



CHAPTER I

The morning was gray, and I sat by the sea near Palos in a gray mood. I was Jayme de Marchena, and that was indeed a good, *old Christian* name. But my grandmother was a Jewess, and in corners they said that she never truly recanted, and I had been much with her as a child. She was dead, but still they talked of her. Jayme de Marchena, looking back from the hillside of forty-six, saw some service done for the Queen and the folk. This thing and that thing. Not demanding trumpets, but serviceable. It would be neither counted nor weighed beside and against that which Don Pedro and the Dominican found to say. What they found to say they made, not found. They took clay of misrepresentation, and in the field of falsehood sat them down, and consulting the parchment of malice, proceeded to create. But false as was all they set up, the time would cry it true.

It was reasonable that I should find the day gray.

Study and study and study, year on year, and at last image a great thing, just under the rim of the mind's ocean, sending up for those who will look streamers above horizon, streamers of colored and wonderful light! Study and reason and with awe and delight take light from above. Dream of good news for one and all, of life given depth and brought into music, dream of giving the given, never holding it back, which would be avarice and betraying! Write, and give men and women to read what you have written, and believe—poor Deluded!—that they also feel inner warmth and light and rejoice.

Oh, gray the sea and gray the shore! But some did feel it.

The Dominican, when it fell into his hands, called it perdition. A Jewess for a grandmother, and Don Pedro for enemy. And now the Dominican—the Dominicans!

The Queen and the King made edict against the Jews, and there sat the Inquisition.

I was—I am—Christian. It is a wide and deep and high word. When you ask, “What is it—Christian?” then must each of us answer as it is given to him to answer. I and thou—and the True, the Universal Christ give us light!

Today all Andalusia, all Castile and all Spain to me seemed gray, and gray the utter Ocean that stretched no man knew where. The gray was the gray of fetters and of ashes.

The tide made, and as the waves came nearer, eating the sand before me, they uttered a low crying. *In danger—danger—in danger, Jayme de Marchena!*

I had been in danger before. Who is not often and always in danger, in life? But this was a danger to daunt.

Mine were no powerful friends. I had only that which was within me. I was only son of only son, and my parents and grandparents were dead, and my distant kindred cold, seeing naught of good in so much study and thinking of that old, dark, beautiful, questionable one, my grandmother. I had indeed a remote kinsman, head of a convent in this neighborhood, and he was a wise man and a kindly. But not he either could do aught here!

All the Jews to be banished, and Don Pedro with a steady forefinger, “That man—take him, too! Who does not know that his grandmother was Jewess, and that he lived with her and drank poison?” But the Dominican, “No! The Holy Office will take him. You have but to read—only you must not read—what he has written to see why!”

Gray Ocean, stretching endlessly and now coming close, were it not well if I drowned myself this gray morning while I can choose the death I shall die? Now the great murmur sang *Well*, and now it sang *Not well*.

Low cliff and heaped sand and a solitary bird wide-winged toward the mountains of Portugal, and the Ocean gray-blue and salt! The salt savor entered me, and an inner zest came forward and said *No*, to being craven. In banishment certainly, in the House of the Inquisition more doubtfully, the immortal man might yet find market

from which to buy! If the mind could surmount, the eternal quest need not be interrupted—even there!

Blue Ocean sang to me.

A vision—it came to me at times, vision—set itself in air. I saw A People who persecuted neither Jew nor thinker. It rose one Figure, formed of an infinite number of small figures, but all their edges met in one glow. The figure stood upon the sea and held apart the clouds, and was free and fair and mighty, and was man and woman melted together, and it took all colors and made of them a sun for its brow. I did not know when it would live, but I knew that it should live. Perhaps it was the whole world.

It vanished, leaving sky and ocean and Andalusia. But great visions leave great peace. After it, for this day, it seemed not worth while to grieve and miserably to forebode. Through the hours that I lay there by the sea, airs from that land or that earth blew about me and faint songs visited my ears, and the gray day was only gray like a dove's breast.

Jayne de Marchena stayed by the lonely sea because that seemed the safest place to stay. At hand was the small port of Palos that might not know what was breeding in Seville, and going thither at nightfall I found lodging and supper in a still corner where all night I heard the Tinto flowing by.

I had wandered to Palos because of the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria de la Rabida and my very distant kinsman, Fray Juan Perez. The day after the gray day by the shore I walked half a league of sandy road and came to convent gate. The porter let me in, and I waited in a little court with doves about me and a swinging bell above until the brother whom he had called returned and took me to Prior's room. At first Fray Juan Perez was stiff and cold, but by little this changed and he became a good man, large-minded and with a sense for kindred. Clearly he thought that I should not have had a Jewish grandmother, nor have lived with her from my third to my tenth birthday, and most clearly that I should not have written that which I had written. But his God was an energetic, enterprising, kindly Prince, rather bold himself and tolerant of heathen. Fray Juan Perez even intimated a doubt if God wanted the Inquisition. "But

that's going rather far!" he said hastily and sat drumming the table and pursing his lips. Presently he brought out, "But you know I can't do anything!"

I did know it. What could he do? I suppose I had had a half-hope of something. I knew not what. Without a hope I would not have come to La Rabida. But it was maimed from the first, and now it died. I made a gesture of relinquishment. "No, I suppose you cannot—"

He said after a moment that he was glad to see that I had let my beard grow and was very plainly dressed, though I had never been elaborate there, and especially was he glad that I was come to Palos not as Jayme de Marchena, but under a plain and simple name, Juan Lepe, to wit. His advice was to flee from the wrath to come. He would not say flee from the Holy Office—that would be heinous!—but he would say absent myself, abscond, be banished, Jayme de Marchena by Jayme de Marchena. There were barques in Palos and rude seamen who asked no question when gold just enough, and never more than enough, was shown. He hesitated a moment and then asked if I had funds. If not—

I thanked him and said that I had made provision.

"Then," said he, "go to Barbary, Don Jayme! An intelligent and prudent man may prosper at Ercilla or at Fez. If you must study, study there."

"You also study," I said.

"In fair trodden highways—never in thick forest and mere fog!" he answered. "Now if you were like one who has been here and is now before Granada, at Santa Fé, sent for thither by the Queen! That one hath indeed studied to benefit Spain—Spain, Christendom, and the world!"

I asked who was that great one, but before he could tell me came interruption. A visitor entered, a strong-lipped, bold-eyed man named Martin Pinzon. I was to meet him again and often, but at this time I did not know that. Fray Juan Perez evidently desiring that I should go, I thought it right to oblige him who would have done me kindness had he known how. I went without intimate word of parting and after only a casual stare from Martin Pinzon.

But without, my kinsman came after me. "I want to say, Don

Jayme, that if I am asked for testimony I shall hold to it that you are as good Christian as any—”

It was kinsman's part and all that truly I could have hoped for, and I told him so. About us was quiet, vacant cloister, and we parted more warmly than we had done within.

The white convent of La Rabida is set on a headland among vineyards and pine trees. It regards the ocean and, afar, the mountains of Portugal, and below it runs a small river, going out to sea through sands with the Tinto and the Odriel. Again the day was gray and the pine trees sighing. The porter let me out at gate.

I walked back toward Palos through the sandy ways. I did not wish to go to Africa.

It is my belief that that larger Self whom they will call protecting Saint or heavenly Guardian takes hand in affairs oftener than we think! Leaving the Palos road, I went to the sea as I had done yesterday and again sat under heaped sand with about me a sere grass through which the wind whined. At first it whined and then it sang in a thin, outlandish voice. Sitting thus, I might have looked toward Africa, but I knew now that I was not going to Africa. Often, perhaps, in the unremembered past I had been in Africa; often, doubtless, in ages to come its soil would be under my foot, but now I was not going there! Today I looked westward over River-Ocean, unknown to our fathers and unknown to ourselves. It was unknown as the future of the world.

Ocean piled before me. From where I lay it seemed to run uphill to one pale line, nor blue nor white, set beneath the solid gray. Over that hilltop, what? Only other hills and plains, water, endlessly water, until the waves, so much mightier than waves of that blue sea we knew best, should beat at last against Asia shore! So high, so deep, so vast, so real, yet so empty-seeming save for strange dangers! No sails over the hilltop; no sails in all that Vast save close at hand where mariners held to the skirts of Mother Europe. Ocean vast, Ocean black, Ocean unknown. Yet there, too, life and the knowing of life ran somehow continuous.

It wiled me from my smaller self. How had we all suffered, we the whole earth! But we were moving, we the world with none left out,

moving toward That which held worlds, which was conscious above worlds. Long the journey, long the adventure, but it was not worth while fearing, it was not worth while whining! I was not alone Jayme de Marchena, nor Juan Lepe, nor this name nor that nor the other.

There was now a great space of quiet in my mind. Suddenly formed there the face and figure of Don Enrique de Cerda whose life I had had the good hap to save. He was far away with the Queen and King who beleaguered Granada. I had not seen him for ten years. A moment before he had rested among the host of figures in the unevenly lighted land of memory. Now he stood forth plainly and seemed to smile.

I took the leading. With the inner eye I have seen lines of light like subtle shining cords running between persons. Such a thread stretched now between me and Enrique de Cerda. I determined to make my way, as Juan Lepe, through the mountains and over the plain of Granada to Santa Fé.



CHAPTER II

I did not start for Granada from Palos but from Huelva, and I quitted Andalusia as a porter in a small merchant train carrying goods of sorts to Zarafa, that was a mountain town taken from the Moors five years back. I was to these folk Juan Lepe, a strong, middle-aged man used to ships but now for some reason tired of them. My merchants had only eyes for the safety of their persons and their bales, plunged the third day into mountainous wild country echoing and ghastly with long-lasting war. Their servants and muleteers walked and rode, lamented or were gay, raised faction, swore, laughed, traveled grimly or in a dull melancholy or mirthfully; quarreled and made peace, turn by turn, day by day, much alike.

One who was a bully fixed a quarrel upon me and another took my part. All leaped to sides. I was forgotten in the midst of them; they could hardly have told now what was the cause of battle. A young merchant rode back to chide and settle matters. At last someone remembered that Diego had struck Juan Lepe who had flung him off. Then Tomaso had sprung in and struck Diego. Then Miguel—"Let Juan Lepe alone!" said my merchant. "Fie! a poor Palos seafaring child, and you great Huelva men!" They laughed at that, and the storm vanished as it had come.

I liked the young man.

How wild and without law, save "Hold if you can!" were these mountains! "Hold if you can to life—hold if you can to knowledge—hold if you can to joy!" Black cliff overhung black glen and we knew there were dens of robbers. Far and near violence falls like black snow. This merchant band gathered to sleep under oaks with a great rock at our back. We had journeyers' supper and fire, for it was cold,

cold in these heights. A little wine was given and men fell to sleep by the heaped bales; horses, asses and mules being fastened close under the crag. Three men watched, to be relieved in middle night by other three who now slept. A muleteer named Rodrigo and Juan Lepe and the young merchant took the first turn. The first two sat on one side of the fire and the young merchant on the other.

The muleteer remained sunken in a great cloak, his chin on his arms folded upon his knees, and what he saw in the land within I cannot tell. But the young merchant was of a quick disposition and presently must talk. For some distance around us spread bare earth set only with shrubs and stones. Also the rising moon gave light, and with that and our own strength we did not truly look for any attack. We sat and talked at ease, though with lowered voices, Rodrigo somewhere away and the rest of the picture sleeping. The merchant asked what had been my last voyage.

I answered, after a moment, to England.

“You do not seem to me,” he said, “a seaman. But I suppose there are all kinds of seamen.”

I said yes, the sea was wide.

“England now, at the present moment?” he said, and questioned me as to Bristol, of which port he had trader’s knowledge. I answered out of a book I had read. It was true that, living once by the sea, I knew how to handle a boat. I could find in memory sailors’ terms. But still he said, “You are not a seaman such as we see at Palos and San Lucar.”

It is often best not to halt denial. Let it pass by and wander among the wild grasses!

“I myself,” he said presently, “have gone by sea to Vigo and to Bordeaux.” He warmed his hands at the fire, then clasped them about his knees and gazed into the night. “What, Juan Lepe, is that Ocean we look upon when we look west? I mean, where does it go? What does it strike?”

“India, belike. And Cathay. Today all men believe the earth to be round.”

“A long way!” he said. “O Sancta Maria! All that water!”

“We do not have to drink it.”

He laughed. "No! Nor sail it. But after I had been on that voyage I could see us always like mice running close to a wall, forever and forever! Juan Lepe, we are little and timid!"

I liked his spirit. "One day we shall be lions and eagles and bold prophets! Then our tongue shall taste much beside India and Cathay!"

"Well, I hope it," he said. "Mice running under the headlands."

He fell silent, cherishing his knees and staring into the fire. It was not Juan Lepe's place to talk when master merchant talked not. I, too, regarded the fire, and the herded mountains robed in night, and the half-moon like a sail rising from an invisible boat.

The night went peacefully by. It was followed by a hard day's travel and the incident of the road. At evening we saw the walls of Zarafa in a sunset glory. The merchants and their train passed through the gate and found their customary inn. With others, Juan Lepe worked hard, unloading and storing. All done, he and the bully slept almost in each other's arms, under the arches of the court, dreamlessly.

The next day and the next were still days of labor. It was not until the third that Juan Lepe considered that he might now absent himself and there be raised no hue and cry after strong shoulders. He had earned his quittance, and in the nighttime, upon his hands and knees, he crept from the sleepers in the court. Just before dawn the inn gate swung open. He had been waiting close to it, and he passed out noiselessly.

In the two days, carrying goods through streets to market square and up to citadel and pausing at varying levels for breath and the prospect, I had learned this town well enough. I knew where went the ascending and descending ways. Now almost all lay asleep, antique, shaded, Moorish, still, under the stars. The soldiery and the hidalgos, their officers, slept; only the sentinels waked before the citadel entry and on the town walls and by the three gates. The town folk slept, all but the sick and the sorrowful and the careful and those who had work at dawn. Listen, and you might hear sound like the first moving of birds, or breath of dawn wind coming up at sea. The greater part now of the town folk were Christian, brought in since the five-year-

gone siege that still resounded. Moors were here, but they had turned Christian, or were slaves, or both slave and Christian. I had seen monks of all habits and heard ring above the inn the bells of a nunnery. Now again they rang. The mosque was now a church. It rose at hand,—white, square, domed. I went by a ladder-like lane down toward Zarafa wall and the Gate of the Lion. At sunrise in would pour peasants from the vale below, bringing vegetables and poultry, and mountaineers with quails and conies, and others with divers affairs. Outgoing would be those who tilled a few steep gardens beyond the wall, messengers and errand folk, soldiers and traders for the army before Granada.

It was full early when I came to the wall. I could make out the heavy and tall archway of the gate, but as yet was no throng before it. I waited; the folk began to gather, the sun came up. Zarafa grew rosy. Now was clatter enough, voices of men and brutes, both sides the gate. The gate opened. Juan Lepe won out with a knot of brawny folk going to the mountain pastures. Well forth, he looked back and saw Zarafa gleaming rose and pearl in the blink of the sun, and sent young merchantward a wish for good. Then he took the eastward way down the mountain, toward lower mountains and at last the Vega of Granada.



CHAPTER III

The day passed. I had adventures of the road, but none of consequence. I slept well among the rocks, waked, ate the bit of bread I had with me, and fell again to walking.

Mountains were now withdrawing to the distant horizon where they stood around, a mighty and beautiful wall. I was coming down into the plain of Granada, that once had been a garden. Now, north, south, east, west, it lay war-trampled. Old owners were dead, men and women, or were *mudexares*, vassals, or were fled, men and women, all who could flee, to their kindred in Africa. Or they yet cowered, men and women, in the broken garden, awaiting individual disaster. The Kingdom of Granada had sins, and the Kingdom of Castile, and the Kingdom of Leon. The Moor was stained, and the Spaniard, the Moslem and the Christian and the Jew. Who had stains the least or the most God knew—and it was a poor inquiry. Seek the virtues and bind them with love, each in each!

If the mountain road had been largely solitary, it was not so of this road. There were folk enough in the wide Vega of Granada. Clearly, as though the one party had been dressed in black and the other in red, they divided into vanquished and victor. Bit by bit, now through years, all these towns and villages, all these fertile fields and bosky places, rich and singing, had left the hand of the Moor for the hand of the Spaniard.

In all this part of his old kingdom the Moor lay low in defeat. In had swarmed the Christian and with the Christian the Jew, though now the Jew must leave. The city of Granada was not yet surrendered, and the Queen and King held all soldiery that they might at Santa Fé, built as it were in a night before Granada walls. Yet there

seemed large bands enough, licentious and loud, the scum of soldiery. Before I reached the village that I now saw before me I had met two such bands, I wondered, and then wondered at my own wonder.

The chief house of the village was become an inn. Two long tables stood in the patio where no fountain now flowed nor orange trees grew nor birds sang in corners nor fine awning kept away the glare. Twenty of these wild and base fighting men crowded one table, eating and drinking, clamorous and spouting oaths. At the other table sat together at an end three men whom by a number of tokens might be robbers of the mountains. They sat quiet, indifferent to the noise, talking low among themselves in a tongue of their own, kin enough to the soldiery not to fear them. The opposite end of the long table was given to a group to which I now joined myself. Here sat two Franciscan friars, and a man who seemed a lawyer; and one who had the air of the sea and turned out to be master of a Levantine; and a brisk, talkative, important person, a Catalan, and as it presently appeared alcalde once of a so-so village; and a young, unhealthy-looking man in black with an open book beside him; and a strange fellow whose Spanish was imperfect.

I sat down near the friars, crossed myself, and cut a piece of bread from the loaf before me. The innkeeper and his wife, a gaunt, extraordinarily tall woman, served, running from table to table. The place was all heat and noise. Presently the soldiers, ending their meal, got up with clamor and surged from the court to their waiting horses. After them ran the innkeeper, appealing for pay. Denials, expostulation, anger and beseeching reached the ears of the patio, then the sound of horses going down stony ways. "O God of the poor!" cried the gaunt woman. "How are we robbed!"

"Why are they not before Granada?" demanded the lawyer and alertly provided the answer to his own question. "Take locusts and give them leave to eat, being careful to say, 'This fellow's fields only!' But the locusts have wings and their nature is to eat!"

The mountain robbers, if robbers they were, dined quietly, the gaunt woman promptly and painstakingly serving them. They were going to pay, I was sure, though it might not be this noon.

The two friars seemed, quiet, simple men, dining as dumbly as