

himself a prisoner. Commending himself to his patron saint, and bracing his shield, he charged bravely among the Moors, and began to lay about him with a holy zeal of spirit and a vigorous arm of flesh. Every blow that he gave was in the name of San Juan, and every blow laid an infidel in the dust. His friars, seeing the peril of their leader, came running to his aid, accompanied by a number of cavaliers. They rushed into the fight, shouting, "San Juan! San Juan!" and began to deal such sturdy blows as savored more of the camp than of the cloister. Great and fierce was this struggle between cowl and turban. The ground was strewn with bodies of the infidels; but the Christians were a mere handful among a multitude. A burly friar, commander of Siercilla, was struck to the earth, and his shaven head cleft by a blow of a scimeter; several squires and cavaliers, to the number of twenty, fell covered with wounds; yet still the stout prior and his brethren continued fighting with desperate fury, shouting incessantly, "San Juan! San Juan!" and dealing their blows with as good heart as they had ever dealt benedictions on their followers.

The noise of this skirmish, and the holy shouts of the fighting friars, resounded through the camp. The alarm was given, "The Prior of San Juan is surrounded by the enemy! To the rescue! to the rescue!" The whole Christian host was in agitation, but none were so alert as those holy warriors of the Church, Don Garci, Bishop of Cordova, and Don Sancho, Bishop of Coria. Hastily summoning their vassals, horse and foot, they bestrode their steeds, with cuirass over cassock, and lance instead of crosier, and set off at full gallop to the rescue of their brother saints. When the Moors saw the warrior bishops and their retainers scouring to the field, they gave over the contest, and leaving the prior and his companions, they drew off toward the city. Their retreat was soon changed to a headlong flight; for the bishops, not content with rescuing the prior, continued in pursuit of his assailants. The Moorish foot-soldiers were soon overtaken and either slaughtered or made prisoners: nor did the horsemen make good their retreat into the city, until the powerful arm of the Church had visited their rear with pious vengeance.* Nor did the chastisement of Heaven end here. The stout prior of the hospital, being once aroused, was full of ardor and enterprise. Concerting with the Prince Don Enrique, and the Masters of Calatrava and Alcantara, and the valiant Lorenzo Xuares, they made a sudden assault by night on the suburb of Seville called Benaljojar, and broke their way into it with fire and sword. The Moors were aroused from their sleep by the flames of their dwellings and the shouts of the Christians. There was hard and bloody fighting. The prior of the hospital, with his valiant friars, was in the fiercest of the action, and their war-cry of "San Juan! San Juan!" was heard in all parts of the suburb. Many houses were burnt, many sacked, many Moors slain or taken prisoners, and the Christian knights and warrior friars, having gathered together a great cavalcade of the flocks and herds which were in the suburb, drove it off in triumph to the camp, by the light of the blazing dwellings.

A like inroad was made by the prior and the same cavaliers, a few nights afterward, into the suburb called Macarena, which they laid waste

in like manner, bearing off wealthy spoils. Such was the pious vengeance which the Moors brought upon themselves by meddling with the kine of the stout prior of the hospital.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BRAVADO OF THE THREE CAVALIERS.—AMBUSH AT THE BRIDGE OVER THE GUADAYRA.—DESPERATE VALOR OF GARCI PEREZ.—GRAND ATTEMPT OF ADMIRAL BONIFAZ ON THE BRIDGE OF BOATS.—SEVILLE DISMEMBERED FROM TRIANA.

OF all the Christian cavaliers who distinguished themselves in this renowned siege of Seville, there was none who surpassed in valor the bold Garci Perez de Vargas. This hardy knight was truly enamored of danger, and like a gamester with his gold, he seemed to have no pleasure of his life except in putting it in constant jeopardy. One of the greatest friends of Garci Perez was Don Lorenzo Xuares Gallinato, the same who had boasted of the valor of Garci Perez at the time that he exposed himself to be attacked by seven Moorish horsemen. They were not merely companions, but rivals in arms; for in this siege it was the custom among the Christian knights to vie with each other in acts of daring enterprise.

One morning, as Garci Perez, Don Lorenzo Xuares, and a third cavalier, named Alfonso Tello, were on horseback, patrolling the skirts of the camp, a friendly contest arose between them as to who was most adventurous in arms. To settle the question, it was determined to put the proof to the Moors, by going alone and striking the points of their lances in the gate of the city.

No sooner was this mad bravado agreed upon than they turned the reins of their horses and made for Seville. The Moorish sentinels, from the towers of the gate, saw three Christian knights advancing over the plain, and supposed them to be messengers or deserters from the army. When the cavaliers drew near, each struck his lance against the gate, and wheeling round, put spurs to his horse and retreated. The Moors, considering this a scornful defiance, were violently exasperated, and sallied forth in great numbers to revenge the insult. They soon were hard on the traces of the Christian cavaliers. The first who turned to fight with them was Alfonso Tello, being of a fiery and impatient spirit. The second was Garci Perez; the third was Don Lorenzo, who waited until the Moors came up with them, when he braced his shield, couched his lance, and took the whole brunt of their charge. A desperate fight took place, for though the Moors were overwhelming in number, the cavaliers were three of the most valiant warriors in Spain. The conflict was beheld from the camp. The alarm was given; the Christian cavaliers hastened to the rescue of their companions in arms; squadron after squadron pressed to the field, the Moors poured out reinforcements from the gate; in this way a general battle ensued, which lasted a great part of the day, until the Moors were vanquished and driven within their walls.

There was one of the gates of Seville, called the gate of the Alcazar, which led out to a small bridge over the Guadaya. Out of this gate the Moors used to make frequent sallies, to fall sud-

* *Cronica General*, pt. 4, p. 338.