

It was Don Rodriguez's birth-day, and Blanca was giving to her father a "tertulia" or feast in this charming solitude.

The Duke invited Aben-Hamet to sit down amongst the young girls, who were amusing themselves with the turban and robe of the stranger. He spoke such pure Castilian that one might have taken him for a Spaniard, if he had not always used "thou" instead of "you."

This word had an expression so soft from his mouth, that Blanca felt a secret fear whenever he used it towards any of her companions.

After the "refruco," they beseeched Blanca to execute one of those dances in which the Gitanas excel. One of the young girls commenced to play upon a guitar, the air of the dance. The daughter of Don Rodriguez took off her veil, and attached to her white hands the ebony castanets. Her black hair fell upon her alabaster neck; her mouth and eyes smiled in unison. Suddenly she makes the ebony sound, strikes three times the measure, and joining her voice to the music of the guitar, she darts forth like a swallow. What variations of step! What elegance in her attitudes! Sometimes she starts as if wearied with pleasure, then retires weighed down with grief. The harmony of her steps, of her songs, and of the music of the guitar was perfect.

This music and dance fixed forever the destiny of the last Abencerrage; they would have been enough to disturb a heart less ill than his. They returned in the evening to Granada.

Don Rodriguez, charmed by the noble and polished manners of Aben-Hamet, did not wish to separate from him until he had promised to come often to amuse Blanca with his Eastern stories. The Moor overjoyed, accepted the invitation.

(To be concluded next month.)

AN IDYL.

"Common objects" REV. J. G. WOOD.

Cleon with Ida walked, one summer day,

To seek for COMMON OBJECTS, and essay

To read the book of Nature,—never read

Because without a *finis*,—and to tread

With youth's light springy footstep, firm and quick,

The flowery paths of Science and to pick