

Forty years had passed and gone, since the period of this miracle. The subjugation of Spain was complete. The Moors lorded it over city and country; and such of the Christian population as remained, and were permitted to exercise their religion, did it in humble resignation to the Moslem sway.

At this time, a Christian cavalier, of Cordova, hearing that a patriotic band of his countrymen had raised the standard of the cross in the mountains of the Asturias, resolved to join them, and unite in breaking the yoke of bondage. Secretly arming himself, and caparisoning his steed, he set forth from Cordova, and pursued his course by unfrequented mule-paths, and along the dry channels made by winter torrents. His spirit burned with indignation, whenever, on commanding a view over a long sweeping plain, he beheld the mosque swelling in the distance, and the Arab horsemen careering about, as if the rightful lords of the soil. Many a deep-drawn sigh, and heavy groan, also, did the good cavalier utter, on passing the ruins of churches and convents desolated by the conquerors.

It was on a sultry midsummer evening, that this wandering cavalier, in skirting a hill thickly covered with forest, heard the faint tones of a vesper bell sounding melodiously in the air, and seeming to come from the summit of the hill. The cavalier crossed himself with wonder, at this unwonted and Christian sound. He supposed it to proceed from one of those humble chapels and hermitages permitted to exist through the indulgence of the Moslem conquerors. Turning his steed up a narrow path of the forest, he sought this sanctuary, in hopes of finding a hospitable shelter for the night. As he advanced, the trees threw a deep gloom around him, and the bat flitted across his path. The bell ceased to toll, and all was silence.

Presently a choir of female voices came stealing sweetly through the forest, chanting the evening service, to the solemn accompaniment of an organ. The heart of the good cavalier melted at the sound, for it recalled the happier days of his country. Urging forward his weary steed, he at length arrived at a broad grassy area, on the summit of the hill, surrounded by the forest. Here the melodious voices rose in full chorus, like the swelling of the breeze; but whence they came, he could not tell. Sometimes they were before sometimes behind him; sometimes in the air, sometimes as if from within the bosom of the earth. At length they died away, and a holy stillness settled on the place.

The cavalier gazed around with bewildered eye. There was neither chapel nor convent, nor humble hermitage, to be seen; nothing but a moss-grown stone pinnacle, rising out of the centre of the area, surmounted by a cross. The green-sward around appeared to have been sacred from the tread of man or beast, and the surrounding trees bent toward the cross, as if in adoration.

The cavalier felt a sensation of holy awe. He alighted and tethered his steed on the skirts of the forest, where he might crop the tender herbage; then approaching the cross, he knelt and poured forth his evening prayers before this relique of the christian days of Spain. His orisons being concluded, he laid himself down at the foot of the pinnacle, and reclining his head against one of its stones, fell into a deep sleep.

About midnight, he was awakened by the tolling of a bell, and found himself lying before the gate of an ancient convent. A train of nuns passed by, each bearing a taper. The cavalier rose and followed them into the chapel; in the centre of which was a bier, on which lay the corpse of an aged nun. The organ performed a solemn requiem: the nuns

joining in chorus. When the funeral service was finished, a melodious voice chanted, '*Requiescat in pace!*'—'May she rest in peace!' The lights immediately vanished; the whole passed away as a dream; and the cavalier found himself at the foot of the cross, and beheld, by the faint rays of the rising moon, his steed quietly grazing near him.

When the day dawned, the cavalier descended the hill, and following the course of a small brook, came to a cave, at the entrance of which was seated an ancient man, clad in hermit's garb, with rosary and cross, and a beard that descended to his girdle. He was one of those holy anchorites permitted by the Moors to live unmolested in dens and caves, and humble hermitages, and even to practice the rites of their religion. The cavalier checked his horse, and dismounting, knelt and craved a benediction. He then related all that had befallen him in the night and besought the hermit to explain the mystery.

'What thou hast heard and seen, my son,' replied the other, 'is but a type and shadow of the woes of Spain.'

He then related the foregoing story of the miraculous deliverance of the convent.

'Forty years,' added the holy man, 'have elapsed since this event, yet the bells of that sacred edifice are still heard, from time to time, sounding from under ground, together with the pealing of the organ, and the chanting of the choir. The Moors avoid this neighborhood, as haunted ground, and the whole place, as thou mayest perceive, has become covered with a thick and lonely forest.'

The cavalier listened with wonder to the story of this engulphed convent, as related by the holy man. For three days and nights did they keep vigils beside the cross; but nothing more was to be seen of nun or convent. It is supposed that, forty years having elapsed, the natural lives of all the nuns were finished, and that the cavalier had beheld the obsequies of the last of the sisterhood. Certain it is, that from that time, bell, and organ, and choral chant have never more been heard.

The mouldering pinnacle, surmounted by the cross, still remains an object of pious pilgrimage. Some say that it anciently stood in front of the convent, but others assert that it was the spire of the sacred edifice, and that, when the main body of the building sank, this remained above ground, like the top-mast of some tall ship that has been foundered. These pious believers maintain, that the convent is miraculously preserved entire in the centre of the mountain, where, if proper excavations were made, it would be found, with all its treasures, and monuments, and shrines, and reliques, and the tombs of its virgin nuns.

Should any one doubt the truth of this marvellous interposition of the Virgin, to protect the vestal purity of her votaries, let him read the excellent work entitled '*España Triumphante*,' written by Padre Fray Antonio de Sancta Maria, a bare-foot friar of the Carmelite order, and he will doubt no longer.

## THE COUNT VAN HORN.

DURING the minority of Louis XV., while the Duke of Orleans was Regent of France, a young Flemish nobleman, the Count Antoine Joseph Van Horn, made his sudden appearance in Paris, and by his character, conduct, and the subsequent disasters in which he became involved, created a great sensation in the high circles of the proud aristocracy. He