

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE MOTHER.

A LEAF FROM SPANISH HISTORY.

DURING that dark and ill-recorded period in which Spain was little more than a field of battle between the Moors and the Christians, the Sanchos of Navarre held the most conspicuous rank among the peninsular potentates, and Sanchez 'et Mayor' was the most conspicuous of the Sanchos. Besides the throne of Navarre, he had succeeded to the royalty of Arragon, and the sovereignty of Castile was the dower of his queen. He had married the beautiful Elvira Muna early in life; and before he had reached the full prime of manhood, two of his sons, Garcia and Gonsola, were able to bear the panoply of a knight; and a third, Fernando, a boy, was sighing for the day to come when he too should have the spur upon his heel and the sword upon his thigh. Another son, also, King Sancho boasted of, but not by Donna Elvira. In his very first battle he had been taken prisoner by a Moorish captain of very high rank, and confined in a dungeon for many days and many nights, until at length his escape was effected by means of the daughter of his conqueror, a maiden of exquisite beauty named Caya, who had seen him, and fallen in love with him. This Moorish girl the generous young prince would gladly have married, if the political or religious laws of Navarre would have permitted him; but he tried to persuade himself and her, that, under such circumstances, the tie which bound them together after their flight from her father's fortress would be nearly as sacred as if it were a conjugal one. The offspring of their love was a boy, whom Sancho named Ramiro, and who grew up with the king's legitimate children. Caya too—it was the custom of those days—lived at court, and was paid respect and honor besides, as the deliverer of the country's hope.—She had abjured, at least outwardly, her Moslem creed, and, for the sake of her son, whom she tenderly loved, conformed in all respects to the customs of her adopted one. In truth, however, she was a quiet unpretending creature, who never said or did anything to the injury of any one with malice prepense, and not being feared, was not hated. Even Elvira herself, hateful to Caya for giving her no reasonable cause for jealousy since her marriage with Sancho (which was a mere matter of state policy), made the Moorish woman the confidante of most of her sorrows of that gentle queen. Sancho had ever been indifferent towards her, though she repaid his coldness with devoted attachment. He was, besides, continually away at the wars, in imminent danger from the chances of battle, while she, at home, was ever mourning over the neglect of her lord, and the disobedience of her children. Garcia had made, before his twentieth year, no fewer than three different attempts to excite a revolt in Ribagorza during the absence of the king, impatient as he was to seize the reins of command. Gonsola, cunning as a fox, and darkly working as a mole, was continually endeavoring, by secret machinations, to render the people of Navarre discontented with the government of his mother and her councillors; and even the child Fernando had exhibited signs of a rebellious nature, and was but too apt to listen to the dangerous instructions of his brothers. Elvira, therefore, was greatly to be pitied, debarred, as she thus found herself, from all the joys which she naturally yearned for as a wife and a mother. If Caya was an ambitious woman, as most of her nation were, or if she had cherished, under an outward show of meekness and contentedness, thoughts and purposes of bringing about by means of her opportunities the establishment of the Moorish dynasty in Christian Spain, she might have drawn hope of success in her schemes from the dissensions of the royal family, at least she might have sought in them some excuse for making her darling Ramiro a sharer in one of those arbitrary partitions of the Spanish kingdom which the barbarous notions of the times rendered of frequent recurrence. But Caya was gifted with too noble a mind to seek any advantage, however tempting, by unworthy means. She still fondly loved the chivalrous prince with whom she fled from her cruel father's roof, and with whom, for a few happy, happy years, she had forgotten the pleasant olive groves of Grenada, under the wild pine forests and glaciers of the Pyrenees. She sincerely compassionated the sorrows of Elvira, and therefore the afflicted queen had a safe and steady friend in her generous

rival. Let the reader 'judge with knowledge' these two women in their affection for one another—

In those old, romantic days,  
Mighty were, the soul's commandments  
To support, restrain, or raise!

Their rivalry was of the forbearing kind which existed between the two wives of that old crusader mentioned in the Orlandus of Kenelin Henry Digby and which the first poet of our day has thought it worth his while to embalm for all eternity in his 'Armenian Lady's Love.' But Elvira had another trusty friend in Sancho's 'master of the horse,' whom he was wont to leave behind him as deputy when he went to the wars. Don Pedro Sesse was a faithful minister and a merciful viceroy. A gallant soldier in his youth, he was an enemy to treachery and to everything that tended to infringe the laws of chivalry. He it was who had frustrated the designs of Garcia and Gonsola, and had therefore earned their hatred. Elvira looked to him as her best guide and protector amidst the sorrows of her lot.

In this state was the kingdom of Navarre, when the news came of a great victory gained by Sancho over the Moors of Corduba, a place at that time the metropolis of Moorish Spain.—As this event was considered a decisive blow to the hopes entertained by the Moors of obtaining possession of Castile, which was their principal object, Sancho's speedy return, after an absence of several years, was anticipated at home, and great were the preparations made for his triumphant entry to the fortress of Najara, where was the royal palace and the residence of the chief nobility. In the midst of these preparations, however, matters took place which turned the palace into a scene of mourning and dismay.

Don Pedro had a beautiful daughter named Blanca, whom the unprincipled Garcia had long but vainly tried to influence by his dishonorable proposals. The virtuous Blanca repelled his advances with proper scorn; and when at length he found that he could not obtain her willing consent, he determined to take her by force. An opportunity soon arrived. Blanca was sitting alone one day in her garden, enjoying the loveliness of the prospect that stretched from the terrace foot to the summits of the distant mountains, when Garcia, who had been waiting for a favourable moment, seized her in his arms, and bore her away towards a spot where he had horses and attendants ready for his purpose. Before the maiden was out of the reach of aid from such as might be disposed to assist her, her shrieks were heard by Ramiro; who happened to be sauntering near the place. He was at her side in an instant with his drawn sword in his hand.

'Ruffian, desist!' exclaimed he, with wrath in his voice and eye, as, passing his left arm round the waist of Blanca, he waved his armed right hand before the ravisher's face; 'though thou bearest my father's blood in thy degenerate veins it shall dye the turf at our feet, if thou loosest not hold of this maiden.'

'Away! base-born hound—half Spaniard, away! and dare not to thwart me in my pleasure,' cried Garcia, foaming with rage and disappointment.

Ramiro answered not, but, freeing the frightened girl by a dexterous manœuvre from the grasp of Garcia, and placing himself between them, he struck the latter with the flat side of his weapon as if he thought him unworthy of a severer blow, though the fire of his royal blood tingled in his cheeks at the insult.

Garcia quailed before the lofty scorn of Ramiro, and he shouted to his attendants to come to his aid.

'Now, for my father's kingdom I would not let thee escape, dastard as thou art!' said Ramiro, as he strode up to Garcia and forced him to defend himself. In a moment Ramiro was standing over his prostrate and bleeding antagonist with his sword lifted for the death blow.—As he was about to strike in self defence, hearing the rapid step of Garcia's assistants, he saw that they were already panic-struck at the sight of their fallen master, and were turning back in flight. Staying his hand, he said,

'Rise, Garcia, for thy father's sake I spare thee.—Thou wilt henceforth avoid the son of the Moorish Caya. Then taking the lady Blanca, who was fainting with the effects of her terror, once again in his arms, he bore her into the house of Don Pedro, and left the vanquished ravisher in pain of body and mortification of heart.

'Tell me, lady,' said Ramiro, as he leant over the form of the reviving

Blanca, 'how art thou? Assure me that I leave thee well and happy.'

'Leave me not yet, noble Ramiro,' said Blanca sweetly. 'How can I sufficiently repay thee for thy valiant protection?—all I can imagine would be too poor a recompense!'

'Oh, not too poor, dear Blanca,' said Ramiro passionately, 'is the gift thou canst bestow, give me thy love, if one who hath a stain of Moorish lineage my hope to deserve it, and I will bless the opportunity that gave thee to my arms.'

Blanca only blushed in answer. She knew Ramiro had loved her long before, and honored and esteemed by her father. The lover plighted their troth to each other that hour, and felt themselves worthy of one another.

The ferocious temper and evil heart of Garcia left him no repose until he had matured a scheme of vengeance to effect the ruin of Ramiro, if possible, before the return of his father. All the more violent means he rejected, as he was unwilling to compass so important an event except by plausible pretences. He therefore determined to work upon the fears of Elvira, and as far as possible to arouse her jealousies. Having first stimulated a show of repentance for his past ill-treatment, which he did so well as effectually to deceive the unsuspecting queen, he next informed her that a secret correspondence had been carried on between Caya and the king during the last expedition, forged proofs of which he showed her; and insinuated that Caya had succeeded in making the king promise to put Ramiro in possession of the fairest portion of his dominions, to the exclusion of Elvira's offspring. This latter stratagem did not succeed so well with Elvira, and she openly told him she had too great faith in Caya's friendship to believe she would seek to deprive her of her queenly prerogative, or her children of their just rights. Garcia for a long time continued to follow up these insinuations and others of a similar kind but when he found he was playing the wrong game, he could no longer control his rage, and he warned Elvira not to oppose him in his attempts to get rid of Ramiro, with a sincerity which the unhappy woman well knew was unaffected.

Garcia's first step was a demand that a council of the nobility should be held to determine upon a matter to be brought forward by him, at which council the queen should preside in person. This being granted, he formally accused Ramiro of having attempted his assassination, exhibited his wound, and produced his attendants, who had been suborned by him, to testify to the truth of the accusation. Ramiro was then summoned to answer to the grave charge of having attempted the life of the heir to the crown—a crime for which death by torture was the punishment in Navarre. Ramiro defended himself by narrating the circumstance of his encounter with Garcia simply as it occurred, along with the cause which led to it; and the beautiful Blanca shrank not from appearing before the court and the nobles, to bear witness for her betrothed. Several of the nobles, however, who were in the interest of Garcia and the abettors of his projects, declared that the testimony of Blanca was not sufficient to clear Ramiro of the imputation, and demanded that judgment should be given against him. Don Pedro, who had been aware of the true facts of the case, burning as he was with resentment against Garcia, besought of the queen for the sake of justice, and as a punishment due to a rebellious and unnatural son, that Garcia, on the contrary, should be made to plead against the charge of having offered violence to the daughter of the king's viceroy. Elvira was about to decree that Garcia's charge had not been substantiated, when she caught the eye of the accuser fixed upon her with a look of demonic malignity which chased the blood from her cheek, and made her tongue cleave to the roof of her mouth. Her fortitude was nearly deserting her, and her love of justice giving way to her fear of Garcia's cruel revenge, when a stir was heard at the entrance of the court, and Caya, with disordered dress, dishevelled hair, and eyes of fire, rushed up to the foot of the tribunal, and throwing herself on her knees on the marble step, clasped the feet of Elvira, and looked up into the queen's face without speaking a word.

'What does this Moorish devil in our hall of justice?' said Garcia, in a stern voice; 'remove her.'

No one stirred, for all were intently watching the scene. Caya still knelt without speaking, looking up to the queen's face; but now the large tears were gathering in her eyes, under their jet black lashes, and now they rolled

down upon her dark cheek, which was no longer lustrous with the hue which Sancho in his youthful years had loved to look upon.

Elvira gently stooped her head towards the suppliant, and was about to speak to her, when Garcia, with increased vehemence in his tone, again demanded her removal, and Elvira, shudderingly, drew back.

'Oh! listen not to him!' at length gasped Caya; 'heed not his cruel voice. Thou wilt not give my boy to his bloody vengeance; thou wilt not put his precious limbs upon the wheel; thou wilt not tear his manly sinews with red-hot pincers! Oh! queen, give me back my Ramiro.'

'Nay, Caya, what will become of me?—there is misery before me whichever way I turn!' said Elvira, as she saw Garcia approaching.

'Stand back!' shouted Caya, springing to her feet, and speaking to Garcia; then turning to Elvira.

'I charge thee let him not touch me—if thou valuest the life of thy son, admonish him to beware hurting a hair of the Moorish woman's head, or that of her child; and not of my child alone—of the child of Sancho of Navarre. Dear Elvira (and here Caya ventured to take the Queen's hand) pity thy poor Caya, who never willingly offended thee. Thou wilt—I see thou wilt. I am thy friend once more—thy sister!' she whispered, as her tears flowed upon the neck of the subdued Elvira, and she clasped her to her bosom.

The queen then, confirmed in her decision, by the assenting looks and murmurs of the lord deputy and the majority of the council, declared Ramiro guiltless of the crime imputed to him, and the assembly broke up.

'Caya,' said Elvira, as they retired together, 'I have done much for thee this day. I have leaned towards thy child against my own. I have made an enemy of the fruit of my womb for the sake of a rival in my husband's love.'

'For the sake of truth and justice thou hast done it,' replied Caya, 'and thou shalt have thy reward.'

'Thou knowest not what it is to fight against the temptations which nature puts in our path—pray that thou mayest not know them.'

'I have had a victory many times over such,' said Caya, 'or thou wouldst not now be queen. Perchance other such temptations may arise—and oh Elvira, be sure they shall not overcome me.'

'Caya spoke prophetically, but even she could not have guessed how soon or to what an extent her sanctancy was to be tried.'

[To be concluded.]

## THE PINE-TREE SHILLING.

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

CAPTAIN John Hull was the mint master of Massachusetts, and coined all the money that was made there. His was a new line of business, for, in the earlier days of the colony, the current coinage consisted of the gold and silver money of England, Portugal, and Spain. These coins being scarce, the people were often forced to barter their commodities instead of selling them.

For instance, if a man wanted to buy a coat, he perhaps exchanged a bear skin for it. If he wished for a barrel of molasses, he might purchase it with pile of pine boards. Musket bullets were used instead of farthings. The Indian had a sort of money called wampum, which was made of clam shell; and this strange sort of specie was likewise taken in payment of debts by the English settlers. Bank bills had never been heard of. There was never money enough of any kind, in many parts of the country, to pay their ministers, so that they had sometimes to take quintals of fish, bushels of corn, or cords of wood, instead of silver or gold.

As the people grew more numerous, and their trade with one another increased, the want of current money was still more sensibly felt. To supply the demand, the general court passed a law for establishing a coinage of shillings, sixpences and threepences. Captain John Hull was appointed to manufacture this money, and was to have about one shilling out of every twenty, to pay him for his trouble of making them.

Hereupon, all the old silver in the colony was handed over to Captain John Hull. The battered silver cans and tankards, I suppose, and silver buckles, and broken spoons, and silver buttons of worn out coats, all such curious old articles were doubtless thrown into the melting pot together. But by far the greater part of the silver consisted of bullion from the mines of South America, which the English buccaniers, (who were little better than pirates,) had taken from the Spaniards, and brought to Massachusetts.