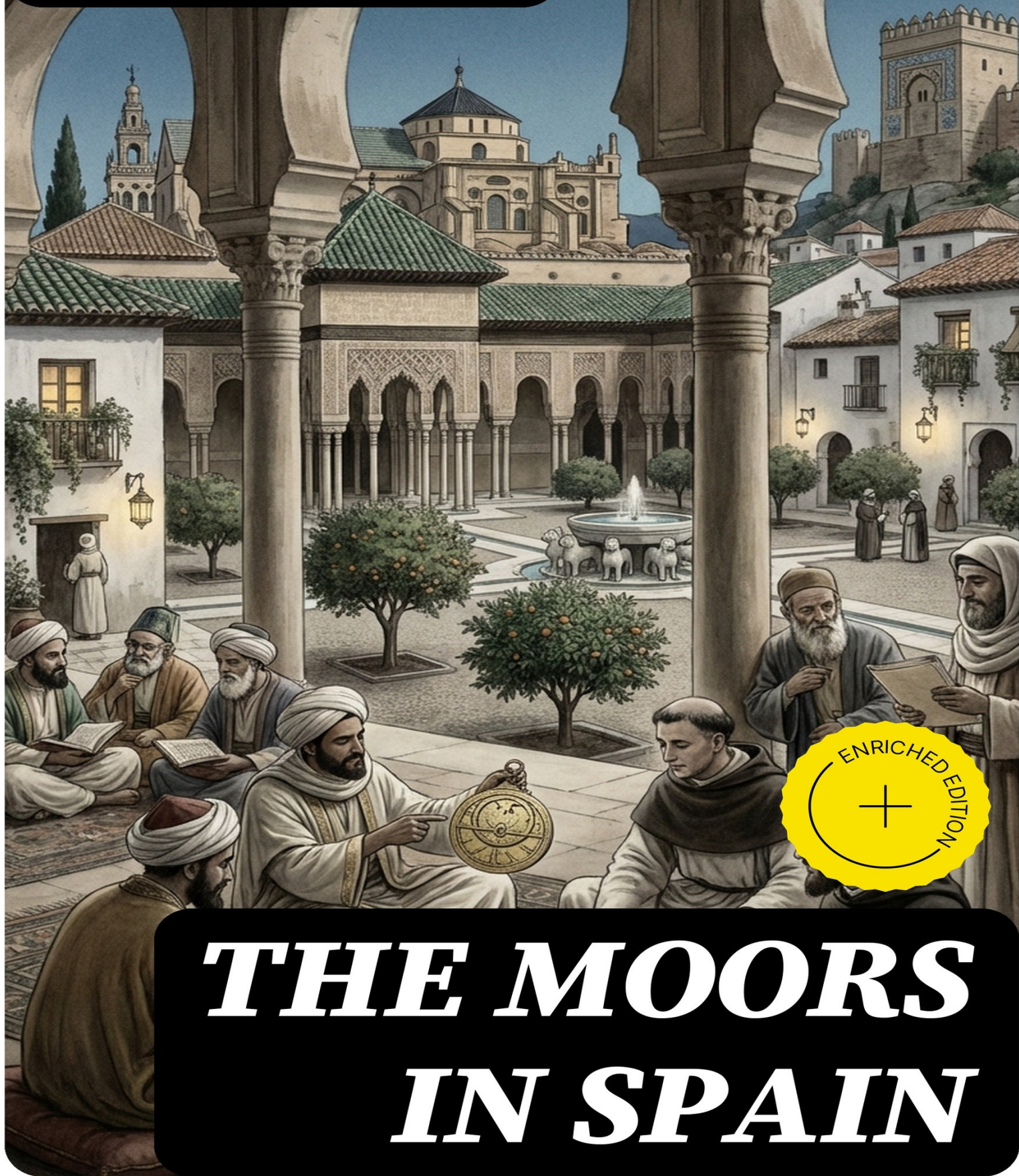


***STANLEY
LANE-POOLE***



***THE MOORS
IN SPAIN***

Stanley Lane-Poole

The Moors in Spain

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Darren Fox

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Introduction

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A civilization born of conquest yet dedicated to cultivation, poised between strict faith and curious inquiry, rises at Europe's western edge in Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Moors in Spain*, where the splendor of cities, the movement of ideas, and the precarious balance of plural societies together form a drama of brilliance and fragility whose lessons lie not only in victories and losses but in the uneasy weave of tolerance and tension that sustains them, as landscapes, languages, and loyalties intersect across centuries of ambition, artistry, and argument, inviting readers to witness how power, piety, and learning contend within the same streets and courts.

First published in the late nineteenth century, this volume is a work of narrative history written in English that surveys the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula from its arrival to its gradual eclipse. Lane-Poole, a British scholar of the period, organizes his account for general readers, blending political overview with cultural portraiture. The setting is medieval al-Andalus and the contested frontiers that connected it to the Christian polities of the peninsula and the wider Mediterranean. As a product of its time, the book reflects Victorian historical interests while aiming to make a complex past legible through clear structure and synthesis.

Rather than a technical monograph, *The Moors in Spain* reads as a brisk, scene-setting chronicle that moves from early incursions through consolidation, flowering, and

contention, always attentive to the interplay between rulers, scholars, artisans, and communities. Lane-Poole's voice is confident and descriptive, favoring vivid sketches over exhaustive argument, and his tone balances admiration for artistic and intellectual achievement with an awareness of volatility. The narrative follows a clear arc without dwelling on battle minutiae, inviting readers to attend to institutions, city life, and patterns of exchange. The result is a compact, accessible survey that privileges texture, momentum, and cultural context.

Central themes include the creation of urban culture, the cultivation of learning, and the negotiation of coexistence and conflict among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The book emphasizes how patronage, trade, and scholarship could flourish under stable governance, even as rivalries threatened that stability from within and without. Architecture, poetry, and the sciences stand as markers of aspiration as well as instruments of prestige. Lane-Poole traces the ways in which courts asserted legitimacy through taste, ceremony, and law, highlighting public works and education alongside diplomacy and war. Throughout, the tension between cosmopolitan ambition and political fracture shapes both the promise and peril of the society described.

Another persistent thread is transmission: the movement of techniques, texts, and tastes across languages and borders. Lane-Poole shows how Iberia's position tied it to North Africa and the Mediterranean, making the peninsula a conduit where agricultural methods, mathematical ideas, and artistic motifs traveled alongside merchants and

diplomats. Translation and teaching emerge as forces that outlast courtly fortunes, shaping neighboring regions long after political configurations shift. At the same time, the narrative underscores factionalism and the hazards of competing loyalties on a volatile frontier. Governance, succession, and regional identity continually test stability, revealing how cultural vitality can coexist with strategic vulnerability.

For contemporary readers, the book illuminates Europe's deep entanglement with Islamic and Mediterranean histories, offering context for discussions of heritage, migration, religion, and scientific exchange. Its portraits of cities and schools help explain how knowledge networks operate, how public investment shapes culture, and how plural societies succeed only when maintained by institutions and restraint. The study also prompts reflection on memory—how narratives elevate certain achievements while overlooking others—and on the responsibilities that follow from inheritance. By presenting a cohesive story of encounter and cross-pollination, it invites readers to see continuities that link medieval Iberia to modern debates about identity and belonging.

Readers should be aware that some formulations reflect the era of composition, and approaching the work with a critical eye enriches its insights by separating period inflections from enduring observations. Even so, Lane-Poole's synthesis remains valuable for its clarity, economy, and evocative sense of place. The book offers a concise entry point into a complex field, pointing outward to archaeological, architectural, and literary studies while

retaining the momentum of a single, intelligible narrative. To read it now is to engage a foundational account that still stimulates discussion, reminding us that cultural florescence is both a product of policy and a matter of imagination.

Synopsis

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Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Moors in Spain* is a late nineteenth-century historical study that traces the rise, florescence, and retreat of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula. Writing for a general audience, the author organizes the narrative from the initial eighth-century conquest through the age of independent Andalusī dynasties and the final remnant in Granada. He balances political chronicle with cultural portraiture, emphasizing urban life, learning, and the arts alongside warfare and diplomacy. The book's central question concerns how a society rooted in Islamic governance transformed Iberia's institutions and landscapes, and how internal strains and external pressures eventually reshaped that achievement.

The opening chapters survey the Visigothic background and the circumstances that enabled the crossing from North Africa in 711. Lane-Poole outlines the roles of commanders who led the first campaigns and the rapid collapse of royal authority in much of the peninsula. He describes the administrative adjustments under the Umayyads and the coexistence that emerged among Muslims, Christians, and Jews under new legal and fiscal arrangements. The narrative stresses both pragmatism and ambition: garrison towns took shape, treaties secured submission, and frontier zones remained volatile. From the start, the book traces how military success fostered a distinctive provincial society tied to wider Islamic networks.

With the establishment of an autonomous emirate, the focus shifts to consolidation under a new Umayyad line centered in Córdoba. Lane-Poole presents the career of a refugee prince who forged authority amid fractious tribal and regional interests, building institutions that steadied taxation, justice, and defense. He emphasizes the emergence of a cosmopolitan urban culture, the patronage of architecture, and the cultivation of letters. Socially, the account notes the layered composition of Andalusí society, from Arab and Berber elites to converts and subject communities. The evolving balance between central power and provincial autonomy sets the stage for both creative flowering and recurrent unrest.

The narrative reaches a high point with the proclamation of a caliphate in Córdoba, when political prestige, economic reach, and scholarly patronage aligned. Lane-Poole describes the cultivated courts, the embellishment of mosques and suburban palaces, and the integration of Andalusí trade into Mediterranean circuits. He also explores diplomacy with Christian polities to the north and with North African powers. The later ascendancy of a formidable minister, renowned for military campaigns, introduces a shift toward mobilization and austere discipline. This phase underscores the tension between intellectual refinement and imperatives of war, foreshadowing institutional strains that would outlast individual rulers.

After court factionalism and civil conflict, unity gives way to a constellation of regional kingdoms. Lane-Poole depicts the taifa era as a paradox of brilliant patronage and political vulnerability, with rival courts cultivating poets and artisans

while bargaining for survival. External entanglements intensify as frontier warfare accelerates and reforming movements from the Maghrib cross the straits to enforce stricter order. Their interventions briefly restore cohesion yet cannot reverse centrifugal forces. The author situates decisive northern victories and shifting alliances within a wider pattern of attrition, showing how changing balances of power narrowed horizons for Andalusian autonomy without erasing its cultural vitality.

In the closing sections, attention turns to the Nasrid stronghold in the south, portrayed as both a refuge and a stage for artistic refinement. Lane-Poole dwells on courtly architecture and the etiquette of diplomacy, tracing how tribute, marriage, and negotiation prolonged autonomy amid mounting pressure. Intellectual life persists, even as resources shrink, and exchanges across frontiers continue to channel learning, crafts, and techniques into Latin Europe. The narrative remains attentive to everyday realities—water management, husbandry, and urban amenities—while tracking the tightening vise of geopolitics. The final act approaches with restraint, keeping focus on endurance and adaptation rather than on a single culminating event.

Lane-Poole concludes by assessing the legacies of al-Andalus for Spain and Europe, arguing that contact with Moorish Spain shaped intellectual horizons, technologies, tastes, and language. He contrasts periods of tolerance with episodes of zeal and exclusion, treating the interplay of faith, power, and culture as the motor of both creativity and decline. The study's enduring resonance lies in its synthesis of political history with material and urban culture, and in its

accessible portrait of a civilization at once local and connected. Without dwelling on final reversals, it leaves readers with questions about memory, inheritance, and the costs of division in complex societies.

Historical Context

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Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Moors in Spain* surveys the period from the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 to the fall of Granada in 1492, focusing on Al-Andalus as a political and cultural sphere. The setting spans cities such as Córdoba, Seville, Toledo, and Granada, and institutions including emirate and caliphate courts, qadi-judiciaries, markets, and scholarly circles. Lane-Poole presents a connected narrative of governance, warfare, and learning, situating Andalusī Islam within Mediterranean networks that linked North Africa and Europe. The book addresses how administration, landholding, and urban patronage under Muslim rule fostered arts, technology, and letters alongside shifting frontiers with Christian polities.

The narrative begins with the Umayyad entry led by Tariq ibn Ziyad and Musa ibn Nusayr, which replaced Visigothic rule and established Muslim governance in much of Hispania. After a period of governors, Abd al-Rahman I founded the independent Emirate of Córdoba in 756, consolidating authority and building the Great Mosque. Judicial offices, tax registers, and market regulation stabilized urban life, while irrigation systems and new crops reshaped agriculture. Military frontiers along the Duero and Ebro shifted with local treaties and raids. Lane-Poole traces these structures to explain the endurance of Andalusī society despite factionalism, frontier pressures, and occasional civil strife.

Under Abd al-Rahman III, Córdoba's ruler proclaimed the caliphate in 929, asserting sovereignty against Abbasid and Fatimid rivals. A flourishing court attracted poets, physicians, and philosophers, while Al-Hakam II's patronage expanded libraries reputed to hold hundreds of thousands of volumes. Monumental projects, notably the extension of the Great Mosque and the palace-city of Madinat al-Zahra, broadcast power and taste. Scholars such as the surgeon Al-Zahrawi and the polymath Ibn Hazm exemplify Andalusí learning, and Jewish intellectuals, including Hasdai ibn Shaprut, served at court. Diplomatic exchanges linked Al-Andalus with Christian kingdoms, North Africa, and the wider Mediterranean.

The caliphate's collapse in 1031 produced the taifa principalities, smaller courts that multiplied patronage of arts while competing militarily. Toledo's fall to Alfonso VI in 1085 marked a turning point, prompting Almoravid intervention from North Africa and the victory at Sagrajas in 1086. Later, the Almohads imposed stricter doctrine and revived centralized power, shaping religious policy and architecture, including Seville's Giralda as a mosque minaret. Lane-Poole connects these dynastic shifts to patterns of taxation, recruitment, and urban defense, noting how external support alternated with local autonomy and how cultural life adapted to chronic fragmentation and reunification.

After the Christian coalition's victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, Almohad power waned, and Castile and Aragon advanced. Fernando III took Córdoba (1236) and Seville (1248); Valencia fell to James I of Aragon (1238). The

Nasrid Emirate of Granada emerged in 1230s as the last Muslim polity, preserved by diplomacy, tribute (parias), and North African ties. Granada's court cultivated letters and architecture, culminating in the Alhambra's palaces and waterworks. Trade linked Granada to Genoa and the Maghrib, even as territory shrank. Lane-Poole situates Nasrid survival within the interplay of fiscal dependence, maritime commerce, and shifting Christian alliances.

Throughout, the book emphasizes intellectual transmission. The Toledo School of Translators, active from the mid-twelfth century, rendered Arabic works of philosophy, medicine, and astronomy into Latin and Romance, with figures like Gerard of Cremona translating Ptolemy and Avicenna from Arabic exemplars. Andalusí thinkers such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes) influenced scholastic debate, while technical instruments, including improved astrolabes, circulated widely. Agricultural techniques and crops—citrus, rice, sugarcane, and irrigation methods—spread across Iberia. Lane-Poole underlines these exchanges to argue that Al-Andalus functioned as a conduit through which classical and Islamic learning reached medieval Europe's universities and courts.

The narrative closes with Granada's capitulation in 1492 to Ferdinand and Isabella, sealed by capitulations guaranteeing Muslim religious rights. That same year, the Alhambra Decree ordered the expulsion of Jews from Castile and Aragon. Subsequent policies narrowed protections: the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition in 1478 prefigured intensified scrutiny; forced conversions of Muslims in Castile followed by 1502, with later rebellions and Morisco

deportations in the sixteenth century. Lane-Poole treats this denouement as the end of a civilizational cycle, contrasting earlier periods of administrative flexibility and learning with the increasingly confessional state that emerged in late medieval Iberia.

Published in 1886 in the *Story of the Nations* series, Lane-Poole's history reflects late Victorian Orientalist scholarship and liberal critiques of religious persecution. A British Museum numismatist and later professor of Arabic at Trinity College Dublin, he drew on Arabic chronicles (notably al-Maqqari) and modern historians such as Reinhart Dozy. His prose celebrates artistic and scientific achievement, often presenting *convivencia* as a comparative ideal while lamenting the repression accompanying unification under the Catholic Monarchs. The work mirrors its era's fascination with medieval Islam's contributions to Europe and employs moral contrast to question national myths of uniformity and progress.

The Moors in Spain

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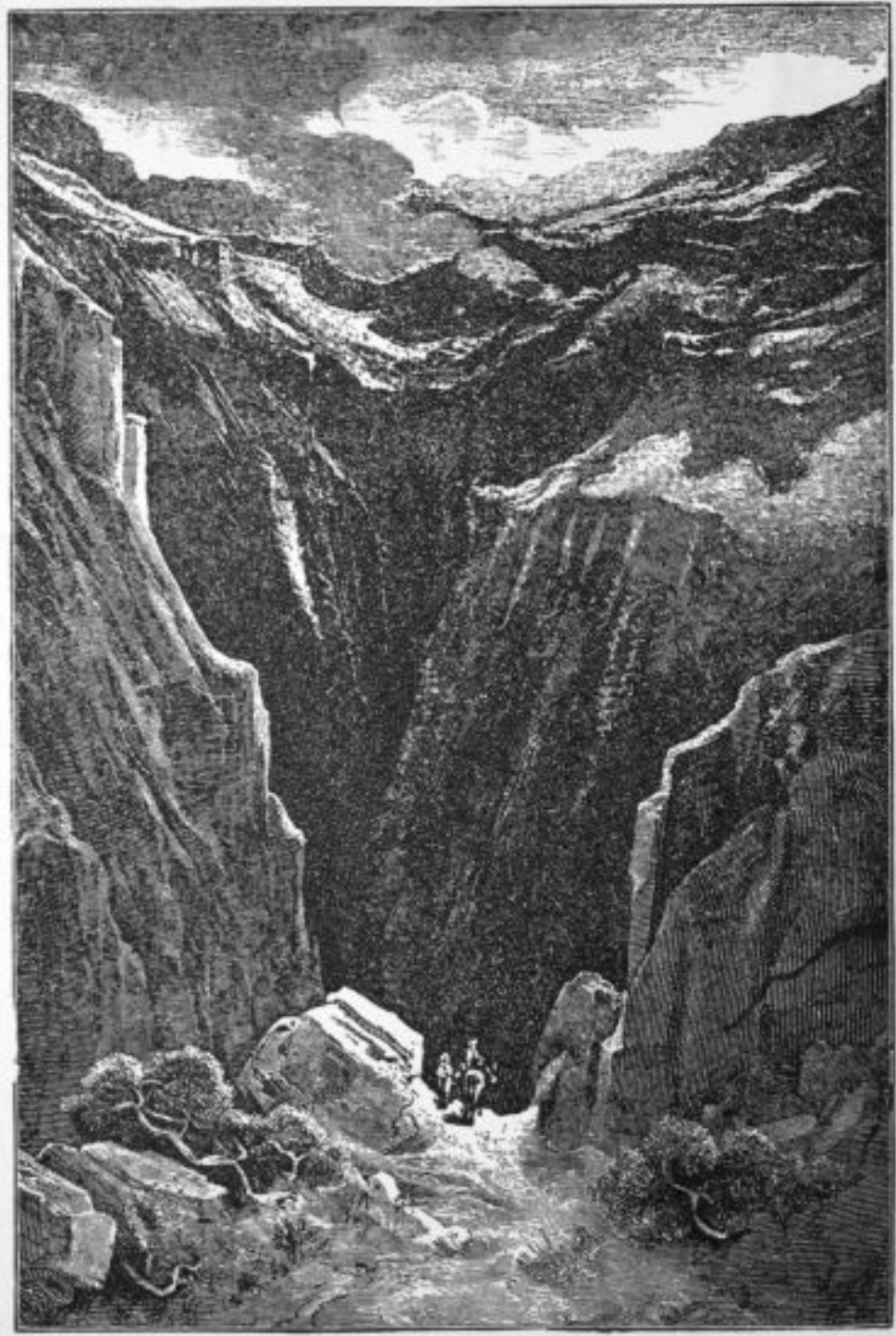
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THE ALPUXARRAS.

Preface.

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The history of Spain offers us a melancholy contrast[1q]. Twelve hundred years ago, Tarik the Moor[1] added the land of the Visigoths to the long catalogue of kingdoms subdued by the Moslems. For nearly eight centuries, under her Mohammedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened State. Her fertile provinces, rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors, bore fruit an hundredfold. Cities innumerable sprang up in the rich valleys of the Guadalquivir and the Guadiana, whose names, and names only, still commemorate the vanished glories of their past. Art, literature, and science prospered, as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science: women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study, and the lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and shipbuilding, the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by the Spanish Moors. In the

practice of war no less than in the arts of peace they long stood supreme. Their fleets disputed the command of the Mediterranean with the Fatimites, while their armies carried fire and sword through the Christian marches. The Cid himself, the national hero, long fought on the Moorish side, and in all save education was more than half a Moor. Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain.

In 1492 the last bulwark of the Moors gave way before the crusade of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with Granada fell all Spain's greatness. For a brief while, indeed, the reflection of the Moorish splendour cast a borrowed light upon the history of the land which it had once warmed with its sunny radiance. The great epoch of Isabella, Charles V., and Philip II., of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro, shed a last halo about the dying moments of a mighty State. Then followed the abomination of desolation, the rule of the Inquisition, and the blackness of darkness in which Spain has been plunged ever since. In the land where science was once supreme, the Spanish doctors became noted for nothing but their ignorance and incapacity, and the discoveries of Newton and Harvey were condemned as pernicious to the faith. Where once seventy public libraries had fed the minds of scholars, and half a million books had been gathered together at Cordova for the benefit of the world, such indifference to learning afterwards prevailed, that the new capital, Madrid, possessed no public library in the eighteenth century, and even the manuscripts of the Escorial were denied in our own days to the first scholarly

historian of the Moors, though himself a Spaniard. The sixteen thousand looms of Seville soon dwindled to a fifth of their ancient number; the arts and industries of Toledo and Almeria faded into insignificance; the very baths—public buildings of equal ornament and use—were destroyed because cleanliness savoured too strongly of rank infidelity. The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of the Moors, grew impoverished and neglected; the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted; most of the populous cities which had filled every district of Andalusia fell into ruinous decay; and beggars, friars, and bandits took the place of scholars, merchants, and knights. So low fell Spain when she had driven away the Moors. Such is the melancholy contrast offered by her history.

Happily we have here only to do with the first of these contrasted periods, with Spain in her glory under the Moors, not with Spain in her degradation under the Bourbons. We have endeavoured to present the most salient points in the eight centuries of Mohammedan rule without prejudice or extenuation, and while not neglecting the heroic characters and legends which appeal to the imagination of the reader, we have especially sought to give a clear picture of the struggle between races and creeds which formed the leading cause of political movement in mediæval Spain. The student who wishes to pursue the subject further than it has been possible to carry it in the limits of this volume should read the following authorities, to which we are deeply indebted. The most important is the late Professor Dozy's *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (4 vols., Leyden, 1861), and the same scholar's *Récherches sur l'histoire et la*

littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge (2 vols., 3rd ed., Paris and Leyden, 1881). These works are full of valuable information presented in a form which, though somewhat fragmentary, is equally pleasing to the literary and the historical sense. Professor Dozy was an historian as well as an Orientalist, and his volumes are at once judicious and profound. Very useful, too, is Don Pasqual de Gayangos's translation of El-Makkary's *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (2 vols., London, 1843), which has been exposed to some needlessly acrimonious criticism by Professor Dozy and others on the score of certain minor inaccuracies, but which none the less deserves the gratitude of all students who would rather have half a loaf than no bread, and are glad to be able to read an Arabic writer, even imperfectly, in a European tongue. Don Pasqual's notes, moreover, present a mass of valuable material which can be obtained nowhere else. Beyond these two authorities there are many Arabic historians, whose works have been consulted in the composition of the present volume, but who can hardly be recommended to the general student, as very few of them have found translators. A slight but very readable and instructive sketch of Arab civilization, with a glance at the Spanish development, is found in August Bebel's *Die Mohammedanisch-arabische Kulturperiode* (Stuttgart, 1884). For the last days of the Moorish domination, Washington Irving's picturesque *Conquest of Granada*, and Sir W. Stirling Maxwell's admirable *Don John of Austria*, largely drawn upon in this volume, deserve separate reading. All histories of the Moors written before the works

of Gayangos and Dozy should be studiously avoided, since they are mainly founded upon Conde's *Dominacion de los Arabes in España*, a book of considerable literary merit but very slight historical value, and the source of most of the errors that are found in later works. Whether it has been in any degree the foundation of Miss Yonge's *Christians and Moors in Spain* (the only popular history of this period in English of which I have heard), I cannot determine: for a glance at her pages, while exciting my admiration, showed me that her book was written so much on the lines which I had drawn for my own work that I could not read it without risk of involuntary imitation.

Besides my indebtedness to the works of Dozy and Gayangos, and to the kind collaboration of Mr. Arthur Gilman, I have gratefully to acknowledge the assistance of my friend Mr. H. E. Watts, especially in matters of Spanish orthography.

In conclusion, those who are inclined to infer, from the picture here given of Moorish civilization, that Mohammedanism is always on the side of culture and humanity, must turn to another volume in this series, my *Story of the Turks*, to see what Mohammedan barbarism means. The fall of Granada happened within forty years of the conquest of Constantinople; but the gain to Islam in the east made no amends for the loss to Europe in the west: the Turks were incapable of founding a second Cordova.

S. L.-P.

Richmond, Surrey,
July, 1886.

The Last of the Goths

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When the armies of Alexander the Great were trampling upon the ancient empires of the East, one country remained undisturbed and undismayed. The people of Arabia sent no humble embassies to the conqueror. Alexander resolved to bring the contemptuous Arabs to his feet: he was preparing to invade their land when death laid its hand upon him, and the Arabs remained unconquered.

This was more than three hundred years before Christ, and even then the Arabs had long been established in independence in their great desert peninsula. For nearly a thousand years more they continued to dwell there in a strange solitude. Great empires sprang up all around them; the successors of Alexander founded the Syrian kingdom of the Seleucids and the Egyptian dynasty of the Ptolemies; Augustus was crowned Imperator at Rome; Constantine became the first Christian emperor at Byzantium; the hordes of the barbarians bore down upon the wide-reaching provinces of the Cæsars—and still the Arabs remained undisturbed, unexplored, and unsubdued. Their frontier cities might pay homage to Chosroes or Cæsar, the legions of Rome might once and again flash across their highland wastes; but such impress was faint and transitory, and left the Arabs unmoved. Hemmed in as they were by lands ruled by historic dynasties, their deserts and their valour ever kept out the invader, and from the days of remote antiquity to the seventh century of the Christian era hardly anything

was known of this secluded people save that they existed, and that no one attacked them with impunity.

Then suddenly a change came over the character of the Arabs[29]. No longer courting seclusion, they came forth before the world, and proceeded in good earnest to conquer it. The change had been caused by one man. Mohammed the Arabian Prophet began to preach the religion of *Islam* in the beginning of the seventh century, and his doctrine, falling upon a people prone to quick impulses and susceptible of strong impressions, worked a revolution. What he taught was simple enough. He took the old faith of the Hebrews, which had its disciples in Arabia, and, making such additions and alterations as he thought needful, he preached the worship of One God as a new revelation to a nation of idolaters. It is difficult for us in the present time to understand the irresistible impulse which the simple and unemotional creed of Mohammed gave to the whole people of Arabia; but we know that such religious revolutions have been, and that there is always a mysterious and potent fascination in the personal influence of a true prophet. Mohammed was so far true, that he taught honestly and strenuously what he believed to be the only right faith, and there was enough of sublimity in the creed and of enthusiasm in the Prophet and his hearers to produce that wave of overmastering popular feeling which people call fanaticism. The Arabs before the time of Mohammed had been a collection of rival tribes or clans, excelling in the savage virtues of bravery, hospitality, and even chivalry, and devoted to the pursuit of booty. The Prophet turned the Arab tribes, for the nonce, into the Moslem people, filled

them with the fervour of martyrs, and added to the greed of plunder the nobler ambition of bringing all mankind to the knowledge of the truth.

Before Mohammed died he was master of Arabia, and the united tribes who had embraced the Moslem or Mohammedan faith were already spreading over the neighbouring lands and subduing the astonished nations. Under his successors the Khalifs[2], the armies of the Mussulmans overran Persia and Egypt and North Africa as far as the Pillars of Hercules[4]; and the Muezzins[3] chanted the Call to Prayer to the Faithful over all the land from the river Oxus in Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Mohammedans, or Saracens (a word which means "Easterns"), were checked in Asia Minor by the forces of the Greek Emperor; and it was not till the fifteenth century that they at last obtained the long-coveted possession of Constantinople, by the valour of the Ottoman Turks. So, too, at the opposite extremity of the Mediterranean, it was an officer of the Greek Emperor who for a while held the Arab advance in check. The conquerors swept over the provinces of North Africa, and, after a long struggle, reduced the turbulent Berber tribes for a while to submission, till only the fortress of Ceuta held out against them. Like the rest of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, Ceuta belonged to the Greek Emperor; but it was so far removed from Constantinople that it was thrown upon the neighbouring kingdom of Spain for support, and, while still nominally under the authority of the Emperor, looked really to the King of Toledo for assistance and protection. It is not likely that all

surviving Umayyad, Abd-er-Rahmān, later established an Umayyad polity in al-Andalus (Cordova).

11 A 9th-century Persian musician (Abu l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nafi') who settled at the court of Córdoba and is traditionally credited with musical and social innovations in al-Andalus, including adding a fifth string to the lute and introducing new fashions, foods, and tableware.

12 Alternate spelling of qadi, the judicial official in Islamic law (sharia) who presided over civil and religious cases; historically qadis could issue legal judgments and enforce punishments under Muslim rulers.

13 Omeyyad is an older transliteration of 'Umayyad,' the Arab dynasty that established the emirate and later caliphate at Córdoba in al-Andalus, ruling roughly from the mid-8th century until the early 11th century.

14 Bobastro was a rocky fortified stronghold in the province of Elvira used by the rebel leader Ibn-Hafsūn (Umar ibn Hafsun) as a base of resistance against Córdoba in the late 9th and early 10th centuries; its ruins are in the area of modern Málaga.

15 In this passage 'Slavs' denotes slave-soldiers and palace guards recruited (originally from Slavic regions) and purchased as children, converted to Islam, trained as professional troops, and often rising to substantial military and political influence in al-Andalus.

16 Pelagius (Spanish tradition: Pelayo) was a Visigothic noble credited with leading the Christian resistance at Covadonga in the early 8th century (traditionally c. 718) and is remembered as an originator of the Christian kingdoms in northern Spain.

17 Khalif (Caliph) is the Islamic title for a sovereign regarded as successor to the Prophet; in this chapter “Great Khalif” refers to the ruler of Córdoba — the caliphal sovereign of al-Andalus (a title assumed by Abd-er-Rahmān III in 929 and used for the Córdoba caliphate until about the early 11th century).

18 Medinat-Ez-Zahrā (often written al-Zahra) was a monumental palace-city founded by Abd-er-Rahmān III outside Córdoba in the 10th century (construction dates are commonly given c. 936–940); it was lavishly built and later abandoned and substantially destroyed during the early 11th-century civil wars in al-Andalus.

19 Variant spelling of the Umayyads, the Arab dynasty that established rule in al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia); a branch of this family created the independent Emirate and later Caliphate of Córdoba, dominant roughly from the early 8th century to the early 11th century.

20 From Arabic (often rendered in English as 'harem'), the private quarters of a Muslim household or palace reserved for women and close family; in medieval courts such as

Córdoba the harīm could also be an influential political center when royal women intervened in affairs of state.

21 A powerful chief minister (al-Mansur) of the Caliphate of Córdoba who in the late 10th century exercised de facto political and military control of al-Andalus, leading major campaigns and ruling until his death around 1002.

22 The Umayyad (rendered here as 'Omeyyad') ruling house established in Iberia by Abd-er-Rahmān I in the 8th century, centered at Córdoba as an emirate and later a caliphate; it largely broke up into independent 'taifa' principalities in the early 11th century.

23 Pelayo (also Pelagius) is the semi-legendary noble credited in Christian sources with leading the initial Asturian resistance to the Muslim conquest and founding the Kingdom of Asturias in the early 8th century (generally dated to the 720s–730s).

24 The Sierra de Guadarrama is a mountain range in central Spain forming part of the Sistema Central, lying north-west of Madrid and historically acting as a geographic frontier between northern Christian kingdoms and Muslim-held southern territories.

25 The Almoravides were a Berber Muslim dynasty and reform movement originating in the Sahara and North Africa that intervened militarily in Iberia in the late 11th and early