

CANTO I

The Exile



MY CID TURNED HIS HEAD and stopped and gazed with streaming eyes. He beheld the open doors, the postern gates unbolted, and vacant the perches where once his skins and mantles hung, and his molting hawks were wont to rest.

My Cid sighed, for his heart was heavy.

My Cid spoke, well and measuredly:

“Blessed be the Lord Our God, Our Father who art on high! See now what my wicked enemies have wrought!”

Now they onward spurred, now dropped their reins. As they sallied forth from Bivar they beheld a bird of happy augury, and as they drew nigh to Burgos, one of evil omen! But My Cid shrugged his shoulders and shook his head.

“Rejoice with me, O Alvar Fáñez!” he cried. “We are cast out of our land! But we shall return, with honor, to Castile!”

Into Burgos rode My Cid, sixty lances in his company, and men and women ran out to see him. The citizens of Burgos, sorely weeping, stood at their windows, and each one made the same lament:

“God, what a worthy vassal, had he but a worthy lord!”

Gladly would they have sheltered him, but none dared, so fearful they of the great wrath of Don Alfonso the King, for his edict had come that day to Burgos, well guarded and strongly sealed with the royal seal, commanding that none give shelter to My Cid Ruy Díaz, and that he who did so would surely lose his goods, his eyes besides, his body even, and his soul! All Christian people with grief were

stricken; all fled the presence of My Cid and no one dared bespeak him. To his lodging rode the Campeador, but its door was locked in fear of King Alfonso and only by force could he have opened it. The men of My Cid shouted, but those within refused to answer. My Cid spurred forward and gave the door a mighty kick, but the door, well barred, held fast. Then up there came a little girl of nine and stood before him.

"O Campeador," cried she, "who in a happy hour girded on your sword, last night the King's edict came, well guarded and strongly sealed, forbidding us to help you. So we dare not open our doors to you for any price, nor yet give you shelter, for we should lose our goods and houses, our eyes besides. O Cid, nothing would you gain by our destruction, and may Our Lord God look after you with all His holy strength!"

Thus spoke the little girl and went back to her house.

Now did My Cid perceive he might expect no mercy from the King. So he left the door and spurred through Burgos to St. Mary's Church, and there alighted and fell upon his knees and prayed from his heart. His prayer finished, he mounted again and rode out St. Mary's Gate across the Arlanzón, and there upon a sandy spot, not far from Burgos, he pitched his tent and loosed his horse.

Thus My Cid, he who in a happy hour girded on his sword, seeing that no one would receive him, made his camp upon the sand, his goodly company about him. My Cid camped as in a wilderness, for it was forbidden him to buy his provender in the town of Burgos, and none dared sell him the smallest morsel that could be bought for money. But Martín Antolínez, that sturdy son of Burgos, got bread and wine for My Cid and his men. He bought it not, but gave of his own and supplied them well. My Cid, the excellent Campeador, was pleased with him, as were all his men.

Then up spoke Martín Antolínez. Hear now what he said:

"O Campeador, born in a happy hour, let us tarry here tonight, but tomorrow let us leave, for I shall be denounced for having served you, and the wrath of King Alfonso will be upon me. If I survive at your side, late or soon the King will want me for a friend. If he does not, well, I would not give a fig for what I leave behind."

My Cid, he who in a happy hour girded on his sword, thus made reply:

"Martín Antolínez, a sturdy lance you are! Your wages shall be doubled if I live! But now my gold is spent and all my silver. Well you know I have not wherewith to pay my company. Since I may not have it for the asking, I will take it. With your help I will make two coffers, which we will fill with sand to make them heavy and cover them with tooled leather, the leather red, the nails well gilded. Go then speedily to Raquel and Vidas and tell them this: that it is forbidden me to buy in Burgos, for the King has banished me; that I cannot bring my treasure with me, for it is heavy; and that I wish to pawn it at its just value. Let them bear it away by night, lest some Christian see it. And may Our Lord God and all His saints be judges of me, for what I do, I do because I must and can do no other."

Martín Antolínez rode swiftly through Burgos to the citadel and there asked urgently for Raquel and Vidas. These two were counting up their gains when Martín Antolínez, the prudent one, entered.

"Where are you, Raquel and Vidas, my dear friends?" cried he. "I would have a private word with you."

The three withdrew.

"And now, Raquel and Vidas," said Don Martín, "give me your solemn word that neither to Christian nor to Moor will you betray me, and I shall make you rich forever and you will never be in want again. Know, then, that when the Campeador went to collect the tribute he seized treasure in vast amount and kept for himself whatever was of value, and for this he was denounced. He has two coffers filled with gold fine-wrought. The King has banished him, as well you know, and he has abandoned his estates, his palaces and houses. He cannot bring the coffers with him, for he would be discovered. So the Campeador will leave them in your hands and you will lend him a just sum for them. Take the coffers and put them safely by, and give me your solemn word that in all the coming year you will not open them."

Raquel and Vidas communed together:

"We stand to make a profit in this business. Well we know he brought a great treasure back from Moorish lands. Ah, he sleeps not quietly who guards his money! Let us take these coffers, then, and put them safely by where they will not be found."

"But tell us now," they said to Don Martín, "what will My Cid be pleased to get for them and what usury will he pay?"

Martín Antolínez, like the prudent man he was, thus made reply:

"My Cid will accept what is just. Little will he ask if his treasure is safe. From all parts the disinherited are coming to join him and he will need six hundred marks to pay them."

"That we will give him gladly," said Raquel and Vidas.

"But night is coming on and My Cid is in great haste," said Don Martín. "We would have the money now."

"That is not the way that we do business," they replied. "We take first and give afterward."

"Agreed!" said Martín Antolínez. "Come you both with me to the illustrious Campeador and we will help you, as is right, to bear away the coffers and put them safely by where neither Moor nor Christian shall know their resting place."

"Good!" said Raquel and Vidas. "Do you bring the coffers here and you shall have your six hundred marks."

Martín Antolínez quickly mounts, with him Raquel and Vidas, now happy and content. They cross not by the bridge, but ford the river, lest they be seen by those of Burgos.

Behold them now at the tent of the famous Campeador. They enter and kiss his hands, and My Cid smiles and speaks to them:

"Ha, Raquel and Vidas, so you have not forgotten me, although the King no longer loves me and has banished me from the land! I will share my wealth with you, I think, and so long as you both shall live you will never be in want again."

Raquel and Vidas kiss the hands of My Cid.

Martín Antolínez draws up the contract: that they will give My Cid six hundred marks for the two coffers, which they agree to keep until the year is past; that they take oath that if they open them in all that while they will be forsworn and My Cid will give them not a cursed penny for their profit.

"Take the coffers quickly now," said Martín Antolínez. "Take them, Raquel and Vidas, and put them safely by. I will go with you and bring the money, for My Cid must be off before cock-crow."

Ah, you should have seen their joy when they tried to lift the coffers! They cannot get them upon their backs, although they are strong men both! Raquel and Vidas are happy men, for they will be rich so long as they both shall live!

Raquel then kissed the hands of My Cid and said:

“O Campeador, who in a happy hour girded on your sword, you are departing from Castile and will be among foreign people. Such is your good fortune that your gains will be great. O Cid, I kiss your hands and beg you to send me a vermilion skin, Moorish and beautiful.”

“That I shall do,” replied My Cid. “It is granted you forthwith. I will bring it you from yonder, or, if I fail to do so, you may take its value from the coffers.”

Raquel and Vidas then took up the coffers and bore them off to Burgos. They entered their lodging very quietly, spread a carpet upon the floor and over it a sheet of white linen. Don Martín then counted out three hundred silver marks, although he weighed them not. Three hundred more in gold they gave him, and Don Martín loaded the money upon the backs of his five squires. Which done, hear now what he said:

“Raquel and Vidas, the coffers are in your hands. Surely I who got them for you deserve a present.”

Raquel and Vidas withdrew apart and said:

“Let us reward him well for bringing us this business.”

“Martín Antolínez,” they said to him, “famed son of Burgos, well have you earned a present! Take now this rich skin and this good cloth and with them make yourself doublet and hose. Take these thirty marks besides—you well deserve them. This is only just, for you were the mediator of our contract.”

Don Martín thanked them and took the money, then bade them farewell and rode forth from Burgos across the Arlanzón and came to the tent of him who in a happy hour was born. My Cid received him with open arms.

“Martín Antolínez, my faithful vassal!” he cried. “You have returned! May I see the day when I can reward you!”

“Good news, O Campeador!” said Martín Antolínez. “Good news! You have your six hundred marks and I my thirty! Order your tent struck and let us go in haste, and let cockcrow find us in San Pedro de Cardena, where we shall see your noble wife. But make our stay there brief and let us leave the kingdom, as needs must, for our time grows short.”

He spoke and the tent was struck, and My Cid and his men mounted in all haste. My Cid turned his horse’s head toward St. Mary’s Church and raised his right hand and crossed himself, praying:

"I thank Thee, O God, Lord of heaven and earth! O glorious St. Mary, lend me Thy strength! Now must I depart from Castile, for the King loves me not, and I know not whether I shall return in all the days of my life. Help me, Glorious One, in my exile! Help and succor me both day and night! If Thou do so, and fortune favor me, good and beautiful gifts shall I bring Thee for thy altar. And I further promise I shall have a thousand masses sung in praise of Thee."

The illustrious one thus took his leave, his heart heavy and his spirit low, and his men mounted and spurred on. Then up spoke Martín Antolínez, that loyal son of Burgos:

"I wish to see my wife unhurriedly and leave instructions with my people. And if the King seize my estate, well, it matters not. I shall be with you again before the break of day."

Martín Antolínez then turned back to Burgos and My Cid spurred on toward San Pedro de Cardena with his knights who gladly served him.

The cocks were loudly crowing and day was breaking when the good Campeador came to San Pedro. Abbot Don Sancho, that excellent Christian, was saying matins, and Doña Ximena, with her the five noble ladies of her household, was thus praying to St. Peter and Our Lord:

"O Thou who rulest all, help Thou My Cid the Campeador!"

My Cid knocks. The news travels fast! God, how happy is Abbot Don Sancho! All run to the courtyard with lamps and torches to welcome him who in a happy hour was born.

"Thank God that you have come!" cried Abbot Don Sancho. "O Cid, this is your house!"

"I thank you, Sir Abbot," answered My Cid. "I am in your debt; but I shall tarry only to feed myself and men, for I must leave the country. Take these fifty marks, which I shall double if I live, for I would put the monastery to no pennyworth of expense. Receive besides these hundred marks for the service of Doña Ximena and her daughters and ladies-in-waiting this year. Cherish these daughters of mine, Abbot Don Sancho! I commend them to you. Serve them and my wife with all loving-kindness, and if this sum should not suffice, let them lack for nothing, I beseech you. For each mark you spend in their behalf four will I give the monastery."

The Abbot willingly agreed.

And now behold Doña Ximena who comes to My Cid, her daughters in the arms of their nurses. Doña Ximena kneels before the Campeador, sorely weeping, and would kiss his hands.

"O Campeador," she cried, "born in a happy hour, grant me now this boon! You are banished from the land by the work of wicked men. A boon, My Cid of the noble beard! Behold me here before you with your daughters, babies still, few in days, and these my ladies who serve me. You are leaving me and we must part in life. For St. Mary's love tell us what we must do!"

He of the noble beard held out his hands to his daughters and pressed them to his heart, for he loved them much. He wept and sighed heavily, saying:

"Ah, Doña Ximena, my noble wife, I love you as I love my soul! We must part in life: I go and you remain. May it please God and St. Mary that I may yet give these my daughters in marriage with my own hands and that I have the good fortune to live yet a little while in which to serve you, my honest wife!"

In San Pedro de Cardena a great feast is spread for the Campeador and the bells ring out.

In Castile the banishment of My Cid the Campeador is everywhere proclaimed, and some abandon their houses, others their estates, to join him. That very day a hundred and fifteen knights gather at the bridge of the Arlanzón and ask where My Cid the Campeador may be. Martín Antolínez meets them there and they set out for San Pedro de Cardena, where he is who in a happy hour was born.

My Cid heard that his company had increased, and mounted and went forth to meet them. When he saw them he smiled again, and all came up to kiss his hands. My Cid spoke joyfully:

"I pray God Our Heavenly Father that, before I die, I may reward you who have left your houses and estates for me! What you lose thereby you shall regain twofold!"

My Cid was happy to see his company increase, and all shared his happiness.

Know you now that six days of his term have passed and three remain, no more. The King has commanded that My Cid be watched and that if he be taken in the land after his term he escape not for gold or silver.

The day is done and night is falling. My Cid gathers his knights about him and speaks to them:

"Listen, my barons, and be not afflicted by what you shall hear. I have little money, but of what there is you shall have your share. Hear now what you must do. In the morning at cockcrow you will have your horses saddled. The good Abbot will ring for matins at St. Peter's and say the Mass of the Holy Trinity, and after Mass we shall ride, for the end of my term approaches and we have yet a long way to go."

As My Cid has commanded, so will they do. The night ends and day breaks, and at the second cockcrow they have their horses saddled.

The bells for matins are loudly rung, and My Cid and his wife hear Mass. Doña Ximena casts herself down upon the altar steps and thus prays Our Lord to shield My Cid the Campeador from all evil:

"Glorious Lord, Our Father who art in heaven, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, the stars and the moon, and the sun which warms us, made flesh in our Mother Mary, born in Bethlehem according to Thy will, where the shepherds magnified and praised Thee, where the three Kings of Araby came to adore Thee, Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar, and brought Thee a glad offering of gold and myrrh and frankincense;

"Thou who didst save Jonah when he fell into the sea, and Daniel from the lions in their noisome den, and in Rome didst save St. Sebastian, and Susanna from the lying slanderer;

"Thou, O Spiritual Father, who didst wander over the earth for two-and-thirty years working Thy renowned miracles, making wine of water and bread of stones, and bringing Lazarus back to life by the strength of Thy will;

"Thou who didst allow the Jews to seize Thee on Mt. Calvary and nail Thee to the Cross at Golgotha, between two thieves, the one now in Paradise, the other who entered not;

"Thou who, whilst Thou wert on the Cross, didst yet another miracle, for Longinus, a blind man who had never seen anything at all, but who wet his hands in Thy blood which was dripping from the shaft of the lance thrust in Thy side, and with it touched his face, and straightway saw and believed in Thee who thus didst cure him;

"Thou who didst come to life again in the tomb and descend into hell, as was Thy will;

“Thou who didst break open the doors and release the Holy Fathers;

“Thou who art King of Kings and Father of all;

“I adore Thee and believe in Thee with all my heart, and I beg St. Peter to help me pray God to shield My Cid the Campeador from harm and, though we now must part, to grant that we meet again in life!”

The prayer was done, the Mass said, and all left the church ready to mount. My Cid embraced Doña Ximena and she kissed his hands, weeping and knowing not what to do. He gazed upon his daughters and said:

“To God Our Father I now commend you. Now we must part and God knows when we shall meet again!”

Ah, such sorrow was never seen! They parted as the nail is parted from the flesh.

My Cid mounted with his vassals, but turned his head and tarried. Then up spoke Minaya Alvar Fáñez and wisely said:

“O Cid, whose mother bore you in a happy hour, where is your strength? We must ride and leave this idle talk. All these troubles will yet turn to pleasures. God who gave us life will give us counsel.”

But My Cid tarried yet a while, pleading with Abbot Don Sancho to protect Doña Ximena and her children, and promised him a rich reward. Don Sancho then turned back and Alvar Fáñez said to him:

“Should more men come to join us, Abbot, have them follow us in all haste, and in town or wilderness they will find us.”

They give their horses their heads and are on their way, for the hour to leave the kingdom is at hand.

My Cid stopped at Espinazo de Can, where many men joined him that night, coming from all parts.

Banished is My Cid, the loyal one!

The next day in the morning they were on the road again, on their left San Esteban, that good city. My Cid passed Alcubilla, which is the limit of Castile, and left by the Quinea road. He crossed the Duero at Navapalos and ended his day's journey at Figueruela. And all along the way men came from every part to join him.

Night fell and My Cid lay down. Sweet slumber overcame him and soundly did he sleep. And the Angel Gabriel appeared to him in a dream and said.

"Ride, O Cid, my good Campeador, for never did knight ride so luckily! Things will go well with you so long as you shall live!"

My Cid awoke and crossed himself. Which done, he commended himself to God, well pleased with his dream.

The next morning they mount again, for, know you, it is the last day of his term. They rest at Sierra de Miedes, on their right the towers of Atienza held by the Moors. While it is still day and the sun has not yet set, My Cid commands his men to parade. Leaving out the valiant men of his foot, he counts three hundred lances, all with their pennants.

"In the morning you will feed your horses," said he, "and God save you! Let him who wishes, eat; if not, let him mount. We shall cross the mountains, high and rugged, and this night we shall be beyond the land of King Alfonso. And then let him who seeks us find us!"

In the night they cross the mountains. Dawn comes and they descend the other side. In the midst of a wonderful great wood My Cid calls a halt to feed the horses and tell his men they will march again that night. And they, good vassals that they are, willingly obey him. Whatever their lord commands, that will they do. They ride again before nightfall and march by night, lest they be seen. They give themselves no rest and, near the town of Castejón on the Henares, My Cid sets an ambush. He lay in ambush all that night and Alvar Fáñez counseled him, saying:

"O Cid, who in a happy hour girded on your sword, since we plan to take Castejón by surprise, do you remain in the rear with a hundred men of our company, while I take two hundred and ride on ahead. With God's help and your good luck we shall take much booty!"

"Well spoken, Alvar Fáñez!" replied My Cid the Campeador. "Do you lead the van with two hundred, and let Alvar Alvarez go with you, and Alvar Salvadórez, and Galindo García, a brave lance, good barons all! Strike boldly, lest you lose your spoils through fear. Let the van advance downsteam from Hita past Guadalajara, as far as Alcalá. Make sure of your prizes and lose nothing from fear of the Moors. I with my hundred, flanked by Castejón, will hold the rear. If you have trouble send me word and all Spain will talk of the help I give you!"

The men of the van are told off, and those who will remain in the rear. Now dawn is breaking and morning is at hand. The sun shines forth. God, how beautiful it is!

The people of Castejón arise and open their gates and go forth to tend their fields. All have now left, their gates are wide, and few remain in Castejón. The people are scattered without.

The Campeador then leaves his ambush and makes for the gate. The guards see him coming and abandon it in fear. My Cid Ruy Díaz, bare sword in hand, then attacks and slays some fifteen Moors who oppose him. He takes Castejón and all its gold and silver. His knights bring up the booty and leave it with My Cid. They value it not at all.

Behold now the two hundred of the van and three, how they boldly ride and sack the countryside. Minaya's standard reaches Alcalá. They bring their booty up the Henares by Guadalajara. Great are the spoils: many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and clothing and other riches. Minaya's standard holds firm and none dares attack his rear. Laden with spoils the company returns. Behold them once again in Castejón, where the Campeador awaits them. My Cid leaves the castle to its guard and marches forth with all his men. He greets Minaya, embracing him:

"Is it you, Alvar Fáñez, my stout lance? Where I send you there would I expect such deeds! Let us heap together all our spoils and of all our gains I will give you the fifth part, Minaya, if you will accept it."

"Much do I thank you, illustrious Campeador!" replied Alvar Fáñez. "The Castilian Alfonso himself would be happy to have this fifth you offer me! But I yield it to you; you owe me nothing. Before God on high I vow that until I am sated with fighting Moors on the field of battle, mounted on my good horse, thrusting with my lance and striking with my sword, their blood dripping from my elbow down, in the presence of My Cid Ruy Díaz, the renowned Battler, I shall take from you not a cursed penny! When with my help you shall have won something of worth, very well, but the rest, lo, it is yours!"

The spoils are heaped up. My Cid, he who in a happy hour girded on his sword, thinks that Alfonso's men may come and seek him out, so he commands that all the booty be divided and the umpires verify what each is to receive. His knights get a goodly share, each a hundred marks, the foot half as much, and My Cid is given all his fifth. But he cannot sell it here, nor yet give it as a present; nor does he wish to keep the captives, men and women, in his company. He speaks with those of Castejón and sends word also to Hita and Guadalajara. However

great the price they pay for his fifth, they will profit greatly. They offer three thousand marks and after three days pay him faithfully.

My Cid thinks they cannot remain in the castle and his men agree with him. They can, indeed, defend it, but hold it they cannot, for lack of water.

“Now that the Moors are pacified,” said he, “and the treaty is signed, King Alfonso may seek us out with all his forces. Hear me now, my men, and hear me, Minaya, and be not offended by what I say. I wish to abandon Castejón, for King Alfonso is close by and may attack us. But I will not destroy the castle. I will set free two hundred of these Moors, lest they speak ill of me for what I have seized of theirs. All of you have now your share of the booty and none is left unpaid. We will depart in the morning, for I will not fight my lord King Alfonso.”

All approve the words of My Cid. All, now rich, abandon the castle they have taken, and the Moors, men and women, bless Him. They march up the Henares as far as they may go, beyond Alcarria and the Caves of Anguita, and across the river and well into the Plain of Taranz.

My Cid encamps between Ariza and Cetina. In all parts, wherever he goes, he amasses great booty. The Moors know not his plan. The next day My Cid, he of Bivar, moves on beyond Alhama and La Hoz, Briviesca also, and Ateca, and halts at Alcocer, on a round hill, high and strong. Near by runs the Jalón, so that water cannot be denied him.

My Cid, Don Rodrigo, plans to take Alcocer!

He makes his camp upon the hill, some of his tents upon the heights, others on the river. The good Campeador, he who in a happy hour girded on his sword, puts all his men to work digging a trench, so that neither by day nor by night can they be surprised, and so that all the world may know here dwells My Cid!

It is quickly noised throughout the land that My Cid has left Christendom and is now settled among the Moors, who hardly dare to work their fields. My Cid rejoices, as do all his men, for the castle of Alcocer will soon pay them tribute.

Those of Alcocer do pay tribute to My Cid, and those of Ateca as well, and the town of Terror; but those of Calatayud, know you, like it not at all.

Fifteen full weeks My Cid rested there, and when he saw that Alcocer would not yield he planned a stratagem and put it promptly into effect. Striking all his tents save one, he marched off down the Jalón, pennants flying, clad in their coats of mail, swords buckled on—all this to deceive those of Alcocer. They saw him go and, God, how pleased they were!

“The Cid’s provisions have failed him,” they said. “He had not time to strike his tents and has left one standing. My Cid is marching off to escape disaster! Let us attack him now and win great booty, before those of Terror capture him, for if they do they will leave nothing for us. He shall pay us doubly for the tribute he has taken!”

They sally forth from Alcocer with wonderful speed. My Cid sees them and pretends to fly. Down the Jalón he spurs with his men.

“There go our spoils!” shout those of Alcocer, and young and old run out, in their mouths the taste of booty, leaving their open gates unguarded.

The good Campeador turns his head and sees a wide space between the Moors and the castle. He commands that his standard be reversed and his men spur back.

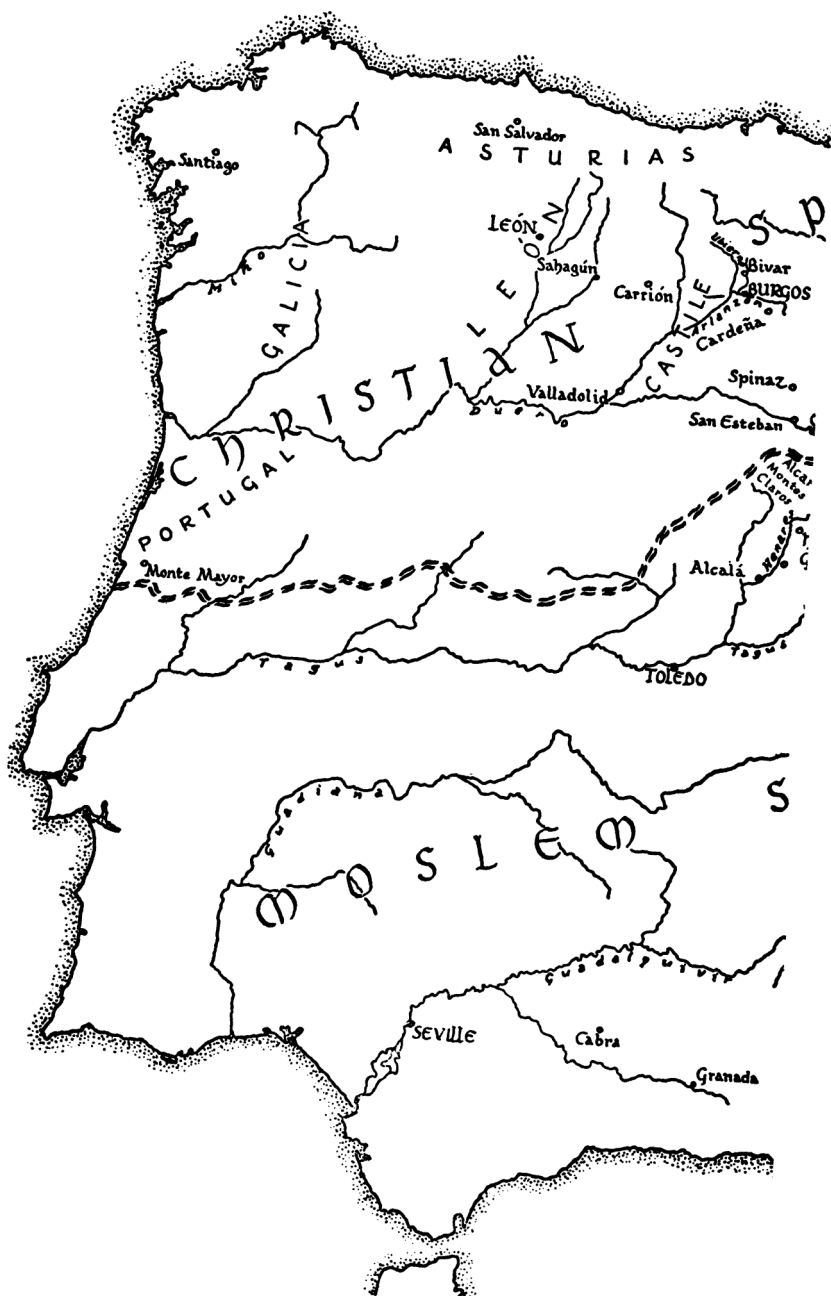
“At them, my knights!” he cried. “Strike fearlessly! With the help of God we shall win this day!”

In the midst of the plain the battle is joined. God, what a happy morning! My Cid and Alvar Fáñez spur on ahead, for they have good mounts, and cut the Moors off from the castle. The vassals of My Cid strike without pity and in a brief space slay three hundred Moors. Now his men who have been in ambush set up a great shout and run out with bared swords. They halt at the gate, but soon the rest join them and the victory is theirs.

Thus by a stratagem did the Cid win Alcocer.

Pedro Bermúdez, who bore the standard, climbed up and planted it in the highest place. Then spoke My Cid, born in a happy hour:

“Thanks be to God in heaven and to all His saints! We now have better quarters for our horses and their riders! Hear me now, Alvar Fáñez and all my knights. We have won great spoils in this castle. We have slain many Moors and I see few alive. The captives, men and women, cannot be sold, and we would gain nothing by beheading them. Let us bring them back to the castle, then, now that we are the masters, and we can lodge in their houses and use them in our service.”





My Cid is now in Alcocer, with all his booty, and sends for the tent he had left standing.

Those of Ateca like it not at all, nor do those of Terrer, and those of Calatayud, know you, take it very hard. They send word to King Mutamin of Valencia, that a certain Cid, Ruy Díaz de Bivar, who was banished by King Alfonso, is encamped in a strong place near Alcocer and by a stratagem has taken the castle.

"If you come not to our aid," they said, "you will lose Ateca and Terrer, Calatayud besides, which cannot escape. All will be lost in the valley of the Jalón, as well as in that of the Jiloca beyond."

King Mutamin heard and was dismayed. Said he:

"I have three Moorish kings here with me. Do two of you proceed thither without delay, with three thousand men, well armed. With the help of those of the frontier take him alive and bring him before me. He shall pay for invading my lands!"

The three thousand mount and are on their way. By nightfall they are at Segorbe. The next morning they ride on and that evening come to Celfa. They send word to those of the frontier, who quickly gather from every part. They leave Celfa del Canal, as it is called, and march the whole day without rest, and by nightfall are at Calatayud. They send criers throughout the land and a great multitude assembles about the two kings, Fáriz and Galve. They plan to besiege My Cid in Alcocer.

They pitch their tents and make their camp. Their forces grow and they now have many men. They post sentries day and night, all fully armed. Many are the sentries, great is the host! They cut off the water of My Cid and his men. My Cid's companies wish to go forth and give battle, but he who in a happy hour was born forbids it. He is besieged for three full weeks. At the end of the third and as the fourth is beginning My Cid calls his men to council and says:

"Our water has been cut off and our provisions are failing. They will not allow us to leave by night and they are too strong for us to fight. Tell me now, my barons, what is your pleasure?"

Then up spoke Minaya, that excellent knight, and said:

"We are far from our noble Castile and can win our bread only by fighting the Moors. We number six hundred, perhaps a few more. In God's name let us attack them tomorrow! This only let us do!"

"You speak to my liking, Minaya!" said the Campeador. "You honor yourself thereby, as I expected of you."

My Cid commands that all the Moors, men and women, be expelled from Alcocer, lest they betray his plan. All that day and all that night the Cid's men arm themselves, and in the morning, just at sunrise, My Cid and his men are ready. My Cid speaks. Hear now what he says:

"We will ride forth and let none remain save two men to hold the gate, and if we die in the field they may have their castle! If we win we shall be the richer! Do you, Pedro Bermúdez, bear my standard. You are a stout man and will guard it faithfully, but do not advance with it until I so order."

Bermúdez takes the standard and kisses My Cid's hands. The gate is opened and they dash forth. The Moorish sentries see them coming and speedily give the alarm. How quickly do the Moors don their armor! At the roll of their drums the very earth trembles! Ah, you should have seen them take their arms and form their lines! They have two royal standards, and the pennants mingled amongst them, who can count them? The Moorish lines advance to attack My Cid.

"Stand your ground, my men!" cries he. "Let no man move until I give the word!"

But Pedro Bermúdez cannot contain himself, and with the standard in his hand he spurs forward, shouting:

"Now God be with you, loyal Cid the Campeador! I shall bear your standard into the thick of their lines. Let us now see whether your vassals will rally round it!"

"Stop, for the love of God!" cried My Cid.

"Nothing in the world can stop me!" replied Bermúdez.

He spurs his horse and charges into the lines. The Moors await him to seize the standard. They deal him heavy blows, but cannot pierce his armor.

"Help him, if you love me!" cried My Cid.

His men embrace their shields and lower their lances, pennants flying. They lean forward in their saddles and attack with strong hearts. With great shouts he who in a happy hour was born urges them on:

"Strike, my knights, in the name of God! I am Ruy Díaz the Cid, the Campeador of Bivar!"

All charge the line where Pedro Bermúdez is, three hundred lances with their pennants! Each one slays his Moor, and upon their return they slay as many more!

Ah, you should have seen all those lances striking, piercing and bursting shields and coats of mail, all those white pennants now red with blood, all those horses running riderless! The Moors invoke Mohammed, the Christians St. James, and in a little while a thousand and three hundred Moors lie dead upon the field!

Ah, how well does My Cid Ruy Díaz the good fighter do battle from his gilded saddle! And Minaya Alvar Fáñez, who commanded at Zorita! And Martín Antolínez, that noble son of Burgos! And Muño Gustioz, that servant of the Cid! And Martín Muñoz, who commanded at Monte Mayor! And Alvar Alvarez! And Alvar Salvadórez! And Galindo García, the good Aragonese! And Félix Muñoz, that nephew of the Campeador! And so with all the rest, all charge to the rescue of My Cid and his standard.

The horse of Minaya Alvar Fáñez is killed, but well is he succored by the Christian squadrons. His lance is broken, but he grasps his sword and smites mightily, now on foot. My Cid Ruy Díaz the Castilian sees his plight and attacks a Moorish knight, well mounted, and strikes him a blow that cleaves him through the middle and drops him to the ground. The Moor's horse he gives to Minaya, shouting:

"Mount, Minaya, my right arm! I have need of you this day! The Moors stand fast and hold the field. Let us finish them!"

Minaya mounts, sword in hand. He fights valiantly and destroys all he meets. My Cid Ruy Díaz, he who in a happy hour was born, thrusts thrice at King Fáriz. Twice he misses, but at the third thrust he strikes home and the blood gushes forth. The Moor turns tail and flies the field. With that single blow the Moorish host is vanquished.

Martín Antolínez aims a blow at King Galve which cuts the rubies from his helmet and touches his flesh. The Moor tarries not for a second blow, of this you may be sure!

King Fáriz and King Galve are defeated. What a day for the Christians! The Moors are flying in all directions and the men of My Cid pursue them. King Fáriz takes refuge in Terrer, but King Galve is not admitted, and he gallops full speed to Calatayud, pursued the whole distance by the Campeador.

The horse of Minaya Alvar Fáñez serves him well. He slays thirty-four of those Moors! His blade is sharp and his arm is all bloody and dripping from the elbow down.

"Now I am quit!" he cries. "The good news will reach Castile, how My Cid has won this battle!"

Many Moors lie dead about him. He strikes them as they fly and leaves few alive.

The men of him who in a happy hour was born now return. My Cid, sword in hand, is riding his good horse, his hood thrown back, his coif open. God, what a beard he has! His men approach.

"Thanks be to God on high!" he shouts. "Ours is this great victory!"

My Cid's men sack the Moorish camp, taking shields and arms and riches in profusion. They gather up the horses of the Moors and find they have five hundred and ten. And how great their joy when they learn they have lost but fifteen of their men! They have so much gold and silver that they know not what to do with it. The Christians all are rich with booty.

The Moors of Alcocer are brought back to their castle and My Cid commands they be rewarded. My Cid rejoices with all his vassals. He has the great spoils distributed, and his fifth comes to a hundred horses. God, how well does he pay his vassals, foot as well as horse! He does wisely, he who in a happy hour was born, and all his men are well content.

"Hear me now, Minaya, my right arm," said he. "Of these riches that the Creator has given us take what you will. I wish to send you to Castile with the news of this great battle we have won, and for King Alfonso who banished me, a gift of thirty horses, all saddled and bridled, with swords hanging from their saddlebows."

"Gladly will I do so!" replied Minaya Alvar Fáñez.

"And take this boot well filled with gold and silver, and with it pay for a thousand masses at St. Mary's of Burgos. What is left give to my wife and daughters and have them pray for me night and day. If I live they shall be rich!"

Minaya Alvar Fáñez is well content. Those of his company are named and they feed their horses. At nightfall My Cid calls his men to council and says: