

Who keeps this fortress, its sworn governor,
 Lord of the valley, master of the town,
 Commanding whom he will, himself commanded
 By Christ his Lord who sees him from the Cross
 And from bright heaven where the Mother pleads,—
 By good Saint James upon the milk-white steed,
 Who leaves his bliss to fight for chosen Spain;—
 By the dead gaze of all his ancestors;—
 And by the mystery of his Spanish blood
 Charged with the awe and glories of the past.

See now with soldiers in his front and rear
 He winds at evening through the narrow streets
 That toward the Castle gate climb devious:
 His charger, of fine Andalusian stock,
 An Indian beauty, black but delicate,
 Is conscious of the herald trumpet note,
 The gathering glances, and familiar ways
 That lead fast homeward: she forgets fatigue,
 And at the light touch of the master's spur
 Thrills with the zeal to bear him royally,
 Arches her neck and clambers up the stones
 As if disdainful of the difficult steep.
 Night-black the charger, black the rider's plume,
 But all between is bright with morning hues—
 Seems ivory and gold and deep blue gems,
 And starry flashing steel and pale vermilion,
 All set in jasper: on his surcoat white
 Gitter the sword-belt and the jewelled hilt,
 Red on the back and breast the holy cross,
 And 'twixt the helmet and the soft-spun white
 Thick tawny wavelets like the lion's mane
 Turn backward from his brow, pale, wide, erect,
 Shadowing blue eyes—blue as the rain-washed sky
 That braced the early stem of Gothic kings
 He claims for ancestry. A goodly knight,
 A noble caballero, broad of chest
 And long of limb. So much the August sun,
 Now in the west but shooting half its beams