

hand; "and well remember the gloom that overspread Toledo, upon the disappearance of one of the best knights of Arragon. My prayers to Heaven," he added, "for aid and for deliverance, have been answered even when I had despaired of its favour.—Thy proffer is most willingly accepted, and I entrust the fortress of Calatrava to thyself and associates, in the full confidence that it will yet be preserved from the false mis-believers. The charter of possession shall be delivered to-morrow."

"We will do our best," said Diego Velasquez, as he took his departure with his companions, "but from God alone cometh the victory."

It was almost midnight, yet the Moorish camp which held in league the fortress of Calatrava, exhibited little of the silence and loneliness peculiar to that hour. Groups of chieftains and officers were to be seen reclining on the grass, or sauntering listlessly along the banks of the Guadiana, while those of meaner rank, unchecked by any severity of discipline, were holding discourse with the sentinels, or listening to the animated strains of the wandering story-teller. Bursts of harsh music from the horn, or atabal, would occasionally rise above the hum of the multitude, conveying to the warrior's bosom the thrilling recollection of some glorious battle-field; and at times, too, the peaceful harp or lute, more in accordance with the mild spirit of the scene, breathed forth the tender lay of love, or sang the beauties of the shady groves, and verdant pastures of the happy Arabian. A moon of unrivalled brilliancy shed a rich lustre over the landscape, lending a snowy whiteness to the graceful drapery of the tent, and causing the surface of the river to glow like a mirror of silver.—The standard of the Prophet, firmly planted amid the luxuriant grass, hung sullenly around its massy staff, as if scorning the tranquil scene, and sighing for the tempestuous atmosphere of battle. In the distance, the renowned front unilluminated by the oblique rays of the moon, rose like a huge mountain from the plain, or the grim evening cloud, when the orb of day sinks angrily into the bosom of ocean. But it was not alone the attractive splendour of the balmy summer night that beguiled the hardy soldiers of their repose. The few remaining defenders of Calatrava, despairing of a successful defence, especially since the de-

parture of the Temple knights, had entered into a convention for its surrender, unless previously relieved, at the expiration of a week from the date of the capitulation. The extreme reluctance of the Christians to yield up the important post, induced them to insist on the latest period for its execution, and the midnight of the seventh day was designated as the time for its fulfilment of the treaty. This term had now almost expired, and as the hour when the crescent should displace the standard of Arragon from the lofty towers drew near, the wakefulness and stir, among the Moslems, denoted their intention of availing themselves of their good fortune, without unnecessary delay.

Amid a luxuriant orange grove that adorned the verdant margin of the Guadiana, the Lady Zara, the daughter of the Moorish leader Abdallah, and her principal female attendants, were seated on embroidered cushions, while a crowd of princes and captains formed an admiring circle round the object of attraction.

"How beautiful," was the observation of the Lady Zara, as she directed her animated glance towards the river, "are the moonbeams playing on the calm surface of the Guadiana, and how soothing the murmur of the crystal ripples, as they lave the flowery shore!"

"The scene is fair," said the veteran Chebar, looking for a moment upon the object of her admiration, "but the rays of the full moon, streaming upon the marble palace of the Spanish king, at Toledo, and the crescent waving in triumph over the city, would to me be a far more splendid spectacle."

"I have seen," observed the young Prince of Cordova, gazing for an instant upon the lovely features of the daughter of Abdallah, but partially concealed by the transparent veil, "a sight far more beautiful than moonlit stream or palace, and have heard even now, a sound softer than the murmur of the sparkling ripples of the Guadiana!"

"To what next am I to be compared?" said Zara, playfully, in answer to the compliment; "the descendants of the Prophet are celebrated for fervour of imagination, and the romantic scenery of Spain is well adapted to give it scope and exercise.—And yet," she added, "it would afford me much gratification to behold the royal pa-