



The History of the Reign of Philip the Second, King of Spain, Vol III

William Hickling Prescott

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This volume is part three of three and was published in 1874.

Book Excerpts:

It was in the beginning of the eighth century, in the year 711, that the Arabs, filled with the spirit of conquest which had been breathed into them by their warlike apostle, after traversing the southern shores of the Mediterranean, reached the borders of those straits that separate Africa from Europe. Here they paused for a moment, before carrying their banners into a strange and unknown quarter of the globe. It was but for a moment, however, when, with accumulated strength, they descended on the sunny fields of Andalusia, met the whole Gothic array on the banks of the Guadalete, and, after that fatal battle in which King Roderick fell with the flower of his nobility, spread themselves, like an army of locusts, over every part of the Peninsula. Three years sufficed for the conquest of the country, except that small corner in the north, where a remnant of the Goths contrived to maintain a savage independence, and where the rudeness of the soil held out to the Saracens no temptation to follow them.

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It was much the same story that was repeated, more than three centuries later, by the Norman conquerors in England. The battle of Hastings was to that kingdom what the battle of the Guadalete was to Spain though the Norman barons, as they rode over the prostrate land, dictated terms to the vanquished of a sterner character than those granted by the Saracens.

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The war, which Don John had flattered himself he had so happily brought to a close, now, like a fire smothered but not quenched, burst forth again with redoubled fury. The note of defiance was heard loudest among the hills of Ronda, a wild sierra on the western skirts of the Alpujarras, inhabited by a bold and untamed race, more formidable than the

mountaineers of any other district of Granada. Aben-Aboo did all he could to fan the flame of insurrection in this quarter, and sent his own brother, El Galipe, to take the command.

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The body of Aben-Aboo was transported to the neighborhood of Granada, where preparations were made for giving the dead chief a public entrance into the city, as if he had been still alive. The corpse was set astride on a mule, and supported erect in the saddle by a wooden frame, which was concealed beneath ample robes. On one side of the body rode Barredo ; on the other, El Senix, bearing the scimitar and arquebuse of his murdered master. Then followed the kinsmen and friends of the Morisco prince, with their arms by their side. A regiment of Castilian infantry and a troop of horse brought up the rear.

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