

**THE CRAYON
MISCELLANY, NO. 3,
LEGENDS OF THE
CONQUEST OF SPAIN**

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The Crayon miscellany, No. 3, Legends of the Conquest of Spain by Washington Irving

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WASHINGTON IRVING

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Irving

THE

CRAYON MISCELLANY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SKETCH BOOK.

No. 3.

CONTAINING

LEGENDS

Of the Conquest of Spain.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.

1835.

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MAIN

LEGENDS

OF THE

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BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SKETCH BOOK.

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PREFACE.

Few events in history have been so signal and striking in their main circumstances, and so overwhelping and enduring in their consequences, as that of the conquest of Spain by the Saracens; yet there are few where the motives, and characters, and actions of the agents have been enveloped in more doubt and contradiction. As in the memorable story of the Fall of Troy, we have to make out, as well as we can, the veritable details through the mists of poetic fiction; yet poetry has so combined itself with, and lent its magic colouring to, every fact, that, to strip it away, would be to reduce the story to a meagre skeleton and rob it of all its charms. The storm of Moslem invasion that swept so suddenly over the peninsula, silenced for a time the faint voice of the muse, and drove the sons of learn-

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ing from their cells. The pen was thrown aside to grasp the sword and spear, and men were too much taken up with battling against the evils which beset them on every side, to find time or inclination to record them.

When the nation had recovered in some degree from the effects of this astounding blow, or rather, had become accustomed to the tremendous reverse which it produced, and sage men sought to inquire and write the particulars, it was too late to ascertain them in their exact verity. The gloom and melancholy that had overshadowed the land, had given birth to a thousand superstitious fancies; the woes and terrors of the past, were clothed with supernatural miracles and portents, and the actors in the fearful drama, had already assumed the dubious characteristics of romance. Or if a writer from among the conquerors undertook to touch upon the theme, it was embellished with all the wild extravagancies of an oriental imagination; which afterwards stole into the graver works of the monkish historians.

Hence, the earliest chronicles which treat of the downfall of Spain, are apt to be tinged with