



"TO RAISE THE GENIUS AND TO MEND THE HEART."

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From the Lady's Book.

THE KNIGHTS OF CALATRAVA;

By the Author of a Tale of "Roncesvalles."
(Continued.)

"And was the danger, the difficulty, the impossibility of the enterprize," demanded the king, "placed before your sage council? Even the daring and well-trained chivalry of the Temple," he added, "have quailed before the barbarian host, and I am asked to entrust the fortress their daring valour could not protect, to the hands of the unwarlike and peaceful inmates of a convent. By St. Jago! it passes belief and patience, and it is well the communication was made in private, rather than before my assembled court."

"The knights of the holy Temple," was the modest remark of the monk, "are not always in the red battle field; they too are governed by monastic rules; and when the strife is over, assuming the cowl for the helmet, they retire to their lonely cells, for prayer and meditation."

"Now, by my faith," exclaimed the king, in derision, "it is a pleasant matter to hear these sluggards of St. Mary, compare themselves with the most approved soldiers in the world."

"And why should they not?" said the speaker Ambrose, in a firm, manly voice, no longer concealing his intense emotions; "why should not the monks of St. Mary be named at the same time with the soldier-priests of the Temple? Do the warriors of the cross endure with patience and hunger and cold, fatigue, and watchfulness?—our fasts and vigils have prepared our bodies for a similar display of fortitude.—Can they suffer, without sigh or groan, pain and torture?—even in the midst of the blazing faggots, the brow of the most youthful of my associates, would be as tranquil as the sleeping lark at noon-day. A thou-

sand brethren of the several convents of our order wait but your assent to take steed and lance, and rescue the devoted fortress from the infidel or perish before its walls."

During the delivery of this spirited appeal, the surprise of the monarch was extreme, and his gaze rested earnestly on the group before him, as if seeking to detect some deception in the assumed character of those composing it. A pause of some duration ensued—the delegates of St. Mary awaiting respectfully the decision of the king. But it was not given at once. His first impulse was to except their proffered services, as a desperate remedy for the evils that surrounded him, but feelings of doubt and uncertainty resumed their sway, and restrained its immediate expression.—"There is some difference," he thought "between enduring privations and sufferings, with a fortitude induced by habit and a sense of religion, and to dash boldly and fearlessly, amid the frowning ranks of fierce and fanatic enemies." They are still but monks and priests."

"Who is there," he demanded, in a tone and manner in which decision was blended with a spirit of anxious inquiry, "to lead these brethren of the convent to battle, and emulate the deeds of the brave De Longueville?"

"One," replied the monk, "whose blade is as keen as that renowned warrior's, and whose war-shout has as loudly mingled with the discordant tebir; Diego Velasquez; and the same duty which led him within the walls of a cloister, now urges him to the battle-field." As he said this, he removed the hood that had partially concealed his face, and displayed to the king his well-known features.

"I had long supposed thee dead," exclaimed Don Sancho, warmly grasping his