

**THE ALHAMBRA.
[NEW YORK]**

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The Alhambra. [New York] by Washington Irving

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WASHINGTON IRVING

**THE ALHAMBRA.
[NEW YORK]**

THE ALHAMBRA.



By WASHINGTON IRVING,

*Author of "The Sketch Book," "Knickerbocker's History
of New York," etc., etc.*

A. L. BURT COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

DEDICATION.

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ., R. A.

MY DEAR SIR: You may remember that, in the course of the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain, particularly Toledo and Seville, we frequently remarked the mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic, remaining from the time of the Moors, and were more than once struck with incidents and scenes in the streets, that brought to mind passages in the "Arabian Nights." You then urged me to write something illustrative of these peculiarities—"something in the Haroun Alraschid style," that should have a dash of that Arabian spice which pervades everything in Spain. I call this to mind to show you that you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work; in which I have given a few "Arabesque" sketches and tales, taken from the life, or founded on local traditions, and mostly struck off during a residence in one of the most legendary and Morisco-Spanish places of the peninsula.

I inscribe this work to you, as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together, in that land of adventure, and as a testimony of an esteem for your worth, which can only be exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow traveler,

THE AUTHOR.

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LEGENDS OF THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

LEGEND OF DON RODERICK.

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THE ALHAMBRA.

A SERIES OF TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE MOORS AND SPANIARDS.

THE JOURNEY.

IN the spring of 1829 the author of this work, whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada, in company with a friend, a member of the Russian embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe, and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship, and with them the remembrance of one in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the recollection of his gentleness and worth.

And here, before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish traveling. Many are apt to picture Spain in their imaginations as a soft southern region decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains and long, naked, sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and invariably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness, is the absence of singing birds, a natural conse-

quence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain cliffs and soaring over the peaks, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths, but the myriads of smaller birds, which animate the whole face of other countries, are met with in but few provinces of Spain, and in them chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the exterior provinces the traveler occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburnt; but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil: at length he perceives some village perched on a steep hill or rugged crag, with moldering battlements and ruined watch-tower; a stronghold, in old times, against civil war or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the marauding of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people, and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal, and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes the eye catches sight, here and there, of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert, or a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus, the country, the

habits, the very looks of the people have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabucho, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparations of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce, also, a mode of traveling, resembling on a diminutive scale the caravans of the East. The arrierors, or carriers, congregate in troops, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days, while individual travelers swell their number and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate wanderer of the land, traversing the peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpujarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his alforjas (or saddle-bags), of coarse cloth, hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle hanging at his saddle-bow contains wine or water for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains; a mule cloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low but clear-limbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanor is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation—"Dios guarda à usted!" "Vay usted con Dios, caballero!" "God guard you!" "God be with you! cavalier!"

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burden of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched down for desperate defense. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders, and the solitary bandalero, armed to the teeth and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.