

by the Mediterranean, on the other by steep mountains, separated from each other by deep valleys whose aspect was as gay and smiling as their soil was rich and fertile.

In the heart of the kingdom rose Granada, a city built on the sides of two mountains between which flowed the Darro. On one of these heights was seen the fortress of Alcazaba, on the other the royal palace of Alhambra. Founded by one of the Moorish kings, after the seat of empire had been transferred from Cordova to Granada, this palace became the favorite dwelling of a long line of princes who enriched it from the spoils of the vanquished in a style of oriental luxury. Even now, no one can wander through those silent and deserted courts, those ruined halls, where walked of old the princes of Granada, without being struck with admiration at sight of the sumptuous ornaments so lavishly displayed around, preserving their freshness and their beauty amid all the ravages of time.

Not only the Alhambra, but even the houses of private individuals inclosed within their walls courts refreshed by sparkling fountains, and planted with odorous trees which filled the air with the most delicious perfume. Placed in the form of an amphitheatre, one over the other, these houses gave the city the appearance of a half open *grenade*, whence the origin of its name. The whole was surrounded by lofty ramparts three leagues in circumference, with twelve gates and more than a thousand fortified towers.

Around Granada extended the magnificent *Véga*, an immense plain which might be compared to a pleasure-garden. As far as the eye could reach, nature was seen in her most graceful