

## Literature, &amp;c.

From the Irish Penny Journal.  
THE MOTHER.

A LEAF FROM SPANISH HISTORY.

GARCIA left the council maddened with rage, and burning with thoughts of vengeance, not only against Ramiro, who had supplanted him in his love, and Pedro, who had been made deputy, principally with the intent that he should watch and counteract his villainies, but against Elvira and Caya, and even Blanca. Some faint outlines of a design either to cut off Sancho himself, and usurp the whole of his father's possessions, or at least compel him to share the sovereignty with him, began also to connect themselves together in his thoughts. In short he was determined that he should accomplish the ruin of all, and that some blow should be struck instantly, for Sancho was already on his way to Navarre.

A circumstance of trifling moment in itself, furnished him with sufficiently plausible means of entering at once upon his plan. Sancho had taken in fight from a Moorish chieftain a most beautiful horse, which in a short time became such a favourite with him, that fearing some accident would deprive him of the noble steed amidst the perils of war, he had sent him home to Elvira, with strict injunctions that no one should be suffered to mount him in his absence. These injunctions were forgotten by the queen, who suffered Don Pedro to use the animal occasionally. This fact Garcia laid hold of to sustain him in accusing the queen of adultery with Don Pedro, and he announced to the nobles his intention of so doing on the arrival of his father.

Sancho had been six years away, and had heard of nothing in the interim from Navarre that was not calculated to diminish the little love he ever felt for Elvira, and increase the romantic attachment he felt towards Caya. Ramiro, the offspring of that attachment, he loved beyond all his sons for his nobleness of nature and persons, and he secretly wished for some excuse for distinguishing him above the others. For those six years he had been sojourning in the scenes of Caya's childhood, where every thing reminded him of her and of his early amour; and as it only had been of a piece with a practice of royalty in even later and more civilized times, to have divorced himself from Elvira, he must not be over harshly dealt with if he confessed to himself that he would be happier to find her dead than living on his return. What his thoughts were, therefore, may be guessed, when, as the gates of Najara were flung open for his entrance, he was met with the intelligence that his queen and her alleged paramour were conspiring against his honor, his kingdom, and his life!

Sancho could imagine no possible motive by which Garcia might be actuated in preferring accusation, ignorant as the king was of what had lately occurred, so he at once ordered the queen to be arrested, and to be brought to trial in the Cortes of the kingdom. The unhappy Elvira was not allowed to see her lord on his return, but was thrown into a dungeon, as was also Pedro, until the preparations for the trial were complete.

When the day arrived, Elvira and Pedro were led prisoners into that hall of justice in which they had so lately sat as judges. Elvira cast a mournful and reproachful look towards Sancho, who sat cold and severe upon his chair of state, but he did not notice her. She was so thin, and pale, and wretched-looking, that the very officials of the court wept at the sight of her; while those to whom she had been kind and merciful in her day of power, groaned audibly as they surmised the event of her trial. She was placed on a seat in the centre of the hall, and the preliminaries were at once proceeded with.

Garcia first came forward, and repeated his accusation, adding a tissue of circumstances calculated to confirm his statement. When he had finished, an officer desired the Queen to defend herself.

'If I had been unfaithful to Sancho,' said she, 'it was before thy birth, Garcia; for neither a gleam of Sancho's goodness, nor a feature of his face, has descended to thee! Some devil betrayed me in my dream, and left me his image to nurse at my bosom, and bring up at my knee.'

'Is this thy answer?' said Garcia, with a bitter smile; 'this reviling of the first-born of thy king will not save thee from the stake.'

'The stake,' shrieked Elvira, 'is it to this thou bringest me?' And then rising, and standing before Garcia, she

continued—'Man—for I cannot call the son now—how canst thou be so cruel? Is there no voice in a mother's misery to touch thy heart?'

Garcia answered not, but desired the officer to proceed and summon the next witness. The officer called out the name of Gonsalo!

Not alone Elvira, but the whole court were surprised to see the king's second son presenting himself at his mother's accusation. Gonsalo had a new series of alleged facts to produce. He had been allured by the promises of Garcia, and his avarice and love of power outweighed whatever feelings of reluctance he might otherwise have experienced. His courage failed him, however, as he perceived those looks of aversion among the spectators which it required more firmness than he possessed to disregard; and having closed his testimony, he was slinking away, in order to escape the glance of Elvira, when she called him back, and catching his hand, addressed him:—

'What have I done to thee, Gonsalo, that thou shouldst blast my fame and take away my life? I would not injure a hair of thy head!—Three times I snatched thee from the grave before thy childhood was past, when thou wert ailing. I lost strength, and sleep, and beauty while bending over thy cradle. I would I had been in my grave before thou sawest the light! I will not curse thee—I will not even beg thy pity; but when thou hast children of thine own, thou mayest guess what thou hast made me suffer, and that will be curse enough—go!'

'The infante Don Fernando, appears,' cried the officer.

A pang, as if her brain had been pierced with a fiery needle, smote the wretched mother as the boy answered to his name. A loud buzz of disapprobation ran through the assembly, and Sancho himself seemed as if he could bear the unnatural scene no longer; but intense curiosity now prevailed with all, and overcame every other feeling. A dead silence ensued while Fernando stood confronting the queen.

He was a pale, light haired lad, with exceedingly soft blue eyes, which he inherited from the pure stock of the Gothic sovereigns of Spain, descending to him unbroken from that glorious time when Pelayo swayed the strongest European sceptre, before Tarik led his conquering bands from Africa. His ringlets streamed down his shoulders as he bent his head and crossed his small white hands upon his breast in token of reverence towards the king. As he appeared there in the graceful dress suited to his years, he looked more like a creature of dreams, when holy imagination colour them, than a false witness against his own mother. Elvira looked at him for full a minute without moving or speaking, until at length his innocent-looking beauty gave birth to some vague confidence in her that he was not coming to destroy her, but perhaps, the contrary. The moment this feeling took possession of her, she bounded forward with a shriek of delight, and flinging herself on the ground before him, she clasped his knees, and letting her head sink between her arms, she endeavored to stay so, while she wept for the first time since she entered the hall. Fernando, however, drew back violently, and disengaged himself from her embrace. The queen looked up at him half-vacantly as he did so; and then she arose, and in a solemn though flattering voice, she said,

'What art thou going to do or to say, Fernando? They may take me away to the stake and burn me, if thou believest me now, for thy crime will be worse torture to me than they can inflict.'

'Speak Fernando,' said the king. Fernando trembled and hesitated, but a motion from Garcia caught his eye and emboldened him to go on. He told that he had seen Elvira giving to Don Pedro Sesse, from the royal stables, that favorite steed which the king had ordered should be ridden by none but himself.

Sancho's brow flushed with sudden anger when he heard this. 'Elvira! Pedro! said he, 'is this true?'

'It is true,' said Elvira, 'but I alone am guilty. Pedro knew not of thy command. As I live, he did not. Let me suffer, oh Sancho, for this one fault, but pardon the innocent.'

'She prays for pardon for her paramour!' cried Garcia exultingly; 'what other proof is needful?'

'Hast thou ought more to declare?' said the king to Fernando, in a tone of displeasure.

Again the boy trembled, and looked towards Garcia, whose eagle eye was like a guilty spell upon him.

'Let him look at the queen as he speaks,' said Sancho.

The boy turned towards his mother, but his cheeks reddened as he did so, and he cast his eyes towards the ground without speaking.

'Speak on!' said the king.

'He will not speak!' said Elvira; 'he will not make a liar of Nature, who is telling the truth for him in his cheeks and eyes! Look, monsters, and tears are coming to his eyes. Oh, holy drops, ye should be treasured among saintly relics—ye shall be balm to these parched and thirsty lips! And here the queen bent to the earth, and kissed the tear drops on the ground which had fallen from Fernando's eyes.'

'Fernando, speak!' said Garcia.

In a voice broken by sobs and terror, Fernando began to say that he had seen Don Pedro stealing by night into the queen's chamber, when he was interrupted by Elvira, who again clung to him with frantic earnestness.

'Thou sawest it not! Oh, say thou sawest it not! My boy, the heavy wrath of God will fall upon thee if thou dost not unsay this fearful falsehood. I am not a cursing thee, but I would avert the curse. Thou must unsay it. It is not possible mine own flesh could all rebel against me. What is it hath bewitched thee, Fernando, to do what devils would leave undone? Dost thou know what thou art doing to me? They will burn thy poor mother in the market place for an adulteress! Thou wilt give thy mother to die in the torments of the damned—the mother, that never crossed thee in thy ways—that fed thee with the milk of her breasts—that rejoiced in thy beauty. Oh, my God! oh, my God! have pity upon me, and soften this boy's heart!' said she, looking up for a moment, and then coaxingly fawning upon Fernando, with a faint smile upon her features. She continued—'My child! my pretty boy Fernando! wilt thou not unsay those wicked words? Ah, let me kiss thee, and say I forgive thee, and we shall be Mother and son together for the rest of our days in some far off place out of the ways of those people. I will love thee better than they, Fernando. They are killing thy soul now, and they will kill thy body after, as they are killing mine, if thou dost not hearken to me. Oh, that I might have life and length of days, only to be away with thee where I could look into thy blue eyes and play with thy golden curls from morning till night. Oh, child, have mercy upon me!'

'Mother,' cried Fernando, throwing himself upon the queen's neck, 'forgive me, and I will unsay all.'

Elvira wound her arms about the infante's form, kissed him without saying a word, and fainted at his feet.

'Her artifices have prevailed with the boy,' said Garcia, with ill-dissembled rage, 'but the testimony of others is not to be thus overborne.'

'Wilt thou enter the lists against her champion, if any dare to defend her with the sword?' said the king.

Garcia was silent.

'If thou wilt not,' said Sancho, 'Elvira shall be declared innocent, and her accusers traitors.'

'Let her champion appear, then,' replied Garcia. 'What my tongue asserts, my sword shall ever prove. There lies my gauger,' and he threw his glove into the centre of the floor.

But in all that crowded assembly there was not one who came forward to take up the gauger of Garcia. They all pitied the queen, and believed her innocent, but the dread of the future tyrant was too powerful a motive to keep them, so far, at least, on his side.

'At the end of three days,' said the king, 'if no champion appear for the queen, she shall perish by the flames, and with her, her alleged paramour.'

The lists were prepared, and at the noon of the second day a knight in bright silver armour, whose name was unknown appeared in the queen's defence. His vizor was drawn over his face, and his device gave no clue to the curious. The whole court was assembled to witness the combat, and Elvira occupied a seat nearest to the side at which her champion appeared. The signal was given, and the contest commenced. It was soon decided. The unknown knight quickly unhorsed his antagonist, and after a brief struggle with the sword, Garcia fell to the earth desperately wounded.

'Confess the innocence of the queen,' said the unknown knight, in a voice which struck Garcia to the soul, 'or thou diest on the spot.'

'She is innocent!' feebly articulated Garcia, as he writhed in the agony of his wounds.

Taking up the sword of the vanquished adversary, the unknown cavalier brought it to the feet of Elvira, and then, gracefully bending on one knee, he lifted the vizor from his casque, and for the first time the queen knew that she had been indebted for life and the preservation of her fair fame to the son of the king by her Moorish rival.

'Madam,' said Ramiro, 'not to me alone, but to Caya thy friend, thy thanks are due. Thou hast been a sister to her—let me be a son to thee.'

Elvira could only weep her thanks.

We find in Mariana, and also in Rodrigo of Toledo, that Sancho of Navarre, at his death, partitioned his kingdom thus:—To his eldest son Garcia he left Navarre and Biscay; to Gonsalo he left Ribagorza; to Fernando, Castile; and Arragon to a natural son named Ramiro.—This was that Ramiro of whom mention is made in the preceding narrative. But we do not find in any of the old authors (and much we wonder that any event connected with so curious and touching a piece of history could have escaped them) that this same Ramiro enjoyed the lordship of Arragon with Blanca, the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the cavalier Don Pedro Sesse.

From the Boston Notion.

## AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

Mr. STEVENS and Mr. Catherwood, both well known by their researches among the antiquities of Egypt, are now delivering a course of lectures in New York upon the antiquities of Mexico. They are well qualified for this task, for Mr Stevens went to Mexico about a year since, for the very purpose of examining these antiquities, and Mr Catherwood accompanied him for the purpose of making drawings of them, for which he was eminently qualified as an artist. They returned in September last, after spending several months in the most diligent examination of those wonderful remains of an unknown people, living in an age not yet ascertained. They are now presenting before the public the result of their labors, and we hope and trust that their exertions to gratify a laudable curiosity, will be amply rewarded by the intelligent people of our sister city. After they have fully gratified the curiosity of their townsmen, we hope they will show themselves in Boston; for our citizens have never yet failed to appreciate and reward scientific or literary research, or to offer a cordial greeting to those who could furnish them with useful and entertaining knowledge. We can promise those intelligent and industrious explorers of the past, that they will not regret a visit to the city of Notions.

For some few years past, the antiquities of the Western Continent have excited great interest. The most remarkable of them were not known at all until about one hundred years since, and then only to the Spaniards; and from that time till within a few years past, those known to the rest of the world were regarded as the works of savages, or of people who had merely attained the imperfect civilization of the Mexicans and Peruvians at the time of their conquest by the Spaniards. But within a few years, a flood of light has been poured upon them, enabling us to see clearly that they are the remains of a people far more advanced in civilization, than any yet described upon this continent by any European historian. The Spanish writers give no account of them before 1750, when the ruins of Palenque were discovered. The Spanish government then despatched some persons to explore and describe them; who placed their account among the governmental records of the city of Mexico. But they were not known in Europe till 1822, when they were explored by an American, who published them in London, but without exciting any interest.—But in 1831, and since, several descriptions of them have been published, which have stimulated these enterprising travellers, Mr Stevens and Mr Catherwood, to their recent exploration.

Though ruins of similar characters, doubtless the work of the same age and people, are found in various parts of Mexico, yet those of Palenque are the most remarkable. So far as discovered, they are of no extent, hardly exceeding that of the New York Battery, or about one fifth of our Common. They consist of palaces or temples, and obelisks or pyramids, and what were probably altars. They are all constructed of hewn stone, and ornamented with sculptures in bold relief, and very elaborately wrought. The palaces or temples are raised upon terraces, some of which are thirty and forty, and others one hundred feet high,