

draw off as many troops as could be spared from the suburbs of Cordova, and to give his camp as formidable an aspect as possible; and that he would return and give Aben Hud such an account of the power of the royal camp as would deter him from the attack. "If," continued Don Lorenzo, "I fail in diverting him from his enterprise, I will come off with all my vassals and offer myself, and all I can command, for the service of your majesty, and hope to be accepted for my good intentions. As to what takes place in the Moorish camp, from hence, in three days, I will send your majesty letters by this my esquire."

The king thanked Don Lorenzo for his good intentions, and pardoned him, and took him as his vassal; and Don Lorenzo said: "I beseech your majesty to order that for three or four nights there be made great fires in various parts of the camp, so that in case Aben Hud should send scouts by night, there may be the appearance of a great host." The king promised it should be done, and Don Lorenzo took his leave; rejoining his companions at the bridge, they mounted their horses and travelled all night and returned to Ecija.

When Don Lorenzo appeared in presence of Aben Hud he had the air of one fatigued and careworn. To the inquiries of the Moor he returned answers full of alarm, magnifying the power and condition of the royal forces. "Señor," added he, "if you could be assured of the truth of what I say, send out your scouts, and they will behold the Christian tents whitening all the banks of the Guadalquivir, and covering the country as the snow covers the mountains of Granada; or at night they will see fires on hill and dale illumining all the land."

This intelligence redoubled the doubts and apprehensions of Aben Hud. On the following day two Moorish horsemen arrived in all haste from Zaen, King of Valencia, informing him that King James of Aragon was coming against that place with a powerful army, and offering him the supremacy of the place if he would hasten with all speed to its relief.

Aben Hud, thus perplexed between two objects, asked advice of his counsellors, among whom was the perfidious Don Lorenzo. They observed that the Christians, though they had possession of the suburbs of Cordova, could not for a long time master the place. He would have time, therefore, to relieve Valencia, and then turn his arms and those of King Zaen against the host of King Fernando.

Aben Hud listened to their advice, and marched immediately for Almeria, to take thence his ships to guard the port of Valencia. While at Almeria a Moor named Aben Arramin, and who