

**LUNA BENAMOR;
PP. 1-207**

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Luna Benamor; pp. 1-207 by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez & Isaac Goldberg

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VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ & ISAAC GOLDBERG

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BY
VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH
BY
ISAAC GOLDBERG



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LUNA BENAMOR

I

LUIS AGUIRRE had been living in Gibraltar for about a month. He had arrived with the intention of sailing at once upon a vessel bound for Oceanica, where he was to assume his post as a consul to Australia. It was the first important voyage of his diplomatic career. Up to that time he had served in Madrid, in the offices of the Ministry, or in various consulates of southern France, elegant summery places where for half the year life was a continuous holiday. The son of a family that had been dedicated to diplomacy by tradition, he enjoyed the protection of influential persons. His parents were dead, but he was helped by his relatives and the prestige of a name that for a century had figured in the archives of the nation. Consul at the age of twenty-five, he was about to set sail with the illusions of a student who goes out into the world for the first time, feeling that all previous trips have been insignificant.

LUNA BENAMOR

Gibraltar, incongruous and exotic, a mixture of races and languages, was to him the first sign of the far-off world in quest of which he was journeying. He doubted, in his first surprise, if this rocky land jutting into the open sea and under a foreign flag, could be a part of his native peninsula. When he gazed out from the sides of the cliff across the vast blue bay with its rose-colored mountains dotted by the bright settlements of La Línea, San Roque and Algeciras,—the cheery whiteness of Andalusian towns,—he felt convinced that he was still in Spain. But great difference distinguished the human groups camped upon the edge of this horseshoe of earth that embraced the bay. From the headland of Tarifa to the gates of Gibraltar, a monotonous unity of race; the happy warbling of the Andalusian dialect; the broad-brimmed hat; the *mantilla* about the women's bosoms and the glistening hair adorned with flowers. On the huge mountain topped by the British flag and enclosing the oriental part of the bay, a seething cauldron of races, a confusion of tongues,