# THE MAGIC OF SPAIN

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The magic of Spain by Aubrey F. G. Bell

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### **AUBREY F. G. BELL**

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BY AUBREY F. G. BELL

Or vous aurez loisir
Cheminant en Espagne
Bien que maintes montagnes
Il vous faudra monter.

Pilgrims' Song.

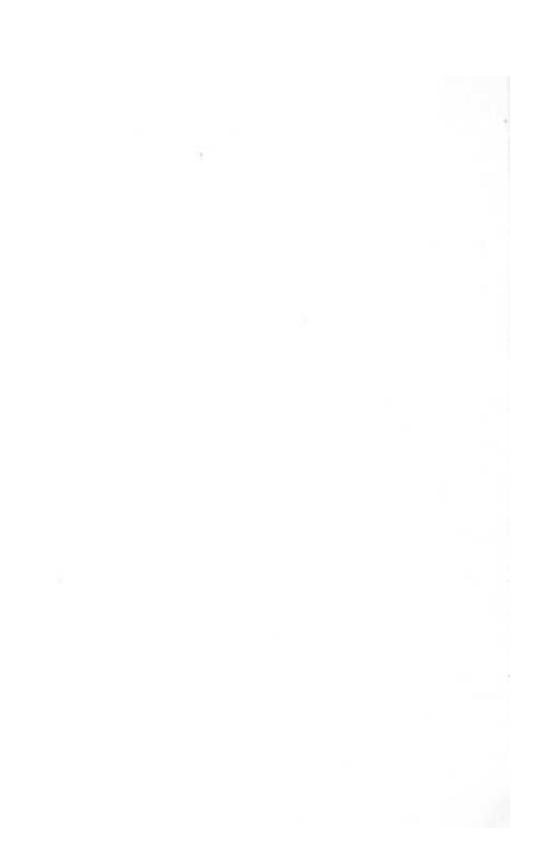
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#### NOTE

HIS is rather a collection of stray notes on Spain than a connected study-of notes from many pleasant hours of Spanish literature and travel, but perhaps of too individual an interest to appear without some apology. No reference will be found to those great social and political problems which disturb Spanish life. To fill the idler moments of a Spanish holiday, and possibly to help the reader to feel that "parfum du terroir" which pervades Spain, is the unambitious object of these pages. Better still, if he turns from them in dissatisfaction to authoritative writers on Spanish life and letters, and to the magicland of Spanish literature itself. For permission to reprint some of these short essays in slightly altered form the author has to thank the Editors of the Morning Post, the Outlook, and the Queen.



### PREFACE

T is not easy in a few words to account for the strange Oriental spell that Spain has exercised over many minds nor to explain the potency of its attraction. For indeed the great Peninsula possesses a special spice and flavour. It has not the immemorial culture of Italy, nor the pleasant smiling landscapes of France with her green meadows and crystal streams. The old Iberia, that dura tellus, has a peculiar raciness. Its colour is often harsh and crude; many of its districts are barren and discom-The bleak and rocky uplands and the fortable. ragged sierra ridges cut the country into sharp divisions and cause it to be thinly and variously populated. On those uplands the breath of the wind is often icy and the sun strikes with a biting force. Great parched and desolate plains extend treeless and unprotected two thousand feet above the sea. The villages at distant intervals are of the colour of the soil, and scarcely to be distinguished from a mass of yellow-brown rocks. Morning and evening a string of mules may be seen outlined on the horizon, for the peasants set out in bands to till their distant fields; or a shepherd with his flock of sheep, or goats,