruz. As the Spaniards were always proud of being considered the faithful children of the church, one of the earliest desires of the inhabitants was to see the town well provided with places of worship, taking care that such provision should be made on a scale more than adequate to the wants of the population. The first chapel that was erected for Christian worship within the precincts of the city was a very rude and simple structure; but in the year 1811, its place was supplied by a large and commodious church, with a lofty belfry built to some extent in the Moorish style. This was erected in the upper town, and dedicated to *La Virgen de la Conception*. Another church of similar dimensions to that of "Los Remedios" was erected about two years later.

Magnificent and costly as their ecclesiastical buildings now began to be, the private dwellings of that period must have been of a very humble description. In 1512 the municipality issued a decree in which the erection of any more straw-covered or thatched dwellings within the city was prohibited. The original division of the town into two parishes still subsists; but all the neighbouring hamlets within a radius of five or six miles, numbering

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about twenty in each parish, are now attached to them, and each hamlet is provided with a small chapel of its own. There are several more chapels in the city itself, the most conspicuous being that of San Benito at the north-west extremity of the town. This chapel is of greater capacity than many churches. Its roof is said to have been entirely constructed from the timber furnished by a single pine tree. Supposing this statement to be true, it may be regarded as a satisfactory proof that the size of these primeval denizens of the forest that covered most parts of the island, at the time when it fell into the hands of the Spaniards, must have been much larger than any that exist at the present day.

La Concepcion, as the church is called, is, as before mentioned, spacious, handsome, and commodious, possessing a beautiful choir, which is much admired on account of its remarkably fine carving. The Retablo is also very fine, and the pulpit is a beautiful specimen of the carving of those days. The latter was presented to the church by one Andres Jose Jaisine, a servant man, who in 1767 had it brought all the way from Genoa at his own expense; but neither its original cost, nor the name of the sculptors by whom it was executed, is now known. This church posseases a very fine painting of the Assump-

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tion of the Virgin by Murillo, but when one observes that it is fast dropping into rags in consequence of the treatment to which it is subjected, he can regard it with but little pleasure. It is difficult to imagine how any human beings, priests or laity, can be so ignorant as, in their superstitious ceremonies, to abuse a noble work of art in the way this painting of Murillo's is annually desecrated. Before the solemn festival of the Conception, it is abundantly besmeared over with oil, which, in the course of a few weeks, collects such a quantity of flying dust, that it forms quite a thick coating of dirt on the painting, beneath which it is almost impossible to distinguish any trace of the magic pencil of Murillo.

The sacred edifice is well provided with all the customary ornaments of the Roman Catholic faith, possessing a good store of the gold and silver vessels used at its ceremonies. But there is nothing of sufficient interest or beauty to call for any particular description. It does, however, include among its treasures one object of some curiosity, which, for many years, was regarded with a feeling of profound devotion by the islanders at large, and is still believed by not a few among them to have possessed certain miraculous powers. It is a very old painting, representing the head and bust of St. John the Evangelist, which, along with the portraits of the other

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three evangelists, adorned the Retablo of the altar. We will copy from the pages of the old historians of the island an account of the occasion and the circumstances in which it acquired the celebrity which it has long possessed:

"While a priest, accompanied by his deacon and sub-deacon, was, at nine o'clock of a May morning, in 1648, celebrating the Dead Mass over a deceased person whose corpse was extended before the high altar, they chanced, accidentally, to cast their eyes on the effigy of St. John the Evangelist, painted in oil colours, more than fifty years before, on a panel of wood, and observed that the left side of the forehead and face of the picture was bathed and even streaked with moisture, in the shape of very minute and brilliant drops, as of some transparent fluid. Surprised at so unusual an appearance, they summoned the Sacristan and enquired if he had happened to sprinkle any of the paintings with water that morning, and were assured that he had not. The beneficed clergyman of the parish came in immediately after, and being informed of the circumstance, reverently applied his fingers to its face, and found them moistened with the same liquid or sweat. The news of the incident spread through the city with the utmost rapidity, and the Vicar General, with many other worthy members of the

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clergy, the commissionary of the inquisition, and the heads of the monastic houses, instantly hastened to the church, but finding it already crowded with towns-people who had flocked thither to the ringing of the joy-bells, they commanded the populace to be ejected, and the church-doors locked, in order that they might make a scrupulous examination into so wonderful an affair. This was practised with great precaution, but nothing could be discovered to indicate the cause of so extraordinary a phenomenon. At last the Vicar-General hit upon a method, that he believed would be decisive of its nature. Calling for an aspergis full of holy water, he plentifully besprinkled the features of the other three portraits, that stood in the same line with that of St. John, and although it was at once perceived that there was no similarity between the appearance of the drops of water, and the moisture that exuded from the latter, he resolved on letting the whole remain for some hours as it then stood, and all the party withdrew from the church, locking the doors on the outside, the Vicar General taking charge of the keys, and leaving sentinels posted at the different entrances. At four in the afternoon, the same party, accompanied by the Captain-General and all the dignitaries of the church proceeded *en masse* to it, and on entering found the moisture of the holy-water entirely

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dried from off the pictures of the three Apostles, while that of St John's was perspiring profusely, brilliant drops falling down on the altar beneath, which the Captain-General obtained permission to touch with his fingers, and then with the utmost devotion applied them to his eyes. For several days the examination and experiments were continued. It was noticed that every fly that settled on the humid side of the face (and all the flies did settle there) instantaneously fell dead, which did not happen when they went first to the other part of it. Trials were made by moistening cotton wicks in the continuous sweat, but they burnt beautifully, as if they had never been wet at all. The miracle being fully established, a solemn Mass and act of thanks were said on the 10th of May (the anniversary of the Saint's Martyrdom), popular enthusiasm rose to its highest pitch, *and it is said* that more than one English Protestant, none of whose names have been handed down to us, who, among multitudes of Islanders, came to witness the miracle, were so convinced by it, that they on the spot abandoned their heresy and embraced the Roman Catholic Faith. The miraculous sweating of the picture lasted for forty successive days, and as a violent epidemic was then raging in Spain, of which some cases were suspected to have appeared in the Canary Islands, their preser-

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vation from the spreading of the evil was universally attributed to the mediation of St. John. During the remainder of the seventeenth century, and the greater part of the last, the devotion to this miraculous effigy was unbounded. An annual feast was established in his honour, and is still kept up by a confraternity embodied in his name."

In the year 1819, the church of Los Remedios was elevated to the dignity of a cathedral for the new diocess of Teneriffe, which included the three western islands of the group. The other diocess is that of Grand Canary, which formerly embraced the whole seven islands, but now, in addition to the Grand Canary, includes only Lanzarote and Fuerta Ventura. In 1826 the lately instituted cathedral was adorned with a new facade supported on columns. Like most of the cathedrals of Spain, it is still in an unfinished state. The interior is provided with an abundance of tawdry ornaments, but contains nothing of any remarkable interest, with the exception of a fine marble pulpit and that well-known picture of San Cristopher which adorns the walls of most churches, preaching its lesson of humility by the example of the saint. As the story of this saint is told in a quaint and interesting manner in Stirling's "Spanish Painters," it may be considered sufficiently interesting to be quoted here:—

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THE STORY OF ST. CHRISTO-FER.

"There was a man of stature big, and big withal in mind,
For serve he would, yet one than whom he greater none might find.
He, hearing that the Emperor was in the world most great
Came to his court, was entertained, and serving him at meat,
It chanced the devil was named, on which the Emperor him blest,
Whereat, until he knew the cause, the Pagan would not rest;
But when he heard this lord did fear the devil, his ghostly foe,
He left his service, and to seek and serve the Devil did go.
Of Heaven or Hell, God or the Devil, he erst, nor heard, nor cared,
Alone he sought to serve the same that would by none be dared.
He met (who soon is met) the Devil, was entertained, they walk
Till coming to a cross, the Devil it fearfully did balk;
The servant, musing, questioned his master of his fear;
Our Christ, quoth he, with dread I mind, when doth a cross appear.
Then serve thyself, the giant said, that Christ to serve I'll seek.
For him, he asked a hermit, who advised him to be meek,
By which, by faith, and work of alms, would, sought for, Christ be found;
And how and where to practise these he gave directions sound.
Then he who scorned his service late to greatest potentate,
Even at a common ferry now to carry all awaits.

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Thus doing long, as with a child he over once did wade,
Under his load midway he faints, from sinking hardly staid;
Admiring how, and asking, he was answered of the child,
As on his shoulders Christ he bore, By being humbly mild.
So through humility his soul to Christ was reconciled,
And from his carriage Christo-fer henceforth himself was styled.

Flowers figure largely in all the religious "funcciones" which are celebrated during the season of summer, commencing with that called the Elevation of the Holy Cross on the 3rd of May, when every one of the numerous crosses that are attached to the dwellings, or planted by the way-side, is adorned with garlands of freshly gathered blossoms. These are allowed to remain on the several crosses until they drop off with decay. In the flower-abounding valley of Orotava, the churches are particularly distinguished by the profusion of their floral adornments during this season. The stone columns that divide the aisles are often wreathed with the most beautiful and tasteful garlands of blossoms and leaves arranged spirally about them, the backs of all the benches and seats throughout the entire extent of the edifice being ornamented in a similar way. Sometimes the central nave is covered with an ingeniously wrought carpet, composed entirely of the petals of flowers, which are variously

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arranged as diagrams or figures. Great quantities of the flowers having been procured, their leaves are cut into small pieces, which are strewed in various combinations, according to the colours required in executing the design that has been previously traced. For the few hours that such perishable materials can be expected to endure, these floral pictures produce a very rich and pleasing effect. They are produced at the expense of much voluntary and gratuitous labour, for in consequence of the early fading of the leaves, they must be collected, and the work begun and completed, in the short space between the morning and afternoon of the day on which the flowers are required.

Laguna is a place of historical interest in the chronicles of the island. Here the valiant Guanche king, Bencomo, met with his first defeat in resisting the invasion of the Spaniards. Here Singuaro, Mencey of Anaga, was taken after a hot pursuit and decapitated. Its situation, too, is very interesting, being one of extreme loveliness, so that, even in its present condition, shorn as it is of all its former glories, it is well worthy of being visited by the traveller, especially as it is at so short a distance from Santa Cruz, where strangers usually land. The invalid even might be tempted to travel the short league that separates Laguna from the cap-

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ital. In the charming scenery that surrounds it, enjoying its pure air and its transparent atmosphere, he might reasonably hope to acquire a new spirit of enjoyment in renovated health and strength. It is out of the beaten path, however, and the majority of ordinary English travellers are not explorers, rather choosing faithfully to tread the oft-beaten path of those that have gone before them. By pursuing such a system, they often miss the most beautiful scenery of the countries in which they travel. In the present case, they bring their excursions to an end just where that remarkable and beautiful mingling of wooded groves and wild volcanic hills, by which I had been previously so much struck, commences.

But the stranger is generally absorbed by one great object in Teneriffe. Before it, all others, however interesting, are neglected, and after he has satisfied his curiosity regarding the principal lion, he feels that the others are too insignificant to be thought of. Satisfied with nothing until he has seen the Peak, after his curiosity is gratified, he disregards everything else. Many, too, are contented with a very unsatisfactory view of it. Descrying from the windows of their inn so much of the precipitous mass as can be seen between the two opposite houses, or glimmering above the flower-

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pots, the great object of their journey hither has been attained, and they have nothing more to see. If one of these easily-satisfied travellers is an Englishman, as in all probability he is, he exclaims, "I have seen the Peak!" and on the strength of this gratifying assurance, immediately orders dinner, with the view of taking his departure. Having finished this all-important meal, he looks out for the Spanish girls belonging to the house, with whom he enters into a merry conversation, the only intelligible part of which, as they speak only Spanish, and he only English, is the laughter with which it is accompanied. However, the attendant girls are at all events good managers, and most of them have a very wakeful eye to their own interest; they are generally able to gull such a specimen of the great John Bull brotherhood of a few extra reals. Our simple and ingenuous countryman then wends his way back to the steamer, carrying with him the agreeable conviction that he has seen the Peak, and alas! most likely carrying with him other memorials of his visit to the Island of Teneriffe, in the shape of certain entomological products. The fleas of Laguna* are said to be so famous for their size,

*The celebrated Dr. Walcott (Peter Pindar), who resided for some time in a villa on the Laguna road, wrote an ode on the Teneriffe fleas.

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strength, and activity, that they are regarded with universal interest, and incidents relating to them are introduced even into the love-songs of the country, accompanied, in lieu of castanets, with expressive snappings of the fingers. Such a verse, for instance, as the following, is popular among the lower classes, and is intended to give a zest to the monotony of love-making:—

"Last night I passed your window,
And I saw you catching fleas,
Surely you might have said to me,
'Come and catch some, if you please.'"

But our poor matter-of-fact John Bull will have none of those literary associations to comfort him when he begins to suffer from the attacks of the torments that he carries with him.

The people of the island have no national music, nor have they any predilection for a particular instrument of any kind. A tambourine, rude pipes made of cane, and a guitar, form their principal resource on the occasion of festivals, or other joyous occasions. There are, however, many amusements peculiar to the island, of which the Pandorga is one of the most novel. It consists of an illuminated procession, by night, through the principal streets of the town in which it takes place. When it is well done, as it sometimes is, by two hundred or more persons, and

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the occasion is favoured by a bright and moonless sky, it forms a very brilliant and animated sight. The procession is composed of as many individuals as are inclined to take part in it, all uniformly dressed in white trowsers and shirts, the latter, contrary to their usual position, hanging outside the other habiliments. The greater number carry white paper lanterns, with lighted candles, on their heads, and attaching themselves at equal distances to long ropes, form two lines, which marching, one on each side of the street, preserve the space in the centre free from the intrusion of the spectators. The middle space, in the meantime, is occupied by those who, in similar white dresses, bear immense figures, made of white paper over a framework of cane, representing grim giants as high as the housetops. Besides these, there are figures, equally large, of all other imaginable kinds of objects in nature,—sun, moon, and stars, camels, donkeys, geese, and ducks, in short, a whole Noah's ark turned out, all lighted from the interior, and all marching at a wonderfully quick rate down the street, each one carried by the number of persons proportioned to the magnitude and weight of the burden. A hole in the back of the figure admits the entrance of the

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bearer, and in the case of the figures representing animals, a white stuffed leg, hanging down on each side from the waist, allows him to use his own in performing the sundry caprioles and curvettings he may think most suitable to the nature of his charger, when it is once lighted up, so that the crowd may be witnesses of his agility. He also carries a lantern helmet, or cap, on his head, and in his hand a long wand, that serves him for a lance, whenever a grand joust between the equestrian or asinine party takes place, at some spot where the procession halts for the purpose, or for the performance of a cotillon, for a band of music always accompanies it in its progress through the several streets. Accidents sometimes will happen on these occasions, notwithstanding all the care that is taken to guard against them, the articles which are used being so liable to take fire. If the illuminating materials within should not be securely fixed, or steadily carried, or if they should be accidentally displaced in some rude shock of arms, an unexpected flare-up will in all probability be the consequence. One of the bodies of the solar system, slowly pursuing its measured path, may thus be transformed into a blazing comet, either to be attracted into another sphere or to be extinguished altogether. But

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the illuminated materials are of so slight a nature that when such an unfortunate *contretemps* does happen, the rising conflagration is in general very speedily extinguished, the only inconvenience arising from it being the exhibition of the extraordinary anatomical configuration of what is meant to pass for a horse, or the revelation of the internal constitution of the sun and moon, or the chemistry of the stars.

On some occasions this peculiar procession presents a very remarkable and romantic appearance. As the general surface of the country is precipitous, the streets of many of the towns have rapid declivities and ascents, in passing along which the ever-moving lights of the Pandorga have a very striking appearance, much more so than they would have if constantly seen only from the same level. It is one great advantage of this spectacle that the quiet and orderly demeanour of the crowd allows the sight to be enjoyed without alarm for the security of one's person or pockets.

The labouring-classes of the population, however, enjoy but a limited variety of amusements. Of athletic sports the men practise none but those of pitching the crowbar and wrestling, exercises for which they are very famous. Although their manner of conducting these sports might surprize

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and puzzle a Cornishman, he would most probably find them tough customers to deal with. There is great rivalry, in these trials of strength and skill, between the several islands, as well as between the several districts, and a festival rarely takes place without a good-natured contest between the different parties.

Cock-fighting is another amusement in which the inhabitants of the Canary Islands are fond of indulging, and in which large sums of money are frequently won and lost. To gambling of all kinds they are passionately addicted. Wherever half a score of them are congregated, a greasy pack of cards is sure to be produced by some one of the company, and the game of *monté*, which is the most popular here, is played by all with the greatest animation.

Like the inhabitants of the mother country, they are very fond of the guitar, but they have never learned to play it tolerably. Singing is also a favourite exercise, but their vocal efforts are generally much worse, if possible, even than their attempts to bring music out of the above instrument. When these amusements are accompanied by a dance in a neighbour's house, it is then that they come forward with all their enthusiasm and activity. In the execution of their Terpsichorean feats, the principal performers will often kick off

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their shoes, and dance on their bare feet, for stockings are not a common commodity among this class in the Canary Islands. Among the dances to which they are addicted are the Spanish fandango and the seguedilla, both, however, being executed by them in a very degenerate style. The "folia," which they are believed to have borrowed from the Guanches, is their usual dance. In the execution of it, it is accompanied by the voices of the couple who are engaged in it at the time, and who continue to sing or dance until one of them is tired out, and resigns his or her place to another. They often improvise the verses they sing to the twanging of the guitar-player, meanwhile marking the time by snapping their fingers in lieu of castanets.

All the amusements of the people are carried on in the most orderly, decorous, and cordial spirit, without quarrels or disturbance. This favourable feature in their character is, no doubt, owing chiefly to their abstemious and sober habits, for it is a most unusual thing to witness a single instance of intoxication among them. They have one peculiar custom, however, to which women as well as men are addicted, but it never leads to the slightest extra-indulgence in the pernicious habit of dram-drinking. Every one takes a small glass of the

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country brandy the first thing in the morning, "para espantar el diabolo," to frighten away the evil one, alleging, as an excuse for this moderate indulgence, the bad effects which the morning cold and the rarefied mountain air at or before daydawn would produce on their stomachs unfortified by such a preservative. Their toil generally commences at this early period of the day, and for the remainder of the twenty-four hours they rarely touch anything else but water. Every country, however, has its peculiar vices; and if in this almost tropical climate intoxication is not one of them, there is a laxity in their morals and a carelessness in their conduct, that will bear anything but a favourable comparison even with those other fair lands that are most famed for vices of this kind.

In illustration of the manners and morals of the people, a tragic story, which, of course, is also very popular, is told in the old city of Laguna. The heroine of it was a young lady of great beauty, who appears to have sought a refuge there about the middle of the last century. A young gentleman, a native of Orotava, belonging to a good family, but brought up to no profession, except one that is widely popular, but not very creditable, that, namely, of living in idleness and making as

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good an appearance as possible on the slender means his friends could spare him, fell deeply and seriously in love with a young lady of equally good station, though of wealth superior to his own. The lady appears to have been as imprudent as her lover, and returned his affection with an ardour in no way inferior to his. The relations of the love-sick damsel, becoming aware of the circumstance, made such inquiries as they deemed necessary into the position and prospects of the youth. Being satisfied that they were not such as would enable him to support a wife in a manner at all equal to that in which she had been brought up, they resolved to insist on the breaking off of a connection that could not benefit her. Although an apparent obedience was rendered to the injunctions of those under whose influence she was, the lovers still managed to obtain many a stolen interview, which unfortunately ended in her fall from virtue.

In course of time the consequences of this guilty passion could no longer be concealed. The lover had not the courage to face his loved one's family when the discovery should be made, and determined to leave the island clandestinely. Taking leave, therefore, of no one but her whom he considered his affianced bride, and to whom he made

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the most solemn promises that he would return and marry her as soon as fortune crowned with success his exertions in some foreign land, he suddenly disappeared from the island. His mysterious and unaccountable departure naturally became the subject of a great deal of comment; but as no authoritative explanation of his conduct could be obtained, the subject had the usual fate of all nine days' wonders; it dropped into silence, the young man passed away from the memory of most, and no one spoke any more about him.

But far different was the fate of the young lady. Left alone to meet the jeers and disgrace of society, to behold the shame and affliction of her friends on her account, the time that was to reveal all at last arrived, and brought down upon her the utmost indignation of her justly offended family. Their anger was so great that their breasts were closed to the promptings of pity and compassion, and, as if they could wipe away the stain cast upon their honour by her misconduct, by adding the guilt of heartlessness on their own part, they mercilessly cast her forth upon the cold world. The utmost assistance they could be induced to render her was in furnishing her with means to hide her disgrace and shame under a fictitious name at Laguna. That done, they totally and for ever abandoned her.

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Passing into retirement, her conduct was distinguished by the greatest propriety, and had it not been for the one unhappy fall from virtue, she might have proved in every respect an honour to her sex. Her habits were industrious and regular, and she was able to provide a modest subsistence for herself and her infant. But one painful thought still rankled in her mind. She was in entire ignorance of the fate of her lover, of whom she had received no certain intelligence since his departure. Many and painful were her reflections on his account. Could it be that he had forgotten her, that his vows had all been disregarded, and that he was faithless to her who had suffered so much for his sake? She knew not; suspense was greater agony even than the most fatal knowledge; but still years passed on, with their alternations of hope, doubt, fear, despair, and still no word, no sign to relieve the agony of her suspense. No human being could long sustain the torture of her ever-gnawing anxiety. She gradually sunk nearer and nearer to the grave, hoping and fearing to the last, and when her broken heart had ceased to beat, she left her child an orphan exposed to all the temptations and trials of a world in which she herself had known little but misery and shame.

Very different had been the lot of her lover. He

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had found his way to Caraccas, and applying himself with resolution to the task on which he had determined, he obtained a commercial situation, was regular, diligent, and careful in the discharge of his duties, secured the confidence of his employers, gradually rose in the world, until, at the end of some sixteen or seventeen years, he found himself possessed of sufficient wealth to realize his never-forgotten intention of returning to Teneriffe and claiming her whom he still desired to make his wife. He also had his doubts and fears. Was it probable that one so beautiful, so attractive, would be still unmarried? She must have had many desirable offers, and was it likely that, with only the most uncertain hope of ever again seeing him, she would continue to reject proposals the realization of which might reinstate her in society, and place her in an enviable position in life. However, these were but the distempered doubts of his mind. His duty was to fulfil his promise, and to learn from herself whether her old feelings towards him still animated her breast, and in that case to make her his wife. He therefore left Venezuela, in which town he had established himself, and in one of the vessels that annually undertake the voyage from it to the Canary Islands, he embarked for the land of his birth and the scene of his early days. He

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carried along with him the handsome competence which he had acquired by his diligence in business, and his ardent desire now was that he might find her whom he had so deeply injured, and whose memory was yet cherished with the fondest affection, still willing to share with him the happier lot that he was now able to offer her. But who can foresee the events that may happen to baffle all our best conceived schemes? How little could he, at a time when all his hopes and fears centred about a single beloved object, imagine the destiny that awaited him—one that—but we must not anticipate events.

The voyage, for a considerable part of the way, was as speedy and as prosperous almost as the impatient wishes of his eager heart could desire. But before the vessel reached her destined haven, an unfortunate change took place. The sky became overcast! The wind increased in vehemence, and the storm broke forth. The ship was driven about at the mercy of the winds and waves, and as the violence of the tempest seemed rather to increase than to abate, all the passengers felt that they were in a position of imminent peril. Their chance of safety was not increased by the conduct of the Spanish sailors on an occasion of such danger. True to their superstitious character, and according to their invariable practice, instead of endeavouring

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to direct the vessel, they betook themselves to their devotions—their usual resource when action is required. They invoked the assistance of the saints, they prayed for the protection of Mary, each individual offering such a bribe as he considered likely to influence the saint whom he specially invoked. One promised to have a number of masses said in such and such a chapel; another vowed to present a dozen candles at a certain altar; some expressed their intention of walking barefoot to the shrine of the Virgen de la Candelaria; others, according to the extent of their means or the greatness of their fears, would present votive offerings of greater or less value to the saint who would deliver them from their present extremity.

The hero of our story, who, it appears, was never very courageous, was in as great a fright as any of the sailors. Remembering the transgression of his youthful days, he was tortured by remorse for the past, as well as by the fears of an impending danger, and in the agitation and distress of the moment, he made, what appears, in the circumstances in which he was placed, a very strange vow (but so the story runs) that if permitted to reach his native land in safety, he would marry any orphan girl that might be recommended to him as of spotless fame and good character. He also

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vowed that no enquiry should be made before marriage as to her parentage, so that, however plebeian her birth might be, no remains of the pride in which he had once indulged on account of his own more illustrious descent should be suffered to offer any opposition to the immediate fulfilment of his vow.

The storm abated. The sailors believed that the saints had heard and answered their prayers. The returning exile was satisfied that heaven had accepted the vow he had just registered in his own breast. At any rate, the vessel made the remainder of her voyage in safety, having arrived in due time at Santa Cruz. The crew and passengers, their goods and chattels being deposited in security on dry land, gradually paid off the debt they had contracted with the heavenly agents who had delivered them in their extremity. Don Juan, among the rest, sought for the information necessary to enable him to perform his promise, and soon became acquainted with the fact that there was an orphan in Laguna, whose character was without a stain, and whose conduct was most exemplary, that she maintained by her industry in needlework, not only herself, but also an old woman who had charitably watched over her for some years in her infancy. This favourable intelligence being fully confirmed

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by the parish priest, who spoke in the most laudatory terms of the young girl, the gentleman soon found means of introducing himself to her, and ere long was on terms of intimate acquaintance with her. The girl he found to be really of a superior character; her manner was gentle, and there was an indescribable charm about her expressive countenance that completely captivated his heart. After a very short acquaintance, he offered to make her his bride. The poor young girl, whose heart was entirely disengaged, who had never anticipated such a joyful change of circumstances, and to whom the offer presented the prospect of a rich and happy future, was easily persuaded, and expressed her willingness to become his wife.

The pair were duly married, and lived very happily together for a considerable number of years. Don Juan, whose wealth had increased, and who was in prosperous circumstances, purchased landed property in the valley of Orotava, where he dwelt with his young wife in the greatest felicity. After three daughters had been born to them, he determined, for the first time, to divulge to his wife the circumstances that had so strangely led to his acquaintance and marriage with her. This, of course, required him to make allusion to the events of his early life, and to reveal the rank to which he

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was entitled by his birth. He assured her, however, that great as the disparity between them in that respect might be, nothing should ever diminish the sincere affection with which he had ever regarded her. Having thus unburdened himself, in order that there might no more be any mystery between them, he requested her to be equally communicative and make him acquainted with the names of her parents and the circumstances of her early life.

"Alas," she said, in reply, "I never knew my father's name; I believe I was the child of shame; and my mother, who had lived and died under an assumed name, repeatedly assured me, under injunctions of the strictest secresy, that her real name was Doña —— of the villa of Orotava. Her seducer, she told me, had quitted the island before my birth, under the most sacred promise that if heaven prospered his endeavours to improve his condition, he would return to Teneriffe, and make my mother his wife. He never did return; my mother died, ignorant of his fate; and in all probability he also is now dead."

The poor young wife had not observed the awful expression of horror that deepened on her husband's face during the latter part of this revelation. Her head was bent down with sorrow

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while thinking of her mother; and the first intimation she had of the awful agitation of her husband was, when, at her last words, he started to his feet, exclaiming in a voice of inexpressible agony :—

"Would I were indeed dead!—a thousand times dead! Oh, God! what awful crime is this I have committed!"

What an awful communication to be compelled to make to her who had no suspicion of the fearful crime she had unconsciously committed. And yet, how could it be avoided? He could no longer live even in the same house with one who was possessed of all the documents necessary to prove that she was the daughter of him with whom she had been so long living as a wife.

Let us draw a veil over the awful disclosure, over the agony with which it was received and made, over the remorse and shame which ever hung like a canopy of wrath over the heads of these two blasted human beings. The dreadful circumstances of this unhappy affair were concealed from the world, but as an immediate separation was the unavoidable result of the revelation that had been made, the evil tongues of all the gossips and lovers of scandal in the place were set agoing, and many ingenious and contradictory

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theories formed in order to account for an occurrence so unexpected.

The wife, and the three poor children that were the fruit of this unfortunate union, took the veil in a nunnery at Garachico. The miserable husband and father also retired from the world, taking the vows that dedicated him to a religious life in one of the convents at the Villa. As some evidence of the repentance with which, on account of his awful though involuntary crime, he was bowed down, and with the hope of expiating it by his devotion to his religious duties and his entire renunciation of the treasures of this world, he bestowed all his wealth on the convent in which he had taken refuge, making an unreserved conveyance of his entire estates to the brotherhood of which he was now the most unworthy member.

The last surviving member of this wretched family died, in the year 1813, in a monastery at Garachico.

The visitor who passes through the city of Laguna should pay a visit to the beautiful wood of Las Mercedes. There is here a small hermitage, or chapel, the private property of a gentleman living in Laguna, in which, previous to the "Correda de los Novios" a festival service is performed regularly every year. On this occasion all the

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country people assemble from different parts of the island. As on all similar occasions, they are dressed in their finest garments, the more youthful always choosing to appear in the gayest and brightest colours that can be selected. No festivals or holidays in any country can surpass those of this remote island in the display of parti-coloured garments, the patterns of which are almost as numerous as their owners.

On the day of the festival service, the camels may be seen, with slow and stately tread, making their way towards the hermitage. This useful animal, which, in Arabia, has been well named the "Ship of the Desert," patiently and easily carries a merry group of three individuals on his sharp-boned back. First, there is one man sitting on the hump, whose duty and pleasure it is to enliven the little party by the strains of music, playing national airs on the guitar as the camel stalks leisurely along towards the hermitage. On either side of him, this fortunate and happy fellow has a merry, bright-eyed girl, who is comfortably seated on a pillow of fine lace. They listen to the music, they talk, they laugh, as they slowly advance to their journey's end. Altogether they are as happy a trio as you will find any where in the island or out of it. The Sultan, whose story Sir Walter Scott has so humorously versified, who could be cured of the melancholy disease that

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afflicted him only by wearing the shirt of a perfectly happy man, might have found among these groups some who, for the day at any rate, were in the condition required. Nor would he have incurred the danger of finding any in the unfortunate position of poor Paddy, who, although without a care on his mind, was also without a shirt to his back.

The Correda de los Novios consists of three or more large carts, rigged out like sailing-vessels, gaudy coloured handkerchiefs being suspended as flags from their masts. Each Correda is manned by a crew of half a dozen sailors, represented by the agricultural labourers of the neighbouring district. Each wears a hat adorned with streamers of bright ribbons, the appearance of which indicates rather the brigand than the sailor. One or two may probably carry a musket on their shoulders. The yoke of oxen by which the Correda is drawn being attached, wind and weather permitting, a short race follows. This is rather a dangerous amusement, however, and I have seen persons on the eve of being crushed to death as these rival ships dashed on to the goal.

Passing through the wood that lies just at the back of the chapel, and ascending to one of the highest crests of the mountain-range that here intersects the island, two scenes of very opposite

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character are disclosed. On one side the view is so lovely as to be almost enchanting; on the other so terrific as to fill one with awe. The great volcanic outlines of the island are seen rising, one above another, until the very climax of the magnificent spectacle, of which they form so important a part, is reached in the Peak, which towers, in gigantic magnificence, high over all. The islands of Grand Canary and La Palma are seen in the distance, floating as it were on an ocean of rolling clouds, while, close at hand, the elegant spires and the white houses of Laguna sparkle in the sun.

You do not require to move from the spot on which you are standing to behold the terrific ravine that yawns on the other side. The impression which it produced on me was one of great awe. It seemed to me as if all that is most awful in such scenes had been concentrated into this one frightful chasm, the desolate appearance of which, after one has looked down into the yawning abyss, can never afterwards be forgotten.

There are many scenes in this remote island, with the richness of its almost tropical vegetation, and the appalling evidences of the comparatively recent agency of fire, the effect of which it would be impossible to describe to those unacquainted with such countries. All that I have attempted to

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portray on this route is accessible to most travellers. To persons, however, of artistic tastes, or devoted to scientific pursuits, with health and time at their command, there are many other scenes of indescribable grandeur and interest.

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CHAPTER V.

The Peak of Teneriffe—Reasons for Ascending it—The English Nobleman — The Clergyman — The Geologist — An Irish Quaker—Journal of an Ascent—Preparations—El Pino del Dornajito—The Monte—Monte Verde—Wooden Crosses—The Retamar—Volcanic Soil—Wild Goats—Estancia de la Cierra—Las Cañadas—Guanche Tabonas—An Unexpected Accident—Estancia de Los Ingleses—Our Resting Place for the Night—Songs and Improvisations of the Guides—Illness of Three of my Companions - A Critical Slip—The Mal Pais —La Rambleta—Coldness of the Wind—Sun-rise—View from the Summit—Difficulty of Planting our Flag-staff—The Caldron—Exhalations of Sulphur—The Descent—The Cueva del Yelo, or Ice Cave—Vigour of Our Guides—The Vicious Mule—Return to Port Orotava.

MANY, and extremely diverse, are the motives that have induced a great portion of the hundreds who have ascended the Peak of Teneriffe, to undertake the toilsome journey; for, although many men illustrious in every branch of science have devoted to it long and earnest researches, with advantage

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to general knowledge, we also find that one has performed it with the sole object of verifying the existence on its skirts of the white violet discovered by Monsieur Broussonet.

An English nobleman arrived at Port Orotava in his yacht one afternoon, procured mules and guides the same evening, started for the Peak during the night, and, descending at noon of the following day, sailed at once for home; merely that he might say at his county ball, which was to be held twelve days after, that he had performed the ascent, and was fortunately able to fulfil his intention. An intelligent and pious clergyman, not many years since, went with no other view than that of offering up from its summit his adoration to the Supreme, closing his senses to the external proofs of His wisdom and power; a puerile advance (it appeared to us) on the old custom of worshipping in high places!—as though he imagined that an elevation of a couple of miles brought him nearer, or could render his orisons more acceptable, to that Almighty Being to whom space and time are as nothing, and whose greatness is as discernible in the pebble upon the sea-shore as in the Peak of Teneriffe, in the creation of the mosquito that now buzzes about us as in that of Behemoth. Another traveller has gone merely to verify an isolated

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geological fact that has been doubted; and probably might have been puzzled by the scheme of yet another (an Irish quaker he was) who proposed to divert himself by conveying to the summit a sackful of sea-shells, to give, as he said, the learned who might follow him, "a nut to crack" whenever they might light upon the cunning strata he meant to form of them among the lava and sulphur of the crater.

None of these, or similar vagaries, however, actuated the party whose journey we are about to describe, for, in fact, it would be difficult to collect other five individuals less prompted by enthusiasm of any sort, or more generally unacquainted with such sciences as might be gratified by the journey; their sole impulse, in short, was curiosity; a desire to see and notice all that was to be seen, with minds well disposed to appreciate every object worthy of admiration, and to extract information or amusement from all. Therefore, eschewing the practice of those travellers who, to save themselves the discomfort of a few additional hours of sunshine, leave the coast by night and return the succeeding afternoon, they resolved on performing their trip leisurely, and, giving the scenery fair play by day-light, to draw all the enjoyment possible from the incidents that might arise. It will, perhaps, be most convenient to relate their progress in the

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words of one of the party, whose journal says as follows :—

Our party, consisting of four Englishmen and one American, left Port Orotava at six o'clock on the morning of a day in August, the eve of full moon, the light of which is considered a valuable auxiliary to the pedestrian part of the journey we had before us. The preparations we had made for it, though not very extensive, were quite equal to all we expected to require, being composed of two days' provision for man and beast; an over-coat and blanket for each of us; thermometer, compass, fowling-piece, and some tools, a small box, divided into compartments, for holding such specimens of sulphur or other curiosities as we might collect, to which I added a little portmanteau well filled with cotton for the same purpose, and fitted with straps to carry it on my own back. These necessaries loaded two sumpter mules; but on reaching the Villa of Orotava at about three miles distance, we had to hire another to carry the kegs of water necessary for our consumption. On turning our backs therefore on the town, our caravan consisted of our own party, two guides, and eight muleteers, with five saddle and three sumpter beasts; and I may as well note here that the terms agreed on with our attendants were four dollars

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a piece to the guides, and three and three quarter dollars to each Arriero (or muleteer) with his beast.

After traversing a pathway, first through vineyards loaded with ripe fruit, and then over stubble fields of some extent, we entered the grove of large and ancient chestnut trees that backs the Villa of Orotava, and were delighted, not only with the pleasant shade they afforded us, but with the verdure between their trunks, where at every step we crushed peppermint, wild thyme, and numerous other aromatic plants, besides the luxuriance of the underwood of ferns, heaths, cystus (in bloom) and many others whose names I am unacquainted with, or could not stop to recognize. Travelling in an upward and westerly direction for a couple of miles, we reached a solitary house on the brink of a ravine, at a spot called el Pino del Dornajito, at an elevation of 3411 feet above the sea; but the magnificent old pine-tree from which it takes its name no longer exists. We descended to a spring in the ravine just under the roadside, the water from which is received in two small wooden troughs, flanked by a cross of formidable size; and after having drank at the uppermost trough, and watered our beasts at the lower one, we continued our route, though not without regretting that, in the hurry of packing our equipage, we had accidentally left our

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spy-glass in Port Orotava, and so deprived ourselves of a distinct view of the buildings of that place through the long and narrow vista of the glen.

Our road now lay in the "Monte," or wood, as it is named, though hardly any trees of good size could be seen in it, and even the small ones of different sorts of the laurel family, heaths, and plants of other kinds, bore a wretched appearance, not having yet recovered from the effects of an extensive fire that a couple of years ago destroyed a large tract of wooded country. Thousands of long scorched branches of the heaths were yet standing upright, and formed most melancholy objects, in spite of the yet tender green offshoots that were beginning to sprout round some of the charred stems. Here we seemed to take leave of civilization; for, after passing in this place a couple of rabbit-hunters and some charcoal burners, we saw no other human beings than those of our own party —much less any sign of cultivation of the soil—until our return.

Thus far, a nice shadowy day had rendered our ride very agreeable, and just at noon we reached the end of the Monte, where a broad stony glen terminates it. Whilst again allowing our beasts to drink at some little puddles of water, and refreshing ourselves with a draught of porter, we were

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suddenly enveloped in the clouds that had gathered around us. This, to persons unaccustomed to it, has a most uncomfortable appearance; a fine, drizzling, chilly mist whirling rapidly in every conceivable direction at the same moment, and causing such a confusion of objects as effectually prevents anything being seen at beyond a very few paces distance, and shutting out all but the road we were treading; which, when we resumed our journey, lay through the Monte Verde, and became at every step more and more difficult to traverse. Large masses of rock, of a structure apparently almost as compact as granite, encumbered the path, intermingled with others of smaller size that bore evident signs of their volcanic origin. The road was skirted with shrubs, stunted trees, and underwood of many different sorts in such profusion as, from a distance, to hide the fossils that cover it, and from this circumstance this region takes its name of Monte *Verde*. On it, we passed by several wooden crosses placed on rocks, to mark the spots where unfortunate wayfarers from the south side of the island have, at different periods, perished in the snow that in severe winters thickly covers this part of it.

The next change of aspect was, when emerging from the Monte Verde, we came upon a comparative

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plain of sandy appearance, called the "Retamar," from the abundance of Retamas that grow on its arid soil. This plant, called by Linnæus "Spartium supranutiam," by Lamarck, "Cytisus fragrans," and by Decandolle, "Cytisus nubi genuus," is a shrub that grows eight or ten feet high; and, from the middle of June till August, is almost covered with a profusion of white blossoms of a most powerful, but rather cloying, sweet scent, the perfume of which is perfectly distinguishable at two, or even more leagues out at sea, when the land-wind comes off from the mountains during the summer nights, although the inequalities of the country render it imperceptible on the lower parts of the land. There are several of these "Retamares" in different directions on the crest of the island; and small clumps, or single specimens of the plant, are scattered to the very foot of the Peak. To them the bee-masters annually send their swarms in the rude hives they use, made of a hollowed cone of palm-tree about three feet high, under charge of men, who, for a trifling remuneration, gain their livelihood by watching them in these solitary regions. The busy inmates of the many hundred hives that are assembled, gather a rich and easy harvest from the Retama blossoms, which impart a singular fragrance and excellence to the honey of Teneriffe. The Retama

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plant has also the property of burning well and brightly while quite green, but shrivels up and becomes unfit for fuel when dry.

To continue my story:—The clouds now breaking away, disclosed to us the summits of most of the mountains (now nearly on a level with us) that form the amphitheatre of the valley of Orotava, and on some of them we could distinguish large pine-trees—remains of the forest which in former times extended to the site now occupied by the villa. All the lower part of the country was yet shrouded in the bank of clouds we had penetrated through.

The soil here was entirely volcanic, being covered with small yellowish-white pumice stones, exceedingly porous and light, scattered with others of larger size and darker colour, but bearing equal tokens of the action of fire; and the sun now began to oppress us severely. Slowly jogging along, we perceived at some distance a group of some twelve or fourteen of the wild—or at least semi-wild—goats that in small numbers roam hereabout. Their posture was that which a herald would call "regardant," and our troop fixed equally attentive eyes on them, thinking that a fresh-killed one would be no mean addition to our larder. Dismounting therefore, and taking the fowling-piece, I left my companions to attract the gaze of the flock as much as

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they could, while, by making a long *detour* under cover of inequalities of the ground, I at last got within range, and brought down the nice fat kid I had singled out; but on one of the Arrieros coming to carry away the spoil, he pointed out a notch cut in one of the creature's ears, denoting that I had made game of the private property of some one or other. We therefore complied with the usual custom in such cases, of flaying the beast on the spot, and leaving the skin with a quarter dollar upon it, as value of the kid, carried off the meat without any fear of dispute, should we chance to stumble upon the lonely goatherd, who might be leagues away, looking after some others of his flock.

The sun was now intensely powerful, and we all experienced warnings that, being already two o'clock, it was time to think about dinner. Accordingly we pushed forward to a mass of slatish-looking rocks; and alighting, eagerly sought a shady spot that might receive us all; but the sun was yet too high for us to find the required shelter from his beams, and we had to build us a sylvan bower of the muleteers' travelling-poles with blankets spread over them—extremely unpicturesque to look at, but marvellously grateful to our parched and jaded frames—as, under its protecting shadow, we nestled round the viands spread out upon another blanket

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on the ground. Well did we rest ourselves, and heartily did we dine, the Peak full in view of us, from apex to base. We were separated from the foot of it by nothing but a dreary, sandy desert, diversified here and there with swellings of inconsiderable height, and bearing no other vegetation than a few retamas. The spot we dined upon, our guides said, is called Estancia de la Cierra, and the plain in front of us, bounded by an amphitheatre of rocks of unequal elevation, forms part of "las Cañadas," that on all sides surround the base of the Peak, and are computed to embrace a circumference of nearly fifteen miles, from the centre of which, the immense mound rises in stern and barren sublimity.

While our beasts were being re-saddled, and our party getting into motion, I managed, from the top of one of the rocks we had lodged under, to make a sketch of the scene before us, at the expense of some skin peeled from my hands and nose by the fiery glare of the sun. A short gallop then brought me up with my companions. As we proceeded, the sense of the loneliness and desolation of this region increased; not a murmur of sound, except from our party, was to be heard; and the sun, beating as it were spitefully upon the earth, seemed, as we went on, to render the few retama plants scarcer and

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scarcer, while the only samples we saw of animal life were a couple of swallows and a crow. On different parts of the slightly rising plain, we perceived huge blocks of black and greenish-black stone, some of them ten or twelve feet high, and as much over, many of them split vertically from top to bottom, as though from the effects of a fall from a prodigious height when ejected by the volcano. These, on examination, we found to be masses of obsidian, of a highly compact and lustrous kind, interspersed with little cavities containing earth and calcined substances. On breaking off pieces, they always present a laminated fracture, terminating in sharp edges, and these provided the aboriginal Guanches with their only cutting instruments, called by them Tabonas.

Hereabout our nerves were put to a severe trial by an accident that, we feared, might prevent the completion of our excursion. It was not indeed that any sudden chasm yawned in our way, or that an unexpected mountain blocked up the path, but the far more prosaic fact of a crash announcing to us the rupture of the panniers borne by one of the sumpter mules, in which were contained, not only the little creature-comforts, but also the necessaries provided for the sustenance of our entire party. There the whole lay in most

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picturesque confusion, clothing a considerable space of the before sterile ground with a teeming harvest of ham, and fowls and bread, and pies, mingled with the Arrieros' salt-fish and potatoes, and broken crockery and glass-ware, while decollated bottles gurgled out their fragrant contents on the thirsty ungrateful soil; and even the delicate quarters of fresh-killed kid were completly encased with a coating of sand, dust, and ashes, that, by the violence of the fall, had become rather deeply inbedded in the meat.

With many a sigh, mingled with but few blessings on the muleteer whose untrustworthy panniers had caused the mishap, did we collect the *débris* and examine the amount of damage done, which fortunately was not so great as we had at first anticipated. So, mending as well as we could the wooden bottom of the "seron," and gingerly restowing the fragments of broken viands with those that remained entire, and finding that a moderate provision of wine, beer, and spirits was left unscathed, we recommenced our march, and at length reached the foot of the Peak at a point on its south-east side, where a large hillock of minute white pumice (called by the guides the Monton de Trigo, or heaps of wheat) abuts against it. It was now five o'clock, and as we were already in the

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tomed to the treacherous looseness of the soil on this steep ascent, we often slipped a couple of steps or more backward, though occasionally meeting a firmer stepping-place on some protruding piece of old lava. As we slowly worked upwards, we noticed several jets of steam and vapour issuing from amongst the stones and sand, and called by the guides "the Peak's nostrils," and hereabouts, certainly perceived a smell of sulphur.

After a number of short haltings to take breath, we at last attained the summit, which we found surrounded with a natural wall of large rocks, thrown promiscuously over each other, but having a small breach in the side we had ascended by. Here the wind howled about us, and the cold was not yet mitigated by the slanting sunbeams. Both the guides advised us not to enter the crater, or, in other words, not to cross the ridge of rocks so as to come upon the centre of the summit, as, they said, when the wind blows with so much violence as it then did, it forms eddies in the hollow, which, if indeed not dangerous, are at least alarming and uncomfortable. They themselves lay down on the lee side of the rocks, wrapped in their blankets, and we stretched ourselves beside them long enough to contemplate all the features of the wondrous view below us, for the day

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the encircling mountains and more distant elevations yet glowed under the departing sunbeams, as did also the summits of Grand Canary, resting upon a bed of clouds heaped side by side like flocks of wool of the purest whiteness, shutting out the view of the sea.

Our muleteers, after unloading and securing their beasts, had dispersed in search of fuel, and when they returned with a sufficiency of Retama to keep up fires, night had closed in, and the full moon was high above the horizon before all the arrangements of our encampment were made. Ere these, however, were completed, one of our party was taken extremely unwell with faintness, shivering fits, and violent pains in his head; we soon covered him with blankets and cloaks, and raised a blazing fire, through the warmth of all which, and the administration of a little spirits, he was partially relieved.

For a long time we reclined in the moonshine, gazing with delight on the prospect, and chatting over the incidents of the day; but the hour for thinking of our supper came round. Our two watch-fires were blazing in rear of the upright rocks, and a rude wall of stones, piled one on another by the Arrieros, confined their beasts to a space separated from our supper room and dormitory. Before the cloth was spread on the ground

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beneath us; and as the sun went on ascending, every point of view became more minutely distinguishable. We next scaled the rocks on the north-east side, which are the highest of the ride, and consequently stood upon the most elevated spot on the Peak.

This mountain has been seen from a ship's deck at 115 miles distance, and Humboldt says it is visible from the south cape of Lanzarote at 153; but supposing we take the medium of 135 miles as the distance at which, in clear weather, the horizon can be made out from the summit of the Peak—then, by walking round it, the eye can take in the astonishing circle of nearly 800 miles of ocean—an extent quite unrivalled by any other known mountain.

Our first employment here was to plant the pole and flag we had brought to announce to our friends in Port Orotava the completion of our journey; a job that cost us infinite trouble, and not entirely devoid of risk; for the stones were all movable and insecure, notwithstanding their weight (which, of many of them, cannot be less than eight or ten cwt.) The outer face of the cone is on this side nearly perpendicular, while, on the inner, the stones are high enough above the crater, or caldron, to make the possibility of a fall on either side a rather

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unpleasant idea. Add to this the violence of the wind, which in one or two gusts I really thought would have carried us bodily away, and the force with which it flapped the flag about while we were securing the staff, which, though formed of two stout chestnut poles, nailed and lashed together, was springing nearly to the earth and up again, during these squalls.

We completed our task, however, and then cautiously descended into the crater, of which the following description may serve to give an idea. The stones of the before-mentioned ridge or wall around it form an elliptical figure, of which the longer axis is from north-east to south-west, and about three hundred feet long. The shorter is about two hundred feet; the whole of the sides sloping down towards the centre, which I should take to be about a hundred and ten feet lower than the highest part of the ridge.

It therefore constitutes an oval bowl of that depth and dimension, without any lower opening or active crater. Its whole extent is studded with large masses of lava in various stages of decomposition, with pumice stone, and with bits of obsidian; while the soil that is visible amongst and beneath them appears to be the pulverized fragments of all these substances. In all directions we saw jets

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of steam issuing; the heat of which, on exposing the thermometer to it, we found to be 140 degrees, though this is not its constant temperature; for in 1792 it was found to be 127 degrees, in 1802, by Humboldt, 122 degrees, and in 1838, 158 degrees, which denotes that the internal fire works with greater or less intensity at different periods. The heat, however, is always sufficient to cause inconvenience to such as may inadvertently seat themselves to rest, as I did, on one of these little apertures, the heat of which, penetrating through my cloak and other woollen clothing, made me start up with no little precipitance. To both taste and smell the steam appeared to be that solely of pure water, but minute crystals of alum have, after a few days, been extracted from some that had been condensed on a cold surface.

A strong and even sickening smell of sulphur pervaded the whole caldron during the time we were in it; and in many places the lava was incrusted with crystallisations of it of the most beautiful bright yellow, purple, and green colours, of which we gathered many specimens, as well as from the soil, in turning it up with a pick-axe we had brought with us. But they were so excessively delicate and friable, that the most careful packing in the portmanteau and box could

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not preserve them entire; and in the course of a few weeks after, they had almost totally crumbled to pieces and lost all their original brilliancy of hue. Wherever we worked the pickaxe, we found, after turning up the superficial soil, a moist white substance like mortar (in many places streaked with sulphur) which is said to contain sulphate of soda and ammonia. It was quite hot, and adhered to the pickaxe and to one of the travelling-poles that we had borrowed from our muleteers for the ascent, and which, after being thrust into it for a short time, became charred. In several spots also the subterraneous heat was so perceptible that the sides of our boots cracked and became scorched by standing still upon them for a few minutes. During the exercise of the pickaxe I had thrown aside my cloak, as the boisterous wind rendered it very inconvenient, and had kept on only a light jacket, without feeling more cold than before; but on now endeavouring to take a pencil from my pocket, with which to sketch the interior of the caldron, I was unable to do so, from my hands being benumbed to a degree I had never before experienced.

Our two companions, who had remained outside the crater with the guides and muleteer, had, together with them, long been clamorous for us to

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descend, and now protested that they could not endure the wind and cold, which certainly were very trying, although the sun shone with great brilliancy, and scorched the side that was turned to it, while the other felt as if frozen. The purity and depth of colour of the sky were of a beauty quite unseen in lower regions, and even in most elevated ones; Saussure's cyanometer was found by Humboldt to mark 41 as the intensity of the zenith on the Peak, while on Mont Blanc it was only 40, and at Chamouny, at the bottom, 20.

According to the request of our comrades and attendants, after having been three quarters of an hour in the crater, we, yet unwillingly, left it, and issued by the breach on the north-east side; but could not yet tear ourselves away from the magnificent view that was presented to us on the outside. The clouds had entirely dissolved from all parts of Teneriffe, but had gathered over Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, and the appearance of the sunbeams playing on them, as on billows of the ocean, was singularly beautiful. So distinct was every object under our view, that with the naked eye we could plainly discern the houses in part of the town, and the shipping at anchor in the bay of Santa Cruz, though in the direct line of vision the distance must be more than twenty miles.

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At last it was necessary to go, and accordingly, after cheering the guides and ourselves with a little brandy, we commenced the descent, which was conducted in a different and more expeditious way than the journey upward; for, taking example by our guides, we adopted a new style of progress—something between a slide and a run. It consisted in striking our Garotes, or travelling poles, into the soil before us; then, imbedding our heels nearly up to the calves of our legs in the dust and cinders, we next leant backwards till the whole mass we stood upon would give way and slide down with us ten or twelve yards at a time. In this way we soon got to the bottom, and stood again upon the Rambleta; though not without one of our companions, a clumsy fellow, having, when about half way down, got his pole fixed so fast among some stones that he could not extricate it when he was launched, the consequence being that he was thrown a complete somerset over the pole and laid on the flat of his back some dozen feet lower down, to his huge discomfort, and no smaller amusement of the rest of the party, when we found that dirty clothes formed the total of damage he had received.

It was now seven o'clock. The wind had died away entirely, and the sun was already beating upon the little plain with sufficient power to make us

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seek a shaded corner wherein to appease the cravings of our unusually keen appetites. So we breakfasted leisurely and well, and then, taking up our staff, entered again on the hateful Mal Pais, the descent of which was no less unpleasant than the upward journey, with the exception that our breathing was now freer. But the momentarily increasing force of the sun upon these horrid black masses of stone annoyed us wofully; and it was with surprise we looked at the path we had clambered over without accident in the dark, of which our present more extended view allowed us to take in all the details at a glance.

At about mid descent we turned a short distance out of our way, and were really struck with amazement at the appearance of the "Cueva del Yelo," or Ice Cave, the mouth of which now stood before us. In the midst of the vast track of surface, everywhere covered with mis-shapen black calcined stones of every size and figure, and at the height of 11,085 feet, we saw some much larger, and of a different nature. They were of a light grey colour and of a smooth close grain. The cave had an aperture of about fifteen feet wide, and twelve in height from the level on which we stood, and from this to the water in the interior appeared to us to be about another fifteen feet deep. We could not from any position

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see the entire extent of the interior, an abrupt angle of rock limiting our view of it to what we judged between two and three hundred feet. The roof forms a natural vault, from which depend innumerable icicles of considerable size, interpersed among stalactites and projections from the roof itself. The bottom was covered as far as we could see with water of the utmost purity, on which floated masses of ice and congealed snow. Under the mouth of the cave the ice is only about six feet deep, and a ladder reaching to it was formerly placed there for the convenience of those who make a trade of collecting and selling ice in the summer; but it fell to pieces many years ago, and has never been replaced. At a few yards from the mouth, however, it has been impossible to ascertain the depth, though lead lines of many fathoms have been used without touching the bottom; and of course everything regarding that, and the interior extent of the cavern, is mere conjecture. A popular belief attributed to its waters an ebb and flow commensurate with that of the sea, but that has long been proved quite erroneous. For want of a rope we were not able to descend to any of the ledges in the inside, and merely lowered a string with a bottle attached to it to bring up some of the deliciously cold and limpid water.

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To those who do not engage in scientific investigations, the Ice Cave forms the last object of interest on the Peak. On finishing our examination of it, we should have immediately proceeded over the remainder of the Mal Pais, had we not been detained by the renewed indisposition of one of our party, who was again seized by the same nausea and its accompaniments as on the preceding night. After considerable delay, he was able to move forward, and it was with great delight we regained the Estancia de los Ingleses at between nine and ten in the forenoon, heartily fatigued with the latter part of our descent. There we stretched ourselves in the shade and rested for awhile, during which the corks of some bottles of porter were removed, and even one or two of those of spirits; but the contents of the latter produced not the slightest intoxicating effect on such of the party as partook of them.

At near eleven we broke up our camp, and unwilling to trust to others than our own now well-tried legs on the sharp and unstable descent from the Estancia to the Cañadas, we walked that part of the way, but, once on the plain, mounted our mules and proceeded with what little speed we could. There was not a cloud in the firmament, and our having some ten or twelve miles of arid

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yellow and reddish pumice-stone and sand to cross, gave rise to anticipations that were but too fully realized, for the scorching sun above us, and what was worse, its reflected rays from the heated surface (which we could by no means protect ourselves against) completely grilled our hands and faces, and even seemed to press with leaden weight upon our bodies. Meanwhile our attendants strode on most gallantly, with an endurance and apparent insensibility to fatigue that was quite astonishing, laughing and singing as cheerfully as if fresh from a week's rest; but the mules seemed to suffer from the heat and dryness, and one of them was seized with a colic, to which they are not unfrequently subject, if new to these elevated regions. Besides occasionally throwing itself on the ground and rolling over and over, it became quite vicious, biting and kicking at any other that approached it. So our friend who rode it prudently resolved on parting company with us and pushing on alone with his best despatch to await our arrival at the Pino del Dornajito; and glad were we all when we rejoined him at that desired spot at about three in the afternoon. There we reclined luxuriously by the side of the spring, and with the remainder of our provisions spread before us, loitered away the time till the heat was no longer formid-

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able. The rest of the way homeward appeared to us nothing more than plain sailing, when compared with our previous experience; and before seven o'clock we were all safe in Port Orotava, highly gratified with our excursion, the pleasures of which had far exceeded its inconveniences, though the latter were pets for several days afterwards, in the shape of peeled hands and faces, the skin of which, in some of our number, completely changed; and even our limbs and bones felt for some time sore from the broiling we had undergone.

The flag we had left flying on the Peak kept its position and was seen from Port Orotava on every clear day till the month of December, when it must have yielded to the blasts of winter.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Legends and Superstitions of Teneriffe—The Burning of Judas—Easter Sunday—Procession of Priests and Acolytes—The Plaza de la Constitucion—Assembling of the Country People—The Instrument of Punishment—The Arch-Traitor's Effigy—Event of the Day—The Fireworks—Madame Judas—Excited Conduct of the People—Judas thrown into the Sea—Amusements—The Passions of a Mob—The Miraculous Image of La Virgen de la Candelaria—Its Discovery by Native Goatherds—The Mencey of Guimar informed of its Appearance—Miracles wrought by the Image—Honoured on Candlemas Day—Nocturnal Lights and Processions—Dr. de la Seña Dedicates his History of the Canary Islands to the Image of Candelaria—Superstitious Reverence of the Spaniards—Committed to the Care of the Dominican Friars—Oblations—Festivals of the Virgin of Candelaria—Acts of Penance—Trading in the Superstitions of the People—The Dominican Order—Loss of La Virgen.

In the central part of the town of Port Orotava, within a few hundred yards of the sea, there is now a large open space called La Plaza de la Constitucion, though formerly enjoying no more dignified

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name than "Plaza de los Camarones" (from the number of small shrimps that used to be deposited there, when, in stormy weather, the surf occasionally broke into the lower part of it), and more recently "Plaza del Charco," or Pool Square, on account of little reservoirs of water that from the same cause, or from violent winter rains, accumulated there. It is now a pretty locality; its oblong square surrounded by a double row of well-grown Oriental plane-trees, and on each side of the alleys formed by them is a sufficient number of commodious stone settees for the use of the promenaders of all classes, who, in the summer afternoons and evenings, resort to it for fresh air and exercise. It is, in short, that general appendage to a Spanish town called the Alameda. Six streets, or lanes, lead into its precincts, and its north-eastern corner opens towards the adjacent sea-shore; the rest is surrounded by some good dwelling-houses, a shop or two, granaries, wine-cellars, and other buildings; and the back-ground presents a partial view of the cultivated high lands, topped by the elevated mountain ridge of more than 6,000 feet above the sea level.

It is a beautiful, bright, calm, cloudless morning in the month of April when we shall visit this spot. The church bells are clanging and gingling most

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inharmoniously; the two nearest batteries discharge their few pieces of ordnance; the thoroughfares of the town are well swept and clean, and some of the houses in the principal streets are decorated with crimson or yellow damask hangings, pendent from their windows and balconies, while in many places the central part of the pavement is thickly strewn with flowers, for it is Easter Sunday, and the religious procession is already on its way from and return to the church, through some of the more leading parts of the town. On it comes, with all the little pomp the place can afford. A crimson banner, and two or three other religious insignia, lead the way; the parish priest walks under a silken canopy accompanied by a few others of the clergy, and by the members of a lay brotherhood, clad in scarlet silk tunics, and bearing lighted wax tapers of a goodly length in their hands, as do likewise the Alcalde (or Mayor) and civic staff, who follow. Then comes an amateur band of military music, alternating from time to time their performance with the drum-beat of the few militia soldiers that form the escort. The townsfolk, of all ranks, in their best attire, throng behind and around, and there is no small show of exaggerated French fashions and superfluous finery among the lady part of the concourse (though on the present

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occasion they all wear their national black lace mantilla), and thus, with measured step, amid the chanting of the priesthood and the tinkling of a small hand bell, carried by one of the acolytes, the strains of the band or the slow march beat on the drums, the procession leisurely completes its tour and re-enters the church.

But what means this stream of human beings who, with hurried pace and eager countenances, flock from the country for miles around down every avenue that leads into the town? They cannot be bent on hearing the high mass that succeeds the re-entry of the procession into the church; for that is performed on every Sunday throughout the year without attracting more attendance than that of part of the parishioners, but now the crowds of country people, men, women, and children, throng in, in hundreds and in thousands; all in their holiday garments, of gaudy and striking colours—the female part wearing their neat straw hats—(not bonnets, but hats of the same shape as those used by the men)—bound with broad showy ribbons, or their heads covered with flaring red or yellow coloured kerchiefs; the men in their clean shirt-sleeves, with unbuttoned waistcoat, and perhaps a jacket folded and thrown over the shoulder, each bearing his Garote, or travelling pole in his not always

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well-washed, hands. They are an active and robust set of men, and in general very strong, though only of medium stature; hard-working and sober in their habits, but lamentably untaught and ignorant withal. To-day, the faces of all, old and young, male and female, exhibit a joyous animation, not common to their usual mode of life. Surely the loud talk, the jests, the whooping and laughter with which they hasten along, cannot be preparatory to attendance on any of their church duties, at so great a distance from their own villages or detached habitations? Ah! no,—they are coming into the place to witness the burning of Judas—Judas, of whose history, and of the nature of whose crime, not ten in a hundred of them have even the slightest knowledge; but they all know that it is a name of detestation, habitually reviled and spat at by their fathers, who have taught them to hold it in abhorrence.

The burning of Judas on Easter day was a custom formerly practised annually in this island, exclusively in the town of Port Orotava; but it had, for a good many years past, fallen into desuetude, and has only now been revived, either as a means of holiday amusement (of certainly no very elevated a character), or by way of giving a fillip

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to the orthodox catholicism of the people. Let us see how it is carried out.

High Mass has been said, and from the church, and from all quarters of the town, people rush hastily towards the Plaza de la Constitucion; the windows and terraces of such houses as command a view of it are filled and lined with ladies, and such of the rougher sex as do not like to expose their persons in the mob. We, however, accompany a portion of the latter who debouch into the Plaza from the street on its eastern side, and enjoy, as we enter it, a charming view of the magnificent Peak, yet fully robed in snow, towering over the back ground of its south-western corner. The atmosphere has a sparkling brilliancy imparted to it by some recently fallen showers, and the temperature is anything but oppressively warm, though the sun falls upon the spot where between six and seven thousand persons are densely congregated, filling all the space between the buildings (or the many little linen booths that have been run up against them for the sale of bread, sweetmeats, and liquor) and the centre of the Plaza, which is left nearly free.

Examining the object of general attraction, we perceive that, towards the lower or most seaward part of the square, a huge sheers—such as is used

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for masting ships—has been erected, with the necessary guys and stays to support and steady it; and from a rope that runs through a double-sheaved block at the top hangs the effigy of the arch-traitor Judas.

This effigy has for the last three weeks been in the course of construction, and the expense of it is defrayed out of a public subscription, amounting to some eighty or more dollars, for this express purpose. If bearing any personal resemblance to Judas, the latter must have been a person of considerably more than ordinary stature, and not endowed with a very fascinating aspect; for the height of the figure is more than *thirteen yards*, the head, large in proportion even for that size, being covered, by way of wig, with no less than five black sheep-skins with the wool on. The whole fabric has been put together in something the same way as we may suppose the negroes to make their Mumbo Jumbo:—wood, laths, hoops, canes, and iron, have all been used to form the head, trunk, and limbs of the figure, which has then been filled with coarse sacking, and paper pasted over that, so as to allow of its being coloured in a becoming manner. The nose and goggle eyes are very strongly-marked features in its countenance, and the highly florid hue imparted to it may probably be intended as an indication of

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the effect produced by so unhealthy a position as it at present occupies. As to its attire, we cannot congratulate the artist on having been, to our mind, peculiarly happy. The late J. P. Kemble would probably have agreed with some later critics in such matters, that there is a small anachronism of costume in clothing Judas Iscariot in the semblance of a black cut-away coat, yellow vest, and pantaloons, with Hessian boots, as he is here presented to us.

There, however, he hangs by the neck, his feet dangling to within a yard of the ground, and whatever faults may be found as to personal appearance, it cannot be denied that he is a strongly-built fellow enough, being as firmly and securely put together as screws, nails, and twine can make him, and as his size and weight make it indispensable he should be. In lieu of gold chain or other ornament, the entire figure is netted over from the top of the boot to the crown of the sheep-skin covered head with a profusion of squibs, serpents, crackers, and other fire-works of the most noisy description; and the whole arrangement elicits shouts of the most enthusiastic delight and admiration from the assembled thousands who hail with uproarious joy every oscillation of the pendent figure.

At last, however, the successive discharge of a

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number of the little rockets (made of a joint of hollow cane instead of paper cases) that are generally used here, gives notice that the grand event of the day is about to come off. The crowd huddles and thickens still more closely than before; and when the fire-work maker and his assistant apply a lighted match to each of the boot-toes, and the first reports are heard, the shouts and clamour of the multitude are quite deafening. For more than twenty minutes the fizzing and cracking is incessant, for the leading tubes that conduct the fire from one group of explosives to another, are purposely made to burn slowly, so as to prolong the exhibition as much as possible, though this is now and then interrupted by a scurry when a handful or two of squibs fly off in a lateral direction and burst among the crowd; and many a before spotless mantilla or gay handkerchief bears indisputable evidence to the wearer having been under fire.

During the whole of the time the fireworks are going off, the vociferations of the great mass of spectators are unceasing, every opprobrious term, and every naughty word in the Spanish language (which, by the bye, are not few) being abundantly lavished upon Judas; and as if that were not enough, his mother too comes in for so large a

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share of them that, it must be acknowledged, if in her life-time she merited one thousandth part of them, Madame Judas, Mère, must have been far indeed from a reputable character. If not, she is decidedly an extremely ill-used person, even by many of her own sex, who loudly, and without blushing, add their votes on the question to those of their husbands and brothers.

The last remaining sparks are gradually burning out on Judas's forehead and nose, but yet an occasional pop is heard from some piece that had hitherto avoided the general ignition and seems ambitious of being heard alone. But the male part of the populace are now hurrying in an excited manner towards the foot of the sheers, each one clutching his pole most energetically. Some lay hold of the legs of the figure and sway it outwards, while others slacken the ropes by which it was suspended, until it speedily lies extended at full length upon the ground, amidst the most diabolical uproar of shouts, hooting, whistling, and outcries of every kind; and then commences the concluding and most extravagant scene of all. Hardly has another rope of some ten or twelve fathoms long been attached to the neck of the figure, before as many men and boys as its length gives room for, tackle on to it, and tear away, dragging

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it after them at the greatest speed its weight and size will allow of, while hundreds upon hundreds of stout and stalwart countrymen run beside, behind, and all around it, their countenances inflamed by an absolutely ferocious expression. Meanwhile they shower upon it a continuous and rapid peal of the heaviest and quickest blows they can bestow with their Garotes, or even thicker clubs, swearing at and cursing it all the while as if demented. An armed picket of soldiers runs with them, to be at hand in case of a row, for it has often happened in former times, and might happen again, now that in the hurry of the race so many are eager to give a blow. The jostling of the outsiders might overthrow one of the nearer enthusiasts, or give him an accidental taste of Judas's fare, which not being to his liking, he would naturally turn on his aggressor, and this would lead to a party skirmish and broken heads.

No casualty of this sort, however, happens to-day. Judas alone bears the whole pelting of the pitiless storm; and before he has run up one street, through another transverse one, down that of Saint John, which leads straight to the sea-side, the figure has been beaten almost to pieces, leaving broken fragments of its materials strewn along its wake. Such part of it, however, as still hangs

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together at the sea-side is launched into the water; boats fasten ropes to it, and tow it out to sea, many of the indefatigable countrymen embarking in them, and still using their poles with unabated zeal. When at a certain distance, it is finally cast adrift. Nay, even the scattered fragments that lie along the streets are still further demolished, not only by dozens of unbreeched urchins, but also by grown men, who have not found a previous opportunity of contributing to the general bastinado. We saw one poor fellow who had lost his pole in giving a farewell blow to the remnant when it was dragged from the shore; and who, while returning up the shingly beach, happened upon a small piece of board that had formed part of it. "What," he exclaimed, "you accursed dog, are you still following me? Wait a bit," and sitting down, he placed the board before him, and with a couple of stones patiently battered it to pieces. Then he arose and went his way, apparently a happy man, conscious of having performed a meritorious action.

Many boat-loads of countrywomen afterwards made an aquatic excursion to see the last floating remains of the effigy, and revile them; and it was considerably beyond noon when the whole was done with. The remainder of the day was occupied with various amusements, such as raffles, mâts de

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Cocaigne, starting a fire balloon, and jollification. At night there was a large display of fireworks, which, with the musical performance of a very perfect amateur band from the neighbouring villa of Orotava, concluded the fiesta, and the town sank into its abnormal silence and dulness.

Altogether, the burning of Judas was an amusing spectacle. The unusual concourse of people, their varied and bright coloured dresses, and the animation that pervaded the whole, formed a highly pleasing view; and in many instances the expressions of delight and astonishment (when divested of the obnoxious parts of speech) were diverting and even ludicrous; and yet, it gave rise to the reflection, on the whole, of how easily the passions of a mob can be excited, and the rage—for it was no less—that was vented against a mere inanimate mass could be directed against their fellow-beings, if pointed out to the vengeance of an ignorant and ill-tutored populace, however mild and inoffensive their individual deportment may be. Under this point of view, the ceremony of the burning of Judas is to be deprecated as tending to develope or foment any latent barbarism that may be among them.

As a further illustration of the superstition of Teneriffe, we may here give an account of

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the miraculous image of La Virgen de la Candelaria.

About a hundred years previous to the invasion of Teneriffe by the Spaniards, two of the native Guanches were one evening driving homewards a large flock of goats by the sea-shore at the place called Chimisay, in the dominion of the Mencey, or king, of Guimar, on the south side of the island, when suddenly the whole flock stopped, as if attracted by some unaccustomed appearance—then took fright, and in the wildest confusion dispersed among the rocks and ravines on the land side, notwithstanding all the endeavours that their drivers, by their usual cries and gestures, made to restrain them. The poor goatherds, much astonished at this strange disobedience of their charge, looked around to discover what caused the alarm, and at last perceived what they believed to be a woman bearing a child on her right arm, standing on one of the rocks that there rise from the sea-side.

Now it was one of the laws of the Guanche people, that no man should speak to or even pass by a woman in a solitary or unfrequented place; and the goatherds therefore made signs to her to descend from her perch, and leave the path open to them, but quite ineffectually, for the lady would not stir. One of the men, rendered impatient by

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her obstinacy, and irritated also by considering the trouble he would have in collecting his flock again, very ungallantly picked up a goodly pebble, the flinging of which at her he thought might be more persuasive than all his gestures to make her move on; but at the moment of throwing the stone, his arm was dislocated at the shoulder-joint and remained immovable. His companion, struck with terror, tremblingly approached the figure. When he reached it, not perceiving any appearance of life or animation in it, he drew the stone knife (called by them Tabona) he carried, and, to convince himself whether it were or were not a creature of flesh and blood, endeavoured to cut it on the hands and arms, but, wonderful to relate, instead of inflicting on it even the slightest scratch, at every stroke he made he grievously wounded his own fingers! Then the panic of the poor fellows became complete; away they ran to tell these strange events to their Mencey, who, seeing their wonderful tale corroborated by the stiff arm of the one and the bleeding fingers of the other, decided on instantly proceeding to Chimisay, accompanied by his chief nobles and counsellors, and guided by the two goatherds, so as to judge for himself regarding what had been described. They found the image in the same spot and position as when first discovered, and were struck with awe

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and amazement at what they considered the surpassing beauty of its resemblance to a female countenance and figure, attired in—to them—strange and costly habiliments, carrying on the right arm a naked infant, and in the left hand a green-coloured taper. They determined on instantly conveying it with all possible reverence and pomp, as something supernatural, to the kingly residence, for which purpose the Mencey selected some of his most distinguished nobles to assist him in bearing the image in their arms. But, although the weight of it was very trifling, and the Guanches an extremely powerful race of men, they found themselves unable to carry it more than a gun-shot's distance, quite worn out with the fatigue of the load. Then the Mencey determined that, as the two goatherds had been the first to discover this extraordinary visitor, the obligation of carrying it should devolve on them alone. With fear and trembling they obeyed the royal behest; but, at the moment of touching the image, the dislocated arm of the one recovered its natural position and activity, and the wounded fingers of the other became instantaneously healed. The weight of the image was as a feather to them, and amid shouts and acclamations they quickly reached the regal court, or cavern, near which a separate place was

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appointed for retaining it, and for offering to it a kind of barbarous adoration. The other Menceys of the island, accompanied by hundreds of their vassals, used to visit it on each Candlemas Day (historians are silent as to the cause of that particular day being chosen, but of course it must have been one of the miracles), and flocks of goats and ewes were maintained exclusively for the use of the visitors who annually came to offer it homage as something divine.

Thus many years wore on till the Spaniards attacked the country. The time did not pass without the frequent appearance of nocturnal processions of lights, followed by one of extraordinary size and brilliancy traversing the sandy beach of Chimisay, while celestial music floated in the air above them. Don Juan Nuñez de la Peña,—one of the most credulous adorers of the image, to which he dedicates his book,—in his "History of the Canary Islands," printed at Madrid, in 1676, says, "Even in our days, these divine processions have been frequently witnessed; and when on the succeeding mornings people have descended to the beach, they have found it strewn with drops of wax and candle-ends of a yellowish colour, the wicks of which are of an unknown substance, neither flax nor cotton, but rather resembling twisted silk!"

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After the entire island had been subdued, the image fell into the hands of the conquering Spaniards, who regarded it with the profoundest veneration, and attributed to it the working of innumerable miracles. They first built a small chapel for it in a cave adjoining the rock on which it was said to have been found; but with the lapse of time it was resolved by a decree of the Emperor Charles V., and by a royal bull, that its care should be confided to the Dominican order of friars, though not without violent opposition on the part of the secular clergy, who claimed that right. The Dominicans, however, built a convent of their order within a short distance of the cave, in the miserable hamlet called, from the image, "Candelaria," wherein it was placed on a costly altar, but from which it was frequently removed;—sometimes by violence, at others to be borne in solemn procession through neighbouring districts in times of drought or other public calamities; but when ever forcibly carried off it invariably found its unassisted way back, occasionally with its petticoats all drabbled with mud from the bad roads,—at other times shaking the sand, and the damp, from the sea-spray, off its garments. It had often spontaneously left its altar to join in the nightly processions on the beach, as related by different chroniclers of

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the age, among whom the above named Nuñez de la Peña stands most conspicuous for the simplicity and absurdity of his narrations on the subject.

The Dominican friars, favoured by the gross superstition of the people, found the image a real treasure to their convent. Costly gifts and offerings of jewels and money flowed in upon them, and they had some of their members constantly travelling in the Spanish West Indies, in Mexico and South America, proclaiming the miraculous powers of the "Virgen de Candelaria de Teneriffe," and collecting valuable oblations, which were remitted to the convent to procure her intercession in favour of the donors. Even so late as 1812, a gentleman of great respectability in Grand Canary, having a daughter of sixteen years old dangerously ill, made a vow to the image that, if his child recovered, he would pay her weight in silver to the shrine. She did get well; and it is said the friars did not press their demand till a sufficiently long convalescence had restored the young lady to her pristine plumpness:—*then*, they had her weighed, and got their silver.

As the wealth of the order increased, it was found that the original convent was not sufficiently large for its purpose; and at the end of last century the

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building of a new one, after plans prepared by the Royal Academy at Madrid, was determined on, and commenced upon a magnificent scale. The soil being sandy, and that part of the island not unfrequently visited by earthquakes, no less a sum than 7,000*l.* sterling was expended upon the foundations alone; and the edifice, though never completed, was sufficiently advanced to afford ample accommodation for more than thirty friars, with room to spare for casual inmates. The space around it was enclosed with a strong wooden stockade, and towards the sea it was defended by a battery mounting four pieces of ordnance, constructed long before, to protect the convent and its shrine from the attack of national foes or of any roving filibuster who might have heard of its wealth; while a flight of steps hewn in the rock in rear of the convent gave its inmates the means of withdrawing themselves, with their charge and treasures, at any approach of danger.

Now, as to the image itself, there was nothing beautiful about it in an artistic sense. It was scarcely four feet high, carved out of a dark reddish coloured wood, and certainly its workmanship did no credit, as sculptors, to the angels, who, Nuñez de la Peña says, were the undoubted makers of it. It was painted, had some gilding about it, and

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on that part of the wood representing the hems of the upper and lower portions of dress were inscribed numerous Roman initial letters, the sense of which was never deciphered, though they gave rise to much theological discussion.

At the back part of the image there were three or four holes, that had evidently at some time or other held iron bolts or large nails, leading to the very reasonable conclusion that the image, if not originally the figure-head of some ancient ship, must at least have been attached to some part of one; but these suspicious appearances were concealed by the profusion of garments made of the richest stuffs that the piety or superstition of devotees covered it with, while the head, ears, neck, and arms were overloaded with the precious metals, with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, and other gems, of really great value. The green-painted candle had been displaced for one of pure gold, weighing several pounds, and of the same metal were the crown worn by the Virgin and the glory round the infant's head.

There were two festivals held every year in honour of the Virgen de Candelaria, the first on the 2nd of February (the day of the Purification), and the other on the 15th of August; and the affluence of people from all parts of Teneriffe, as well as from

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the other islands, was always very numerous. During the ceremonies of the August festival, the highest seats in the church, and the right of bearing the image in procession, were reserved solely for such persons as could satisfactorily prove their descent from the aboriginal Guanches—the brave and harmless race of men whom the Spanish invaders so ruthlessly extirpated by fire and sword, and by selling the prisoners they took into captivity in Spain and Portugal.

The scenes of penance, or of propitiation, that were enacted during these festivals, were often of a revolting character. A well of brackish water stands at the eastern extremity of the beach of Chimisay, while at nearly a third of a mile's distance, the convent of Candelaria and its overhanging rocks closed the other. From the well (the "holy well" they call it) you might see numbers of women on their knees, starting to shuffle in that position over the shingle and sand of the beach, and up to the altar in the church of the convent, where those who could sustain the fatigue would arrive with the lower part of their dress in shreds, and their lacerated knees leaving a bloody track upon the pavement. Others would undertake the same peregrination with five lighted tapers in each hand, one of the ways of tormenting their bodies for the good

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of their souls. Men were not more backward in these devotional exercises. Some would in like manner travel over the same distance, bearing heavy loads on their backs; and I have seen one perform the Herculean feat of having an iron crow-bar of nine pounds' weight attached to each of his horizontally-extended arms, and thus, spread out as if extended on a cross, walk from the well to the altar, which he reached in a nearly fainting condition. It is true that this was not looked on so much as a proof of devotion to the image as of pride in displaying his extraordinary strength.

Like all festivals of a similar nature in the islands, the "vespera" (or day preceding the feast) is, in all but the Church ceremonies, one of entertainment and merry-making, as also is the feast-day itself. On both, the friars at Candelaria, in addition to collecting gifts and votive offerings, used to drive a roaring trade in the sale of little green wax-tapers, the burning of which during child-birth, thunder storms, and other moments of peril by land or sea, they warranted as highly conducive to safety. They likewise sold narrow silk ribbons impressed with the mystic characters painted on the wooden drapery of the image; and these, bound round the head, were represented to be a sovereign remedy for headaches, epilepsy, and many other

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disorders. Large consignments of both articles used to be sent to their brotherhood in South America and elsewhere, for sale to the credulous they found in all countries.

Whatever may have been the merits of the Dominican order in former times, the members of it attached to the Convent of Candelaria in our age were, in everything recommendable, a sadly degenerate set. "Jolly friars" they could not be called;—they were too sensual, indolent, and ignorant to have even the spirit of conviviality in them.

They were about eighteen in number. "Fat-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights"—rubicund, flabby fellows, of most capacious paunches and inconceivable appetite, the allaying of which was their chief occupation; while, with the sole exception of teaching a few poor children their letters and catechism "after a fashion," their lives were loaded with scandal.

Such were they when the awful and disastrous catastrophe of the 6th November, 1826, overtook them. The deluge that then burst over the islands, and caused such infinitely greater damage, washed into the sea the battery and the greater part of the convent, together with the image; for, though the friars escaped by their private stairs to the rocks above,

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they were in too great a hurry to think of the safety of more than Number One. For many years after, the zealots watched for some miracle that they said would most assuredly again cast up the effigy on some part of the shores of its pre-chosen island;—but all in vain—it has never reappeared; and its costly ornaments (*if* they too were washed away) remain buried in the deep; or at least, such as were restored after the Constitutional Government of Spain had in 1821 placed in deposit the riches of all the conventual establishments. King Ferdinand VII. overthrew that system two years later, and ordered their restitution. At that time, it is said that, with regard to the Virgen de Candelaria's jewel-case, green glass had been substituted for emeralds, paste for diamonds, pearls of a pin's head size for others as big as peas, and pinchbeck for pure gold; but they answered the same purpose, —tinsel attracted as much devotion as solid metal, and the parties who made the exchange were none the worse for it.

Many of the verbal traditions of miracles said to have been wrought by the image of the Virgen de Candelaria are too extravagant to be even noticed by any but of the most vulgarly ignorant class; and it is astonishing how several pious, and perhaps in other respects well-informed, authors of the six-

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teenth and seventeenth centuries could disfigure their pages with the absurdities they very gravely relate as proofs of the divinity of an ill-sculptured block of wood.

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CHAPTER VI.

English Ships at the Canaries—Pic-nics in Teneriffe—The Handiness of Sailors—Visit to the Grand Canary—The English Vice-Consul—La Real Cuidad de las Palmas—Hospitality of its Inhabitants—Dilapidation of the City—Dolce far niente in the Tropics—Sefiors and Sefioras in the Alameda—View of Las Palmas—Cathedral of St. Anne—Amphitheatre of Caves—The Architect of the Cathedral—Don Diego Eduardo—Spanish Subjects of Irish Origin—The Palm Tree in Architecture—The Lotus of the Egyptians—The Greek Acanthus—The Floor of the Sacristy—Mr. Stephenson, the Engineer—Relic of Old St. Paul's—The Capilla Mayor—Immense Paschal Candle—Conversion of the Guanches to Christianity—Church of San Marcial—The Inquisition in the Canaries—Loss of the Guanche Language—The Ayimtamiento—The College of Las Palmas—System of Education—Church and Convent of the Jesuits—Theatre and Casino—Appearance of the Barranco de los Freyles—Aerial Effect in Grand Canary—La Virgen del Pino—Excursion to the Atalaya—The Cave Village of Potters—Sketching.

WE were always happy when an English ship came to the island. No sooner was the gun that

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announced its arrival fired, no sooner was the anchor dropped into the sea, than some one was on board to get the news from England, and to welcome the strangers to the island. How we rejoiced to see the honest English faces ashore, to converse freely in our mother tongue, and to hear the hearty English peals of laughter! Everybody was sure to be in good spirits, their very presence in these "Fortunate Islands" smoothing the wrinkles on the brows of those most oppressed with the cares of business or of state. Enjoyment was the order of the day; and, pic-nics being arranged for the most beautiful and interesting parts of the country, we delighted in conducting the strangers to the luxuriant valleys, the wild ravines, the mossy ruins, and the silent old towns of Teneriffe.

There was almost as much rejoicing, too, in preparing for these expeditions as in the expeditions themselves. Anything that gave occupation to the exuberant spirits of our friends or ourselves was welcomed, so that we were always in a bustle till the appointed day arrived. Horses and donkeys had to be engaged, carraiges prepared, and all kinds of stores laid in for our journey. When we made up our minds to have a merry-making, we resolved that it should be one in earnest—a resolution in which

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we were well seconded by our friends, particu larly by the officers of the ship. Sailors are noted for the ease with which they can make themselves at home anywhere, and then, not only can they be remarkably entertaining, but they can also make themselves so useful in a variety of ways. I have often seen them in a few days doing things well, which we or our friends, who do not possess the same ready knack, could not accomplish in double the time. Besides, we have always found them such good friends, and before their departure have so taken to each other that, when the time for bidding farewell came, we felt the separation with pain. However, such things must be; the best of friends must always part some time or other; and it is well that the experience of life teaches us resignation to this inexorable law.

On one occasion, by way of variety, and for the sake of prolonging a pleasant intercourse, we accompanied some friends on board their ship as far as the Grand Canary. We were anxious that they should land with us, but, as circumstances would not permit this, we were compelled to part with them off the island. They left us with many congratulations on our change of appointment, for at the time we had only recently come to the Canary Islands, and with the best wishes for our future

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prosperity and happiness. After expressing an anxious desire that we might be spared in the course of events to meet again, we were put ashore, whence we watched the noble vessel as it ploughed its way through the dancing billows, and soon disappeared in the distance. It was a great disappointment to our kind and hospitable Vice-Consul and his wife that the captain could not anchor off the island, for, like ourselves, they rejoiced in the sight of the British flag, and in the society of English friends.

La Real Cuidad de las Palmas, the capital of Grand Canary, is rather a gloomy and uninteresting city. It has a ruined appearance, and the atmosphere is so heavy in its close and narrow streets that the visitor can with difficulty resist the influence of the melancholy feelings which such a place is calculated to inspire. The town is pretty extensive, but very silent, with little animation in its almost deserted streets. The houses are flat-roofed, looking as if the top-floor had fallen off. The appearance of most of them is very mean, but here and there a more lofty and handsome one, with some pretensions even to architectural decoration, stands up in solitary importance. Some of the old public buildings and houses look imposing enough, compared with the pigmy structures by which they

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are surrounded; and a few of the streets have considerable pretensions to beauty, but they are so interspersed with ruined houses and heaps of building-materials, that they look as if they had only recently suffered from a severe earthquake.

One thing, however, may fairly be said in favour of this ancient town. Its inhabitants are exceedingly kind and agreeable to strangers,—at least, such was our experience. All whom we had the pleasure of meeting we found so courteous and hospitable, that we became reconciled even to the dilapidation of which we had so often occasion to be witnesses. As too much ceremony would be a great drawback in these sultry climates, we always were happy to meet persons who could receive us without formality, and whose free and easy kindness soon made us feel as comfortable as in our own home. Another tropical pleasure is that of being thoroughly idle. When the sun is parching the earth with a degree of heat of which the untravelled inhabitants of England, fortunately, have no conception, one dearly loves to dawdle about in his own way, to stand, or sit, or sleep, or wake, as he pleases. On these sultry days, the very camels even, with that strange zig-zag movement which is peculiar to them, move about unheeded, going slow or fast, or not going at all, at their own pleasure. The very

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donkeys may take liberties with you, receiving no admonitory rebuke from the heavy stick that hangs idly in your hand. People lie asleep in their houses during the heat of the day, for there is little astir until the cool breath of evening is felt, when the Señoritas begin to move, and having arranged their light toilet, appear in all their bloom and beauty on the Alameda. The Spanish gentlemen are there too; but they, having lighted their cigars, are conversing with the cock-fighting gentleman who has come over from Teneriffe to provide them with an opportunity of witnessing their favourite sport. Bull-fighting was never more popular in Spain than cock-fighting is in the Grand Canary.

Some distance beyond the Alameda, there is a very beautiful view of Las Palmas as it stands on the ravine on both sides of which its streets are erected. There is something peculiarly foreign in the aspect of the town, viewed from this position. In winter, a mountain stream flows down the ravine, which is spanned by a very elegant bridge built by one of its former bishops. The houses, which in this direction are some of the best in the town, are beautifully interspersed with orange and palm trees. Crowds of women come to wash in the stream which flows down the Barranco. On one side of the ravine

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the Cathedral of St. Anne is erected. Though unfinished, it is a remarkably fine, and even noble-looking, building. On the other side may be observed an amphitheatre of caves, some of which, doubtless, once afforded refuge to the aborigines, while others are the work of more recent times. The poorer part of the inhabitants, who, like their Guanche predecessors, are still a semi-troglodite race, inhabit these not very choice abodes. In the distance the blue range of the Pexas Mountains may be observed crowning the landscape. Altogether, the view is at once unique and charming.

The great lion of Las Palmas is its cathedral, of which the inhabitants may well be proud. In the glorious days of Isabella the Catholic, when the genius of Spain was attaining to its greatest ascendency, the Spanish architect, Don Diego Montande, laid the foundations of this magnificent church. It was fortunately built and consecrated before a taste had arisen for a style of architecture that was inconsistent with the canons and requirements of Christian art. The architect, Montande, is said to have received only forty maravedis daily for his work, a sum equal to about ninepence, English money, in the eighteenth century. However, the bishopric being possessed of immense revenues, the Bishop and Chapter determined to reconstruct and finish

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the cathedral. Although, therefore, the first architect deserves all the honour for having designed so magnificent a building, it was principally erected by an architect who, though a native of Laguna in Teneriffe, yet claimed British origin. His name was Don Diego Nicholas Eduardo, the descendant of a family which, in company with many others in similar circumstances, came from Ireland at the time of the rebellion in that country, and took refuge in the Canary Islands. To this day, in these islands and in Spain, there is many a Murphy, O'Donnell, and Callaghan, names which clearly show whence they have sprung, although the nationality of the individuals bearing them is now changed. It is said that Eduardo built the roof of the cathedral of so light a pumice that the workmen, considering it unsafe, refused to continue the work. The only way in which he could inspire them with confidence was by sitting under the roof himself, while they were engaged in working at the building. By this means their courage was restored and the work progressed.

The church, as it now stands, is composed of a nave with double aisles, the side aisles forming chapels. The piers also are very lofty and elegant, partaking in some measure of the form of the

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palm-tree. They are thus quite characteristic of the city in which the cathedral is built. This fact suggests a question well worthy of some consideration. Why should not the indigenous flora of this, or of any other country, be adapted to the architecture of its edifices? The Egyptians availed themselves of their own lotus. The Greeks learned a lesson from their native acanthus. The natives of Palestine obtained suggestions from the pomegranate and lily. And in the case of these islands, what could be more appropriate to the ornamentation of the houses in the Canaries than their own stately and massive banana and vigorous aloe, to which a contrast, at once so striking and beautiful, could be obtained in the elegant fern or the euphorbia? Would not the introduction of forms suggested by these trees, plants, and flowers, while introducing something original, with greater variety, into architecture, be at the same time more consistent than the perpetual use of the Greek honeysuckle or other classical decorations, without regard to the character and traditions of the people or the natural features of the place?

The sacristy of the cathedral has a very remarkable stone floor. It is shown to visitors as a perfect marvel, and seems completely to puzzle the priest who exhibits it. It is a square of some five-

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and-twenty feet, and, as there is no support but the side walls (for he takes the visitor down into the chamber beneath to look), the supposed wonder that requires to be explained is the manner in which it is supported. The celebrated English engineer, Mr. Stephenson, happened to be one of our party on the occasion of this visit to the cathedral. As what was such a mystery to the priest was none to him, he excited the great surprise of the former by explaining to him on paper the principle on which the floor was built, namely, that, being in the form of an arch, it required only the outer walls, which were very thick, to support it. The worthy padre did not appear quite to relish the idea of so simple an explanation of what had all his life been such a marvel to him, and it is doubtful whether any reason or argument would have satisfied him of its correctness.

Altogether, the interior of the cathedral is very grand. Its appearance would be much more imposing, if it were not for the coro, which destroys the general effect by cutting up the nave. From the style of its architecture, also, it appears to be quite out of keeping with the other parts of the building. The lectern, or reading-desk, is said to be a relic from old St. Paul's cathedral.

In the Capilla Mayor a very massive silver lamp

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is suspended. It is made of filigree silver, the workmanship of Genoese artists, and is said to have been presented to the church by Cardinal Ximenes in 1690. The altar and credence-table are very magnificent, being formed of beaten silver. The former is decorated with three large salvers, besides the immense paschal candle, nearly a foot in diameter, and about fifteen feet in height, which is placed on the northern side. A fine canopy of rich crimson velvet adorns the high altar.

In accordance with the religious policy of the times, Pope Clement VI., in 1344, took advantage of all the discoveries that were then made to propagate the Roman Catholic faith. He accordingly claimed spiritual dominion over the Canary Islands. The Norman cavalier, John de Betancourt, who undertook the conquest of Canary, had two chaplains with him, John le Verrier and Peter Bontier, who were very zealous in the extension of their faith. Their success in the conversion of the Guanches almost equalled their unwearying zeal. In the year 1404, they built a church in the island of Lanzarote, naming it the Church of San Marcial. By a bull of Pope Benedict XIII. it was converted into a cathedral see, suffragan of Seville. Fo Mendo de Viednia, after some contention, was recognized by the Council of Constance, and is generally con-

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sidered the first bishop of the see of San Marcial in Lanzarote. Subsequently, in 1435, a bull was obtained from Eugenius IV. authorising the translation of the see to Grand Canary, as being a place of greater importance. In November, 1485, eight years after the complete subjugation of the island, this translation was effected, the then newly-erected cathedral being at the same time dedicated to St. Anne.

The present church was built in the year 1500. It was commenced during the episcopate of F. Diego de Moros, dean of Santiago, and third bishop of Las Palmas, one of the most violent opponents of Luther and the doctrines of the Reformation. The first sacred offices were celebrated in it on the eve of Corpus Christi, 1570. It is supposed not to occupy the same site as the first church.

The Inquisition was established in the Canary Islands soon after the conquest, a circumstance to which we may attribute, at least in part, the loss of the Guanche language, the natives not daring to speak it in public, from the fear of being misunderstood, or of exciting the suspicion of their conquerors. The memory of their old traditions and their ancient customs disappeared with their language. As Grand Canary was the head-quarters of the Inquisition, the *auto-da-fe* is said to have been perpetrated there.

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In addition to the cathedral, there are other handsome buildings in the city of Las Palmas. Immediately in front of it is the Ayimtamiento, or Town-hall, which forms a handsome ornament to the square. We are aware that it has been sneeringly declared to be an exact facsimile of Day and Martin's establishment in Holborn, while it is really a fine building, and looks extremely well.

There is an excellent college for the education of young men. Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, and the other branches of science are taught in it, lecture-rooms being devoted to each of these departments of instruction. The building also contains a model-room and library. There is a dining-room in which the students take their meals, and a separate bath and dressing-room for each. For exercise there is a fine terrace-walk close upon the sea, and a garden well filled with the shrubs and evergreens of the island. Books are kept, recording the name, conduct, and progress of each student, which are always open to the inspection of the public. The plan of the institution is exceedingly liberal, the object in view, apparently, being that families whose limited means preclude them from sending their sons to Europe to complete their education, should have the opportunity of obtaining sound, practical, and useful instruction for them at home. Great order is main-

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tained in the establishment, the discipline of which is very strict. Many of the pupils, in after life, have afforded good evidence of the excellent system of training to which they were subjected in the early years of their life.

The church and convent of the Jesuits is near this college. The inmates were banished from Teneriffe during the religious and political commotions which extended from Spain even to these small and remote islands, but were subsequently permitted to return. Las Palmas also possesses a theatre and casino for the amusement of the people, which, with the alameda, form interesting and attractive places of resort to the inhabitants.

The aspect of the country around Las Palmas, and indeed in the whole island of Grand Canary, differs in some material points from that of Teneriffe. In consequence of the much greater quantity of rain that falls annually in the former island, everything looks verdant and refreshing, and vegetation of all kinds is remarkably abundant. It suffers under one great disadvantage, however, Grand Canary being said not to be nearly so salubrious as Teneriffe. In 1851, when it was visited by cholera, the island was completely decimated. This fatal disease is said to have been first introduced by a ship from Habana, which arrived with

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foul linen on board, a supposition confirmed by the fact that it broke out in the quarter where the clothes were washed. The same vessel, however, is stated to have previously landed a passenger in quarantine at Santa Cruz, where no evil results followed.

The road leading out of the town winds for some distance along the edge of a very deep ravine. The prospect is exceedingly pleasing and cheerful, presenting a continuous bird's-eye view of gentlemen's country-houses, every inch of ground being carefully cultivated. There are innumerable gardens, variegated with blossoming flowers of all colours and kinds. Productive vineyards are seen over the whole face of the country, and there are many dense groves and thickets in which, even at midday, one may find shelter from the overpowering rays of the sun.

One of our excursions, while on the island, was to the Barranco de los Freyles. It forms a narrow gorge between steep and stupendous rocks hanging over on each side, while a mountain-torrent dashes wildly over its rough bed below. It is scarcely possible to conceive a spot which presents a more wild and desolate aspect; and yet, you have but to take one more turn, and all at once you behold a scene as different as it is possible to imagine. In

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the distance, the cultivated table-land, with its clusters of palm-trees, may be seen glittering in the sun like a bright spot of emerald green, presenting a strange contrast when viewed beside the rugged rocks and frowning precipices of this tremendous gorge.

In Grand Canary there is more aerial effect than in Teneriffe, owing probably to the greater amount of moisture in the atmosphere. In the latter island, the effect is often very perplexing, particularly to an artist accustomed to a northern climate, the aerial perspective almost ceasing, the measure of distance failing, and the view looking flat and somewhat like a scene-painting. This effect continues until the eye in time becomes accustomed to the clear and intense effects of tropical sunlight. This, however, as I have observed, is not the case in Canary, where, if the effects are not so gorgeous as in Teneriffe, they are more poetical and suggestive.

There is a very beautiful spot called Teror about four leagues from Las Palmas. The greater part of the road which leads to its passes through some of the most charming and beautiful scenery in the island. The village of Teror is situated on a considerable elevation, its white houses being perceptible on the mountain side, shining in the sun, long before the traveller reaches it. Here again the

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face of the country is interspersed with numerous country seats and the fine estates of wealthy proprietors. At some distance from Teror, on a still greater acclivity, there is a lovely valley literally dotted with churches and cottages. When I first beheld it, every object was concealed by one dense cloud which came rolling up the valley, but, as it seemed gradually to be lifted up, cottages and gardens were disclosed one after another, shining in the sunlight with a brilliancy and beauty which made it impossible for me to imagine a fairer scene.

Teror is celebrated for a strange legend of a remarkable pine-tree, on which an image of the Virgin Mary was found. The figure was carried to the parochial church, where it is still preserved in great honour, being loaded with jewels. As the diamond rings prepared for the Virgin could not be put on her hands as originally formed, she was provided with an extra pair, which are now so resplendent with precious stones that the joints of the fingers are completely hidden by them, while her own original hands, which are very beautiful, are tucked under her magnficent brocaded robes. She is called La Virgen del Pino, a name which has become so popular that many of the young ladies of the island rejoice in bearing it as their Christian appellation.

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CHAPTER VII.

Atalaya — Caverns — The Community of Potters—Specimens of their Workmanship — Savage Dogs — Imaginary Fears — Sketching—Demand for Old Clothes—Story of a Prussian Friend on a Botanical Excursion—The Peasant-Farmer—The Study of English — Butter for Breakfast — A Present of Calzones Largos — Hospitality of the Residents of Grand Canary—The English Hotel—Pepa, the Hostess—An Unsavoury Abode—The Furniture and Decorations of Pepa's Hotel—Its Conveniences and Inconveniences—The House occupied by Columbus—His Visit to the Canaries—Alonzo Sanchez de Huelva, the Andalusian Mariner—Information communicated by him to Columbus.

I AM not aware that there is any place in the island to which a more pleasant excursion can be made in fine weather than to Atalaya. The aspect of the place is very remarkable, presenting at first sight something like the appearance of an extinct crater. On examining it more closely, we found that it was shaped like an immense basin, the sides

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of which were perforated with a great number of caverns. These caverns, differing from each other in extent, rise in tiers, like the boxes in a theatre, up the acclivity on which they are situated to the very edge of the great natural basin. Although many may find some difficulty in crediting the statement, it is still true that these dens constitute the habitations of a considerable population. The place is literally a town of caves, with a population amounting, it is said, to about two thousand. Although they are certainly a very wild and savage looking class of people, they profess to follow a regular line of industry, being potters by trade. I was favoured with an opportunity of seeing some articles of their workmanship, which were so well executed that in some instances they would not have disgraced the workmen of more civilized localities, who have had the advantage of more careful and systematic training in their craft. I saw several utensils, the shape of which was very elegant, although a connoisseur might have detected some faults so far as regards perfect symmetry of form. On the whole, many of the articles reminded me of the vessels of Etruscan pottery, to which they bore considerable resemblance.

The people were not by any means the most prepossessing I have seen. Their countenances were

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dark and lowering, their manners wild and savage, and their appearance that of an unsettled community of gipsies, whom they greatly resembled, rather than that of the inhabitants of a quiet and orderly village, even though the houses were the caves of the earth. As we might have anticipated, we were soon surrounded by beggars, eager and clamorous in their demands. Their savage-looking dogs, with blood-shot eyes, that looked with faithful suspicion on all strangers, snuffed and growled about us. It seemed to me that we had found our way into company not of the best or safest character, and I cannot say that I felt quite comfortable in the midst of such a reckless horde. I had only two companions with me, and when one of them, excited to anger by the clamorous importunities of the numerous beggars, spoke rather sharply to them, I did not think it quite safe, and wished he had deferred his reproof until we had got to a safer distance from them. However, as we were now, to use a common expression of boys, "in for it," I thought it advisable to assume an appearance of as great indifference and composure as I could muster up, for, with such lawless people, the most dangerous thing in the world is to show that you are afraid of them. I therefore sat down and took out my sketch-book and drawing-materials. With

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hundreds gathered by curiosity about me, I set to work, and soon reproduced on paper the savage scene and the wild figures on which I had been looking. My fears must have greatly exaggerated the causes of alarm which I had imagined, for I met with no interruption in my operations. There was, no doubt, a good deal of curiosity to see what I was about, but there was no rudeness or violence. When I had finished my task for the day, I again put up my instruments, and, beyond the curiosity of which I continued still to be the object, I took my departure without suffering any inconvenience from the presence of these almost untutored savages.

Having now greater confidence in my friends, the potters of the caves, I went alone on the following day to visit them and their locality. I say alone, for my only companion was a boy named Juanito, about fourteen years of age, whom I had taken with me to take care of my donkey. As soon as I began to make preparations for drawing, I was perceived by some sharp eyes, and crowds, equal in number to those that had beset me the day before, gathered around the station on which I had fixed. Not only, however, did I find them very well conducted, but also exceedingly courteous and obliging. Any little service that I required,

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they were ready to perform, bringing out mats also for me, that I might have a more comfortable seat. When I began to draw, there was some commotion among themselves, struggling to get near to me and to excite my attention to them individually. On inquiring what they wished me to do for them, I was informed that they were anxious to get introduced into my sketch. I had thus an excellent supply of models, some of them with most expressive faces, strongly-marked features, dark complexions, and flashing eyes.

I took care, however, to give them no money, being afraid that the sight of it might excite their cupidity, and lead them to ask for or expect more than I would have been disposed to give. As a measure of precaution, therefore, I had taken none with me. I told them, however, that, if they wished for anything, they might call at my residence the following day. Money really did not appear to be so much an object of desire with them as clothing. Any article of wearing apparel they were exceedingly anxious to procure, and it would have required the stores laid up in the emporium of a Moses or Jacob in Houndsditch to answer all the eager demands made upon my generosity. I had to be liberal enough in promises, the only coin in which I could pay them at the time.

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Putting them off till the morrow, I promised that I would then see what I could do to satisfy a few at least of the many pressing wants which I was so urgently solicited to supply.

Many amusing stories, I have no doubt, might be told of this strange predilection for articles of old clothing. I am myself acquainted with one instance that occurred to a Prussian friend of my own. This gentleman happened to be engaged at the time on a botanical excursion in the island. On one occasion, being desirous of making an excursion to a remote and secluded district, in order that he might pursue his journey without incumbrance, he left his baggage at some village in the interior. One day he had been wandering about in search of some specimen of a plant he was anxious to procure, in his anxiety to find which the time slipped away with greater speed than he had reckoned. When he at last resolved to give up for the day a search which, as yet, had been fruitless, he found out his real situation. He was benighted in a strange, distant, and unknown part of the country. Besides, he was so completely knocked up by the labour of the day, under a hot sun, that he felt unequal to the task of retracing his steps, even if the road lay straight before him in broad daylight. In these circumstances he came to the determination

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of demanding hospitality for the night from one of the peasant-farmers of the district. On coming up to one of their solitary houses, he made known his situation, and was at once kindly invited to accept of shelter and entertainment under the friendly roof of the agriculturist.

After partaking of such homely fare as his host could offer him, he retired to seek the repose he so much needed after the fatigues he had undergone during the day. In entertaining the hope, however, that he was at once to be allowed to enjoy uninterrupted sleep, he had literally reckoned without his host. The latter did not so understand the hospitality which he considered himself bound to show his guest. In a spirit of kindness and courtesy, he would seat himself by the side of our friend's bed, and continue to converse with him. It is true he considered this an act of politeness due to a stranger resting for the first time beneath his roof, but the wearied botanist, who had gone to bed with the hope of being allowed to forget all sublunary things for a time, could not be induced to regard it in the same light. It was with great reluctance, therefore, that he listened to the long-winded stories of the worthy farmer. The latter, among many other things, told him that he had not always lived in that secluded place, but had been

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in the seaport-towns where great numbers of foreign gentlemen came, and which were frequented by merchants from Europe. There were, in particular, several English, and he had once managed to pick up a good many English words, but unfortunately he had now forgotten them all. It was still more unfortunate for our friend that he should happen to be desirous of having his memory refreshed at such a moment, but, as he did not like to lose the benefit of the acquisitions which he had once made, he would be delighted again to know what were the English names of "cavallo," "perro," "cochino," "vaca," "cabra," &c. Our good friend, though heartily wishing that his host had chosen another time for renewing his acquaintance with a foreign language, amiably complied with his request, giving him the English equivalent for every animal he had named.

As the desire of knowledge, however, increases with its gratification, this philological interrogatory was continued so long that the guest's patience became quite exhausted, and he gave many plain indications of his desire to be left alone. But his host did not appear to comprehend any of these signs, so much was his heart fixed on increasing his stock of English words. The wearied Englishman was therefore compelled to tell him plainly that he could endure his presence no

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longer, and wished to be allowed to enjoy the sleep of which he stood so much in need. The old man replied:—

"Si, Señor, I will go presently, but you will have plenty of time to sleep, and it is really so seldom that any foreign gentleman visits this part, that I must take advantage of the opportunity."

With many lamentations that he should have been the person destined to give him so favourable an opportunity of rubbing up his English, the wearied gentleman had again to listen to the monotonous query: "Como se dice cavallo, perro, cochino?" until the host himself was exhausted by so unusual an amount of intellectual labour, and with many kind wishes bade his guest good night.

Our exhausted friend now fondly thought that all interruption to the enjoyment of quiet and repose was removed, and that he might reckon on a good night's sleep. He was still doomed to disappointment, however, for, after a short interval, just when he believed himself falling into the land of forgetfulness, a man and a boy, having entered the room, proceeded to attach a goat-skin bag, filled with milk, to a rope suspended from the roof, and commenced swinging it to and fro from one to the other, keeping time to the sound of a mono-

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tonous kind of sing-song. Our friend now felt himself in the condition of a persecuted man, a martyr to his love of science. If his patience had been sorely tried before, it was now fairly exhausted, and he expostulated with his two tormentors, telling them how impossible it was for him to sleep while they made such a horrible noise.

Listening to his complaints, however, with great composure, they only answered :—

"Duerma, su merced, que nosotros no le molestamos,—and we must continue our work, or else you will have no butter for your breakfast."

At daybreak, after having partaken of the fare provided for him as breakfast, the botanist took his leave. Wishing, however, to recompense his hospitable host for the reception with which he had met, he offered him some money, which the latter absolutely refused, saying that in his "pueblo" he was "caballero," and that he felt proud of having had the honour to entertain the foreign gentleman in his "pobre choza." "But," continued he, "what nice trousers those are you have on! I wish you would give them to me."

He was told in reply by his guest that he would be delighted to make a present of them to him, but that, having no baggage with him, he had not another pair to put on.

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"Oh," said the host, "eso no importa; I assure you I seldom wear *calzones largos* myself, except on feast days, and you may easily do without them till you arrive at the pueblo where you have your baggage."

Our friend, however, not being quite so unsophisticated in his manners, could not make up his mind to part at that time with so important an habiliment, and travel in the *sans culotte* style his host appeared to think so natural. The present of a pair of trousers, therefore, had to be deferred to a more suitable opportunity.

The residents of Grand Canary, as I have already remarked, are courteous, hospitable, and kind to strangers; but a person who goes to the island without a recommendation to some resident family will fare badly indeed, for there is great difficulty in finding good accommodation even in the city of Las Palmas. Indeed there are only two places where strangers are received, and, though they are called hotels, it is by far too dignified a name for them. The first is an exceedingly dirty and ill-regulated place, rejoicing in the distinction of being called the English Hotel. Pepa, the presiding genius of it, we found to be anything but an agreeable or obliging hostess, inattentive in the extreme, and even insolent, to those who take up their residence

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in such quarters as she provides for them. The visitor no sooner gets within the precincts of her den than his disagreeables begin. From the top of a dirty flight of stone stairs he gropes his way into a large dark room, which is hermetically closed up under the pretence that it is necessary to keep out the heat. When the shutters were opened, a thin and consumptive-looking cat that seemed to have taken up its quarters there, darted out of the room, the extreme appearance of which betokened great neglect and uncleanliness. A hard sofa and a few chairs were very formally arranged in their orthodox places, but they were so covered with dust that one could not go near them without carrying away a considerable quantity of it on his person. The pillows of the sofa, being made of wood, must have been comfortable objects on which to rest an aching head! The state of the floor I shall not attempt to describe, satisfying myself with saying that it was indescribable. I doubt indeed if the English language could supply me with terms sufficiently strong to give a correct idea of the filthy state of the place, or if the English mind could conceive of human beings allowing an apartment in their houses to get into such a condition. With all this disorder and dirt, however, there were some ambitious attempts at display. Everything that could be

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gilt was gilt. Faded needlework and prints were decorated with gilt frames. A gilt looking-glass was suspended on the wall. The glass had become misty and obscure through long-continued neglect, but the gilding was still resplendent on some part of it. In short, it was a room full of show and dirt.

We were next introduced to the bedroom, which, if possible, was worse even than the room we had left. To call it a room would be a misnomer. It was a den, lighted only by a small aperture at the top, immediately over the bed, which passed for a window. So encased was the floor with successive layers of dust, which seemed to have been trodden into it, that it was no longer possible to discover the original material. The few articles of furniture were so uncleanly that one hesitated to soil his hands by touching them, and the chairs so rickety that few could venture to sit down upon them, lest they should tumble with them to the ground. The disagreeable atmosphere of the room was not improved by the sickening smell of incense that pervaded it. There were also some of the usual objects of Roman Catholic veneration. A picture of the Madonna, with a very dusty and faded ribbon bow, was hung near the bed. The room was adorned with a decorative palm, which bore all the appearance of having been popular with the flies ever since it had been

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planted in its present position. The door would not remain shut without being barricaded. Sometimes, during the night, when the wind blew violently, it would burst open, and the rain would pour in through the open corridor. Indeed there were so many sources of disturbance during the night that it was impossible to obtain any continuous rest till a late, or rather early, hour. There were cats roaming though the passages, while their loud yells and sepulchral cries murdered sleep. At twelve every night certain of the guests returned to supper, creating additional noise and disturbance, so many things being wanted, so many voices screaming all at once, Pepa's being always prominent in sharpness and loudness.

In the morning things were little better. Such a comfort as hot water was with difficulty obtained. The shoes were left unbrushed, and when the poor drudge of a servant was asked why they had not been cleaned, he replied that he would be happy to do them if I would show him the way.

The other hotel is, if possible, still more miserable. The host and hostess, however, are more attentive, and always disposed to be kind and obliging to such as favour them with their patronage. Persons intending to remain for some time in Grand Canary would do better to hire a house in the country,

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providing themselves at least with one native servant. So few articles of furniture are really necessary in this charming climate that it would by no means be such a formidable affair to make this arrangement as might appear at first sight.

While wandering one day through the streets of the city of Las Palmas, I was so much struck by the quaint appearance of an old window and door, that I sat down to sketch them. This was so unusual a sight to the people who lived about that it evidently afforded them much amusement. In order to get anything like sufficient distance, I was compelled to enter a doorway, which, like most in the Canaries, was always standing invitingly open. When the residents of the house saw me, and became aware of what I was about, with all the natural grace and courtesy of the people of these islands, they offered me a seat or whatever else I might require. They also had the kindness to inform me that the old house opposite was the one which had been occupied by Christopher Columbus when he visited Canary *en route* to the New World. This information gave additional interest to my sketch, and I begged them to tell me all they knew on the subject. They, however, modestly referred me to more weighty authorities, from whom I acquired all the knowledge I was anxious to obtain.

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It would appear that Columbus, on his first voyage of discovery, put into this port on the 11th of August, 1492, his small squadron, as is well known, consisting only of three small vessels. The great navigator remained there for twenty days, engaged in refitting the Nina, one of his vessels which had suffered some damage during the short voyage from Spain to the Canaries. After the necessary repairs, the vessels of the expedition proceeded to Gomera, where Columbus had previously resided for some years as a settler. After there taking in supplies of water and provisions, and reinforcing his crews with some volunteers from the island, he proceeded on his course on the 7th of September.

Some of these authors at the same time attempt to deprive him of the honour of having been the actual discoverer of America. They acknowledge that he was undoubtedly the first who intentionally went in search of the New World that his study and reflections on the subject assured him must exist to the westward of all the then known regions of the earth. According to their account, during the period that Columbus was a denizen of Gomera, it happened that an Andalusian mariner, named Alonzo Sanchez de Huelva, commanded a small vessel engaged in traffic between these islands and that of Madeira. On one of his customary voyages,

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he is said to have encountered so violent a gale of wind that his vessel was driven completely out of its course. Long and unremittingly the gale pursued them, blowing with such violence as to leave them no alternative, in their puny barque, but to scud before it, or to perish beneath the mountain waves that followed in their wake. After many days' sailing in an almost unvaried direction, the united influence of wind and sea conveyed the distressed voyagers safely to the shore of what, according to their description, must have been one of the West India Islands. From this place, after a prolonged period, and the endurance of almost incredible hardships of every kind, the master and two sailors, the sole remnants of the wretched crew, managed to find their way back to Gomera in their crazy vessel. Here they were most hospitably received and humanely treated by Columbus under his own roof; but such was the miserable state of weakness to which their long sufferings had reduced them, that, within a brief period of time, all three died there, not, however, before the patron, Sanchez de Huelva, had fully communicated to Columbus, as a brother seaman, and ardent inquirer after geographical knowledge, all the details of his disastrous voyage, the course he had been obliged to steer, the distance he estimated he had

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gone over, and all such other observations as it had been in his power to make.

The possibility of such a voyage being performed under the circumstances related in this account is beyond all doubt. Indeed, towards the end of the last century, it was practically verified by the well-authenticated fact that one of the small craft that ply between the islands, whose *patrones* (masters), even at the present day, are entirely ignorant of every particle of navigation, with the exception only of the compass, the use of which they understand, not one of them being able to read, much less to keep, a log, while coming, deeply laden with wheat, from Lanzarote to Canary, met with a similar accident to that which is said to have befallen the ancient De Huelva some centuries ago. For a lengthened period of time, this little vessel, built only for plying from island to island, was compelled to keep a straight course before the blast, the first land to which they came being Venezuela, in South America. Here they were so fortunate as to fall in with an English vessel, by which they were safely piloted into the harbour of La Guayra.

After long pondering on the information obtained from De Huelva, Columbus, already a good cosmographer and experienced seaman, whose am-

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bition had previously been limited to a hope of surpassing the Portuguese discoverers on the coast of Africa, is said to have arrived at the conclusion that a counterbalancing land must exist in the western hemisphere. This conviction led to his fruitless endeavours to obtain from John II. of Portugal and Henry VII. of England, the encouragement and assistance that were finally granted him by Isabella of Castile.

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CHAPTER VIII.

English Writers on the Canary Islands—Captain Glasse—Juan de Bethencourt—Incursions on Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, and Gomera—Burning of San Sebastian—Santa Cruz de Berberia Encounters between the Spaniards and Moors—The Conqueror of Teneriffe—Captain Glasse's Trading Speculation—Port Hillsborough—English Trading Settlement on the Coast of Africa—Spanish Hostility—Glasse a Prisoner at Santa Cruz—His Imprisonment Concealed—Its Strange Discovery—Remonstrance addressed to the Spanish Court—Deliverance of the Captain—Embarks for England—Conspiracy and Murder at Sea—Death of the Captain—Supposed Existence of an Eighth Canary Island—Attempts to Discover it—Tasso's Enchanted Island—St. Brandon—The Appearance of the Unknown Island Explained—The Marvellous Fountain Tree—Padre Frego's "Teatro Critico."

ONE of the few English writers who have employed their pens in describing the Canary Islands is George Glasse, a merchant, who, after the middle of last century, published in London the history of their discovery and conquest, to which is

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added a description of their then state, the habits and manners of the inhabitants, &c., &c. The historical part is merely a translation of the old manuscript work of Father Juan Abreu Galindo; but the latter part, consisting of the author's personal observations on the commerce, mode of life of the people, the winds, currents, and other phenomena, is as correct as might well be looked for at the hands of an author who, though from his early years visiting the islands on trading voyages, had never made a lengthened stay in any one of them.

His tragical fate is so far connected with the island of Grand Canary, that it may be not uninteresting to give an account of his adventures; but, to do so with clearness, we must go back to long prior dates.

From the time of Juan de Bethencourt's first taking possession of the island of Lanzarote, it was one of his favourite and ambitious objects to extend his conquests to the adjacent coast of Africa; to which end he and his followers made frequent descents and inroads there, bringing away few other spoils than captives, whom, in considerable numbers, they retained as slaves in their own service, and sent many others to be sold as such in Spain and Portugal. These expeditions were

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frequently repeated by Bethencourt's successors, and brought on the reprisals often made by the Moors, who, in return, harassed the islands with their invasions. The latter occasionally carried off with them persons of note, for whose ransom they obtained large sums of money, or, failing to do so, condemned them to the same cruel bondage as their fellow-prisoners of humbler standing. Their incursions on that island were more numerous than on any of the others, and continued till so late a period as 1749. On two different occasions, in 1569 and 1586, they kept possession of it for some weeks, and swept off all the booty that, together with hundreds of prisoners, they could carry away. In Fuerteventura and Gomera, also, they repeatedly landed, and, in the latter, more than once burned its capital, the town of San Sebastian, and even attacked the western part of Teneriffe.

But the early Spaniards had obtained an unprofitable footing upon the coast. They had constructed a fort to protect their own forays and, as far as possible, keep in check those of the infidels. They called it the castle of Santa Cruz de Berberia, or of Mar Pequeño, and kept it supplied with a garrison that was employed in almost daily encounters with the Moors, who, however, after a long siege and much bloodshed, in 1524,

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succeeded in driving the Spaniards from their territory, and immediately razed the fortification to the ground, many years elapsing before it was again rebuilt.

When, however, Alonzo Fernandez de Lugo, the conqueror of Teneriffe, found himself appointed by Charles V. Governor-General, not only of the islands, but likewise of that part of the western coast of Africa lying between Cape Geer and Cape Bojador, he thought it incumbent on him to prove the Spanish right to their assumed possession, by re-erecting the fort of Santa Cruz de Mar Pequeño. It was done; but the King of Fez and his subjects, in overwhelming numbers, allowed it but a short permanence. These ruthless enemies again demolished it, as they had done with its predecessor, after driving back to the Canaries the small number of its defenders who had been fortunate enough to escape from death or a cruel captivity. No further attempt seems to have been made by the Spaniards to fix themselves in a country of so little advantage to them, and from which, to compensate for their many grievous losses, they appear to have derived no other benefit than the number of Moorish slaves they had made, and the superior one of having introduced into the islands the useful breed of dromedaries that is now used

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as beasts of burden in all of them but Palma, Gomera, and Hiero. But, though in abeyance for more than 250 years, and, so to say, forgotten or unknown by the rest of the world, they nevertheless arrogated to themselves the right and title to it, as though it had really been a vanquished and colonised territory of their own. They likewise appear to have always kept a jealous eye on any proceedings that might indicate an interlopement by other powers; arising probably from the dread that their fishery on the coast (on which the population of the islands so greatly depends for its sustenance) might be interfered with.

George Glasse, the author of whom we speak, was a Scotch master-mariner, and, as such, made many trading voyages between England and the Canaries, as well as between the principal ports of Western Barbary. In the course of these voyages, he seems to have visited and made himself acquainted with the whole of the former. He appears to have been a man of shrewd, active, and observant mind, and also of enterprising character, as was evinced by his plan for establishing a factory, or at least a trading post, on that part of the African continent where the Spaniards had, in long by-gone years, attempted to settle. His belief was that he could there establish a permanent and valuable barter-

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trade of English and other European goods against the gums, skins, and other productions of the country.

Obtaining in London the requisite assistance to carry his scheme into execution, he freighted a large ship, laded her with a cargo proper for the object, and with his wife, daughter, servants, and interpreter (an Armenian), proceeded in her to the port of Guader, the same which the Spaniards anciently called Santa Cruz de Berberia. As a first measure he christened it Port Hillsborough, in honour of the Earl of that name, who was then a member of the British Ministry, and had approved and promoted Glasse's plan. The latter soon formed an alliance with Yaben Ben Hamet, Muza Ben Mahmoud, Salem Ben Yathman, and many other Moorish chiefs glorying in different terminations of Ben. It was then, only on discovering the ancient foundations of some extensive edifice, and a few much-corroded copper coins, that he first learned the fact that in former ages there had been other European residents there.

But a much more unpleasing discovery was soon forced upon him. Port Hillsborough, though admirable in itself, and of very easy access from the sea, was found to be perfectly closed against the exit of any ship of the size of the one that had now

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entered it, unless favoured with a steady south wind, though smaller vessels could at all times work out. Now, as that wind hardly ever blows during the prevalence of the regular north-east trade winds, which last from April or May till the middle of September, he was threatened with a long and inconvenient detention of his ship, in which case it would be impossible to secure the early transmission to England of the articles he had already obtained in barter for his merchandize. To obviate this difficulty, Glasse determined on equipping and manning his long-boat, in which, with only three or four of his crew, he came to the Canary Islands, with the intention of there purchasing one or more of the small brigantines that plied between them. To the departure of these vessels, when loaded, Port Hillsborough presented no natural impediment. He touched first at Lanzarote; but, unable to attain his object there, he came on to Grand Canary, where he remained on shore, sending his boat and seamen back to the coast.

Meanwhile, the Spanish Ambassador at London, having heard of the project of forming an English settlement on the coast of Africa contiguous to the islands, gave notice of it to the Court of Madrid. The Captain General was speedily furnished with private orders from his Government to be on the

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alert, and, in case of the report proving true, to use every exertion to thwart the plan, by refusing all succour of provisions, men, or vessels, to the nascent establishment.

Scarcely, therefore, had poor Glasse, who was quite ignorant of these circumstances, or that Spain had any pretensions to the spot he had selected, landed, as we have said, at Grand Canary, before he was pounced upon as a violator of the Spanish laws. Being conveyed, a close prisoner, to Santa Cruz in Teneriffe, he was there immured in a cell of one of the castles, — his confinement being shortly after made still more strict in consequence of his being detected in an attempt to escape. So much secrecy regarding his imprisonment was preserved, that nearly a twelvemonth had elapsed before the existence of an English prisoner in the castle became known to any but the immediate actors in his detention. The discovery of his being there is said to have been effected by Glasse's frequently cutting off the crust of his daily loaf of bread (all means of communication with the outer world being denied him, as a prisoner *au secret*). Scratching on it in English with a nail his name, and the place and time of his detention, he then flung it from his dungeon-bars to the shingly beach below, in hopes that some fisher-

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man or straggler there might pick it up and convey it to some one who could understand it. And so it did at last happen; for one of these crusts ultimately reached the hands of the British Consul on the island, who lost no time in investigating the matter. But, all interference on his part being disallowed by the Governor-General, who stated that he merely acted in compliance with orders, a statement of the case was transmitted by the Consul to his Government, which instantly called through Lord Rochfort, their Envoy at Madrid, for explanation and redress from the Spanish Court. The latter at first treated the affair very cavalierly, expressing surprise that so much fuss should be made about the fate of a mere merchant captain, but, being assured, in reply, that the meanest cabin boy that sailed under the British flag was entitled to, and would receive, as much protection as if he were one of the nobles of the land, the Spanish Government at last gave unwilling orders for Glasse's restoration to liberty—a fatal liberty for him.

So unlooked-for an incident as had occurred effectually ruined the proposed establishment of the factory at Port Hillsborough. The Moorish chiefs, after long and vainly waiting for the promised return of the captain, one day resolved on making the most they could of the goods the gods had sent them. They

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rose upon the unfortunate settlers, cruelly butchered many of them, and burnt the ship, barely allowing time for Mrs. Glasse and her daughter, with the interpreter and two or three other survivors, to throw themselves into the boat, in which, after encountering great danger and privations, they finally found their way to Teneriffe.

But the liberty to which Captain Glasse was restored came upon him at a very unlucky moment, for it proved the immediate cause of the death of the entire family. Naturally anxious to leave the scene of his sufferings as early as possible, and eager to reach his native country and demand reparation from Spain for his imprisonment and losses, he hastened to Port Orotava, where an English ship, called the Earl of Sandwich, lay ready to take her departure for London. This vessel was loaded with a valuable cargo of wine, silk, orchilla-weed, cochineal, a great amount of gold-dust and bars, and a still larger amount in kegs of dollars. Glasse and his family embarked as passengers on this vessel, and had a prosperous voyage until near the land they were never more to see.

Four of the crew had conspired at this juncture to murder all the other persons on board, and possess themselves of the bullion and coin they

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knew to be in the ship. This villainous design they carried into execution at night, attacking and overpowering the captain and watch upon deck; and when Glasse, hearing the scuffle, was rushing to the rescue from his cabin, he was waylaid on the companion-ladder by one of the mutineers, who pinioned his arms, while another wrested his sword from him and passed it repeatedly through his body. His wife and daughter (then only twelve years old) were dragged from the cabin, but, escaping from the hands of their captors, they threw themselves overboard, locked in each other's arms, the four murderers finally remaining the only living beings on board. The latter then steered the ship up St. George's Channel, till within a few leagues of Waterford, when, placing the treasure in the boat, they scuttled and sank the ship, themselves landing privately, and burying most of their ill-gotten wealth at a marked spot on the beach, casting the boat afterwards adrift. The dissolute conduct and profuse expenditure of foreign coin during their stay at Waterford, however, soon attracted suspicion towards them, and, this being further strengthened by the accidental discovery of some of the buried treasure, and by the boat being picked up, they were traced by the officers of justice to Dublin, and there arrested. After many

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recriminations among themselves, they each made a full confession, with minute details of their crime. Their trial and execution is found under the head of "Principal Events" in the "Annual Register" for 1765.

In islands like these, so remote from all the great centres of civilisation, not only are stories of adventure such as the preceding one of John Glasse listened to with delight, but the wildest legends and traditions find the people prepared to receive them with unhesitating belief. I recently heard a strange account of a report which was prevalent in the islands about the beginning of the sixteenth century, which has descended to the present time, and a belief in which, I dare say, is still entertained by many minds not well informed regarding the accuracy and extent of modern geographical discovery. The story contains so many striking particulars, and affords such a remarkable example of the proneness of a primitive people to delight in the marvellous and unknown, that an apology is scarcely necessary for inserting it here.

The Canaries, as I have previously stated, consist of a group of seven principal islands, but in the early part of the sixteenth century it was reported that an eighth had been discovered. The

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original statement was that an island not before known had been frequently visible from La Palma, Hierro, and Gomera. The belief in the actual existence of this new member of the group became so strong that, in the treaty of peace concluded at Evora in 1519, Portugal ceded the right of conquering it to Spain. It is mentioned in the treaty under the name of "Ilha nao Truvata," the Unfound Island. Many of the inhabitants of the three above-named islands declared that they had repeatedly seen it in a direction bearing W.S.W. from Palma and W.N.W. from Hierro, its distance being about forty leagues from the former, and apparently not less than eighty-seven leagues in length from north to south.

The two extremities of this island were said to rise to a very great height, the hollow between them being apparently covered with forests. Green boughs, fruit, and even entire trees, were frequently cast, during tempestuous weather from the westward, upon the shores of Hierro and Gomera. A circumstance like this of course gave greater consistency to the growing belief in the existence of the new island.

In order to ascertain the truth of the report, an expedition left Grand Canary in 1526. After cruising for many days in the direction in which

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the island was said to have been seen, the mariners returned without having observed the slightest appearance of it, or aught indicating that there could be any land in the quarter pointed out. There were none of the ordinary signs by which the vicinity of land is usually discovered, no change in the colour or depth of the water, and none of these flights of sea-fowl that haunt the coast. But the non-appearance of the island did not satisfy credulous and superstitious people that it did not exist. If it had not been discovered by those sent in search of it, the explanation of their failure was simple; it was an enchanted island, rendered visible to mortal eyes only occasionally.

In course of time, however, the reports of its appearance became more and more frequent, so much so, indeed, that the Supreme Court of the Seven Islands (the Andaman) commanded the local authorities of La Palma, Hierro, and Gomera, to collect and transmit to it the depositions under oath of all such parties as could give information likely to throw light upon so mysterious a question. In the island of Gomera, more than one hundred persons swore to having repeatedly seen the island of the existence of which some persevered in expressing so many doubts. In La Palma still more direct asseveration of its reality

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was made in the testimony of three Portuguese seamen. According to their deposition, the ship of whose crew they formed a part having anchored in a bay near the southern point of the unknown island, the captain and two of the crew went on shore, and on the sand discovered the distinct prints of a man's feet, more than double the ordinary size, and with such a distance between each footprint as showed a proportionately large stride. A cross was found nailed against the trunk of a tree, and a fireplace formed of three stones near it. Heaps of limpet-shells were scattered about the fireplace, leading to the belief that the shell-fish had been cooked there. Many oxen, sheep, and goats were roaming about. These, the mariners, after drinking some very pure water at a running streamlet, pursued with their spears into a forest.

On the approach of evening, however, the sky became so overcast and lowering, that the captain, perceiving all the usual indications of an approaching storm, hastened, without waiting for his companions, to the boat, in which, rowing himself out to the ship, he stepped upon its deck just a moment before a most furious tempest burst upon her, exposing them all to great danger. When the storm broke forth, the island instantly disappeared

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from the sight of the crew, nor could they, when the weather again became more serene, obtain a second view of it.

The account concludes by stating that this remarkable circumstance inspired the sailors with the greatest dread, they entertaining no doubt that the island they had seen was of supernatural origin, the product of some enchantment. The two men who had remained on shore were never more heard of, their fate being bitterly lamented by their companions.

Another sea-captain, a native of Teneriffe, affirmed that he also had been favoured with a view of the Unknown Island, and that, with part of his crew, he had landed on its shores. They had ventured to go some distance into the interior, when, warned by approaching darkness, they returned to their boats and regained their ship without delay. As in the former case, they were just in time, for, no sooner had they put their feet upon the deck, than a tremendous storm burst forth, the winds blowing with the greatest violence, and the sea being lashed into unusual fury. In a moment all sight of the island was lost, and they could never again obtain the slightest glimpse of it.

A French adventurer, who had visited this part

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of the world, also stated that a similar circumstance had happened to him. He was returning from the Brazils, when, his ship having been dismasted in a gale, the Unknown Island appeared in sight, and he and his crew went on shore in order to obtain materials to replace the loss their vessel had sustained. They immediately set to work to fell a large tree, but before their task could be completed they were driven away by a hurricane in the same way as their predecessors; nor, when the tempest was allayed, could they again perceive the island on which they had landed but a short time before.

All this information seeming to afford sufficient testimony in support, at least, of the occasional appearance of the island, two other expeditions were fitted out, the ships sailing from La Palma. A considerable interval elapsed between the two voyages, but neither was successful. The island would not be called at mortal bidding from the vasty deep. The latter of the two expeditions was accompanied by a Franciscan friar, prepared to hurl the thunder of his exorcism against the enchanted island the instant it appeared in sight. His presence, however, secured no better success than in the case of the expedition which had gone before without any such faithful servant of the Church.

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For more than a century after this, although the island appears to have been occasionally visible as before, the public curiosity and excitement regarding it were no longer so great as they had been. No further regular attempt to discover it is spoken of till the year 1721, when the Captain General, Don Juan de Meer y Aguerra, again formed the resolution of settling the difficult question as to the existence of this mysterious island, which appears to have been as perplexing a problem in those days as the story of the sea-serpent of more modern times. The expedition fitted out under his direction sailed from Santa Cruz, being accompanied by the most able and experienced navigators, and by two apostolic chaplains. The leaders of the expedition were commanded to make the most strenuous exertions to discover the fly-away island; but, after a long and patient search, sailing about in every direction of the compass, their exertions were unrewarded with success.

Since 1759 we have no account of any other appearance. Those who once believed in the existence of the Enchanted Island, in which Tasso, in his "Jerusalem Delivered," laid the scene of Reynaldo's confinement in the gardens of Armida, now belong to a past generation. The name of San Borondon had been given to the island from the

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remotest times. It was so named in consequence of a legend of very ancient date, according to which a Scotch monk, called St. Brandon, by some means or other found his way to it in the sixth century, and on his first landing restored to life the corpse of one of the native giants.

Taking all the circumstances of this strange story regarding the appearance of the *Ilha nao Truvata* into consideration, the conclusion to be drawn is, that what at any rate seemed to be such an island must have been observed in the position attributed to it. The testimony of numerous witnesses at periods remote from each other, and repeated sketches of it, all agreeing in its general figure, indisputably support this view of the matter. Neither can it be doubted that the appearance which was hastily assumed to be an eighth island was caused by the shadow of the island of Palma, projected under a particular state of the atmosphere and angle of the sun's elevation upon the vapours collected to the leeward of that island. It was, in short, a kind of *Fata Morgana*, which usually appeared between six and seven o'clock in the morning, though one of the witnesses examined in Hierro in 1570 did not hesitate to affirm that he had seen the sun set on several occasions behind the southern mountain of San Borondon.

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The testimony of the three sea-captains is somewhat difficult to reconcile with this view. The Portuguese captain might have taken advantage of the popular belief to account for the loss, perhaps by violent death, of his two men, who were reported to have gone ashore with him. The Spaniard and Frenchman, on the other hand, with that spirit of boasting not uncommon among seafaring people, would not be outdone in the account of the marvels they had seen by the Portuguese. So mysterious a narrative would at least gain for them some notice and consideration.

Sceptics may also be inclined to ask, if such an appearance were presented by natural causes in former days, why is it not occasionally still visible? It is certainly difficult to account for the physical changes that have prevented any repetition of the phenomenon for the last one hundred and fifty years; but it is a problem which scientific men alone are capable of solving.

Another fable connected with the Canary Islands was that of the marvellous Fountain Tree. Its species was unknown, but it was long believed to furnish the only supply of water enjoyed by the natives of Hierro, where it seldom rains. The tale regarding the mysterious properties of this wonderful tree, absurdly enough, has been repeated within

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very recent years in several English publications of reference and instruction, in which it is represented as a still existing vegetable wonder. So gross an error is the more inexcusable, as, for centuries past, numerous writers, beginning with Lord Bacon, have shown the fallacy of such a belief. It is more than a hundred and fifty years since the Padre Trego, in his great work, the *Teatro Critico*, fully described the real nature of the phenomenon, which was supposed to be a fountain of water. The tree, so far from being unique of its kind, and of unknown species, was one of the laurel family, extremely common as well in Hierro as in the other islands. It is a fact that a quantity of pure water, to the amount of a few gallons daily, was constantly dripping from its leaves. This was collected for use in receptacles formed round its trunk, into which were conducted also the contents of the pools which the winter rains had left in its neighbourhood. But the water that dropped from the leaves did not arise from any virtue in the tree itself, but from the position in which it grew. This was at the upper extremity of a narrow but deep ravine, opening on the sea-coast, and leading by an ascent of about five miles to almost the highest point of the island, where it terminated in a nearly perpendicular face of rock, against which the tree grew,

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surrounded by brambles, heath, ferns, and other smaller plants. The wind constantly rushed with great violence up the funnel of this narrow ravine, bearing with it clouds and mist from the sea. These, being stopped in their further progress by the bare surface of the rock, and condensed on the surrounding vegetation, but particularly on the broad shining leaves of the evergreen laurel, trickled down in drops in sufficient quantity to become an object of care in an island where the other usual sources of water were far from abundant. The tree, already decayed by age, was blown down and totally destroyed by a hurricane so long ago as the year 1612.

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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

The Islands of Teneriffe and Grand Canary;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE MANNERS AND

CUSTOMS OF THE GUANCHES.

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I.

THE RELIGION, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS OF TENERIFFE AND GRAND CANARY.

FOUR hundred years ago the aboriginal Guanches of the Canary Islands became extinct as a people. A mystery which conjecture and investigation have failed to penetrate enveloped them then as now, and the Guanche race remains to this day an ethnological problem. The analogy of their ancient customs and language with those of their continental neighbours induces the belief in a common origin. The vicinity of the Canary Archipelago to the coast of Africa, which, although low ground, is visible from Fuerteventura, renders it next to impossible that the Libyans, like the Phœnician and Carthaginian navigators, were not attracted by the snows and fires of Teneriffe.

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The inhabitants of the Canary Islands presented to the European invaders different types of physiognomy, and there were remarkable distinctions in their manners and customs, but more particularly in their language, in which, however, there is sufficient analogy to prove the existence of a common mother tongue. Unacquainted with any kind of navigation, they must have been for ages shut up in their several islands without the possibility of any intercommunication. Local causes maintained the people of the various islands within their respective localities, and might have effected a modification in their dialects, their habits, and even their physical appearance. Each lived according to its separate laws and preserved its particular customs, some being governed by independent chiefs, and others recognizing an absolute power, or submitting to their hereditary princes. But in those islands in which the two races existed, a state of permanent warfare was the proof of their mutual aversion.

Not only did the language and vicinity of these islanders prove their African origin, but their customs and habits showed a fellowship and connection with the natives of that continent. Their cave dwellings, hewn out of the living rock, as they are used in Grand Canary even to the present day,

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exhibit the close approximation of their habits to those of the inhabitants of the neighbouring coast of Africa. The African custom of embalming the dead universally prevailed, as is proved by the continual and even very recent discovery of caverns containing a great number of mummies. Viera, the historian of the island, mentions a cave on the south side of Teneriffe which contained as many as a thousand. Some differences in the manner of embalming the dead bodies have been observed in the mummies discovered in the several islands. The African custom of shaving the head was also adopted under certain circumstances by the Guanches. Polygamy existed in some of the islands, in Lanzarote the women being permitted as many as three husbands. The preparation of "gofio," which was their principal food, and which is still that of the peasantry in the country districts, very much resembles the "cuscutoo" of Barbary and the western coast of Africa.

In an extremely curious work published at Paris in 1630, by Bergeron, and copied from the manuscript of Boutier and Verrier, chaplains to Betancourt (Bethancourt), the conqueror of Grand Canary, it is mentioned that the islanders were an extremely beautiful and graceful people, with swarthy countenances and dark sparkling eyes.

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From his observations, the existence of two varieties of race, sufficiently marked in their physical character to warrant such a conclusion, may be clearly deduced. The golden hair, which is still found on the skulls of the mummies, agrees with the description of the people given by Edris, the Mohammedan historian. He states that at the time of the expulsion of the Moors from Lisbon in 1147, some of that people, after touching at the Azores, arrived at the Canaries, where, being made prisoners, they found that they could make themselves understood by the natives, whom they described as a red race, the women being of extreme beauty. In the narrative given by the envoys of King Juba, which is the earliest document of any value that has been discovered regarding the Canary Islands, no mention is made of the inhabitants. Nor, in a fragment transmitted by Pliny, are they at all alluded to, although he speaks of ruined edifices, the remains probably of buildings constructed *en passant* by the Carthaginians, who, having passed the Straits of Gades, sailed along the coast of Africa to found colonies. In the expeditions of Hanno, the nearer and more elevated islands must have attracted the attention of the Carthaginian chief, and the presence of the Carthaginians on some occasion seems confirmed by

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the discovery of a little temple, called Junonica from the name of the protecting deity of Carthage, the remains of which were seen in one of the islands by the Mauritanian explorers of more recent times.

From the researches of M. Berthelot and a few other writers on the subject, it appears that similar distinctive features were recognisable in their language as had been observed in their physical types. It is not consistent with the nature of this work to enter into a profound dissertation on the language which the aborigines spoke, and it would be impossible to find all the elements in the few remains which authors have left us. Some phrases incorrectly quoted by those who wrote them, fragments of different dialects which have been transmitted to us, proper names which history has preserved, some still borne by several families, and the appellations of certain localities, are not sufficient to constitute anything like a satisfactory knowledge of an idiom which has been forgotten for more than three centuries. It is important, however, to recognize in the many analogies existing between the several dialects used in the Canarian Archipelago the most distinct and satisfactory proofs of the existence of a common mother tongue from which all were derived. In his erudite work upon the Canary

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Islands, M. Berthelot observes, "The relations of identity which result from a comparison of the words in one catalogue prove that a great number of common names, and those relative to the necessities of life, or identified with the perceptions of intelligence, as well as proper names of men and women, and local denominations, were equally used in various islands, and even in the entire Canary group." He proceeds to state that in forty words, thirty-eight begin with *at* or *ar*, which are of similar construction in the Berber or Shellouh dialect. It is well known that the *ayt* of the Shellouh ordinarily precedes many names of places. This syllable *ayt* corresponds in Berber with *beni* and *woolad* of the Arabs, and signifies "children" or "tribes." For example, "aytzimor" signifies the "tribes of Zimor." In the list of names of places taken from the different islands, one hundred may be counted beginning with *a*, which might have been pronounced as if preceded by the Berber *ayt*. Regarding those which begin with *the*, *te*, or *thee*, they also appear to be of Berber origin. Besides those in the catalogue of Bernaldez, there are more than one hundred which begin with *t*, in the same way as in the topographical denominations of Western Barbary. Galudo has remarked that the words *ilfa*, white, *aho*, milk, and *tamosa*, barley,

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were identical among the ancient Canary population and the African tribes of Atlas. It has also been observed that the name of *Telde*, a town in Canary, and *Tequeste*, a valley in Teneriffe, are found in Morocco. If the first syllable in the greater part of the names mentioned by Bernaldez be suppressed, analogies will be found in the names of several localities in the island of Grand Canary. On the whole, there appears to be sufficient reason for believing that the different dialects spoken in the Canaries before the conquest originated from a mother tongue which, in its forms, and in the resemblance of numerous words, assimilated with the ancient Libyan or Berber language.

The difficult questions now arise as to how and when these differences arose in the Canary Islands? The silence of history leaves us two hypotheses, the one, that of successive migrations, the other, that of the submergence of the lower land, leaving the elevated points insulated, thus cutting off the living beings who were existing on each of them from all intercourse with their neighbours, and in the lapse of ages producing different usages and habits. Many are the theories respecting them, most of which are founded upon apocryphal tradition, too obscure and vague to enlighten us on a question of such importance. Although Pliny makes no mention

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of population, we may infer, from the circumstance of the ruins that he describes in Canary, the existence of an ancient people in the time of the maritime expeditions of the Carthaginians and Phœnicians. M. Berthelot observes, "There are other historical circumstances which make us believe in the colonization of these islands before the early centuries of the Christian era. Western Africa was then, and for a long time, in contact with Roman civilization; the two Mauritanias had become provinces of the Empire; the youth of these countries served in the Latin legions.

"Taefarinas himself, before he rose against his powerful and implacable rulers, distinguished himself in their ranks. On reflecting on these circumstances, can it be believed that this period could leave Africa so entirely deficient of information, and in such a state of primitive ignorance as the historians of the Conquest would have us believe?"

From the modifications of the language, from the absence of any Mohammedan customs, from their entire ignorance of the means of any kind of communication between one island and another, and from the similarity of some of their practices with those of Egypt, we are induced to ascribe a very high antiquity to this people. Preserving, in their isolation, the original character and primitive

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customs of the Libyan tribes, the indications of two varieties of race, and the traces of two distinct idioms, still point to a subsequent Arab migration. This is certainly difficult to reconcile with Viera's assertion of their entire ignorance of navigation, a circumstance not only unique in the history of an island-people, but incompatible with an innovation which must at least have been accompanied by such knowledge.

The Guanches had their nobles and their plebeians, their poor and rich. "In the beginning," quoting their tradition, "God created men and women, land and water—giving them cattle and fruits for their subsistence. But afterwards He created more people, giving them nothing; and when they prayed for their portion, He answered and said, 'Serve the others, and they will supply you.'"

Thus their aristocracy was not only hereditary, but of divine right and inaccessible to the vulgar. It was enveloped with a sanctity and religious mystery which invested it with a supernatural power and superiority.

The title of Mencey, or Lord, was assigned to the prince whose sovereignty was recognized by the chiefs of the tribe. That of Achemancy designated a person of secondary rank, but still the issue of a

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reigning family. The Sigoñes were gentlemen, and the mass of the people were called Achacuca.

Tenerfe, or Teneriffe, was for many years subject to a single monarch. Tenerfe the Great was the last prince who reigned with sovereign power. He died about one hundred years before the Conquest, after witnessing the rebellion of his nine sons, who at his death divided the island into as many principalities, a small portion being also conceded to a bastard son of the king's, named Aquahan. The legitimate sons took the title of Mencey, or Lord. But the Prince of Tahora gained a supremacy over the other Menceys, and the tribes acknowledged his power by adding to his title that of Quebihi, Grand Majesty. His son, Quebihi Bencomo, succeeded him, and was the last Guanche King. After an obstinate and brave resistance, he succumbed to the Spanish invaders, and with his lovely daughter Daeila received baptism at their hands.

The kings and nobles had at the entrances of their caves and dwellings a large square, called Tagoror, surrounded by stone benches, where they held their councils, administered justice, and performed the principal ceremonies. On the occasion of a coronation, this Tagoror was adorned with arches of palms and laurels, and hung with bushes,

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flowers, and aromatic herbs. Here the new sovereign appeared to his nobles and vassals dressed in a "tamarck" of very exquisite material, was received with great acclamations, and seated on a stone more elevated than the rest, covered with choice skins. An old man among the princes of royal blood, and the nearest relation to the King, brought with profound respect to the Tagoror a bone of the ancient monarch of Tenerfe, which was preserved in a pillow of leather. This they presented to the new King, who, kissing it with the greatest reverence, placed it majestically on his head, saying these words:—"I swear by the bones of my forefather, the great Tenerfe (which were encircled by a royal crown), to imitate his actions, and watch over the happiness of my people." After this the nobles took the sceptre from the hands of the prince, and putting it on their shoulders very reverently said:—"We swear by this memorable day of your coronation to constitute ourselves defenders of your kingdom and that of your descendants." The ceremony then concluded with repeated acclamations from the crowd.

Viera says it was not on a royal bone that the Menceys pronounced their vows, but on a skull of the ancient princes.

The new king, crowned with flowers, then

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invited the attendants to a magnificent banquet, followed by games, dances, and music. Fires blazed for several nights, illuminating the surrounding valleys. In time of war hostilities were suspended, that nothing might interrupt the general rejoicings.

When the Court travelled, it was preceded by an officer of the Mencey, who carried a large wooden spear, with a flag hoisted, as a sign that the monarch followed. All then left their caverns and their flocks, eager to see the king, to clean the dust from his feet with the edge of their tamarcks, and to kiss him affectionately. This fidelity extended beyond the grave, for the Guanches revered the king, although dead, and deposited him in his cemetery with all the pomp of sceptre and crown. They likewise placed before his corpse "ganigos" of milk, believing that on the resurrection of the body—a doctrine in which they believed—he would require that material sustenance.

The right of investing nobles devolved upon the Faycan, or High Priest, who held the second rank in the kingdom. The candidate for this honour was required to be rich, descended from noble parents, and able to bear arms. He was to present himself to the Faycan with his hair hanging down his back, when the Faycan called out in a loud

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voice, "I conjure you all in the name of Alcorac (God) to declare if you have seen N, the son of N, enter a yard to milk or kill goats, or with his own hands prepare dinner, if he has committed robberies in time of peace, or if he has been ill-spoken to women. When the assembly answered in the negative, the Faycan cut his hair below the ears, and delivered to him the magado, or spear, with which he was to serve in the war for his sovereign. This ceremony concluded, the people respected him as a noble, and he took rank among persons of his class; but if there were a witness who could prove that he had transgressed in any of the above particulars, the Faycan cut off all his hair, and left him in the condition of a plebeian, incapable of aspiring to nobility, and he was thenceforth known by the name of Trasquilado.

Little is known with regard to the religion of the Guanches, or whether they believed in the immortality of the soul. That they had some idea of a future existence may be inferred from the circumstance of their placing provisions beside the dead at the time of interment. In Teneriffe they worshipped Acheman, the Supreme God, whom they invoked under different names. They also believed in an evil spirit, whom they called Guayota, and who inhabited the centre of the earth, or the crater of

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the Peak, which they designated "Echeyde," or Hell, and which they held in extreme dread, swearing by "Echeyde" in their oaths.

Viera mentions that in Grand Canary and Fuerteventura the natives were given to idolatry, and refers to the discovery of a small idol representing a man with a globe in his hand. He also speaks of temples in which they worshipped a Supreme Being, to whom they made offerings of butter and libations of milk. These temples were called "Efiquenes."

After the submission of Grand Canary, many captives were made, and sent to Seville, where, in their exile, they continued in their apparent idolatry. But the Alcalde, Mayor, or principal magistrate, received an order from the King of Spain, dated from Cordova, 30th August, 1485, in which he was enjoined to prevent these prisoners from assembling for the performance of those Pagan rites. An evil spirit, whom they called "Gahio," as well as phantoms and supernatural beings, were held in superstitious dread by them.

In the Island of Palma pyramids of stones were erected for the celebration of religious fêtes, which concluded with songs, dances, and gymnastic games. In the same island, in a deep valley or large extinct crater, known now as the "Calder,"

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there was a large rock called "Idafe," which the natives held in continual dread, from the fear of its suddenly falling upon them and crushing them to death. To prevent such a calamity, they propitiated it with presents and deposits of the entrails of animals, saying, "Are you going to fall, Idafe?" upon which another answered, "Give to it, and it will not fall."

Viera, quoting Espinosa, also mentions a very touching ceremony which took place at Teneriffe in the time of any public calamity, particularly when the island was threatened with drought or famine. The people assembled with all their flocks in a deep valley, taking care to separate the young from the dams. The air was filled with their plaintive cries, which the echoes of the valley repeated, and they believed that the intercession of these innocent victims to hunger was efficacious with Heaven, whose blessing they implored.

The Priestesses Tibabina and Tamorante, her daughter, by their predictions and pretended relations with a supernatural power, exercised an extraordinary influence over them. The Prophet Guanamane was also held in great honour in Teneriffe. They were all appealed to in order to pacify dissensions and to preside over religious ceremonies. The islanders of Hierro worshipped two tutelar

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divinities—Eraoranhan, who protected men, and Moreyba, who watched over women. Even after they were converted to Christianity, they continued to invoke Jesus and the Virgin Mary under these names. Eraoranhan and Moreyba, they believed, sat on two high rocks called Bentayga, which are now known under the names of "Los Santillos de los Antiguos." In time of famine or drought, crowds went to these rocks and besought the divinities to send rain and abundance, accompanying their prayers and expiatory vows with a fast of three days.

There was also a sacred grotto where the protector "Aranfaybo" was kept, whither an old man, venerated for his sanctity, led them in times of calamity. Aranfaybo, who had the privilege of interceding with the divinities to assuage their public misfortunes, was a pig of a most diminutive race. The old man entered the grotto and brought out with him, under his tamarck, the venerated Aranfaybo, which, on its presentation to the people, was received with acclamations and transports of joy. The pig was allowed its liberty so long as the calamity prevailed; but when Heaven vouchsafed a blessing, it was brought back in triumph to its grotto.

The Faycan, and certain young virgins who

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lived in sacred grottoes, presided at their religious ceremonies, wearing white robes made of fine skins, longer than those usually worn by other women. They were supported by charity, and enjoyed great privileges, their principal duties consisting in making daily libations of milk in honour of their divinity. Their temple was a sacred asylum which none dared to violate with impunity. There were also rocks which were invoked with mysterious rites on occasions of public distress, especially in times of drought. The people assembled from all parts of the island, bringing branches of trees and palm-leaves. Having arrived at the heights, they broke, with much ceremony, vases filled with milk and butter, dancing and making their complaints, after which they went in procession to the sea, where they beat the waves with the branches they had brought, making the air ring again with their shrieks and lamentations. It is mentioned even that warriors have on these occasions thrown themselves from the rocks of "Sirma" as expiatory victims.

The African custom of embalming the dead was universally practised by the Guanches. A tribe of priests was maintained for the sacred office of cleansing the body. After repeated washings with salt and water, which was also the habit of the Egyptians, they anointed it with aromatic herbs and

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butter made from goats' milk. The body was opened with sharp stones made of opsidian, called "tabonas," analogous to the Ethiopian stone employed to open the bodies at the side—an incision which has also been remarked in the sides of some Guanche mummies. They were then left to dry in the sun, and afterwards rubbed with herbs, powder of wood, pumice-stone, and other absorbent substances. This preparation lasted a fortnight, which time the relations of the deceased celebrated with great pomp, singing the praises of the defunct, and giving themselves up to grief. When the body was very dry, and as light as charcoal, it was wrapped in several goat-skins, either tanned or raw, and impressed with a distinguishing mark. The kings and principal dignitaries were enveloped in finer skins, and, being put into a "Sabino," or coffin of pine-wood, were carried to the most inaccessible caverns, where they were placed vertically against the walls, or in great order upon shelves.

Viera states that they were also placed upon branches of juniper trees cut for the purpose. He mentions a famous grotto of the Barranco de Herque between Arico and Guimar, on the south side of Teneriffe. Entering by a very small aperture, the interior presented a large space or hall,

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in several compartments of which there were above a thousand mummies deposited.

"I saw," he says, "with wonder the art with which the Guanches rendered their dead eternal, and I found myself in the presence of the ancient inhabitants of the 'Fortunate Islands,' contemporaries, perhaps, of King Juba."

I have seen, in a very recent discovery in Grand Canary, some fine specimens of Guanche mummies in a perfect state of preservation. The hair was red brown, and the teeth all of a beautiful whiteness. The sewing of the skins was so exquisite that the work of my French kid glove looked coarse in comparison with it, this sewing having been done with a needle made of a fish-bone.

With these mummies is generally found a number of cylindrical beads made of baked earth, of a reddish colour, some strung two-and-two, and others three-and-three, which are said to have been worn by the inhabitants as necklaces.

At the beginning of this century, some moss-gatherers discovered another cavern situated in one of the ravines on the coast between Tacaronti and Sangal. These catacombs are said to have furnished nearly all the cabinets in Europe.

When the mortuary skins have been applied wet to the body, they have taken so completely the

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form of the individual, that, after the destruction or removal of the body, they remained perfect moulds of the form which had been enclosed. In the "Transactions" of the Royal Society of London, there is an account of the Guanche mummies given by a traveller, and written only a few years after the Conquest. It mentions that, in acknowledgment of some medical services rendered by the writer to the natives, they took him to visit one of these sepulchral caverns where their ancestors were deposited. It was situated in the district of Guimar, which at that epoch was peopled with the Guanches who had been spared after the conquest of the island. These mummies were deposited in layers; the flesh, in a perfect state of preservation, being enveloped in skins as dry as parchment. There were three or four hundred of them; earthen jars which had contained milk and butter being placed at their side. The islanders who accompanied the traveller told him that there existed more than twenty grottoes in Teneriffe where the bodies of their princes and other persons of distinction were preserved, but that they themselves did not know how to find the entrance to them, the secret being preserved by old people of profound prudence.

However, notwithstanding the care with which

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they were concealed, discoveries are made from time to time even in our day. Male mummies are distinguished by the straight position of their arms, while those of females are crossed in front over the body. They are in a kneeling position, with the legs fastened back, and their ancles tied to the upper part near the hip. On the feet of one mummy was found a new-born infant, which crumbled to dust on the opening of its envelope.

It is asserted that a giant called Mabai, who measured twenty-two feet high, was found embalmed at Fuerteventura. It has also been stated that, amongst the princes descended from the kings of Guimar, some measured fourteen feet high, and had eighty teeth. Those which are usually found are certainly not of an extraordinary length, though they differ in size in the several islands. They are generally discovered in a state of good preservation, the features in good keeping, and the teeth very firm and white. The hair, also, is in fine condition, and the colour bright.

When the Guanches felt death approaching, they assembled all their relations and friends; and, despising any kind of aid, they said, "Vaco guare," I want to die. They were instantly taken to a cave and laid on a bed of skins, a vessel of milk and cheese being placed near them, and the entrance

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being closed, so that none might dare to disturb their last moments.

In considering the cave-dwellings of the ancient islanders, it is impossible not to see their practicable adaptation to the wants of a people who, living within five degrees of the Tropics, had to contend with two fierce enemies, sunlight and the fervid midday air. Teneriffe, from the volcanic nature of its soil, offered peculiar protection in the indigenous architecture of its subterranean caverns. Cool in summer and sheltered in winter, they were chosen as the palaces of their kings, and the residences of their nobles and rich. But, though the rocks were abundantly perforated with these wonderful dwellings, they were not sufficient to lodge all the people, and the poor had to resort to cottages built of stone and covered with the trunks of trees, while artificial grottoes were sometimes cut by the hand of man. Some of the finest of these are to be seen in the district of Guimar, and bear the appellation of the "Caves of the Kings." There interiors present large square chambers, some of which have stone benches running round them and niches cut in the walls, the latter being probably destined to receive jars of water and milk. These caverns are mostly inaccessible to the present islanders, except by ropes.

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The simple habits of the Guanches involved but few wants in the shape of furniture or utensils. A small ground mill, made of two round stones (in use in Teneriffe at the present day), was used to grind the corn with which they made "gofio," which formed their principal food, as it does also that of the country people now, still retaining the Guanche name. A pouch made of skin was used to put it into, and "ganigos" (small earthen vessels of a classical shape, resembling the rough crockery brought from the interior by the Kabyle on the Barbary coast, common now in Teneriffe, and bearing the same name) was used for holding milk. Among their other instruments for domestic use, we may mention dried stems of cardon, or thistle, to produce fire by friction, cutting instruments of obsidian, called "tabonas," spoons of sea-shell, awls, hooks, and needles of fish-bone or the prickles of palm-trees, and the nerves of animals, with which to sew their tamarcks, or shirts. They also employed nets made of rushes for catching fish, spears and darts with ends hardened in the fire, swords of wood, shields made from the dragon-tree, beds made of fern, with sheets of skins, and screens of cane woven with great beauty. Their seats were merely smooth stones, covered with skins; their knapsacks and baskets were formed of palm leaves, and they used pine-wood torches.

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In time of war the confederate tribes communicated by means of scouts placed at intervals, by fires lighted on the tops of mountains, and by shrill whistlings that were heard at a great distance. Before coming to personal conflict, they used stones as their first means of attack, and slings were their principal resource during the combat. They fought nearly naked with shields, or with their tamarcks rolled up on their left arm for the same kind of protection. They launched javelins also with great skill, using the "banot," a kind of dart, with unrivalled dexterity, causing the barb to rest in the wound while the handle pierced the flesh. They fought bravely, exchanging prisoners after the battle.

Agriculture was their chief employment. The art of tanning was practised by them with much success —and it is said that the colour of their leather was equal in brilliancy to that of Morocco. Some remains of painting were discovered, and even a rough portrait is mentioned as having been executed on wood with charcoal, ochre, the juice of herbs, and milk. The Guanches were good swimmers, and when fish were seen on the surface of the water, their women and children would throw themselves in, and, with lighted torches in their hands, surround the shoal on the outside and drive them towards

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the shore, where they hurriedly spread their nets, woven with rushes, and, dragging them in, divided the spoil with impartiality.

Another mode of fishing was by means of the milk of the Euphorbia, which they mixed in the pools formed by the ebbing of the tide. The fish, remaining stupefied on the surface of the water, were easily caught.

Their medicines were few and simple, the stale butter from goats' milk, which they kept long under the earth to purify, the whey of milk, and the herbs of the country, of which they had some knowledge, forming all their specifics. Their surgical instruments consisted of flints and knives, and they healed their wounds with the roots of rushes moistened in boiling goats' butter. Their food consisted of "Gofio" or "Ahoroa" kneaded with honey, goats' flesh, rabbits, &c.; and they were so particular in preserving the simple taste of their food, that they ate it by itself, and after it their gofio and palm honey. They drank nothing but water, and that only at a certain period after eating anything heated, for fear of destroying their teeth.

The ancient islanders were extremely inclined to games and public rejoicings, but their yearly Festivals of the Beñesmen were in the hot season, when they gathered their crops, and made their

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general levies of the island. Those of the coronations of their new kings were the most splendid; they consisted in feasting, music, dances, wrestling, jumping, races, throwing stones, and lifting great weights.

Their dress consisted of a simple shirt, the tamarck made of goatskin, without sleeves; it was tied at the sides and fastened at the waist. The women wore a larger dress of the same kind, which reached to the feet. They painted themselves with the juice of grass and flowers, green, red, and yellow. The shoes which they used were called "xercas," the stockings or "huirmas" being the distinguishing mark of nobles. When dancing, they accompanied themselves with small drums and rough flutes made of the cane of the country, at the same time clapping their hands. This dance, which is in vogue amongst the present islanders, resembles very nearly that which I have seen practised by the Jews of Tangier in Barbary.

Finally, their character, according to Bontier and Le Verrier, differed somewhat in the several islands, as did their religion and habits. In Teneriffe, they are described as being fond of their country, modest, generous, and sensible; magnanimous in adversity, and sensible to honour; robust, active, and inured to war. The natives of

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Fuerteventura were austere, and capable of strong friendship. Those of Gomera were famous for feats of agility and possessed of great presence of mind. Melancholy was the predominant disposition of the islanders of Palma and Hierro, while, on the contrary, the Canarians were gay, active, ingenious, brave, and of great veracity. Abstemiousness and simplicity characterised these ancient people, who lived to an extreme old age.

The customs prevalent in the island of Grand Canary very closely resembled in most particulars those of Teneriffe. Without repeating, therefore, what has been already said, we shall give a minute description only of those characteristic ones which are peculiar to the island. The concurrent testimony of all early writers represents the inhabitants of Grand Canary as a particularly fine race of people, the men being tall, well-proportioned, possessed of extraordinary strength and agility, and, at the same time, brave, lively, and faithful in spirit. The women, though dark-complexioned, were in general extremely handsome, with delicate features and elegant figures. Their almond-shaped eyes are described as exceedingly beautiful, and their hair unusually long and fine. The same personal characteristics appear indeed to have belonged to the inhabitants of most of the other islands, with some

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variations of stature and colour. Those of Fuerteventura, for example, are described as men of almost colossal size, with deeply bronzed complexions, while those of the northern part of Teneriffe were comparatively fair, with auburn or even lighter coloured hair. In temper and disposition, the difference between the inhabitants of the several islands was much greater than in personal appearance. The people of Lanzarote were of a friendly, joyous, and benevolent disposition, while those of Fuerteventura were irascible and warlike. While the martial instincts of the Guanches of Teneriffe were tempered by their solidity of mind and reflective habits, the natives of Gomera were faithless and treacherous. The people of Palma and Hierro seemed to be oppressed by a perpetual melancholy, the influence of which may be observed in those songs and in the airs of their native dances which have come down to the present time. Most writers, however, agree in stating that the inhabitants of all the islands were gifted, considering their barbarous condition, with good reasoning faculties, and were all endowed with great individual courage.

The favourite dwellings of the inhabitants of Canary, as with those of Teneriffe, were the natural caverns and grottoes so prevalent in their rocky

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soil, which they blocked up with stone walls when too much exposed, lining with planks those that served for the residence of their magnates. When they were compelled by the want of a sufficient number of caves to erect small stone hovels, they frequently built two or three close together, the side walls being crossed by a single trunk of palm as a roof-tree, and the roof thatched with branches and brushwood, which were covered with a layer of earth.

Their manner of dress was as simple as their way of living, their chief garment, which was made of skins or of plaited palm-leaves and rushes, consisting of a tunic without sleeves, barely reaching to the knee. Their caps were made of compressed kid-skin, the thongs by which their sandals were attached to the ancle being of the same material. The women enveloped themselves in "thamarcas," which fell down to the middle of the leg in folds, and were composed of the same material as the men's tunics. Their long hair, which was fastened and adorned with dry rushes stained with different colours, was elaborately plaited, and hung down their backs. They are said to have been great gormandizers, eating voraciously of the favourite gofio, which was composed of roasted barley reduced to meal in a rude handmill, and

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which still constitutes the principal sustenance of the inhabitants of the islands. Besides the flesh of goats, hogs, and sheep, they were also very fond of that of fattened puppy-dogs. The goat, which was their largest animal, must sometimes have grown to a prodigious size, the early describers of the country affirming that it was nothing rare for a single goat to yield as much as sixty pounds of pure lard, exclusive of the meat, which was frequently preserved by merely drying it in the sun, a method which is still practised in the island of Hierro, where it is called Jocinte.

Their simple mode of living requiring but a scanty stock of household utensils, their warlike weapons constituted the principal ornaments of their dwellings. Darts and lances made of the toughest wood, the point sometimes hardened in the fire, and sometimes formed of a sharp stone, clubs, swords, and the magadoes were arranged along the walls. The latter was a stout pole, eight or nine feet long, terminated at each end by a large and ponderous knob, in which sharp-pointed stones were inserted. The males being trained from their youth, or rather from their infancy, in the use of their various weapons, the force and precision with which they used them is described as incredible. Shields formed from the trunk of the dragon-tree were their principal defensive arm.

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Some of the native Grand Canarian laws and customs were barbarous in the extreme. Though the island contained so disproportionately large a population as fourteen thousand souls, it was very imperfectly cultivated, and its productions not sufficient for the wants of its numerous population. As the number of births, notwithstanding, greatly exceeded that of deaths, the inhabitants were kept in a constant dread of famine through the failure of any of their crops. They had no means of supplying their wants from any other source, for their knowledge of any kind of navigation was so small that not even the rudest kind of canoe or raft was ever known in any of the islands. It was this dread of famine that led them to establish the inhuman law that all but the first-born child of every woman should be destroyed at the moment of its birth. The feelings of natural affection, however, ere long triumphed over so barbarous an enactment, and it was abolished before the time of the Spanish conquest.

Their women, as in Teneriffe, enjoyed the legal privilege of having three husbands, each of whom acted in his turn as lord and master for one month, the other two being in the condition of servants during that time. Many, however, preferred to have only one partner through life, in which case the bride,

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as in Morocco, was obliged to remain as quiet as possible in a cavern, in a reclining posture, for a period of thirty days, eating abundantly of gofio. At the expiration of that period, she was expected to have attained the degree of *embonpoint* that fitted her for the marriage state. The marriage could not take place until the lady was declared to be in a fit condition by the Faycan, or High Priest, or by the temporal chief, one of which individuals not only gave away the bride, but likewise claimed the same sort of tribute that was once exacted in many of the French and other continental *seigneurages*.

The natives of Grand Canary were of a lively and mirthful temperament, fond of all kinds of amusement and passionately addicted to dancing, which they performed with equal grace and agility. One of their dances, indeed, was considered so attractive both in itself and in the air, the music of which was performed on rude tabors and cane flutes, or even, in the want of these instruments, by the mouth, that it obtained, under the name of Canario, much celebrity, and was greatly in vogue at the Spanish and other European Courts.

They were also extremely fond of feats of strength and agility, eagerly engaging in wrestling and running matches. They cultivated every kind of ex-



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ercise that could increase their muscular strength, lifting prodigious weights, carrying ponderous beams of timber to ledges and jutting prominences on the face of some steep mountain, and there planting them in spots that would be deemed quite inaccessible in our degenerate days. Within a very few years back, some of these trophies might still have been seen in places far beyond the power of any ordinary mortal to reach, although it must be confessed that the difficulties of the sites have been greatly increased by the destructive action of many a severe winter. The Spaniards affirm that the devil assisted the natives in placing these poles, his object being that others attempting the like exploit might lose their lives in the effort. He usually appeared, as they believed, in the shape of a shock-dog, and sometimes in other figures, called by the natives "Tibicenas."

The Canarians were remarkable for their good government, and for their strict administration of justice. When a man committed a crime which they deemed worthy of death, he was at once apprehended and committed to prison. He was then tried and, if found guilty, led to the place of execution, which was also the scene of their feasts, wrestling-matches, and duels. The delinquent being stretched on the ground, and his head placed on a

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large stone, the executioner, who was a man set apart for the office, taking up another heavy stone, and lifting it as high as he could, suddenly let it fall upon the culprit's head. For crimes that were not considered worthy of death, they proceeded on the principle of the *Lex Talionis*—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

None of the Canarians, with the exception of the dregs of the people, would exercise the trade of a butcher. This employment was accounted so ignominious that they would not allow any who followed it to enter their houses, or to touch anything belonging to them. It was unlawful for the butchers even to keep company with any but those of their own occupation, and when they wanted to obtain anything from another person, they were obliged to carry a staff and point to the article desired, standing at the same time a considerable distance from it. In consideration of the abject state in which they were held, the other members of the community were required to supply them with whatever they required.

The people of Canary had several public festivals, as, for example, at the period of gathering in their crops of barley, which may be considered their harvest home. Most public events, such as the accession of a new local chief, were celebrated with great

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rejoicing. During the period of their festivals, all internal wars were suspended, the belligerents on both sides fraternizing as long as the ceremonies lasted, and at the termination renewing the fight with even greater ardour than before.

One of their favourite games was considered of so important a nature, as tending to try the courage and aptitude for war of the parties engaged in it, that its performance had always to be patronized by the presence of the Faycan or of one of the chiefs. A small platform, about three feet high, was raised in some public place, a smooth stone of half a yard square being fixed at each extremity of it. On these the two champions of the ring were stationed, each being provided with a short heavy-headed club, with three large smooth pebbles, and a number of hard, sharp-edged stones, their only cutting instrument. The contest began with the discharge of the pebbles on both sides, these being thrown at each other with immense strength, and with wonderful precision of aim. The dexterity and flexibility of body with which, at a very short distance, they succeeded in almost invariably eluding being struck by the stones is described as very wonderful, for they were not allowed to move from the spot where they were appointed to stand. After this, seizing the club with the

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right hand, and taking up the "tabonas" or sharp-edged stones, in the left, they approached each other more closely, and commenced their hand-to-hand fight, striking and parrying with these rude instruments, till, wearied by their exertions, and covered with blood and perspiration, their separate adherents interfered, putting a stop to the contest until they should renew their strength for its more vigorous continuance by a hearty meal. That finished, they set to again, keeping up the contest with great spirit and resolution until such time as the spectators and the president of the fight considered that they had given satisfactory proofs of their bravery and adroitness, when the cry of "Gama, Gama" terminated the trial and established the reputation of the combatants. So great was the dexterity of these people in avoiding the blow of any missile aimed at them, that all the old Spanish authors affirm that it was next to impossible to hit them at a distance by a discharge of anything but fire-arms. When arrows and cross-bow bolts were shot at them, if approaching too directly to be avoided by a contortion of the body, they have been known frequently to catch them in their hands.

The island of Canary was divided into no less than ten districts or petty cantons, each governed by a chief called the Guanarteme. Each of these

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Guanartemes had under him six Guayres, or counsellors, chosen from among their nobility, for these barbarians also had their aristocratic class, selected either for their personal valour and prudence, or in consequence of being the owners of the largest flocks of sheep and goats. The nobles were distinguished from the plebeians by the long, flowing beards which they wore, and by their hair being cut evenly across their forehead and over their ears by the hands of the Faycan. The ten cantons seldom enjoyed perfect peace, frequent internal wars taking place between some of them, and continuing till the entire oligarchy was suppressed by the success of some one chief in overpowering the remainder and creating himself king of the whole island. It was in the reign of the second absolute monarch, named Artimi Semidan, and during the lives of most of the deposed Guanartemes, that the Spaniards made their first hostile incursions upon Grand Canary.

No one was allowed to possess landed property of his own, the soil belonging exclusively to the King, or Guanarteme, of the district in which it was situated. As large a portion of fallow or unbroken land as was deemed sufficient to raise the quantity of grain necessary for the support of himself and family for a year was granted to each

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individual. This allotment was rudely tilled or scratched over with goat-horns fitted on poles, and the seed deposited in the earth. After gathering in the produce of their labour, a different portion of ground was assigned to each for the operations of the succeeding year.

No kind of traffic, beyond the mere exchange of such articles as they might mutually require, was known to the natives. Those who employed others to work for them as labourers, masons, curriers, weavers of rushes, and dyers, or in such other simple trades as they had a knowledge of, repaid them for their toil by bestowing upon them such articles as they stood in need of.

We have already described the mummies of Teneriffe, in which are seen such astonishing proofs of the perfection to which an unenlightened race had attained in embalming and preserving for centuries the corpses of their dead. No less skill was displayed in currying and dressing the skins in which the mummies were swathed. Fragments of their remains are still occasionally met with, and it is but a few months since some were found, the smoothness, fineness, and pliability of which could be equalled only by the best kid-leather of the present day. Other pieces have been discovered with the natural covering of short glossy hair still

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on, the parts being sewed together with such exquisite neatness that, although their only thread consisted of the fine fibres of tendons, the joinings and stitches were so well executed that it was only with difficulty they could be distinguished. Although the Canarians possessed both these arts, their skill was never equal to that of the inhabitants of Teneriffe. Their mummies were deposited singly and in a sitting posture, the holes into which they were put being chiefly in spots covered with a deep volcanic *débris*. They never seem to have collected their dead in large Pantheons, as the immense caverns used for the purpose of sepulture by the Guanches might very properly be denominated.

As the complete group of islands derived their collective name from Grand Canary, we may, before concluding this hasty sketch of the manners and customs of the ancient inhabitants of the two principal islands, say a few words regarding the name "Canary." The name, like the islands themselves, is involved in considerable mystery, the obscurity of which leads the mind back to the beautiful allegories of Pagan superstition and the mythic legends of antiquity. These islands lying at the extreme verge of the world known to the ancients, in the dim vastness of the western ocean, their geographical position and their inhabitants

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were long involved in inscrutable darkness, which the science of the ancients was not able to penetrate. The etymology of the generic name, though it has been the subject of much discussion, remains to this day undecided. Some have derived it from the Latin word *canna*, an abundance of canes growing in the island; while others trace it to *canis*, Canary having been once infested with a peculiar breed of wild mastiffs, two of which are mentioned by Pliny as having been in the possession of Juba, King of Mauritania. "Channaria Extrema," the name given by Ptolemy to Cape Bojador on the adjacent coast of Africa, is also said to have been transferred to the Fortunate Islands. Our own Thomas Nicholls, writing in 1526 (Hakluyt's and Purchas's Voyages) says, "Some write that this island was named Canaria by means of the number of dogges which there were found, as, for example, Andrew Thanet sayeth that one Juba carried two dogges from thence; but that opinion could I never learn by any of the natural people of the country, although I have talked with them in my time, and with many of their children. For truth it is that there were dogges, but such as are in all northern lands, and some part of the West India, which served people, instead of sheep, for victuell. But some of the conquerors of those islands I have heard say

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that the reason why they were called the Canary Islands is because there grew generally in them all four square canes in great multitude together, which, being touched, will cast out a liqueur as white as milke, which liqueur is rank poison ; and at the first entry into these islands, some of the conquerors were therewith poisoned." (Our worthy countryman evidently alludes to the Euphorbia, which abounds in the Canary Islands).

Pliny makes mention of a people called Canarii, who dwelt beyond Mount Atlas, bordering on the country of the Peroite Ethiopians. At the skirt of the same mountains there is an African tribe called Canarios, who perhaps first peopled this island, from whom it may ultimately have derived its name. Ptolemy calls Cape Blanco in Africa "Ganaria Extrema," and the blacks who now live on the banks of the river Senegal call all the country opposite to the Canary Islands, between that river and Mount Atlas, "Gannar." From the similitude of the names, we would naturally be led to believe that the natives of the island of Canary and those of the neighbouring continent of Africa were one and the same people.

Whatever be the origin of the name, it is certain that the islands have been known as the Canary Islands ever since the settlement of the Spaniards

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in the Archipelago. The prefix "Grand" was bestowed on Canary in consequence of its being the first seat of government and the capital island of the group, a distinction which has been transferred to Teneriffe within a comparatively recent period.



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II.

THE CONQUEST OF GRAND CANARY.

THE first account of the Canary Islands being publicly known in Europe, after the decline of the Roman Empire, was some time between the years of 1326 and 1334, by means of a French ship that was driven amongst them by a storm. Upon this discovery, a Spanish nobleman, Count of Claremonte, named Don Luis, son of Don Alonzo de la Cerda, surnamed the Disinherited,* procured a

* He was rightful heir to the Crown of Castile, but was deprived of it by his uncle, Sancho IV. From Doña Isabella, daughter to this Luis de la Cerda, is descended the noble family of Medina Celi, in Spain (Mariana). When the grant was made to Don Luis, it gave such umbrage to the English Ambassadors, who then happened to be at Rome, that they immediately despatched an express to their Court to prevent this consequence, imagining there were no other "Fortunate Islands" than those of Great Britain.—HEYLEY'S *Cosmography*.

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grant of those islands, with title of King, from Pope Clement VI., upon condition that he would cause the Gospel to be preached to the natives. Two years after, Don Luis obtained a licence from Pedro, King of Aragon, to equip a fleet from some of his ports, in order to take possession of the Canary Islands; but, though some of his ships were actually fitted out, the design failed in consequence of his death and other circumstances. Some other vessels, however, went to the Canary Islands about the same time, the crews of which were Mayorquins, who belonged to the Crown of Aragon.

Nothing was done towards prosecuting the discovery of these islands until the year 1385, when some Biscayans and inhabitants of Seville joined to equip a fleet of five ships at Cadiz, in order to make descents upon and plunder the Canary Islands and the adjacent coast of Barbary. The command of these ships was given to one Fernando Peraza, a gentleman of Seville. After coasting along the African shore, they sailed westward, and fell in with the island now called Lanzarote, where they landed. The natives came in crowds to the port to behold them; but the Spaniards, shooting some arrows among them, killed some, wounded others, and so frightened the rest that they ran away. Upon this the Spaniards marched to the



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town where the natives resided, which they sacked, carrying off a large booty of goatskins, tallow, and sheep, besides one hundred and twenty of the inhabitants, among whom were the Guanareme, or king of the island, and Singnafaya his wife. With these they returned on board and sailed back to Spain, where in those days such plunder was reckoned very valuable.

After many expeditions had sailed to these islands for the purpose of plunder, several persons excited by avarice, solicited Henry III., King of Castile, for a licence to conquer them, as Henry pretended they were his property, though on what plea he founded his claim to them is not known. In the year 1309, the contention of the Crown of Castile was ended by the death of Don Pedro, who was stabbed by his bastard brother, Don Enrique, who then succeeded to the Crown.

A few years before this happened, several noblemen from Normandy in France came to Castile to the assistance of Enrique, among whom were Bartram Claquin, Constable, and Ruben de Bracamonte, Admiral, of France. This last had two nephews by a sister who lived in Normandy, and was married to the Lord of Betancourt, Granville, and other places in that country. The eldest, named Jean de Betancourt, though then an old

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man, had a strong desire to travel and do something worthy of his ancestors, and determined to make a visit to Spain to his uncle the Admiral. He met at Rochelle one Gadifer de la Sala, a man of large possessions. This person, fascinated by the expedition, agreed with Jean de Betancourt to accompany him in quest of the Fortunate Islands, which were then a subject of much interest in Europe. They sold and mortgaged their estates, in order to raise sufficient funds to equip a *small* fleet, well provided with skilful mariners, pilots, and interpreters, who must have been in the islands before. This fleet consisted of three ships, containing two hundred persons, exclusive of the seamen. Among the number were many young gentlemen of Normandy, several of whom were relatives of Jean de Betancourt.

On the 1st of May, 1400, they set sail and proceeded on the voyage without any accident occurring till they reached the Islands. The first they saw was Lanzarote, which name was given to it by Jean de Betancourt, probably in honour of one of his acquaintances. When he landed his men, the natives gathered together in a body to defend themselves, imagining that these strangers were come to plunder and carry them off, as they had done before; but observing the French to be well assured

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they were afraid to attack them, and retired into the country, leaving them at liberty to encamp in a convenient place, for the natives had nothing to oppose them with but sticks and stones. But, finding that the French remained some days in the same place without attempting to molest them, they began to take courage, and some of them ventured into the camp, where they were well treated by Jean de Betancourt and Gadifer de la Sala, who allowed them to go in and out of it and take whatever they pleased.

This good treatment removed all their fears, insomuch that when the French began to build a fort for defence and accommodation, the natives cheerfully assisted them in bringing stones and lime for the work. This fort was built at Rubicon.

Having made a pacific conquest of Lanzarote, they passed over to the other islands, touching at Fuerteventura, which was separated from Lanzarote by a channel of two leagues in breadth. Leaving an officer in Rubicon, they landed at a place called Valtarrahala in the latter island, then called by the French Fortuite. The inhabitants, seeing a number of strange people arrive in their island, gathered in great numbers to oppose them. Being men of more warlike spirit than those of Lanzarote, more athletic and of larger stature, the French, con-

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sidering what a handful of men they had to attack them with, re-embarked and set sail for Lanzarote, where they consulted what next was to be done.

Considering the few people they had for such an undertaking as the conquest of the Islands, it was determined that Gadifer de Sala should return to France, in order to bring back supplies of men. Accordingly he went, and, unfortunately for the expedition, died a few days after his arrival in his native land. When this was known to Jean de Betancourt, finding himself deprived of his intended succour and without money or friends in France, he determined to embark for Spain, where he arrived and applied to his uncle, Ruben de Braemont, and other relations, for assistance to proceed with his design. But his chief patron and intercessor with the King of Castile was the Infante, Don Fernando, afterwards King of Aragon, by whose means he procured from the King, Don Enrique III. a grant of the Fortunate Islands, with the title of King. This done, he went to Seville and equipped a fleet well provided with the men and stores necessary for the conquest of the islands, the King supplying him with money to defray the charges of the armament. The grant of the Canary Islands to Jean de Betancourt was dated in the year 1403.



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When he arrived at the Canaries, the island of Fuerteventura was divided into two kingdoms, one commencing at the Villa and continuing as far as Handia, and the other extending from the Villa into Corralejo, and separated by a loose stone wall, four leagues in length, crossing the breadth of the island from sea to sea. There were in this island, at the time of the conquest, four thousand fighting men. Those who were famous for their virtue and valour bore the appellations of Mayhag and Altihag, which were names held in great honour.

It is said that when Jean de Betancourt and Gadifer de la Sala came in quest of these islands, the then King of Lanzarote, who was named Guadarfa, was descended from a European who had been driven by a tempest on its coast, and whose history is thus related:—

When Don John I., son of Henry II., reigned in Castile, he was engaged in war against the King of Portugal and the Duke of Lancaster about the succession of the crown of Castile, the Duke pretending that it was his right on account of his marriage with Doña Constancia, eldest daughter of King Pedro. In the course of the wars, and about the year 1377, King John sent some ships commanded by Martin Ruez de Avendano to scour the coasts of Galicia, Biscay, and England. This fleet met with a severe tempest,

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which lasted many days, insomuch that the admiral's ship was obliged to bear away and drive before the wind until she arrived at a port in the island of Lanzarote. There the Spaniards landed, and were kindly received by the natives, who treated them to the best that the island afforded. Don Martin Ruez de Avendano was lodged in the house of Honzamas, the King, while he remained in the island, and had a daughter named Yeo, by Fayna, the King's wife, who, when of age, was married to one of the Royal family. By this distinguished person, Yeo, whose complexion was very fair and beautiful compared with that of the natives, had a son named Guadarfia.

After Nuazamas' death there was much discussion about the succession, the natives insisting that Guadarfia was ineligible on account of his mother Yeo not being of noble birth, her colour favouring the belief that she was born of a stranger, and not of Nuazamas the King. In order to end the dispute, the council met and came to the resolution of shutting her up with three other females in the house of the deceased Nuazamas, to be there smoked. If she came out alive, she was to be declared noble and the genuine offspring of Nuazamas.

Before she went to the smoky trial, an old woman advised her to convey secretly into the room a large



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sponge moistened with water, and when the smoke began to be troublesome she advised her to apply it to her mouth and nostrils. Yeo took her advice, the benefit of which she experienced, for when the door was opened, the three servants were found suffocated, but Yeo was still alive. Upon this she was brought forth with great marks of honour, and her son Guadarfia was immediately declared King of Lanzarote, being the same whom Jean de Betancourt found reigning on his arrival there in 1405.

Having subjected the island of Fuerteventura, and having also received reinforcements of ships, and new and warlike provisions from Europe, Jean de Betancourt led an expedition to Canary, where, through the precipitation of some of his officers, the aborigines came off victors, at the very first encounter killing twenty-five of the leaders of the invasion, though not without suffering great loss themselves, their King, Artimi Semidan, being one of those who fell in the defence of his country. Although Betancourt and his followers were obliged to return from the island, like his predecessor La Sala, he is said to have been so much impressed with the heroic conduct of the natives that he thenceforward always termed it *Grand* Canary.

In subsequent years, several more attacks were

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made on the unfortunate islanders, but always with the same fruitless results. Jean de Betancourt had died, and his nephew and successor, Maciot de Betancourt, who was married to the beautiful Princess Teguise, daughter of the deposed King of Lanzarote, sold all the islands, though yet but partially conquered, to the Infante Don Henrique of Portugal. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that she exchanged them for certain possessions in the island of Madeira, which already belonged to the latter. Henry IV. of Castile next granted the right of subduing the islands of Canary, Teneriffe, and Palma to some Portuguese nobles, and the empty ceremony of taking nominal possession of the island first named was, in 1464, committed to one Diego de Herrera; but he was soon driven out by the natives, with no more lasting success than had attended all former expeditions,—being compelled, with his defeated forces, to retire to Lanzarote.

Undeterred by such constant failures, Herrera resolved on prosecuting the attempt with another and more powerful expedition. Reinforcements of nearly eight hundred Portuguese having arrived, he again set foot in Canary, landing at a port called Gando, from whence he and his son-in-law, Diego de Silva, marched inland at the head of five hun-

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dred men-at-arms, leaving their vessels at anchor. Again was fortune adverse to them. After a few leagues' march they were attacked with great daring by an overwhelming force of the natives, who, after killing and wounding a great number of the Europeans, drove the remainder back, obliging them to take up a position on an eminence overhanging the sea, where they trusted, through their superior discipline and more efficient weapons, to make good their stand against the numerical superiority of their opponents.

Believing that the host of enemies they had before them comprised almost all the warriors of the country, they determined on dividing their force, Diego de Silva at the same time going by sea, with two hundred men and two interpreters, to a remoter part of the island, whence, penetrating into the interior, they hoped to cause such a diversion as would prove favourable to the remainder of their troops by cutting off a large part of the enemy. This plan was put into execution, and in a couple of days the detachment had landed at a place called Galdar, and were advancing inland, unperceived, as they thought, by the natives; but the chief, Tenesor Semidan, already aware of their presence, had collected a body of six hundred fighting men, of whom he detached a part to cut

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off the retreat of the invaders, by setting fire to the forests in their rear, while he, with the rest of his force, awaited them in front. He then attacked them with so much fury and vigour that De Silva was but too happy in being able to fight his way into a circular space surrounded by a wall four or five feet high, with two narrow oblique entrances into it, which was the spot used by the natives both for holding their courts of justice and for the execution of criminals.

Here the invaders defended themselves bravely against the hourly increasing number of their assailants; but at the end of two days, worn out with fatigue, hunger, and thirst, they sent out their two interpreters to the besiegers, with an offer of surrendering upon certain conditions. The enraged multitude would listen to no proposals from an enemy they had so completely at their mercy; and would instantly have torn the messengers to pieces, had it not been for the persuasion of their chief, who allowed them to rejoin their comrades in safety. The circumstances that followed evinced so great a degree of humanity in the bosom of that Guanarteme, and so much nobleness of mind in one whom we generally regard merely as an outraged barbarian, that it would be perfectly incredible, were not its truth established by the corroborant testimony of all the

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writers of that period. The chief, then, assuring his followers that he would negotiate with the invaders only on such terms as would convince them how thorough was the repulse they had experienced, and how hopeless the condition in which they stood, singly approached close to the wall of the enclosure, and, by means of the interpreters, reproached De Silva for the continual cruelty of the Spaniards, in persecuting and harassing an unoffending people, whose rage and desire of revenge they had now so fully excited that his vassals, no longer listening to his admonitions, had already doomed the whole of the Spaniards to death, and that such would assuredly be the fate of every prisoner they might now make. He himself, however, feeling pity for their miserable condition, and being always averse to needless bloodshed, could suggest to them a means of saving their lives. If he could only be certain that they would retain a grateful remembrance of his generosity, and in future abstain from injuring his people, he would allow the besieged Spaniards to rush out and seize him, threatening him with instant death, unless allowed a safe retreat to their ships. So valuable a hint was not to be disregarded by the besieged. With a sudden rush, some of them

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directly laid hold of the apparently resisting chief, and dragged him within the enclosure; and when the Canarians, seeing the capture of their leader, flew, with the fiercest yells of desperation, to effect his rescue, he forbade their further advance, on the plea that his own life would be the immediate penalty of any further act of hostility. To save the existence, therefore, of their Guanarteme, they not only consented to allow the invaders a secure return to the sea-shore by a shorter way than they had come, a certain number of their principal men accompanying and guiding them upon the route, but they likewise supplied them with all the gofio and other food they could collect.

On the way towards the place of embarkation, however, there was a desperately perilous path to traverse, a mere goat-track, as it seemed, on the brink of a precipice of great height. Here the confidence of the Spaniards in the good faith of the natives gave way; they hesitated and demurred at entering what they feared would prove a snare purposely laid to inveigle them into a position from which, without being able to use their weapons, they might easily be hurled, by their more agile and practised conductors, into the abyss below. The Guanarteme, divining their suspicions, smilingly placed himself on De Silva's unprotected side,



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and conducted him, in perfect safety, to the bottom of the dangerous way, yet known by the name of De Silva's Pass, while, in like manner, his followers supported and conducted the soldiers, carrying the wounded with peculiar care.

Profuse in expressions of gratitude and friendship, the leader of the Spaniards presented the Guanarteme with a splendid cap of scarlet cloth, and with his own sword in a gilt scabbard, each of his Guayres also receiving the gift of a similar weapon. Perhaps he could have given them no better proof that he did not meditate any further act of hostility. If his intentions had been inimical, it would have been the greatest imprudence on his part to present them with weapons which they knew so well how to use, as they had shown by the slaughter they had committed with those which had previously fallen into their hands as spoils of war.

De Silva re-embarked with his surviving comrades, and rejoined his father-in-law Herrera, whom he in vain endeavoured to dissuade from making any further attempt against the natives; but the latter, maddened by the thought that his troops had undergone a fresh humiliation, insisted on renewing the attack, and De Silva, after saving the lives of two Guanartemes in a skirmish, left the

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army in disgust, and withdrew to Lanzarote, from whence, with the Portuguese auxiliaries, he shortly after returned to his native country. Herrera obstinately remained, and, after undergoing another defeat still more decisive, was driven out of the island.

He then proceeded to Gomera, where he found no opposition, but, on the contrary, was entertained by the natives in a friendly and courteous manner. After leaving Gomera, Betancourt sailed for Hierro, or Ferro, and anchored in the harbour belonging to that island. When the natives perceived the ships approaching with their white sails, they remembered the prophecy of a man named Yore, who was reckoned a soothsayer and diviner. This man, when on his death-bed, had called the natives together, and told them that after his death, when his flesh should be consumed and his bones mouldered to dust, the god Eraoranzan would come to them in white houses on the water. He advised them not to resist or flee from them, but to adore them, because they were come to do them good. The natives, who placed great faith in the predictions of this prophet, buried him in a place apart from the rest of their dead, that his bones might afterwards be distinguished from those of all others. Seeing the ships now approaching with their white

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sails swelling on the surface of the water, they firmly believed that the prophecy was fulfilled, and, going to the cave where Yore was buried, they found his bones crumbled to dust. On making this discovery, they immediately ran with great joy to the shore in order to receive their god Eraoranzan. When Betancourt anchored at the port, he took great care in landing his men, entertaining some fear of being overpowered by the numbers assembled, for the islanders were crowding in great multitudes to the water-side. Finding, however, that they were unarmed, and that they showed no signs of hostility, he approached them and was received with every demonstration of joy and friendship. Betancourt gave thanks to God for his success, rejoicing particularly in the fact that no blood had been shed. He stayed in the island some days to refresh his men, and then returned to Fuerteventura, leaving in Hierro a garrison composed of Biscayans, French, and Flemings, under the command of one Lagaco, to whom he gave a strict charge to behave with indulgence to the natives, and to instruct them in the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

The four islands of Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gomera, and Hierro being now conquered, De Betancourt began again seriously to think of re-

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trieving his honour, which, as he imagined, had been sullied by his unsuccessful attack on Canary, and the conquest he could not obtain by force of arms he resolved to gain by apparently friendly means. For this purpose he shortly afterwards returned to Gando in Canary, accompanied this time by the Bishop of Lanzarote, whose see was then called Rubicon, with a staff of ecclesiastics, and many of its principal inhabitants. Summoning the Guanartemes to an amicable conference, he made them understand the advantage they would derive from a pacific intercourse and traffic with the Spaniards, who could provide them with so many necessaries and comforts of life, thus persuading them to enter into a treaty of peace, for the stability of which thirty boys under twelve years of age were to be given as hostages on each side.

This condition was complied with, the Spaniards taking care, on their part, to deliver none but the children of their Lanzarote vassals, the prisoners of war being reciprocally exchanged. The Bishop then signified the obligation which, as Christians, was incumbent on them, that they should erect a building which would at once serve them as a place of worship, and be useful as a storehouse in which to preserve the merchandise with which the Spa-

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niards would supply them. To this proposal, as likewise to one that all the Orchilla weed gathered in the island should belong to Herrera, the natives acceded with so much readiness that they even voluntarily helped to collect the stones with which the invaders built a strong tower, which, as soon as it was completed, was well stored with arms and ammunition. Herrera, with his confederate the Bishop, and his retinue, then returned to Lanzarote, leaving in the tower a sufficient garrison of men under a commander who was secretly instructed to use every endeavour to weaken the power of the natives, both by attracting adherents to himself, and by sowing private discord between their chiefs, and thus engaging them in intestine war. Too impatient, however, to wait the effect of such treacherous policy, the Spaniards soon threw aside all observance of the recently-made treaty of peace. The garrison made frequent raids in the neighbourhood of the fortress, beat and ill-used the owners of the flocks they stole, and outraged the women.

For some time the plunder of their sheep and goats was borne patiently by the natives; but at last the abuse suffered by a number of their principal females roused their dormant animosity to an uncontrollable pitch. A party of Spaniards, having left their fortress to forage, were waylaid, and the

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whole of them killed. The conquerors arrayed themselves in the armour they had stripped from their victims, and at night approached the tower, driving before them, in haste, a flock of goats, and pursued by a multitude of their companions in their usual dress. This artifice succeeded in making the Spaniards believe that their comrades, returning successful with a good booty, were followed by the injured natives. Under this impression, the gate of the tower was quickly thrown open to receive and protect them. The disguised natives entered, and, having the inmates now between them and the outer party, speedily killed or made prisoners of the entire garrison. The tower was in a few days levelled to its foundation, and the Spaniards were once more left without a foothold on any spot in Canary.

At length the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabel, finding that all individual attempts to subdue the islands had proved abortive, determined on making the conquest of them a national concern, and on attaching them to the Crown as a kind of suburban province of Spain, already taking to themselves the title of Kings of the Canaries, but without interfering with the vested rights of those who had previously overcome and settled four of them. A powerful armament, well supplied with everything



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necessary in the way of provisions and munitions of war, was speedily collected at Seville, whither recruits flocked so rapidly that in a short time six hundred infantry and thirty horse soldiers were gathered together to reinforce the troops that had already been engaged in former attacks on Canary.

The command of this united army was conferred on Don Juan Bermudez, Dean of the Cathedral of Rubicon, who had accompanied the Bishop in the last expedition, conjointly with General Juan Rejon, in the belief that this combination of the arm of faith with the arm of flesh must quickly vanquish the stubborn islanders. All preparations being completed, the new adventurers left Port St. Mary's in three large ships, in May, 1478, and in a month after anchored at the Isleta of Canary; the troops landed on St. John's day at this hitherto unattacked point, without the slightest opposition. Their first care was to cut down some palm-trees that abounded on the sandy soil, in order to raise with them a covering to an altar they had hastily erected, at which the warrior Dean performed a solemn Mass, in his prayers expressly imploring the Divine aid to the troops, that, completely armed, listened to him, in their pious task of *exterminating* the unhappy race whose possessions they coveted.

The entire force soon afterwards marched towards

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Gando; but, according to the friar Father Juan Abreu Galindo's narrative, some mysterious warning that was communicated to them on the way by an inspired messenger, induced them to retrace their steps and entrench themselves near the spot where they had landed. The Spanish troops gave the name of Real, or the Head-quarters of Las Palmas, to their fortified camp, which they surrounded with a high wall formed of stones and the trunks of palm-trees, defending it further by a strong tower, which contained a storehouse for their provisions and ammunition, as well as a chapel dedicated to St. Anne.

In a few days' time all these works were approaching completion, when intelligence was obtained that the Canarians were marshalling a force of two thousand men under the command of the brave Doramas, Guanarteme of Telde, whose name is still preserved in the district which to this day is called *Montaña de Doramas*, a forest that belonged to him, which, within the last quarter of a century only, has been cleared and brought under cultivation.

General Rejon, in order to gain time to finish his preparations, and more especially the tower, on which he placed great reliance, no sooner saw the enemy approaching than he sent an envoy, accompanied by an interpreter, to say that he had been

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commanded by his sovereigns solely to take the island under their august protection, and to induce the natives to embrace the true Christian faith. He assured them that by so doing they would secure to themselves their royal friendship, and enjoy peaceful possession of their wives, children, flocks, and goods; but if, on the contrary, they should refuse the offer, he would then commence a war of extermination against them, not leaving one of them alive, except in state of bondage. To this haughty message Doramas deigned no other reply than that on the morrow he would himself be the bearer of his answer.

Doramas acted on this occasion with his usual vigour; but the Spaniards had employed the night in taking every prudent precaution against the threatened attack. Drawing their infantry out of the camp, they formed them in three separate corps under different leaders. Their trifling force of cavalry was commanded by the churchman Bermudez, who, for the nonce, throwing away his clericals, showed himself on that day to be a brave and dexterous cavalier. He might indeed have been more consistently employed in thumbing his breviary and missal in the cathedral at Lanzarote, than in butchering and maiming the proselytes whom he hoped to make among the barbarians.

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The onset of the latter was furious and impetuous to the utmost degree. The Guanarteme of one of the districts of the island, a man of enormous muscular power, followed by some of his Guayres and other retainers, wielded his ponderous magado with such deadly force that he nearly broke through the Spanish line by which the camp was protected; but one of the troopers of Bermudez, charging him on horseback, drove his spear through his thighs, and then dragged him as a prisoner within the fortification. This event, combined with the havoc made by the fire-arms, and the dread inspired by the horses, animals which they had never before seen, induced Doramas to draw off his warriors, and to watch for a more propitious opportunity of encountering his enemy. In this unfortunate contest, the Canarians left three hundred of their bravest troops on the field of battle, many being also taken prisoners.

This was the first victory ever gained by the invaders over the islanders, and their joy at it was proportionally great. Their principal triumph was the capture of the Guanarteme, whose wounds were attended to with the utmost care, and who, when they were healed, was sent to Spain; most probably to suffer the same bitter fate of slavery that awaited his fellow-prisoners.



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This success gave the Spaniards ample time to extend and complete their fortifications, with little or no interruption from the natives. They soon began also to throw out foraging parties, who, protected by the dreaded horsemen, occasionally extended their excursions to a distance of eight and even ten leagues, returning with a large booty of provisions, and seldom meeting with even the slightest opposition from their now humbled enemy.

At this period, however, there was war between the Spanish and Portuguese nations, and the latter, having never foregone the right they conceived they had to the Canary Islands, sent a squadron of seven ships filled with soldiers to aid the Guanarteme of Galdar in again expelling the invaders. Having formed an alliance with him for that purpose, they agreed to make an attack by sea on the Spanish position, while the natives did the same on the land side.

As soon as the vessels were discerned from the camp, General Rejon, guessing their design, drew a considerable part of his garrison towards the spot at which he had himself landed, and there placed the greater part of them in ambush, while with the rest he showed so feeble a force that, when the first two hundred Portuguese soldiers landed, they believed themselves strong enough to obtain

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a victory without waiting for the reinforcements which the boats had returned to fetch from the ships. The wily Rejon retreated before the Portuguese, merely skirmishing till he had drawn them within his ambuscade, when the two bodies, closing upon them in front and rear, put the entire two hundred to the sword. During this time a heavy surf had set in upon the shore, and the boats that were hastening from the ships, overloaded with soldiers to succour their comrades, were upset, so many men being drowned that the squadron, unable, after so severe a loss, to make any further attempt, put to sea, and thenceforward contented itself with cruizing in the neighbourhood and cutting off the supplies that small trading vessels were in the habit of bringing from Spain. Doramas and his followers, witnessing this fresh mishap, did not venture to make an unsupported attack, but disbanding, they retired to the most mountainous parts of the island, in order to be out of the reach of their implacable foe.

During the breathing-time thus afforded to the Spaniards, who had now begun to convert the camp into a town, violent disputes broke out between their two commanders. Complaints against General Rejon were sent by his colleague, Dean Bermudez, to their Catholic Majesties, who, in 1479, appointed

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a Royal commissioner, named Algaba, to proceed to Canary and reconcile a difference so prejudicial to the public cause; but the crafty Dean soon won the envoy entirely over to his side, and, making him his decided partizan, he managed so successfully, that Rejon was seized in a most treacherous manner, loaded with irons, and sent prisoner to Seville, a most formidable list of accusations being laid to his charge. The Dean in particular complained that the General had not allowed him his due share in the temporal and military government, that he had intruded himself into the spiritual matters of their joint command, and that he had been remiss and inactive in not availing himself with sufficient vigour of the advantages they had obtained over the natives. His rival being thus disposed of, Dean Bermudez renewed his friendly intercourse with Herrera at Lanzarote, and succeeded in obtaining from him those provisions and supplies which the latter, in dudgeon at being deprived of all chance of effecting the conquest, in attempting which he had made so many fruitless endeavours, had constantly refused to the Royal forces.

Eager to prove the incapacity of Rejon for the task, and proud of now being sole commander, Dean Bermudez, forgetting his own ignorance of the art of war, resolved on surprising a force that

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several Guanartemes were said to be collecting about Doramas at a place called Moya, the highest and nearly the most central part of the island. Bermudez marched at nightfall by a precipitous mountain-track, intersected with many ravines; and at dawn of day his weary, drowsy, and hungry soldiers found themselves in presence of a small number of the natives, who attacked and drove them back with great slaughter, killing also five of their horses. In a still more disastrous expedition some months after, at a place called Tirajana, the Spaniards were again put to flight, with a loss of many killed, upwards of one hundred wounded, and eighty taken prisoners. By these two victories the valiant natives secured the possession of a large store of European weapons, so much superior to their own.

It would be tedious, indeed, to follow the Spanish historians in their lengthy details of the skirmishes and battles in which Bermudez was constantly engaged, and always with similar ill-success. We may, therefore, now proceed more directly to state that, after an inquiry held at Seville, into the conduct of General Rejon, he was acquitted of all blame, and ordered to return to his command of Canary, accompanied by a new Bishop of Lanzarote. Dean Bermudez and his confederate, Algaba,

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refused compliance with the order, and on his arrival forced Rejon to leave the island. Furious with rage, the latter again repaired to Seville, and laid this new grievance before the Court. He was furnished with a fresh and more stringent royal order, in which the Dean's flagrant disobedience to his sovereign's former command was severely adverted to, and soon found himself on his way back to Canary, supported by thirty men-at-arms, on whose adherence and fidelity he could fully depend. Keeping his vessel out of sight from the shore during day-time, he landed secretly at midnight, on the 2nd of May, 1480, and, easily winning over the sentinels, for he had many partizans among the troops, he penetrated into the town unobserved by anyone, and there ensconced himself and his followers in the dwellings of his brother-in-law and other friends.

The following day being one of the high festivals of the Romish faith, Bermudez and Algaba, with all the principal persons in the place, were assembled at their devotions in the church, when Rejon—whom they all believed to be in Spain—backed by his thirty armed followers, suddenly appeared in the midst of the congregation. Doubtless a bomb-shell falling in the midst of them would have been a more welcome visitant to the two rulers, who knew

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that the greater part of the soldiery were more partial to their enemy than to themselves.

Rejon made short work of it. He had his two rivals dragged from the church and conveyed to prison, gratifying his vengeance by placing Algaba in the same dungeon which he had himself inhabited, and loading him with the same fetters which he himself had worn. The Royal order, reinstating him in his command, was then publicly read, no opposition being offered to his renewed rule. A hurried criminal process was instituted against his two competitors, and having soon found, or suborned, witnessess to uphold an accusation he brought against Algaba, of being in treaty with the Portuguese to give up the island to them, the latter was sentenced to death, and almost immediately beheaded in the public square. Dean Bermudez, probably on account of his ecclesiastical character, escaped so severe a punishment, being only condemned to perpetual residence in the Cathedral at Lanzarote, where in a short time he expired, it is said, of a broken heart.

Algaba, however, had been a man of consideration and influence in Seville, his native city, and his widow and friends were not slow in laying before the monarch their complaint against Rejon. They asserted that it was from motives of private

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revenge that he had given orders for his execution, instead of sending him to Spain to be tried by the competent authorities.

In consequence of this, Rejon was again deposed, and his successor in the command, General Pedro de Vera, instructed to send him immediately to Spain to account for his actions. This being done, General Vera's next act was one of such iniquitous treachery, that it is severely censured even by his own chroniclers. On his arrival, he found a great number of Canarians, who, having abandoned the cause of their country, had come over to the Spaniards, embraced the Christian religion, been baptized, and resided peaceably in the town of Las Palmas. These, he apprehended, might again change sides in case of any serious attack on the place being made by their countrymen. At all events, they were already detrimental to the Spanish cause, by augmenting the consumption of the provisions that were with difficulty brought from Spain.

To get rid of a considerable part of them, he adopted the stratagem of pointing out to their regard the adjacent beautiful island of Teneriffe, for the acquisition of which the Spaniards had already been long fighting, and only needed their assistance to complete its conquest. If they were disposed to

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render this service, they would be recompensed with lands that would be allotted to them, and by the renown their deeds of arms would ensure. Two hundred of the Canarians joyfully accepted a proposal that so well agreed with their warlike propensities and habits, and were put on board a ship, the master of which was instructed, instead of carrying them to their promised destination, to take them to Spain, and there sell them as slaves. This villainous plan was frustrated by the Canarians, who, when they perceived that, instead of approaching Teneriffe, they were sailing in a contrary direction, and that they finally lost sight of that island altogether, suspected the snare that had been laid for them, and obliged the captain, under the threat of instant death to him and his crew, to land them at Lanzarote.

They were well received in that island, but their condition was not much improved, part of them having been taken to Portugal by Diego de Silva, who is said to have obtained from King Alonzo the grant of a place of residence for them at Sagres, near Cape Finisterre, and the remainder were employed in different incursions on the coast of Africa, where they were either killed or made prisoners by the Moors.

When this treacherous act of Vera became

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known to the converted Canarians that remained in the town, their hatred and distrust of the Spaniards were again so roused that they deserted and rejoined their fellow-islanders, determined on fighting to the last extremity against such perfidious enemies. Doramas, the indefatigable and implacable Guanarteme of Telde, had again assembled a sufficient number of his countrymen to harass and menace the Spanish garrison, and advanced to Arucas, with the intention of attacking it. On perceiving this, General Vera marched out to confront him. He found the natives strongly posted on an eminence, where it would have been disadvantageous to attack them, and therefore drew up his men on another height, opposite to theirs, the two armies remaining for several hours in inactivity watching each other's motions. Losing patience at this delay, Doramas at last descended alone into the little valley that separated them, approached the Spanish force, loading them with opprobrious terms, and loudly defying any one of them to meet him in single combat. So insulting was his manner that Vera himself determined to accept the challenge; but, being restrained by the expostulations of his followers, he allowed one of his officers, mounted on a splendid Andalusian charger, to act as champion of the Spaniards. Full of eagerness, this chivalrous

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officer galloped towards the island chief; but before he could approach near enough to use his spear, Doramas discharged a dart at him with such deadly force and unerring aim, that it at once pierced his shield, his coat of mail, and his heart, hurling him from his saddle, a corpse. At sight of this disaster General Vega could no longer control his rage. Eager to avenge the loss of his follower, he rushed against his adversary, and, although Doramas, on his approach, flung at him another dart that penetrated his shield, he escaped without injury. Then, bending his head to his courser's neck, and avoiding the blow of a second dart, he overtook the Guanarteme, struck him through the loins with his spear, and bore him to the ground, from whence he cried for quarter. When the natives saw the fall of their beloved chief, they rushed like infuriated wild beasts upon the Spaniards, and prodigies of valour and strength are said to have been performed on both sides; but their inferior weapons and unprotected persons were no match against the Spanish armour of proof in a hand-to-hand encounter. They were obliged to retreat, leaving in the enemies' hands a considerable number of prisoners. Of these none were treated with so much care as the unfortunate Doramas, as the victors were anxious to take him with them in order

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to grace their triumphant return to their fortifications. But his wound was too severe to allow any hope of cure, or to sustain so long a journey, and when he was so weakened by loss of blood that his last hour was evidently near, the Spaniards resolved on admitting him before death into the Christian church. From a neighbouring spring a helmetful of water was brought, with which the ceremony of baptism was performed; and by one of those acts of incongruity so common to the age, General Vera stood godfather to the enemy he had just deprived of existence. Doramas died immediately after the ceremony, and his corpse was buried in the forest that bore his name, where the Spaniards raised a mound of stones, surmounted by a cross, to mark the last resting-place of their inveterate foeman.

After this victory, which again drove the natives to their strongholds in the less accessible parts of the island, the Spaniards sent two ships with a strong force of soldiers to the port of Agaéte, on the western side of the island, where they soon constructed a fort from whence they could with security detach parties into the interior; but they had the misfortune of again suffering defeat and loss in another battle at Tirajana, where Bermudez had formerly been worsted.

A new chieftain of the natives, Bentagnaya, the

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principal Guayre of the district of Galdar, had meanwhile risen to replace Doramas. Again inspiring courage into his countrymen, their new leader was unceasing in the annoyance with which he harassed the Spaniards, though not in the open field, where their superiority in weapons, and more particularly their fire-arms and cavalry, gave them such decided advantages. Aware of the zeal of the Spaniards for making converts, and by their means weakening the force of those who still resisted, he one day presented himself alone and unarmed in Las Palmas, declaring that he wished to be instructed and baptized in the Christian faith. He was joyfully received, and allowed to remain a sufficient time to complete his pretended intention; but he employed himself during his stay in making minute observations of all the defences of the camp, the posts and number of their sentinels, the hours of changing guard, and everything that he thought could be conducive to his plan. When he had procured all the knowledge which he deemed necessary, he deserted from the camp and rejoined his followers.

These he shortly after divided into two bodies for a night attack, the one being destined to assault the wall on the land side, and so call the entire garrison to that spot, while the other should scale

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that nearest the sea, and gain a footing in the camp, where they purposed to give quarter to no one. The latter body, being deceived by some casual uproar they heard in the inner part of the camp, believed that their comrades had already commenced the false attack, and so, mounting the walls and making their entrance, they killed the sentries and such other Spaniards as they met, till the whole garrison was alarmed, and, the land-side party having been accidentally delayed, they were overpowered and driven out with great slaughter. This was the boldest attempt the islanders had ever made against their invaders, who, in consequence of it, were kept under arms for many succeeding nights. Notwithstanding this precaution, however, scarcely a single night passed in which the islanders did not carry off some of the Spanish soldiers, while by day they captured such as ventured out to fish, or to gather orchilla-weed. Finally, one night, Bentaguaya, with only one attendant, having got over a weak part of the wall, slew the sentinels and made his way to the General's stables, where he killed the grooms and two chargers—animals much more feared than their riders by the natives—but, in retreating, he was seen by another sentry, by whom he was wounded, but not so severely as to prevent his making his escape.

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Shortly after this, a Spanish party left their new fortress at Agaeta, and, by a silent night-march into the interior, surprised the Guanarteme of Galdar, Temesor Semidan by name. This chief, with four of his Guayres and a few attendants, was captured in his cave-palace before his subjects could assemble with the view of offering resistance. He was conducted to Las Palmas, where the arrival of such a prize was hailed with the greatest joy by General Vera and his followers. Being the spoil most deserving of regal notice, the Guanarteme and his four counsellors were sent to Spain, and presented to the monarchs, who then held their court at Calatayud. The strange appearance of the islanders, clad in their native habits, their athletic figures, and the freedom and grace of their motions attracted general admiration on their way from Cadiz, through Seville, Xeres, Cordova, and the other towns through which they had to pass; while, on their side, they were still more astonished at the civilization, wealth, and strength of the country they now for the first time saw. On their arrival in the royal presence, they were so overcome by the splendour of all they beheld and by the number of armed retainers, that they were convinced their little island could not long successfully withstand the attacks of so powerful a nation. The barbarian

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chief prostrated himself before King Ferdinand, professed submission to the Spanish Crown, and announced his desire of becoming a Christian, his fellow-prisoners also doing the same. King Ferdinand raised him from the ground, embraced him, and, bestowing on him his own name, stood godfather at his baptism, which was soon after performed by a Cardinal at Toledo.

It was justly considered by the Sovereign and his advisers that these converted captives, who had now become to a certain degree civilized, if permitted to return to Canary, might possess sufficient influence over their countrymen and former vassals to lead to their submission without further useless resistance.

With this view they were sent back and attached to the forces under General Vera, who, in the intervening time, had been furnished with reinforcements of Biscayan soldiers, with whose assistance he had been unceasing in his persecution of the natives, though with but indifferent success. Though sometimes one party and sometimes the other had proved victorious, still he had managed gradually to extend his command over the country, additional forts having been established in two or three places.

After the arrival of Don Ferdinand Guanarteme,

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as he was now called, Vera marched against a large force of the natives, on whom it was expected the exhortations of their former chief would produce a powerful effect; but it was found that his eloquence was powerless over so stubborn an auditory. His countrymen, far from being cajoled out of their freedom by his flowery description of the wealth and irresistible power of Spain, insulted and reviled him in every possible manner as a traitor to the common cause, who had been won over to the enemy by an extrinsic display of the mere emblems of power and wealth. Being fortunate enough to get back to the Spaniards without personal injury, he shared the defeat which they suffered immediately after, and was again driven into Las Palmas.

This seemingly interminable war still lingering on, several other battles were fought with various success. Sometimes the Spaniards were successful, and again the islanders were victorious, until, wearied out with such indecisive efforts, General Vera resolved on staking the ultimate results on one cast of the die. Marshalling his entire host, which consisted of upwards of one thousand men, including auxiliaries from Lanzarote and Gomera, well armed and well appointed in every respect, he marched with these from Las Palmas,

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under a vow never to return to it until his efforts were crowned with complete success. The natives, who had congregated on one of the highest spots in the island, only numbered six hundred fighting men, and one thousand five hundred women and children; the whole of whom Vera resolved to exterminate, giving quarter to no one, but slaughtering all without distinction of age or sex. With this firm determination he was preparing to attack them, when his companion, the Guanarteme, horror-struck at the idea of such a butchery of his countrymen, of whom his own children and brethren formed a part, obtained leave to parley with them once more. He did so this time more effectually than on the previous occasion, pointing out to them that the superiority of their enemies' numbers had cut off all possible chance of escape by retreat, the place being completely surrounded by them, that the infuriated Spaniards now left them no alternative but submission or death, and finally, that in confiding their fate to the rule of monarchs so unrivalled as those of Spain for power, wisdom, and generosity, they would insure to themselves and to their posterity the inviolable liberty of their persons and possessions, instead of being subject, as hitherto, to the frequent jealousies and bickerings of a number of petty chiefs of their own. His countrymen listened with

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attention. They saw the truth of part of his harangue, and credulously believed the remainder. Throwing away their weapons, and approaching their besiegers with shouts of joy, they embraced them, and submitted to their authority. As a matter of course, from that day, which was in May, 1483, their independence was lost, and the rapid annihilation of their race commenced.

We find it difficult to explain how this half savage people could, for so long a series of years as elapsed between Bethancourt's first attack upon them in 1404 till their final submission to Vera seventy-nine years afterwards, have continued to defend their liberty against an enemy so infinitely superior in every requisite for making war; but it shows equally their own innate prowess and love of freedom, and the ill-judged policy of their various invaders in frittering away time and lives in a succession of petty attacks, instead of collecting means for obtaining their coveted object by one grand and decisive attack.

After their subjection, almost all the native warriors were got rid of by embodying them with the Spanish soldiery, then engaged in the conquest of the islands of Palma and Teneriffe. They distinguished themselves in these expeditions by their natural bravery and hardihood, some of them

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receiving grants of land as a reward, and others being drafted for service in the incursions which the Spaniards were making on the coast of Africa, where they were either killed or made slaves by the Moors. As years rolled on, the type of the aboriginal Canarians completely disappeared, partly by the decrease of their own population, and partly by their frequent intermarriages with the conquerors.

The town of Las Palmas rose so rapidly in extent and importance, that in 1485 Pope Innocent VIII., at the instance of the Catholic monarchs, granted a bull translating the Cathedral of Rubicon from Lanzarote to that place, and instituting the new see of the bishopric of Canary, embracing the whole of the seven islands; but it was only in 1570 that the Cathedral was first made use of. The see remained undivided until 1819, when that of Teneriffe was organised at Laguna, the two, however, within the last few years having merged again into that of Canary.

Internal peace having at last been established, fresh decrees of the sovereigns appointed the city of Las Palmas, or rather "Real de Las Palmas," which is its proper title, capital of the entire province of the Canary Islands. New colonists flocked to it with the intention of settling there, and General Vera, with wise foresight, brought

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from the island of Madeira and from Spain abundance of sugar-canes, fruit-trees, and vegetable seeds of all sorts, besides cattle, poultry, and even game, to be naturalised in the country. All throve well, but more particularly the sugar-cane, which increased so rapidly that in a few years it became the staple article of produce in Grand Canary, as well as in Teneriffe and Palma, yielding abundant crops of very good sugar. It was, however, ultimately supplanted by the culture of the vine, the more profitable produce of which caused the total extirpation of the sugar-cane, except in the island of Palma, where its cultivation on two or three estates was continued until within some fourteen years ago.

In 1526 the Emperor Charles V. established in the city of Las Palmas the Superior Court of Appeal of the province, for all civil and criminal cases. This court was instituted under the name of the Royal Audiencia, and still possesses its original jurisdiction; but its decisions are subject to a further appeal to the higher tribunals in Spain.

Grand Canary thus went on prospering peacefully and satisfactorily till 1594, when our Sir Francis Drake, who, as well as some other English and French cruizers, had occasionally caused some

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alarm in the islands, appeared before Las Palmas with twenty-seven vessels of war, and, after some cannonading, succeeded in effecting a landing; but before he could collect much booty, he was driven away with loss. Drake, however, must have excited considerable alarm throughout all the islands, for even to the present century, among the lower class of people, nursing women used to hush their fractious babies (and perhaps yet do) with the threat, "Ahi, viene el Draque" — Drake is coming!"

Four years later the growing prosperity of the city received a more severe check in its invasion by a Dutch fleet of seventy-three ships of war and transports conveying nine thousand troops, under the command of Admiral Vanderdoes, who had already made an unsuccessful attack on the island of Gomera. At Las Palmas they effected a landing in a hundred and fifty boats, notwithstanding a vigorous defence, in which the Spanish governor, Alvarado, was mortally wounded. On the following day, 27th June, 1599, they obtained possession of the different forts that protected the city, from which the inhabitants had already withdrawn, and were now followed by the troops, who encamped at a short distance from it.

Admiral Vanderdoes, after establishing himself

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in the city, sent proposals agreeing to withdraw from the island on condition of receiving a ransom of 400,000 ducats, an acknowledgment of being vassals of the United Provinces of Holland and Zealand, and an annual payment, as such, of a tribute of 10,000 dollars. These terms were rejected by the Spaniards, who, a few days after, having enticed a body of four thousand of their invaders into an ambuscade which they had laid for them, attacked them so suddenly that, taken by surprise while resting after a laborious march, the Dutch offered but a feeble resistance, and, after suffering great loss, were totally routed, and fled back into the city. Admiral Vanderdoes, believing that all the military force of the island was close upon him, ordered a hasty re-embarcation of his troops, with such plunder as they had collected, among which was all the brass artillery, the bells of the cathedral, churches, and convents, and a large quantity of wine and other valuables. He then set fire to the town, and almost all the principal edifices were consumed. Besides private dwellings, the churches, the palace of the Bishop, the monasteries and a nunnery, the prison, and all the public archives, were reduced to ashes. The fleet remained at anchor till the 8th of July, when Vanderdoes, detaching a part of it to convey the spoil to Holland, sailed with the remainder to the southward,

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where, after having attacked the island of Saint Thomé, then belonging to the Portuguese, he and most of his force died of the fevers prevalent in that climate. Although this was but an unfortunate expedition to the Dutch, who are said to have lost more than two thousand men in Canary alone, an account of the capture of that island, and also of Gomera, was published in Holland in 1600.

Since that now remote period, no hostile attack appears to have been made on the island, though, of course, it has since then undergone many internal vicissitudes and changes; but, advancing always in wealth and population, though losing the title of capital of the province, which in the present century was transferred to the town of Santa Cruz in Teneriffe, in consideration of its being the permanent residence of the military Captain-General. The last notable event that has occurred in the history of Grand Canary was the awful visitation of cholera, that, for four months of 1851, scourged the island with dreadful mortality, though, happily, without extending to any other of the Archipelago.

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III.

THE CONQUEST OF TENERIFFE.

THE last sigh of Boabdil el Chico had scarcely been breathed in the lovely pass of Las Alpuxaras, and the fever of triumph was still burning on the brows of the conqueror of Granada, when he began to long for new conquests. Flushed with his recent successes over the Saracens, who had so long held the fairest provinces of Spain in subjection, he sought eagerly for a new field in which to display his military enterprize. At this time the Atlantic Archipelago of the Canary Islands held out peculiar attractions to the ambitious soldier, for, although many expeditions had already been sent out for their conquest, they were as yet only partially subdued.

The magnificent island of Teneriffe, the principal

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member of the group, was, in particular, still in possession of the aborigines. Among the many restless adventurers who had resolved on its conquest was Alonzo Fernandez de Lugo, a distinguished scion of the noble family of Lugo in Gallicia. He had already gained considerable renown as a soldier, having taken part in a creditable manner in several military expeditions. He had served with great distinction against the Moors in Granada, where he had made himself remarkable by his prowess and feats of bravery. He had joined as a volunteer the expedition for the conquest of Grand Canary, after which he had returned to Spain; and, proceeding immediately to the royal camp, he laid his further schemes of conquest before the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, from whom he obtained authority to equip a new expedition for the conquest of the islands of Teneriffe and Palma. A similar authority had been previously granted to one of his companions in arms, Juan Regon; but, as that commander had failed in carrying his designs into execution, Don Alonzo de Lugo was buoyed up with the high hope of distinguishing himself by the successful completion of an enterprize in which his predecessor had failed.

Several honourable distinctions were at the

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same time conferred upon the leader of the proposed expedition. He was appointed by his sovereign Captain-general of the Canary Islands, and of the coast of Barbary from Cape Geer to Cape Bojador. The patent under which this authority was conferred upon him bears the date of 1491.

Armed with these high powers, Lugo immediately left the royal camp of Santa Fé for Seville, where his intention was to collect the troops and materials of war necessary in order to enable him to carry out his undertaking. Having arrived at the latter city, he lost no time before commencing to beat up for recruits. Planting four standards in a prominent position, he invited all the youth of the country who were thirsting for adventure, and eager to acquire military distinction, to take service under him. He also used all his influence to persuade his friends and kinsmen, and other individuals of note, to accompany him in his enterprize, promising them as a reward abundance of booty, such as goats, barley, and particularly captives, by the sale of whom as slaves they could realize immense sums in Spain and Portugal when they returned. He also held out to them the prospect of large endowments of land, if they should secure success to his plans by their valour.

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A short period of active preparation, however, served to exhaust Lugo's means. Long before his arrangements were completed, he had expended all his money, the entire produce of his own property, as well as many sums that had been furnished him by merchants of Seville, and by other parties who hoped to share in the plunder brought from Teneriffe and Palma, having been expended in inducing recruits to volunteer, and in purchasing the arms necessary for their equipment. Alonzo was completely at a loss how to act. As the old chroniclers say, nothing but a miracle seemed capable of providing the funds still absolutely necessary before the expedition could set sail from Spain. Finding himself, therefore, overwhelmed with debts, his fortune and his credit having been entirely expended in making indispensable preparations, when he saw himself apparently baffled in his favourite scheme of conquering the two Canary Islands, he became very much depressed, and in his distress betook himself for consolation to the High Church of Seville. Here, the chronicles tell us, he was joined by an ancient man, of venerable aspect, a complete stranger to him, who endeavoured to console and encourage him, enjoining him by no means to forego the devout and pious enterprize on which he had entered. He was

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assured by the stranger that, although he had hitherto met only with difficulties in the preparation of his design, Providence would certainly yet look down upon him with an eye of favour, and assist him in carrying it on to a successful and glorious issue.

Having comforted him with these encouraging words, the venerable stranger then approached the high altar, and, raising the altar-cloth, took from under it a bag containing a large sum of money, which he presented to Lugo, telling him at the same time that when that was spent he should not want for further supplies. Pleased at the prospect of always having a balance in hand, without the trouble even of drawing a cheque, Lugo reverently accepted the gold, and, having secured it in his pouch, was so overcome with joy at having the means of effecting his design in his possession that he forgot to thank the generous stranger. Becoming almost immediately aware of his inadvertence, he turned round to express his gratitude, but his ancient benefactor was no longer visible, having disappeared in so sudden a manner that Lugo was unable to account for his absence. The old historians, however, in their charming credulity, were at no loss to explain the whole occurrence.

"This ancient and venerable man," says Galindo

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Nuñez de la Pena, and other chroniclers, both his contemporaries and those who succeeded him, "could have been none other than St. Peter himself, of whom Lugo was all his life a devout adorer."

Apart from the munificence of St. Peter, a story the credibility of which we leave our readers to judge, it is certain that the future conqueror of Teneriffe was in some way or other rescued from his difficulties and enabled to enlist a sufficient number of soldiers to fill two ships, which were also well provided with all the arms and munitions necessary for carrying on the war. With these two vessels Lugo sailed from Cadiz, and in the course of the same year arrived at Grand Canary.

Immediately on disembarking, he ordered a proclamation to be made, announcing to the Spanish settlers the command that had been bestowed upon him by the favour and confidence of his sovereigns. As soon as the nature of the expedition in which he was engaged was generally known, a great number of recruits joined his standard. They consisted not only of the more youthful and adventurous of the Spanish inhabitants, but also of many of the native population, who, having been Christianized, were now willing to ally themselves with the Spaniards in an expedition the object of which was to reduce

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the other islands to the same state of bondage as that in which they, after such valiant efforts for their independence, were now held.

The number of troops under the command of Lugo now amounted in all to about nine hundred men. With this small force he left Grand Canary, to undertake, in the first place, the conquest of Palma. That island had already suffered by an invasion of the Spaniards, who had landed in it in 1443, under the command of Guillem Pereza. The natives however, defended themselves with great vigour, the Spaniards were defeated, and, their leader having been killed, they were obliged to re-embark. It is also related that the women of Palma, who were remarkable for their beauty and grace, and at the same time as brave and determined as their best warriors, had fought with great valour against the invaders of their native soil, sometimes even eclipsing the feats of arms of the most distinguished of the other sex. On a subsequent occasion, when a similar attack was made on their shore by the Spaniards who garrisoned the island of Hierro, they had acted with equal resolution, the expedition ending in the disgraceful defeat of the invaders, who were compelled to return to their ships in the greatest haste.

Lugo, however, was more fortunate than his pre-

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decessors in his attempt to destroy the independence of these valiant islanders. Immediately on effecting his landing, the first thing he did was to form an entrenched camp in which his troops might be able to defend themselves against the unexpected assaults of the natives. Having thus secured his position, he lost no time before beginning to make hostile incursions into the interior of the country, where, in his encounters with the natives, he was almost invariably victorious. Two or three sanguinary battles were fought, in which, although the warriors of Palma resisted with all their usual resolution and valour, they were unable to maintain their ground against the superior discipline and arms of the European troops. The consequence was that, after an obstinate but hopeless resistance, the island was completely subdued by the troops under the command of Lugo. On the 3rd of May, 1492, just seven months after the commencement of hostilities, the royal standard was displayed as an emblem of triumph, and the Kings of Castile proclaimed monarchs of the Island of San Miguel de la Palma. At the same time the town of Santa Cruz was built, and declared the capital of the island.

The announcement of this important acquisition was immediately transmitted to Spain. In the

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vessel by which it was conveyed, Lugo also sent, among many other captive islanders who were destined to be sold as slaves, the native Prince Tanaura as a present to his sovereign. But this unfortunate captive was a high-minded and spirited chief. Having prolonged by his bravery as long as his inadequate means enabled him the defence of his country against its invaders, now that he could no longer render any service to it, he preferred to starve himself to death on the voyage to Spain, rather than live in his humiliation, to be handed over as a captive to the monarch whose General had reduced his native island to subjection.

The Spanish monarchs lost no time in recompensing Lugo for his distinguished services. He was named Governor of Palma, full authority being conferred on him to make such a division of the island between the conquerors, the Spanish settlers, and the remaining aborigines, as he might deem advisable. It is almost needless to say that the share of their own territory which was assigned to the latter unfortunate people was a very scanty one.

But Lugo had a still greater end in view. The main object of his ambition was the conquest of Teneriffe. The last spark of freedom could not be

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extinguished among the natives until the principal island of the Canary group, yet remaining independent, was subjected to his rule. Having, in the first place, appropriated as his own share of Palma the large and fertile district of Las Sauces, and leaving his nephew, Dr. Fernando Severino, with a sufficient garrison, to act in his name, he embarked with the remainder of his troops for Grand Canary. His object in again visiting this island was to stir up the military spirit of the settlers by his account of the triumphant issue of his expedition against Palma. Having lost a considerable number of his best soldiers in his encounters with the natives of that island, he was anxious also to increase the number of the forces under his command, for the more important and formidable enterprize which he was now about to undertake. His appeals were almost as successful as he could desire. Volunteers flocked to his standard in great numbers, for the conquest of Teneriffe, which was situated opposite to Grand Canary, was a very attractive and popular scheme in the eyes of most, if not all, of the Spanish settlers.

On the 1st of May, 1493, General Alonzo found himself at the head of a considerable body of troops, and lost no time in setting sail for Teneriffe, the Island of the Blessed, the Garden of the Hesperides,

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the ancient boundary of space itself, as the mythic legends of antiquity tell us. In the meantime, while the invader, with a force of one thousand foot-soldiers and one hundred and fifty cavalry, was setting foot on their shores, "the Guanches," says the Spanish chronicler, "remained in their caverns, and amid the silence of their woods, enjoying, like so many Arcadians, a happy and undisturbed existence, their heaviest cares being their flocks and harvests, and their thoughts dwelling on the innocent loves of Guaremara and Ruzman, Prince of Guimar, as sung by the poet." It would appear, however, notwithstanding the poet's enthusiastic description of the Arcadian peace in which the natives of Teneriffe lived, that their ten Menceys were in a state of great alarm, having been inspired by their priests with sad forebodings of coming evil. A prophet, in particular, on whose words they placed the utmost reliance, had confidently predicted the approaching ruin of the great Tenerfe, and counselled Bencomo to look out for the "great white bird" which should bring ruin on his wings. Bencomo, however, does not appear to have respected the prophet so much as his other fellow-countrymen, for, knowing the effect which such dismal forebodings have on the minds of the multitude, he is said to have

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caused the prophet of evil to be hung on a laurel-tree.

The fatal prediction, however, of the unfortunate seer was at last fulfilled. A flock of white birds appeared on the horizon, the heralds of the approach of Lugo and his army. "Whoever," says the chronicler, "saw the General land at the head of his troops, embracing a large wooden cross which he fixed on the ground at every few paces, adoring it with the greatest humility and devotion, would have thought he was an angel of peace come to preach the Gospel and Christian humility. But Alonzo was only a conqueror!"

Alonzo, then, succeeded in effecting his landing without much difficulty, for, although some of the most daring of the Guanches attempted to oppose the disembarkation, and even had a slight skirmish with a small body of the Spaniards, their numbers being very few, they were soon obliged to retire.

After General Lugo had established his camp in a favourable and secure position, he ordered Fernando Guanaterme, accompanied by seventy Canarians, to hasten without loss of time to the Mencey of Anaga, in whose jurisdiction they now were, with the view of endeavouring to obtain his goodwill. The utmost, however, they could obtain from Benchorro, the Mencey in question, was his promise

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to maintain strict neutrality during the progress of the contest which the Spaniards would undoubtedly have to maintain before they could succeed in rendering themselves masters of the island.

The General now resolved, before commencing active proceedings, to celebrate a solemn religious festival, with the view of obtaining the sanction of Heaven to his proceedings. The Invention of the Cross was solemnized on the 1st of May, 1493, in the camp of Port Anata. The ceremonial was conducted with great simplicity under a large tent, covered with branches of laurel and garlands of flowers. The tent was erected on the very spot where General Lugo had himself landed and planted the Spanish banner. As a further memorial of the event, he ordered an altar to be built, at which, adorned with flowers and odoriferous herbs, the Canarian priest, Alonzo de Samarna, celebrated mass with great solemnity. It was afterwards resolved that a town should be built on that site, the same which since that day has been known as the Port of Santa Cruz.

On the 4th of May the Spanish army commenced active operations. Having left their encampment, they advanced towards the Vega of Lagunas. They had already marched without disturbance a league over a precipitous and dangerous road,



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when the batadores, who had been sent forward to examine the course they intended to pursue, returned with the information that they had seen a considerable body of the islanders in the thick of the neighbouring forests. It was, moreover, evident that this body was now moving, for the most horrible and alarming yells, mingled with shrill whistling and fierce cries, announced that they were fast approaching to meet the Spanish troops. On becoming aware of this, the General ordered his men to halt on the rising ground on which the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of La Gracia was afterwards built, at the same time commanding that no one should, on any pretext, throw down his arms.

It was about nine in the morning when the Guanches came in sight of the Christian army. Bencomo, Mencey of the valley of Taoro (Orotava), and the principal of the island kings, distinguished at once for his love of independence and his detestation of the invaders, held a native Tagora, or council, in order to determine what should be done before hostilities were actually engaged in. The resolution to which they came was, that while a close alliance should be formed between the nine Menceys who were determined to maintain the independence of the island, Bencomo, guarded by

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four hundred men, should, in the first place, proceed towards the Spanish army, demand a parley with its general, and endeavour to learn what was the object of these foreign troops in thus disturbing them in their peaceful homes.

Bencomo, who was naturally of a resolute and fierce character, in his heart despising every nation as immeasurably inferior to his own, nevertheless determined to act according to the resolution which had been formed by his brother-Menceys. When, however, he saw the Spanish troops drawn up in order of battle, he could not restrain himself from displaying some of his usual arrogance and contempt. Turning to his Guanches, who were standing around him, he said that he felt quite reassured when he beheld such troops, for he had observed very little valour among the people who came pretending that they could subdue his country. "See you not how they have been surprised on hearing of our vicinity, and observe how immovable they remain, as if paralyzed by terror. I swear by Echeyde (the Peak) and by the bones of my forefather, the great Tenerfe, that if these Spaniards attempt to make war on our country, or to despoil me of my heritage, I will execute upon them such terrible punishment that it will never be blotted out from the memory of their children.

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After uttering these boastful words, Bencomo, accompanied by Prince Tingarro, approached the Spanish camp. His manner was remarkably composed, and his look majestic and commanding. On observing his approach, the Spanish General deputed Guillermo Castellano and two others to meet the Guanche king, and to demand the reason of his approach to the camp of the Spanish soldiers. Bencomo, having explained the object of his visit, was informed by the deputies of the intentions of Lugo. The island warrior indignantly ordered them in reply to tell their chief "that if he had come with his Christian warriors to ratify that peace which had formerly been concluded between their respective Powers, they were welcome, but that if, as their language seemed to indicate, they had come with hostile intent, to invade a peaceful island, it would be better for them immediately to renounce their design and return to their own country."

The deputies listened patiently to Bencomo's angry harangue, and then, on the part of their General, proposed the same terms of amity as had been accepted by the other islands, whose chiefs were now living in friendship and harmony with the Spaniards. The principal articles of the treaty proposed by the Spanish General were the following:

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—1st. Perpetual peace and friendship with the Spaniards. 2nd. The immediate profession of the Christian religion; and, 3rd. Obedience and fidelity to the Catholic monarchs, who would takeall the islands under their august protection, preserve the lives and liberties of the natives, confer great benefits upon them, and make them secure in the possession of their property.

To the first proposal, Bencomo answered that a man who had never been offended by another could not refuse his friendship, and that, consequently, he was willing to accept that of the Spaniards, while assuring them of his own good feelings. But he required, as a proof of the friendship they professed, that they should immediately evacuate the island, contenting themselves with an offering which should be made them of such articles of its produce as they might require. Bencomo's reply to the second proposal was, that the Guanches of Teneriffe as yet had no clear or satisfactory idea of what in Europe was called the Christian religion, and until it was sufficiently explained to them, and approved by their reason, he could not oblige his people to embrace it blindly, nor would he do so himself. And to the third his short reply was, that the Menceys of Teneriffe had never known the shame of submitting to men like themselves.



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Having given these answers, Bencomo hastily returned to his own domains at Tavora, where he held a council with the Menceys of the western district. Dissension and jealousy, however, unfortunately arose among them, while the two chiefs who governed the districts most contiguous to the Spanish camp had already formed alliances with the enemy.

"Remember," said Bencomo, addressing the Menceys, "that we are descended from the great Tenerfe, and that it would be better for us to die than to sacrifice the liberty of our country and remain captives in the hand of our arrogant invaders. Let us form a general confederation, that we may unanimously oppose the enemy with blows. Every one of you shall command his respective vassals, and I offer myself as leader of the whole army."

These last words were the ruin of his cause. The Menceys of Adoña, south of Dante and Ycod, who had always looked with suspicion on the great power of Bencomo, and who feared his ambitious designs, vigorously opposed this alliance, maintaining that every Mencey should defend his own domain, when the appearance of the enemy threatened danger. Their dominions being in a part of the island the most distant from the Spanish camp,

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they were more afraid of Bencomo than of Alonzo, the Christian invader.

The Menceys whose dominions were most exposed to the Spaniards immediately entered into alliance with Bencomo, who offered to bring four thousand troops in defence of the common cause. The Mencey of Guimar, in the meantime, adhered to the European cause, and joined the Spaniards with a body of six hundred of his vassals. Being received at the Spanish camp with a discharge of artillery and the loud beating of drums, they were almost struck dumb with wonder and respect, and lost no time in confirming the treaty into which they were willing to enter. The Mencey of Guimar engaged to acknowledge himself a vassal of the Catholic monarchs, to be baptized in the Christian faith, to assist the Spaniards with subsidies of men and provisions, and never to form an alliance with the enemies of the Spanish cause.

In the beginning of 1494, the Spaniards were in possession only of that part of Teneriffe situated between Santa Cruz and Laguna. In the spring, however, of the same year, Don Alonzo resolved on breaking up his camp at Laguna, and, marching westward, to reduce the Guanche forces in the north of the island. With this view, an exploring party advanced far enough to obtain a sight of the extensive valley

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of Orotava, then called Taora by the natives. Meeting with no opposition on this expedition, they were enabled to amass a great quantity of plunder, and to collect provisions for their future use. A stratagem, however, had been laid for them. When Bencomo was informed of the advance of the Spaniards, he had detached a body of three hundred of his bravest troops, who, marching towards the fatal ravine of Acentigo, which the Spaniards had to pass on their return, concealed themselves behind the rocks and trees that overhung it, and when their enemies, who were marching onwards in perfect security, unsuspicious of any danger, had got involved in the narrow and precipitous paths of the pass, the natives poured down rocks and trees upon their heads, uttering at the same time the most unearthly shrieks and shrill whistlings. Thus taken by surprise, the soldiers fell into utter confusion, and "sauve qui peut" became the general cry. Alonzo, however, did not lose his presence of mind. Stopping the fugitives by shouts and gestures, he exclaimed:—

"Here, my friends, is an opportunity for the display of our Spanish valour, and by the Divine assistance we will easily discomfit this host of barbarians, who were born only to serve us."

To this address, one of his captains, a man

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famous for his exploits in many a previous battle, replied:—

"I swear to God that, without His assistance, I will triumph over this vile rabble of savages."

Scarcely, however, had he uttered these blasphemous words ere a Guanche dart transfixed him from side to side, and, when he fell from his horse, a blow from a club terminated his life. Lugo, meanwhile, was able to prolong his resistance for a space of two hours, when, learning that Bencomo was advancing with three thousand men, he bethought himself, as the Spanish chronicles tell us, of invoking the aid of St. Michael. In answer to his prayer, the Archangel presented himself visibly in the heavens, and, enveloping the scene of battle in a dense cloud, at the same time filling the victorious Guanches with an unaccountable panic, the Spanish General was enabled to withdraw the remainder of his force, not an individual of which was unwounded. Upwards of six hundred Spaniards, and two hundred of their native allies, were left dead in the ravine, which was thenceforward called "La Matanza."

The dispirited remainder of the army, not more than two hundred men, were incessantly harassed by the attacks of the Guanches on their return to Santa Cruz. The latter even ventured to attack

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the tower in which the Spaniards at last found a secure refuge, but were driven back with the loss of one hundred and sixty of their bravest warriors.

General Lugo now found himself in a very awkward position. Having no longer an army to command, he was encompassed on all sides by enemies of indomitable valour, whose hatred to the Spaniards was unrelenting. When his provisions were exhausted, he had not a force sufficiently large to make a foray upon the flocks of the natives, and he had no means of drawing supplies from the other islands. In these circumstances, he had no alternative but to abandon his enterprise for the present; and, on the 8th of June, 1494, he returned with his dispirited followers to Grand Canary.

The Spanish General, however, was not long idle. Some Genoese merchants, established in Canary, came to his aid, providing him with the means necessary to equip a new expedition. Lugo also sent an agent to Spain, to solicit the co-operation of the third Duke of Medina Sidonia, who sent to Grand Canary a body of six hundred and fifty infantry and forty-five cavalry, recruited chiefly on his own domains at San Lucar. This princely aid was received by Lugo and his soldiers with un-

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bounded joy; and, as they had not been idle during the absence of their envoy in Spain, they had also raised a body of troops, composed of natives of Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, and Gomera. With these forces, amounting to one thousand infantry and seventy horse, Lugo effected a second landing at Santa Cruz towards the end of the year 1494. The tower, which had been demolished by the Guanches, was rebuilt, and the troops prepared once more to take the field.

The natives, who were surprised at this invasion of the Spaniards, after their dreadful loss at Matanza, collected their forces in the plain around Laguna. The older Spanish chroniclers, greatly exaggerating the strength of the Guanche army, say that it consisted of 11,000 men, the population of the whole island not then exceeding 15,000. It was doubtless, however, a considerable army of brave though undisciplined warriors, who fearlessly awaited the attack of the Spaniards. General Lugo, losing no time, at once led his troops out against them, sending, in the first place, a message to Bencomo, to offer terms of peace and amity, similar to those which he had formerly rejected, and to which he still disdainfully refused to listen. Alonzo, therefore, ordered the attack to be made at once. The

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discharge of arquebuses and cross-bows made dreadful havoc amongst the Guanches, who, in return, darkened the air with unceasing showers of darts of pitch-pine wood, sharp-edged stones, and other missiles, which they flung with great force and accuracy of aim. The battle raged with great fury for two hours, at the end of which the Spaniards, being sorely pressed, were again on the point of giving way, when an unexpected diversion was made in their favour by a Canary chief, who had been left with his men to guard the tower. Bencomo having been wounded, was no longer in the field to encourage them by his presence, and when this additional force appeared, his followers lost spirit, and gradually yielded before the impetuous advance of the Spaniards. The Mencey of Añaga was pursued by four horsemen, against whom he defended himself with great valour for a time, but, on finding his strength fail, he cried for quarter, which the Spaniards barbarously refused, piercing him with their spears. Having cut off his head, they placed it on a pike, and conveyed it to General Lugo, who immediately gave orders that it should be sent to Bencomo with a message from him, warning him of the consequences of his prolonging a fruitless opposition any longer. Bencomo replied with great dignity, that, far from dreading a similar

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fate, he envied him who had met his death in such a way, in defence of his country and honour.

The Guanches meanwhile were greatly depressed by the attacks of an enemy more subtle and remorseless even than the Spaniards. The fatal "madorra" broke out among them, spreading over the entire island with fearful rapidity. The country was covered with dead bodies, and it is said that Alonzo discovered a native woman sitting on the top of a hill, who wildly exclaimed when she saw him,—"What are you doing, Christian? Why do you not take possession of the land, for the Guanches are all dead?" It was, indeed, almost literally so. The whole valley of Tegueste lay in silence and solitude. The season was uncommonly wet; the frames of the Guanches were weakened by suffering, and they fell into a state of apathetic lethargy, in which they welcomed death as their best friend. Their dry and shrivelled remains are still found in great numbers, not embalmed and in their usual burying-places, but in caverns, where they are seen scattered about in a sitting posture, their arms crossed over their knees, and their heads resting upon their arms.

The Spaniards, also, were exposed to great suffering at the same time from famine. The news of their victory at Laguna had drawn considerable



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numbers of adventurers from the surrounding islands, whose presence reduced the stock of provisions to so low an ebb that each soldier was limited to a daily allowance of six dried figs and a handful of barley. Had it not been for the generosity of one of their companions, who sold all his estates in order to obtain money to procure provisions, they would have been reduced to worse straits than they had ever yet been in. When the Spaniards had recruited their strength, they advanced farther into the interior of the island, where, in a skirmish with a small party of the natives who still survived, they took a prisoner who informed them that Bencomo had still a force of five thousand men under arms, and was now on his march to attack them. This information proved quite correct, for on the following morning Bencomo appeared in presence of the Spaniards, prepared to offer them battle. The challenge was accepted, and after a contest of five hours' duration, the Guanches were defeated, Bencomo himself being wounded, and nearly two thousand of his followers killed. The Spaniards pursued the natives with shouts of "Victoria! Victoria!" in remembrance of which a church and hamlet bearing that name were afterwards built.

Instead of pursuing their advantage, the

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Spaniards unaccountably returned to Santa Cruz, where they were again exposed to all the evils of famine, from which they were delivered by the generosity of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who sent a vessel loaded with provisions from Spain. Once more taking the field, they advanced through a country covered with the corpses of the slain, and established their camp in the valley of Orotava. Although Bencomo was still in arms, he was now convinced that, in the state of weakness to which the Guanches had been reduced by disease, it would be advisable to avoid more bloodshed by a painful, though necessary submission. Proceeding, therefore, to the Spanish camp, he was received with open arms by Alonzo de Lugo, who only imposed upon him the obligation of embracing the Christian religion, and receiving baptism as a subject of the Spanish monarch. The General made a faithful promise that the Guanches should be protected, and that a certain territory should be allotted to them, a promise which, with the habitual faithlessness of the Spanish conquerors of the age, he afterwards broke. The towns of Upper and Lower Realixo were subsequently built on the spots where the two hostile camps had last stood.



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From that period the extinction of the Guanche race on the north side of the island proceeded with increased rapidity; but on the south, where the tribes had formed an early alliance with the invaders, the aboriginal type is still perceptible in the high cheek-bones, irregular features, dark olive complexions, and the spare, upright, and sinewy figures which are frequently met. The name of Bencomo came down to our own times in the persons of two of his descendants, viz., the Dean, Don Pedro José Bencomo, who died in 1828, and his brother, Don Cristobal Bencomo, who was confessor to King Ferdinand VII., and survived his brother only a short time.

The eight remaining Menceys of Teneriffe were carried by Lugo into Spain, where they were presented to Ferdinand and Isabella. Bencomo is said to have been taken to Venice, though the motive of such a proceeding does not appear. In the short space of a century after the conquest, the Guanche race had entirely disappeared from the island. Don Alonzo de Lugo, General of the Coast of Barbary and Perpetual Governor of the Islands of Palma and Teneriffe, lived to behold the prosperity of the appanage he had procured for the Spanish Crown. Having founded many of the

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towns and churches of the island, he died in 1525, his life having been a faithful commentary on the motto of his race, "Quien lanza sabe mover, ella le da de comer." "The spear will give sustenance to him who knows how to use it."

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