

ROSAMOND—A SONG.

BY ORVILLE PEASE.

Rosamond, darling one,
 List to my lay,—
 Turn not in coldness, love,
 From me away;
 Earth's brightest angel,
 With pinions all furled,
 Thou art my lovely theme,
 Rose of the world.

Maid of the sunny brow,
 Lovest thou me?
 Ever in wanderings
 I've thought of thee;
 Still have thy tresses dark
 Gracefully curled
 Over my brow in dreams,
 Rose of the world.

None but thou reign'dst ever
 In my true heart—
 Ne'er did thy influence
 From me depart;
 While through life's giddy maze
 Reckless I've whirled,
 Still have I thought of thee,
 Rose of the world.

Thou art my rose, dearest,
 Radiant and bright;
 Cheeks like the damask rose,
 Glowing in light,
 Lips like its red leaves
 With honey impearled—
 Rosamond, lovely flower,
 Rose of the world!

THE GAME OF CHESS.

BY ESTELLE GRAY.

THE king, Philip II., played chess in the palace of the Escorial. Ruy Lopez, an obscure priest, but an expert player, was the partner of his majesty. By particular favor he knelt upon a cushion of brocade, while around the king stood the nobles in a grave and respectful manner. The morning was brilliant, and the air was perfumed with the fragrance of the orange groves of Grenada; the sun darted his rays of fire upon the gothic windows, and the violet curtains softened its light, and threw a rich glow into the splendid saloon. The joyous light of day seemed hardly in unison with the sombre thoughts of Philip II.; his brow was contracted, and occasionally a shade passed over his countenance, revealing the thoughts which occupied his mind; his forehead was as dark as the tempest which lowers upon the summit of the Alpuxares. With frowning eyebrows, the king threw frequent glances at the door of entrance; all the lords were silent, exchanging between themselves signs

of intelligence; the appearance of this whole assembly was serious and thoughtful, showing that some great event occupied their attention.

The silence was unbroken, save by the movement of the chess, when the door suddenly opened. A man of rude and sinister appearance presented himself mute and respectful before the king waiting his command to speak. There was nothing prepossessing in this man's exterior, and upon his entrance a sudden and general movement was made, the lords drew themselves up with disdain, with disgust even, as if they saw a dangerous animal, and repulsive to their sight, enter their midst.

Philip II. spoke, his voice trembled, he was moved; a galvanic tremor pervaded the assembly, for the new comer was Fernando Calavar, grand executioner of Spain.

"Is he dead?" inquired Philip, in an imperious voice, which gave place to terror.

"No, sire," replied Fernando Calavar, bowing. The king knit his brow.

"As a grandee of Spain, the condemned claims his privileges, and I have not dared to proceed against a man whose blood is of the highest in Spain, without a more precise order from your majesty." He bowed again.

A murmur of admiration passed through the assembly; this was the response of the nobles who had listened with attention. The blood of Castile burned in their veins, and glowed in their flushed faces—the manifestation became general. The young Alonzo d'Ossuna showed it openly by putting on his cap. His bold example was followed by a majority of the nobles—soon their white plumes waved proudly, and seemed to announce with audacity that their masters protested in favor of their privileges, for it is never allowable in Spain for the nobles to cover their heads before their sovereign.

The king started with anger, and struck the table, throwing the chess into confusion.

"He has been judged by our royal council," said he, "and condemned to death; what does the traitor ask?"

"Sire," replied the executioner, "he asks to die by the axe and block, and also to pass with a priest the last three hours of his life."

"Ah!—granted," replied Philip, almost satisfied. "Is not our confessor with him as we ordered?"

"Yes, sire," said Fernando, "the holy man is with him, but the duke will not receive him—he will not receive absolution from any one of lower rank than the bishop; such are the privileges of nobles condemned to death for high treason."

"These are our rights," boldly said the fiery

d'Ossuna, "and we claim of our king the privileges for our cousin."

"Our rights and the justice of the king are inseparable," said in his turn Don Diego de Tarrazas, Count de Valencia, an old noble of gigantic stature, dressed in armor, and holding in his hand the truncheon of grand high constable of Spain, and leaning upon his long Toledo sword.

"Our rights and our privileges," cried the nobles.

These words were repeated like an echo, and this audacity made the king bound on his throne.

"By the bones of Campeador," cried he, "by the soul of St. Iago! I have sworn not to eat or drink, until the bloody head of this traitor has been brought to me, and I have seen it; it shall be done as I have said. But Don Tarrazas has well said, 'the king's justice confirms the rights of his subjects.' Lord constable, where does the nearest bishop reside?"

"Sire, I have often had more frequent dealings with the camp than with the church," brusquely replied the constable. "The almoner of your majesty, Don Silvas, is here present, he can answer better than I."

Don Silvas trembled, and humbly said:

"Sire, the Bishop of Segovia is attached to the king's house; he who filled that station, died the past week, and the *feu* which names his successor is still upon the council table, and must be submitted to the veto of the pope. There is holding at Valladolid, a meeting of the princes of the church; all the bishops have gone there, and the Bishop of Madrid quitted his palace yesterday to attend it."

At these words a smile of joy played upon the lips of d'Ossuna. This joy was natural, for the young man was of the blood of the Gusmans, and the condemned, his cousin, was his dearest friend. The king perceived the smile; his eye assumed a new expression: it was a mixture of anger and authority.

"We are king," said he gravely, with a calmness which hid the storm within. "Our royal person must not be the mark for railleries—this sceptre seems light, gentlemen, but who dares smile at it, it shall crush like a block of iron! Besides, our holy father the pope is somewhat indebted to us, and we do not fear his disapprobation in the steps we are about to take. Since the King of Spain can create a prince, he can also make a bishop. Arise then, Don Ruy Lopez, I create you Bishop of Segovia! Arise priest, I order thee, and take thy seat in the church!"

The astonishment was complete—Don Ruy

Lopez arose mechanically, he hesitated, hung down his head, and tried to speak:

"May it please your majesty—" said he.

"Silence, lord bishop!" interrupted the king, "obey the words of thy sovereign. The formalities of thy installation shall be accomplished another day; our subjects shall not fail to know our will in this affair. Bishop of Segovia, accompany Calavar to the cell of the condemned. Receive the confession of the sinner, and in three hours abandon the body to the axe of the executioner. And then, Calavar, we will wait for thee in this saloon, thou shalt bring to us the head of the traitors, for Don Gusman, Prince of Calatrava, Duke of Medina Sidonia dies to-day. Let justice be done!"

Philip approached Ruy Lopez:

"I will give thee my seal ring, that the duke may believe thy word."

"Ah well, gentlemen, dare you still doubt the justice of your king?"

None replied. Ruy Lopez followed the executioner, and the king having taken his place, made a sign to one of his favorites, to come and continue the game. Don Ramirez, Count de Biscaye came and knelt upon the velvet cushion.

"With chess, gentlemen," said the king, smiling, "and your company, I shall pass the time of waiting very agreeably. Let none of you go out until the return of Calavar. We should suffer with *ennui* to lose the society of any of you."

After these ironical words, Philip commenced a game with Don Ramirez, and the lords, weary with fatigue, disposed themselves in groups. All regained its former state of order and quietness; whilst Calavar conducted the new bishop to the chamber of the condemned. The worthy man seemed the result of a change which we read of in fairy tales; was he really awake?—he half doubted it, and in his soul he cursed the court and the king. He perfectly comprehended that he was Bishop of Segovia, but he felt keenly at what price he had gained this dignity. What had Don Gusman done that the king should thus sacrifice him? Don Gusman the first chess-player in Spain! He reflected upon all this as he passed over the marble steps which led to the prisons of state, and prayed God that the earth might open and swallow him. His prayer was sincere, but he prayed in vain!

The Prince of Calatrava was confined in a narrow room panelled with oak; he was walking with a hurried step as they entered, which showed his anxiety of mind. The cell was furnished with a massive table, and two wooden stools; the floor was covered with thick mats;

all sounds were hushed—silence reigned supreme. A large crucifix was affixed to the wall, in the embrasure of an arched window which lighted it. Except this image of resignation and mercy, nothing ornamented the walls; the cell was cold and gloomy; it could be easily perceived that it was for the condemned the ante-chamber of the tomb. The window was high and guarded by iron bars; every precaution was taken to make it secure.

At the moment when Ruy Lopez entered, the sun filled with his bright beams the cell; it seemed like mockery to one who was so soon to see it no more. The duke saluted the new bishop of the church with much courtesy; they looked at each other with looks that said a thousand things. Ruy Lopez felt all the difficulty of his mission, and the duke divined it; both were occupied with the same thought, that though condemned, he was innocent; nevertheless the charges against the duke were serious—they were the discovery of a despatch written by his hand to the court of France, in which he disclosed a project for assassinating Philip II.; this had sufficed for his condemnation. Don Gusman, strong in his innocence, had besides, preserved before the judges a rigorous silence, and the accusation not being disproved, the sentence of death as a traitor had been passed upon him. During his trial, he had never quailed, and even at the last hour his spirit was unmoved—if his brow was contracted with anguish, his firm step unsteady, and his breath short, it was that he thought of his gentle betrothed, the beautiful Donna Estella, who, ignorant of his condemnation, awaited his coming in her chateau on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and if he faltered at this last hour, it was not for himself, but because love had enthroned itself in his heart, and made him forget all save her he loved. Don Ruy Lopez was not alone—Calavar was at his side, and it was he who now spoke to announce the king's answer, and the decision he had made. Ruy Lopez confirmed the recital, and the duke bent his head before the new bishop, and asked his blessing. Then without emotion, he turned to Calavar, and with an imposing gesture which showed his scorn, dismissed him, saying:

"In three hours I will be ready for thee." And the duke and bishop found themselves alone.

Don Ruy Lopez trembled; the face of Don Gusman returned to its usual serene expression. He took the hand of the bishop and pressed it warmly—there was a pause, when the duke said:

"We have met under more auspicious circumstances than now." And he smiled.

"It is true," replied Ruy Lopez, who pale and

anxious, seemed the condemned, rather than the confessor.

"Far more happy!" repeated the duke, carried back to other scenes in imagination. "Do you remember that when in presence of Philip and the court, you played your great game with Paoli-Boy the Sicilian, it was upon my right arm that the king leaned?"

Overcome by the recollections, and the melancholy tone in which they were uttered, the bishop hastened to change the subject.

"These are, my dear son, useless reminiscences. Let us not lose our time in vain words; employ it to make your peace with Heaven, while you can do so. Let us read together the holy service, hoping it may remove all stain from your soul, and prepare you for the great change!"

"A change indeed!" exclaimed the duke, smiling sadly at this exhortation. "Recall, my father, these words of Miguel Cervantes, and which are so apropos for us, 'Life is a game of chess;' I have forgotten the precise place where the passage occurs, but its signification is, that while upon the earth men play in different situations, that there are, as in chess, kings, knights, soldiers and bishops, according to birth, fortune, and fate; and then when the grave is finished, death enters the scene, and levels all in the tomb, as we throw the chess together in the box."

"I do remember those words of Don Quixote," replied Ruy, astonished at this singular conversation, "and I also remember the answer of Sancho, 'That however good the comparison might be, it was not so new but that he had heard it before.' But may God forgive us this lightness, my son!"

"I was for all that your favorite scholar, and even your antagonist," said the duke, without appearing to hear.

"It is true," exclaimed the bishop; "you are a great master of chess, and I esteem it an honor to have had such a pupil; but we must think of other things—kneel, my son."

Both knelt, and before the crucifix, at the foot of the image of the Saviour of the world, Don Gusman made his confession to Ruy Lopez, who received it weeping. Then when the duke had finished, two hours after—for the burial service under the seal of the church was long and affecting—the bishop blessed the prisoner, and gave him absolution. They then arose; the face of Don Gusman was calm and resigned. There was yet an hour to wait.

"This delay is frightful!" exclaimed the duke. "How can I endure for another hour this condemned life? Since the world and I have separated, why must I live on? An eternity of

suffering is in one of these moments of delay. Why does not the executioner come?"

The condemned walked his narrow cell; his eye turned to the door, and seemed to summon Calavar and his companions; his agony was apparent, and the firmness of the duke which had sustained him until now, faltered in this last fearful hour of suspense.

Ruy Lopez had fulfilled his mission. He must pass this last hour with him; but all exhortation was finished, the soul was pure; the priest was man again. At the hurried words of Don Gusman, and in his pale face, he comprehended immediately that thought overcame this strong nature, and that the last hour would be worse than death to him. He thought, but how could he alleviate his sorrow? What more could interest a man so soon to die? Suddenly a thought flashed through his brain.

"If a game of chess were not too profane?"

"The idea is admirable," said the duke, called anew to life by the proposition, and turning to it with avidity, "the idea is a bright one, but the chess, my friend?"

"I have them always with me," said Ruy Lopez, as he advanced and laid upon the table a small set of chess. "May our mother forgive me, but I sometimes amuse myself by combinations of chess in the confessional."

"And you resolve many problems by them, I have no doubt," answered the duke, smiling.

They drew the stools up to the table, sat down, arranged the chess, and the two lords, temporal and spiritual, were soon engaged in an interesting game. It was a singular picture to see, and worthy the pencil of Rembrandt or Salvator Rosa, this strange game between the priest and the condemned. The light shone upon the pale and noble countenance of Don Gusman, and the beams which escaped from the high window broke upon the benevolent face of Ruy Lopez, who, even while playing, tried in vain to stop the tears which pity caused to flow from his eyes. The emotions of the two players were very different; Ruy Lopez played with a distraction, not habitual to him, and which made him inferior to his usual power. Don Gusman, on the contrary, by one of those oddities of human nature, and stimulated by the excitement which devoured him, played with extraordinary power. At that moment the blood of Castile was not at fault, for never had the duke proved better the clearness of his calculations. This brightness of intellect reminded one of the last gleam of an extinguished lamp, or the harmonious notes of the dying swan. Don Gusman had attacked his adversary with an impetuosity which had made victory al-

most certain. Ruy Lopez, forgetting in spite of himself his sad thoughts, defended himself bravely, but his efforts were useless. The game was becoming more and more complicated; the bishop tried with skill to delay the check-mate which was inevitable, and the duke exerted all his power to bring the game to a crisis. Minutes passed over the time which separated them from the quarters, the quarter from the half hours, and the fatal moment has come!

A noise was heard; the door turned on its massive hinges; and the duke was arrested in his play and dream by the cold and terrible reality which presented itself at the appearance of the executioners!

The assistants of Calavar, armed with torches and swords, advanced, bringing a block covered with black cloth, which announced its object by the axe laid upon it. They put their torches in the niches prepared for them, while others threw cedar-dust upon the floor; this was done in an instant, and all was ready for the condemned. Ruy Lopez arose trembling at the sight of Calavar, but the duke moved not: he sat, his eyes fixed upon the chess-board, without paying any attention either to the men or the block. It was his turn to move. Calavar seeing his insensibility, put his hand upon the duke's shoulder, and pronounced a single word, "Come!"

The prisoner started as if he had put his foot upon a serpent.

"Let me finish my game," said he, imperiously.

"Impossible," replied Calavar.

"But fellow, I have beat, I shall certainly give a check-mate. Leave me my game."

"Impossible," repeated the executioner.

"Have the three hours passed?"

"The last stroke is sounding, we must obey the king!"

The servants who had been standing leaning upon their swords, now approached.

The duke was seated against the wall beneath the window, the table was between him and Calavar. He rose and said proudly:

"This game I must have, and you may have my head after it! Until I have finished it, I will not stir from my place! I must have half an hour; wait till then."

"Duke," replied Calavar, "I respect you, but I cannot grant you this, my life would be the forfeit."

Don Gusman made a movement—then drawing off the diamonds he wore on his fingers, threw them coldly at the feet of the executioner.

"I will finish my game," said he, abstractedly. The jewels rolled in the dust.

"My orders are precise," cried Calavar, impetuously. "Pardon, noble duke, if I use force, but the law of the king, and of Spain, must be accomplished. Quit then, your place, and do not spend the last moments of your life in useless contest. Speak to the duke, lord bishop: tell him to submit to his destiny."

The answer of Ruy Lopez was prompt and decisive. He seized the axe lying against the block, swung it round his head and exclaimed:

"Monsieur, the duke shall finish the game."

Terrified by the gesture which accompanied these words, Calavar started back, nearly falling upon his aids. Their swords were drawn, and the bloody band prepared for combat. But Ruy Lopez, who seemed to change into a Hercules, threw as a bar his oaken stool upon the floor, and exclaimed:

"The first of you who passes this limit fixed by the church, is a dead man! Courage, noble duke! to your game. There are but four of the miscreants, the last wish of your lordship shall be accomplished, or I will lose my life! And you, villains, woe to him who dares lay a hand upon a bishop of the church, let him be cursed forever! Who dares do it? Lay down your swords; I the bishop command it!"

He continued to repeat in a jargon mixed of Spanish and Latin, one of those formulas of excommunication and malediction, which at this period exercised so great power over the mass of the people. The effect of this speech was prompt. The assistants remained immovable, and Calavar thought that to kill a bishop without the direct order of the king, was to bring upon himself misfortune in this world, and perdition in another.

"I shall go to the king," said he.

"Go if you will," said the bishop, still maintaining his guard.

The executioner knew not what to do—he reflected—to go to Philip with this news, where he was awaiting the head of the traitor, was to expose his own surely. To attack the priest and the condemned, was hazardous; for Ruy Lopez was a strong man, and the duke smiled at the idea of a combat; the position was delicate. At length he took the side which seemed wisest.

"Will you really promise to finish in half an hour?" asked he.

"I promise it," replied the duke.

"Continue then your game."

The truce being concluded, the players returned to their places and game. Calavar, who also played chess, looked with interest on the game, and his assistants formed a barrier around the duke, which seemed to say:

"You shall finish the game!"

Don Gusman looked for a moment around him, and his humor did not fail him.

"I have never before played in so noble a company," said he; "be witnesses, hangmen, that once at least in my life, I have beaten Ruy Lopez; you may tell of it after my death."

He turned to his game, with a cold sad smile, like a sunbeam which lights the snowy summit of the Alps a moment and is gone, died on his lips. As for the bishop, he tightly grasped the handle of the axe in his right hand, accompanying the movement with this reflection:

"If I was sure that the duke and I could escape from this den of tigers, I would break the heads of all four."

If three hours had been long in the prisoner's cell, they had not passed more rapidly at the court of the king, Philip II. The monarch had played chess with his favorite—Don Ramirez de Biscaye, and the nobles, forced by etiquette to remain standing, appeared overcome by fatigue, increased still by the weight of their armor. Don Tarraxas, with eyes partly closed, was as motionless as one of the iron statues which ornamented the gothic saloons. The young d' Ossuna, sad and weary, leaned against a marble column. And the king, as he paced the floor, listened attentively, as if he heard a distant noise. Following the superstitious custom of the time, he knelt frequently at the feet of an image of the virgin, placed upon a pedestal of porphyry, taken from the ruins of the Alhambra, and prayed her to pardon him for the bloody deed which he had ordered to be executed; then he would turn to look at the hour-glass. All were as silent as the palace of Azrael, the angel of death, for no one, whatever his rank, dared speak before the sovereign without his order. When the last grain of sand which marked the fatal hour had run out, the king uttered a cry of joy and said:

"The traitor dies!"

A low murmur ran through the assembly.

"The time has expired," replied Philip, "and with it, Count de Biscaye, your enemy has fallen like the leaves of the olive shaken by the wind."

"My enemy, sire!" replied Ramirez, affecting surprise.

"Yes, count," said Philip, maliciously, "why repeat my words? Were you not a rival with Don Gusman in the affections of Donna Estella, and can two rivals be friends? Donna Estella shall be yours! this young girl shall give to you her wealth and her beauty. You see, count, if any one should speak of the ingratitude of sovereigns, you can say that we have not forgotten the true friend of the king and of Spain, who

has discovered the conspiracy and the correspondence of Don Gusman with France!"

Don Ramirez de Biscaye listened restlessly to the king. He did not raise his eyes, and seemed troubled because of this public praise; then he tried to speak:

"Sire," said he, "it was with great reluctance I fulfilled this painful duty."

He could not say more. Tarrazas slightly coughed, and d'Ossuna striking the pommel of his sword with his iron gauntlet:

"Before Donna Estella shall belong to that man, thought he, I will sleep in the tomb, where now my noble cousin sleeps. To-morrow shall be the day of revenge."

The king continued:

"Your zeal and your fidelity shall be rewarded. The preserver of the throne, and perhaps of our dynasty, merits an extraordinary recompence. This morning we ordered you with our principal chancellors, to write the letters-patent, which confers upon you the rank of duke and governor of Valencia—are they ready to sign?"

Don Ramirez grew pale—this reward seemed more than he could bear—he shuddered. The king made a movement. The count quickly drew from his bosom a roll of parchment, and kneeling, presented it to the king, who received it, saying:

"To sign these letters-patent shall be our first public act to-day. The executioner has already punished treason—it is time that the king rewards fidelity."

The king unrolled the parchment. Suddenly his face assumed an expression of indignation, his eyes flashed, and he cried in a loud and angry voice, "Holy mother! what do I see?"

The game of chess was finished; Don Gusman had won. He arose.

"I am always the devoted servant of my king," said he to Calavar.

The executioner understood him, and prepared the block, while Don Gusman knelt before the crucifix, and said in a firm voice:

"My God, may this cruel and unjust act fall upon him who has done it, but let not my blood fall in fiery rain upon my king!"

Ruy Lopez prostrated himself in a corner, and hiding his face under his cloak, repeated the prayers for the dying. Calavar leaned his hand upon the duke's shoulder, to remove his collar, Don Gusman recoiled.

"Let nothing belonging to thee, except this iron, touch a Gusman," said he, tearing off his collar, and placing his head upon the block. "Strike," added he, "I am ready!"

The executioner raised the axe—when the sound of footsteps and confused voices arrested his arm. The door suddenly opened under the strength of a troop of soldiers, and d'Ossuna threw himself between the victim and the executioner—it was time!

"He lives!" cried Tarrazas.

"He is saved!" repeated d'Ossuna. "My beloved cousin, I no longer hoped to see thee again; God would not permit the innocent to perish for the guilty. God be praised!"

"Thou hast come in time, my child," said Don Gusman to his cousin. "Now I have no more strength to die!"

He swooned upon the block—the ordeal was too great. Ruy Lopez lifted him in his arms, and carried him into the royal saloon, followed by all the lords, and when Don Gusman recovered, he saw himself surrounded by all his friends, in the midst of which appeared Philip II., with a smile of satisfaction on his face. Don Gusman believed himself dreaming. He did not know that Don Ramirez, in the excess of his joy, had by mistake, given to the king with the letters-patent to sign, a paper containing an account of a plot, the purpose of which was to free himself of Gusman, and thus destroy a detested rival, and one of the firmest supporters of the throne. He soon learned all, however, and three days after at the same hour, Calavar beheaded Don Ramirez Count de Biscaye, the traitor and accuser. Each one loaded Don Gusman with attentions, and the king pressing his hand, said:

"Gusman, I have been very unjust; I shall never forgive myself."

"Sire," replied the duke, "let it no more be spoken of. Such words as these from my sovereign are worth a thousand lives."

But the king continued:

"Friend, our royal desire is that from this time, to immortalize the remembrance of your almost miraculous deliverance, you bear upon your escutcheon a silver axe, on an azure chess-board. Then in the course of this month, you shall wed Donna Estella, and your nuptials shall be celebrated in our palace of the Escurial." And turning to Ruy Lopez, he added, "I believe the church will have a faithful servant in its new bishop. Thou shalt be dedicated lord prelate, with a scarlet robe, enriched with diamonds! This shall be the reward for thy game of chess with Don Gusman."

"Sire," replied Ruy Lopez, "never until this day have I been gratified at being check-mated."

There are men who delight in playing the fool, but are angry when told they succeed in it.