The Dead COMMAND

(NOVEL)



By

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez

Translator**:**

Frances Douglas

ILLUSTRATED

&

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About Author

Blasco Ibáñez:



Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867 – 1928) was a journalist, politician and best-selling Spanish novelist in various genres whose most widespread and lasting fame in the English-speaking world is from Hollywood films adapted from his works.

Short Biography:

He was born in Valencia. At university, he studied law and graduated in 1888 but never went into practice. He was more interested in politics, journalism, literature and women. He was a particular fan of Miguel de Cervantes.

In politics he was a militant Republican partisan in his youth and founded a newspaper, *El Pueblo* (translated as *The People*) in his hometown. The newspaper aroused so much controversy that it was taken to court many times. In 1896, he was arrested and sentenced to a few months in prison. He made many enemies and was shot and almost killed in one dispute. The bullet was caught in the clasp of his belt. He had several stormy love affairs.

He volunteered as the proofreader for the novel *Noli Me Tangere*, in which the Filipino patriot José Rizal expressed his contempt of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. He travelled to Argentina in 1909 where two new cities, Nueva Valencia and Cervantes, were created. He gave conferences on historical events and Spanish literature. Tired and disgusted with government failures and inaction, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez moved to Paris at the beginning of World War I. When living in Paris, Ibáñez had been introduced to the poet and writer Robert W. Service by their mutual publisher Fisher Unwin, who asked Robert W. Service to act as an interpreter in the deal of a contract concerning Ibáñez.

He was a supporter of the Allies in World War I.

He died in Menton, France in 1928, the day before his 61st birthday, in the residence of Fontana Rosa (also named the House of Writers, dedicated to Miguel de Cervantes, Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac) that he built.

Writing career:

His first published novel was "*La araña negra*" ('The Black Spider') in 1892, an immature work that he later repudiated – a study of the connections between a noble Spanish family and the Jesuits throughout the 19th century. It seems to have been a vehicle for him to express his anti-clerical views.

In 1894, he published his first mature work, a novel called "*Arroz y tartana*" (*Airs and Graces*). The story is about a widow in late 19th century Valencia trying to keep up appearances in order to marry her daughters well. His next books consist of detailed studies of aspects of rural life in the farmlands of Valencia – the so-called *huerta* that the Moorish colonizers had created to grow crops such as rice, vegetables and oranges, with a carefully planned irrigation system in an otherwise arid landscape. The concern with depicting the details of this lifestyle qualifies Blasco Ibáñez as an example of Costumbrismo:

- *Flor de mayo* (1895) ('Mayflower')
- *La barraca (novel)* (es) (1898) ('The Hut')
- *Entre naranjos* (es) (1900) ('Between Orange Trees')
- *Cañas y barro* (es) (1902) ('Reeds and Mud')

These works also show the influence of Naturalism which he would most likely have assimilated through reading Émile Zola. The characters in these works are determined by the interaction of heredity, environment and social conditions – race, milieu, et moment – and the novelist is acting as a kind of scientist, drawing out the influences that are acting upon them at any given moment. They are powerful works but are sometimes flawed by heavy-handed didactic elements. For example, in *La Barraca*, the narrator often preaches the need for these ignorant people to be better-educated. There is also a strong political element – he shows how destructive it is for these poor farm-workers to be fighting each other rather than uniting against their true oppressors – the Church and the land-owners. However, alongside the preaching, there are lyrical and highly detailed accounts of how the irrigation canals are managed and of the workings of the age-old "*tribunal de las aguas*" – a court composed of farmers that meets weekly close by Valencia Cathedral to decide

which farm gets to receive water when and which also arbitrates on disputes on access to water. "*Cañas y barro*" is often adjudged the masterpiece of this phase of Blasco Ibáñez's writings.

Other Books of Ibáñez:

Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis (1916)

La Catedral (1903)

Sangre y Arena (1908)

Cañas y Barro (1902)

Entre naranjos (1900)

Los enemigos de la mujer (1919)

Los argonautas (1915)

Los muertos mandan (1909)

La Barraca (1898)

Mare nostrum (1918)

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BY

VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ
AUTHOR OF "SONNICA"

From the Spanish
LOS MUERTOS MANDAN

Translation

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FRANCES DOUGLAS



NEW YORK

DUFFIELD & COMPANY

1919

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PART FIRST

CHAPTER I: A MAJORCAN PALACE



Jaime Febrer arose at nine o'clock. Old Antonia, the faithful servant who cherished the memory of the past glories of the family, and who had attended upon Jaime from the day of his birth, had been bustling about the room since eight o'clock in the hope of awakening him. As the light filtering through the transom of a broad window seemed too dim, she flung open the worm-eaten blinds. Then she raised the gold-fringed, red, damask drapery which hung like an awning over the ample couch, the ancient, lordly, and majestic couch in which many

generations of Febrers had been born and in which they had died.

The night before, on returning from the Casino, Jaime had charged her most earnestly to arouse him early, as he was invited to breakfast at Valldemosa. Time to get up! It was the finest of spring mornings; in the garden birds were singing in the flowery branches swayed by the breeze that blew over the wall from the sea.

The old servant, seeing that her master had at last decided to get out of bed, retreated to the kitchen. Jaime Febrer strolled about the room before the open window almost nude. There was no danger of his being seen. The dwelling opposite was an old palace like his own, a great house with few windows. From his room he could see a wall of indefinite color, with deep scars, and faint traces of ancient frescoes. It was so near, the street being extremely narrow, that it seemed as if he might touch it with his hand.

Nervous on account of an important event which was to take place in the morning, he had passed a restless night, and the heaviness following the short and indifferent sleep led him to seek eagerly the invigorating effect of cold water. Febrer made a sorry grimace as he bathed in the primitive, narrow, and uncomfortable tub. Ah poverty! His home was devoid of even the most essential conveniences despite its air of stately luxury, a stateliness which modern wealth can never emulate. Poverty with all its annoyances stalked forth to meet him at every turn in these halls which reminded him of splendidly decorated theaters he had seen in his European travels.

Febrer glanced over the grandiose room with its lofty ceiling as if he were a stranger entering the apartment for the first time. His powerful ancestors had built for giants. Each room in the palace was as large as a modern house. The windows were without glass all over the house and in winter they had to be closed by wooden shutters which admitted no light except that entering through the transoms, and these were studded with crystals cracked and dimmed by time. Lack of carpets disclosed floors of soft Majorcan sandstone cut in small rectangles like wooden blocks. The rooms still boasted the old-time splendor of vaulted ceilings, some dark, with skilfully fitted paneling, others with a faded and venerable gilding forming a background for the colored escutcheons which were emblazoned with the coat of arms of the house. In some rooms the high walls, simply whitewashed, were covered by rows of ancient paintings, and in others were concealed by rich hangings of gay colors which time had failed to destroy. The sleeping room was decorated with eight enormous tapestries of a shade of dull green leaves representing gardens, broad avenues of trees in autumnal foliage leading to a small park where deer were frisking, or where solitary fountains dripped into triple basins. Above the doors hung old Italian paintings in soft brown tones representing nude, amber-hued babes fondling curly lambs. The arch dividing the alcove from the rest of the apartment suggested the triumphal order, its fluted columns sustaining a scroll-work of carved foliage with the softened luster of faded gilding, as if it were an ancient altar. Upon an eighteenth century table stood a polychrome statue of Saint George treading Moors beneath his charger; and beyond was the bed, the imposing bed, a venerable family monument. Antique chairs with curved arms, the red velvet

so worn and threadbare as to disclose the white woof, jostled against modern cane-bottomed chairs and the wretched bath-tub.

"Ah, poverty!" sighed the heir of the estate.

The old Febrer mansion, with its beautiful unglazed casements, its tapestry-filled halls, its carpetless floors, its venerable furniture jumbled with the meanest of chattels, reminded him of a poverty-stricken prince wearing his brilliant mantle and his glittering crown, but barefooted and destitute of underclothing.

Febrer himself was like this palace—this imposing and empty frame which in happier times had sheltered the glory and wealth of his ancestors. Some had been merchants, others soldiers, navigators all. The Febrer arms had floated on pennants and flags over more than fifty full-rigged ships, the pride of the Majorcan marine, which, after clearing from Puerto Pi, used to sail away to sell the oil of the island in Alexandria, taking on cargoes of spices, silks, and perfumes of the Orient in the ports of Asia Minor, trading in Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, or, passing the Pillars of Hercules, plunging into the fogs of Northern seas to carry to Flanders and the Hanseatic Republics the pottery of the Valencian Moors called majolica by foreigners because of its Majorcan origin. These voyages over pirate-infested seas had converted this family of rich merchants into a tribe of valorous warriors. The Febrers had now fought, now entered into alliances with Turkish corsairs, with Greeks, and with Algerines; they had sailed their fleets through Northern seas to face the English pirates, and, on one occasion, at the entrance of the Bosphorus, their galleys had rammed the vessels of Genoese merchants who were trying to

monopolize the commerce of Byzantium. Finally, this family of soldiers of the sea, on retiring from maritime commerce, had rendered tribute of blood in the defense of Christian kingdoms and the Catholic faith by enlisting some of its scions in the holy Order of the Knights of Malta. The second sons of the house of Febrer, at the very moment of receiving the water of baptism, had the eight-pointed white cross, symbolizing the eight beatitudes, sewed to their swaddling-bands, and on reaching manhood they became captains of galleys of the warlike Order, and ended their days as opulent knights commanders of Malta recounting their deeds of prowess to the children of their nieces, being tended in their illnesses and having their wounds dressed by the slave women with whom they lived despite their vows of chastity. Renowned monarchs passing through Majorca would leave their sumptuous quarters in the Almudaina to visit the Febrers in their palace. Some members of this great family had been admirals in the king's armada; others governors of far distant lands; some slept the eternal sleep in the Cathedral of La Valette beside other illustrious Majorcans, and Jaime had done homage at their tombs during one of his visits to Malta.

La Lonja, the graceful Gothic structure near the sea at Palma, had been for centuries a feudal possession of his forefathers. Everything was for the Febrers which was flung upon the mole from the high-forecastled galleons, from Oriental cocas with their massive hulls, from fragile lighters, lateen-sailed settees, flat-bottomed tafureas, and other vessels of the epoch; and in the great columnar hall of La Lonja, near the Solomonic pillars which disappeared within the shadows of the vaulted ceilings, his ancestors in regal majesty used to receive

voyagers from the Orient who came clad in wide breeches and red fezzes; Genoese and Provençals wearing capes with monkish hoods; and the valiant native captains of the island covered with their red Catalonian helmets. Venetian merchants sent their Majorcan friends ebony furniture delicately inlaid with ivory and lapis lazuli, or enormous, heavy plate-glass mirrors with bevelled edges. Seafarers returning from Africa brought ostrich feathers and tusks of ivory; and these treasures and countless others added to the decoration of the halls, perfumed by mysterious essences, the gifts of Asiatic correspondents.

For centuries the Febrers had been intermediaries between the Orient and the Occident, making of Majorca a depository for exotic products which their ships afterward scattered throughout Spain, France, and Holland. Riches flowed in fabulous abundance to the house. On some occasions the Febrers had made loans to their sovereigns, but this did not prevent Jaime, the last of the family, after losing in the Casino the night before everything which he possessed—some hundreds of pesetas—from borrowing money for a journey to Valldemosa on the following morning from Toni Clapés, the smuggler, a rough fellow of keen intelligence, the most faithful and disinterested of his friends.

While Jaime stood combing his hair he intently studied his image in an antique mirror, cracked and dimmed. Thirty-six! He could not complain of his looks. He was ugly, but it was a grandiose ugliness, to adopt the expression of a woman who had exercised a peculiar influence over his life. This ugliness had yielded him some satisfactory adventures. Miss Mary Gordon, a blonde-haired idealist, daughter of the governor of an

English archipelago in Oceanica, traveling through Europe accompanied only by a maid, had met him one summer in a hotel at Munich. She it was who first became impressed, and it was she who took the first steps. According to the young lady, the Spaniard was the living picture of Wagner in his youth. Smiling at the pleasant memory, Febrer contemplated the prominent brow which seemed to oppress his imperious, small, ironic eyes. His nose was sharp and aquiline, the nose common to all the Febrers, those daring birds of prey who haunted the solitudes of the sea. His mouth was scornful and receding, his lips and chin prominent and covered by the soft growth of the beard and mustache, thin and fine.

Ah, delicious Miss Mary! Their happy pilgrimage through Europe had lasted almost a year. She was madly enamored on account of his resemblance to a genius, and wished to marry him; she told him of the governor's millions, mingling her romantic enthusiasm with the practical tendencies of her race; but Febrer ran away at last, before the English woman should in her turn leave him for some orchestra director or other Who might be an even more striking double of her idol.

Ah, women!... Jaime straightened his figure which was manly, though the shoulders bent somewhat from his excessive stature. It had been some time since he had taken interest in women. A few gray hairs in his beard, a slight wrinkling around the eyes, revealed the fatigues of a life which, as he said, had whirled "at full speed." But even so he was popular, and it was love that should lift him out of his pressing situation.

Having finished his toilette he left the dormitory. He crossed a vast salon lighted by the sunshine filtering through shutters

in the windows. The floor lay in shadow and the walls shone like a brilliant garden, covered as they were by interminable tapestries with figures of heroic size. They represented mythological and biblical scenes; arrogant dames with full pink flesh standing before red and green warriors; imposing colonnades; palaces hung with garlands; scimitars aloft, heads strewed over the ground, troops of big-bellied horses with one foot lifted; a whole world of ancient legends, but with colors fresh and vernal, despite their centuries, bordered with apples and foliage.

As Febrer passed through the stately hall he glanced ironically at these treasures, the inheritance from his ancestors. Not one of them was his! For more than a year these tapestries, and also those in the dormitory, and throughout the house, had been the property of certain usurers of Palma who had chosen to leave them hanging in their places. They were awaiting the chance visit of some wealthy collector who would pay more royally believing them to be purchased direct from their owner. Jaime was only their custodian, in danger of imprisonment should he prove false to his trust.

Reaching the center of the salon, he turned aside, impelled by habit, but seeing nothing to obstruct his passage, he burst into a laugh. A month ago a choice Italian marble table which the famous knight commander, Don Priamo Febrer, had brought back from one of his privateering expeditions had still stood here. Neither was there anything for him to stumble against farther on; the enormous hammered silver brazier resting on a support of the same metal, upheld by a circular row of cupids, Febrer had also converted into cash, selling it by weight! The brazier reminded him of a gold chain present-

ed by the Emperor Charles V to one of his ancestors which he had sold in Madrid years ago, also by weight, with the addition of two ounces of gold on account of its artistic finish and its antiquity. Afterward he had heard a vague rumor that the chain had been re-sold in Paris for a hundred thousand francs. Ah, poverty! Gentlemen could no longer exist in these times!

His gaze was drawn by the glitter of some enormous writing desks of Venetian workmanship, mounted upon antique tables sustained by lions. They seemed to have been made for giants; their innumerable deep drawers were inlaid in bright colors with representations of mythological scenes. They were four magnificent museum pieces, a feeble reminder of the ancient splendors of the house. Neither did these belong to him. They had shared the fate of the tapestries, and were here awaiting a purchaser. Febrer was merely the concierge of his own house. The Italian and Spanish paintings hanging on the walls of two adjoining rooms, the handsomely carved antique furniture, its silk upholstery now threadbare and torn, also belonged to his creditors—in fact, whatever there had been of value in his venerable heritage!

He passed into the reception hall, a cold, spacious room with elevated ceiling, in the center of the palace, which connected with the stairway. The years had tinged the white walls with the creamy shade of ivory. One must throw his head well back to see the black paneling of the ceiling. Casements near the cornice together with the lower windows lighted this immense, austere apartment. The furnishings were few and of romantic severity; broad armchairs with seats and backs of leather studded with nails; oak tables with twisted legs; dark chests with iron locks showing against upholstery of moth-

eaten green cloth. The yellowish-white walls were only visible, as a sort of grill-work, between rows of canvases, many of them unframed. There were hundreds of paintings, all badly done, and yet interesting pictures painted for the perpetuation of the glories of the family, executed by old Italian and Spanish artists who chanced to be passing through Majorca. A traditional charm seemed to emanate from the portraits. Here was the history of the Mediterranean, traced by crude and ingenuous brushes; sea fights between galleys, assaults upon fortresses, naval battles enveloped in smoke. Above the clouds floated the pennants of the ships and rose the tower-like poops with flags bearing the Maltese cross or the crescents crinkling from the rail. Men were fighting on the decks of the ships or in small boats which floated near; the sea, reddened by blood and lurid from the flames of the burning vessels, was dotted with hundreds of little heads of men still fighting upon the waves. A mass of helmets and three-cornered Schomber hats mingled upon two vessels which grappled another where swarmed white and red turbans, and above them all rose hands grasping pikes, scimitars, and boarding-axes. Shots from cannons and blunderbusses rent the smoke of battle with long red tongues. In other canvases, no less dark, could be seen castles hurling firebrands from their embrasures, and at their bases warriors almost as big as the towers, distinguished by eight-pointed white crosses upon their cuirasses, were setting their ladders against the walls to clamber to the assault.

The paintings bore on one side white scrolls with the ends folded about coats of arms, on each of which was written in ill-formed capital letters, the story of the event; victorious en-

counters with the galleys of the Grand Turk or with privates from Pisa, Genoa and Vizcaya; wars in Sardinia, assaults on Bujia and on Tedeliz, and in every one of these enterprises a Febrer was leading the combatants or distinguishing himself for his heroism, the knight commander Don Priamo towering above them all, he who had been both the glory and the shame of the house.

Alternating with these warlike scenes were the family portraits. On the topmost row, crowding a line of old canvases depicting evangelists and martyrs in semblance of a frieze, were the most ancient Febrers, venerable merchants of Majorca, painted some centuries after their death, grave men with Jewish noses and piercing eyes, with jewels on their breasts, and wearing tall Oriental caps. Next came the men of arms, the sword-bearing navigators with short cropped hair and profiles like birds of prey, all clad in dark steel armor, and some displaying the white Maltese cross. From portrait to portrait the countenances grew more refined, but without losing the prominent forehead and the imperious family nose. The wide, soft collar of the homespun shirt became transformed into starched folds of plaited ruffs; the cuirasses softened into jackets of velvet or silk; the stiff broad beards in imperial style changed to sharp goatees and to pointed mustaches, which, with the soft locks falling over the temples, served as a frame for the face. Among the rude men of war and the elegant caballeros, a few ecclesiastics with mustaches and small beards, wearing tasseled clerical hats, stood out conspicuously. Some were religious dignitaries of Malta, to judge by the white insignia adorning their breasts; others, venerable inquisitors of Majorca, according to the inscription which extolled their zeal

for the spread of the faith. After all these dark gentlemen of imposing presence and metallic eyes, followed the procession of white wigs and of countenances rendered youthful by shaving; of coats resplendent with silk and gold, showy with sashes and decorations of honor. They were perpetual magistrates of the city of Palma; marquises whose marquisate the family had lost through matrimonial complications, their titles becoming merged with others pertaining to the nobility of the Peninsula; governors, captain generals, and viceroys of American and Oceanian countries, whose names evoked visions of fantastic riches; enthusiastic "botiflers," partisans of the Bourbons from the start, who had been compelled to flee from Majorca, that final support of the house of Austria, and they boasted as a supreme title of nobility the nickname of butifarras, which had been given them by the hostile populace. Closing the glorious procession, hanging almost on a level with the furniture of the room, were the last Febrers of the early nineteenth century, officers of the Armada, with short whiskers, curls over their foreheads, high collars with anchors embroidered in gold, and black stocks, men who had fought off Cape Saint Vincent and Trafalgar; and after them Jaime's great grandfather, an old man with large eyes and disdainful mouth, who, when Ferdinand VII returned from his captivity in France, had sailed for Valencia to prostrate himself at his feet, beseeching, along with other great hidalgos, that he reëstablish the ancient customs and crush the growing scourge of liberalism. He was a prolific patriarch, who had lavished his blood in various districts of the island in pursuit of peasant girls, without ever sacrificing his dignity; and as he offered his hand to be kissed by some one of his sons who lived in the house and bore his

name, he would say with a solemn voice: "May God make you a good inquisitor!"

Among these portraits of the illustrious Febrers were a number of women, grand señoras with great hoops filling the whole canvas, like those painted by Valasquez. One of them, whose slender bust emerged from her flowered bell-like skirts with pale and pointed face, a faded knot of ribbon in her short hair, was the notable woman of the family, she who had been called "La Greca" on account of her knowledge of Hellenic letters. Her uncle, Fray Espiridion Febrer, prior of Santo Domingo, a great luminary of his epoch, had been her teacher, and the "Greek woman" could write in their own language to correspondents in the Orient who still maintained a dwindling commerce with Majorca.

Jaime's glance fell upon some canvases farther down (the distance representing the passing of a century) where hung the portrait of another famous woman of the family, a girl in a little white wig, dressed like a woman in the full skirt and great hoops of the ladies of the eighteenth century. She was standing beside a table, near a vase of flowers, holding in her bloodless right hand a rose as large as a tomato, looking straight before her with the little porcelain-like eyes of a doll. This woman had been styled "La Latina." In the pompous style of the epoch the lettering on the canvas told of her knowledge and wisdom, and lamented her death at the tender age of eleven years. The women were as dry shoots upon the vigorous trunk of the soldierly and exuberant Febrer stock. Scholarship quickly withered in this family of seamen and soldiers, like a plant which springs up by mistake in an adverse clime.

Preoccupied with his thoughts of the night before and of the contemplated trip to Valldemosa, Jaime stood in the reception hall gazing at the pictures of his forefathers. How much glory, and how much dust! It had been twenty years, perhaps, since a merciful cloth had passed over the illustrious family to furbish it up a little. The more remote grandfathers and the famous battles were covered with cobwebs... and to think that the pawnbrokers had declined to acquire this museum of glories under the pretext that the paintings were poor! Jaime was surprised that it should be difficult to turn these relics over to wealthy people anxious to pretend an illustrious origin for themselves.

He crossed the reception hall and entered the apartments in the opposite wing. They were rooms with lower ceilings; above them was a second story occupied in other times by Febrer's grandfather; relatively modern rooms, with old furniture in the style of the Empire, and on the walls illuminated prints of the romantic period, representing the misfortunes of Atala, the love affairs of Matilde, and the achievements of Hernán Cortéz. Upon the swelling dressing tables were polychrome saints and ivory crucifixes, together with dusty artificial flowers beneath crystal bells. A collection of cross-bows, arrows, and knives recalled a Febrer, captain of a corvette belonging to the king, who made a voyage around the world near the close of the eighteenth century. Purplish bivalves and enormous nacre-lined conch shells lay upon the tables.

Following a corridor on the way to the kitchen he left on one side the chapel which had been closed for many years, and on the other the door of the archives, a huge apartment with windows opening upon the garden, where Jaime on his

return from trips had spent many afternoons poring over bundles of papers kept behind the metal grating of many series of ancient bookshelves.

He peeped into the kitchen, an immense place where anciently were prepared the sumptuous banquets of the Febrers, who fed a swarm of parasites, and lavished generosity on all their friends who visited the island. Antonia looked dwarfed in this high-ceiled, spacious room, standing near a great fireplace which would hold an enormous pile of wood and was capable of roasting several animals at once. The ranks of ovens might serve for an entire community. The chill cleanliness of this adjunct of the palace showed lack of use. On the walls great iron hooks called attention to the absence of the copper vessels which used to be the splendrous glory of this conventional kitchen. The old servant did her cooking at a small hearth beside the trough where she kneaded her bread.

Jaime called to Antonia, to announce his presence and entered the adjoining room, the small dining room which had been utilized by the last of the Febrers, who, being in reduced circumstances, had abandoned the great hall where the old-time banquets used to take place.

Here, also, the presence of poverty was noticeable. The long table was covered with a cracked oil-cloth of blemished whiteness. The sideboards were almost empty. The ancient china, when it became broken, had been replaced by coarse platters and jars. Two open windows at the lower end of the room framed bits of sea, of intense and restless blue, palpitating beneath the fire of the sun. Near them swayed rhythmically the branches of palm trees. Out at sea the white wings of a

schooner approaching Palma, slowly, like a wearied gull, broke the horizon line.

Mammy Antonia came in, setting upon the table a steaming bowl of coffee and milk and a great slice of buttered bread. Jaime attacked the breakfast with avidity, but as he bit into the bread he made a gesture of displeasure. Antonia assented with a nod of her head, breaking into speech in her Majorcan dialect.

"It is hard, isn't it? No doubt the bread does not compare with the tender little rolls the señor eats at the casino, but it is not my fault. I wanted to make bread yesterday, but I was out of flour, and I was expecting that the 'payés' of Son Febrer would come and bring his tribute. Ungrateful and forgetful people!"

The old servant persisted in her scorn of the peasant farmer of Son Febrer, the piece of land which constituted the remaining fortune of the house. The rustic owed all he had to the benevolence of the Febrer family, and now in these hard times he forgot his kind masters.

Jaime continued chewing, his thought centered upon Son Febrer. That was not his either, although he posed as owner. The farm, situated in the middle of the island, the choicest property inherited from his parents, that which bore the family name, he had heavily mortgaged, and he was about to lose it. The rent, paltry and mean, according to traditional custom, enabled him to pay off only a part of the interest on his loans; the rest of the interest due served to swell the amount of the debt. There were still the tributes, the payments in specie which the payés had to make to him, according to ancient us-

age, and with these he and Mammy Antonia had managed to exist, almost lost in the immensity of the house which had been built to shelter a tribe. At Christmas and at Easter he always received a brace of lambs accompanied by a dozen fowl; in the autumn two well-fattened pigs ready to kill, and every month eggs and a certain amount of flour, as well as fruits in their season. With these contributions, partly consumed in the house, and in part sold by the servant, Jaime and Mammy Antonia managed to live in the solitude of the palace, isolated from public gaze, like castaways. The offerings in money were continually becoming more belated. The payés, with that rustic egoism which shuns misfortune, became indolent in fulfilling his obligations. He knew that the nominal possessor of the estate was not the real owner of Son Febrer, and frequently, on arriving at the city with his gifts, he changed his route and left them at the houses of his creditors, awe-inspiring personages whom he desired to propitiate.

Jaime glanced sadly at the servant who remained standing before him. She was an old payesa who still kept to the ancient style of dress peculiar to her people—a dark doublet with two rows of buttons on the sleeves, a light, full skirt, and the rebocillo covering her head, the white veil caught at the neck and at the bust, below which hung the heavy braid, which was false and very black, tied with long velvet bows.

"Poverty, Mammy Antonia," said the master in the same dialect. "Everybody shuns the poor, and some fine day if that rascal does not bring us what he owes us, we shall have to fall to and eat each other like shipwrecked mariners on a desert island."

The old woman smiled; the master was always merry. In this he was just like his grandfather, Don Horacio, ever solemn, with a face which frightened one, and yet always saying such jolly things!

"This will have to stop," continued Jaime, paying no heed to the servant's levity. "This must stop this very day. I have made up my mind. Let me tell you, Antonia, before the news gets abroad: I'm going to be married."

The servant clasped her hands in an attitude of devotion to express her astonishment, and turned her eyes toward the ceiling. "Santísimo Cristo de la sangre!" It was high time!... He should have done it long ago, and then the house would have been in a very different condition. Her curiosity was stirred, and she asked with the eagerness of a rustic:

"Is she rich?"

The master's affirmative gesture did not surprise her. Of course she must be rich. Only a woman who brought a great fortune with her could aspire to unite with the last of the Febrers, who had been the most noted men of the island, and perhaps of the whole world. Poor Antonia thought of her kitchen, instantly furnishing it in her imagination with copper vessels gleaming like gold, dreaming of its hearths all ablaze, the room filled with girls with rolled up sleeves, their rebocillos thrown back, their braids floating behind, and she in the center, seated in a great chair, giving orders and breathing in the savory odors from the casseroles.

"She must be young!" declared the old woman, trying to worm more news out of her master.

"Yes, much younger than I; too young; about twenty-two. I could almost be her father."

Antonia made a gesture of protest. Don Jaime was the finest man on the island. She said so, she who had worshipped him ever since she led him by the hand, in his short trousers, walking among the pines near the castle of Bellver. He was one of the family—of that family of arrogant grand seigniors, and no more could be said.

"And is she of good family?" she questioned in an effort to force her master's reticence. "Of a family of caballeros; undoubtedly the very best in the island—but no—from Madrid, perhaps. Some sweetheart you found when you lived there."

Jaime hesitated an instant, turned pale, and then said with rude energy to conceal his perturbation:

"No, Antonia—she's a—Chueta."

Antonia started to clasp her hands, as she had done a few moments before, invoking again the blood of Christ, so venerated in Palma, but suddenly the wrinkles of her brown face broadened, and she burst out laughing. What a jolly master! Just like his grandfather; he used to say the most stupendous and incredible things so seriously that he deceived everybody. "And I, poor fool, was ready to believe your nonsense! Perhaps it was also a joke that you were going to get married!"

"No, Antonia, I am going to marry a Chueta. I am going to marry the daughter of Benito Valls. That is why I am going to Valldemosa."

The stifled voice in which Jaime spoke, his lowered eyes, the timid accent with which he murmured these words, re-

moved all doubt. The old servant stood open-mouthed, her arms fallen, without strength to raise either her hands or her eyes.

"Señor!... Señor!... Señor!"

She could say no more. She felt as if a thunderbolt had crashed upon the house, shaking it to its foundations; as if a dark cloud had swept before the sun obscuring the light; as if the sea had become a leaden mass dashing against the castle wall. Then she saw that everything remained as usual, that she alone had been stirred by this stupendous news, so startling as to change the order of all existence.

"Señor!... Señor!... Señor! A Chueta! An apostate Jewess!"

She grasped the empty cup and the remnants of the bread, and ran to take refuge in the kitchen. After hearing such horrors in this house she felt afraid. She imagined that someone must be stalking through the venerable halls at the other end of the palace; someone—she could not explain to herself who it might be—someone who had been aroused from the sleep of centuries! This palace undoubtedly possessed a soul. When the old woman was alone in it the furniture creaked as if people were moving about and conversing; the tapestries swayed as if stirred by invisible faces, a gilded harp which had belonged to Don Jaime's grandmother vibrated in its corner, yet she never felt terror, because the Febrers had been good people, simple and kind to their servants; but now, after hearing such things——! She thought uneasily of the portraits hanging on the walls of the reception hall. How severe those señores would look if the words of their descendant should reach their ears! How fiercely their eyes would flame!

Mammy Antonia finally grew calm and drank the coffee left by her master. She had laid fear aside, but she felt profound sorrow over the fate of Don Jaime, as if he were in peril of death. To bring the house of the Febrers to this! Could God tolerate such things? Then scorn for her master momentarily overcame her old-time affection. After all he was nothing but a wild fellow, heedless of religion, and destitute of good habits, who had squandered what had been left of the fortune of his house. What would his illustrious relatives have to say? How ashamed his aunt Juana would be—that noble lady, the most pious and aristocratic woman in the island, called by some in jest and by others in an excess of veneration, la Papisa—the Pope-ess!

"Good-bye, Mammy. I'll be back about sunset."

The old woman grunted a farewell to Jaime, who peeped into the kitchen before leaving. Then, finding herself alone, she raised her clasped hands invoking the aid of the Sangre de Cristo, of the Virgin of Lluch, patron saint of the island, and of the powerful San Vicente Ferrer, who had wrought so many miracles when he ministered in Majorca—a final and prodigious saint, who might avert the monstrosity her master contemplated! Let a rock from the mountains fall and forever close the way to Valldemosa; let the carriage upset, and let Don Jaime be carried home on a stretcher by four men—anything rather than that disgrace!

Febrer crossed the reception hall, opened the door to the stairway, and began to descend the worn steps. His forefathers, like all the nobles of the island, had builded on a grand scale. The stairway and the zaguán occupied a third of the lower story. A kind of loggia in Italian style, with five arches

sustained by slender columns, extended to the foot of the stairway, the doors of which gave access to the two upper wings of the building opening at either end. Above the center of the stairway, facing the street door, were the Febrer arms cut in the stone, and a great lantern of wrought iron.

On his way down Jaime's cane struck against the sandstone steps, or touched the great glazed amphoræ decorating the landings which responded to the blow with the sonorous ring of a bell. The iron balustrade, oxidized by time and crumbling into scales of rust almost shook from its sockets with the jar of his footsteps.

As he reached the zaguán Febrer stood still. The extreme resolution which he had adopted, and which would forever cast its influence on the destiny of his name, caused him to look curiously at the very places which he had so often passed with indifference.

In no other part of the building was the old-time prosperity so evident as here. The zaguán, enormous as a plaza, could admit a dozen carriages and an entire squadron of horsemen. Twelve columns, somewhat bulging, of the nut-brown marble of the island, sustained the arches of cut undressed stone over which extended the roof of black rafters. The paving was of cobbles between which grew dank moss. A vault-like chill pervaded this gigantic and solitary ruin. A cat slunk through the zaguán, making its exit through a hole in a worm-eaten door of the old stables, disappearing into the deserted cellars which had held the harvests of former days. On one side was a well dating from the epoch when the palace was construct-ed, a hole sunk through rock, with a time-worn stone curb and a wrought-iron spout. Ivy was growing in fresh clusters

between the crevices of the polished rock. Often as a child Jaime had peered over the curb at his reflection in the luminous round pupil of the sleeping waters.

The street was deserted. Down at its end, near the walls of the Febrer garden, was the city rampart, pierced by a broad gateway, with wooden bars in the arch like the teeth in the mouth of an enormous fish. Through this the waters of the bay trembled green and luminous with reflections of gold.

Jaime walked a short distance over the blue stones of the street which was destitute of sidewalks, and then turned to contemplate his house. It was but a small remnant of the past. The ancient palace of the Febrers occupied a whole square, but it had dwindled with the passing of the centuries and with the exigencies of the family. Now a part of it had become a residence for nuns, and other parts had been acquired by certain rich people who disfigured with modern balconies the original unity of the design, which was still suggested by the regular line of eaves and tile-covered roofs. The Febrers themselves who were living in that portion of the great house which looked upon the garden and the sea, had been compelled to let the lower stories to warehousemen and small shopkeepers, in order to augment their rents. Near the lordly portal, inside the glass windows, some girls who greeted Don Jaime with a respectful smile were busy ironing linen. He stood motionless contemplating the ancient house. How beautiful it was still in spite of its amputations and its age!

The foundation wall, perforated and worn by people and carriages, was cleft by several windows with grilles on a level with the ground. The lower story of the palace was worn, lac-

erated, and dusty, like feet which had been plodding for centuries.

As it rose above the mezzanine, a story with an independent entrance which had been rented to a druggist, the lordly splendor of the façade developed. Three rows of windows on a level with the arch of the portal, divided by double columns, had frames of black marble delicately carved. Stone thistles climbed over the columns which sustained the cornices, while above them were three great medallions—that in the center being the bust of the Emperor with the inscription DOMINUS CAROLUS IMPERATOR, 1541, in memory of his passing through Majorca on the unfortunate expedition against Algiers; those on either side bore the Febrer arms held by fish with bearded heads of men. Above the jambs and cornices of the great windows of the first story were wreaths formed of anchors and dolphins, testifying to the glories of a family of navigators. On their finials were enormous shells. Along the upper portion of the façade was a compact row of small windows with Gothic decorations, some plastered over, others open to admit light to the garrets, and above them the monumental eaves, such as are found only in Majorcan palaces, their masses of carved timbers blackened by time and supported by sturdy gargoyles projecting as far as the middle of the street.

Over the entire façade extended cleats of worm-eaten wood with nails and bands of rusted iron. They were the remains of the grand illuminations with which the household had commemorated certain feasts in its times of splendor.

Jaime seemed satisfied with this examination. The palace of his ancestors was still beautiful despite the broken panes in

the windows, the dust and cobwebs gathered in the crevices, the cracks which centuries had opened in its plaster. When he should marry, and old Valls' fortune should pass into his hands, everyone would be astounded at the magnificent resurrection of the Febrers. And yet, would some people be scandalized at his decision, and did he himself not feel certain scruples? Courage, forward!

He turned in the direction of El Borne, a broad avenue which is the center of Palma, a stream bed which in ancient times divided the city into two villages and into two hostile factions—Can Amunt and Can Avall. There he would find a carriage to take him to Valldemosa.

As he entered the Paseo del Borne his attention was attracted by a group of people standing in the shade of the dense-crowned trees staring at a peasant family which had stopped before the display windows of a shop. Febrer recognized their dress, different from that worn by the peasants on the island. They were Ivizans. Ah, Iviza! The name of this island recalled the memory of a year he had spent there long ago in his youth. Seeing these people who caused the Majorcans to grin as if they were foreigners, Jaime smiled also, looking with interest at their dress and figures.

They were, undoubtedly, father, son and daughter. The elder rustic wore white hempen sandals, above which hung the broad bell of a pair of blue trousers. His jacket-blouse was caught across his breast by a clasp, affording glimpses of his shirt and belt. A dark mantle hung over his shoulders like a woman's shawl, and to complete this feminine garb, which contrasted strongly with his hard, brown, Moorish features, he wore a handkerchief knotted across his forehead beneath his

hat, with the ends hanging down behind. The boy, who was about fourteen, was dressed like the father, with the same style of trousers, narrow in the leg and bell-shaped over the foot, but without the kerchief and mantle. A pink ribbon hung down his breast like a cravat, a spray of flowers peeped from behind one of his ears, and his hat with a flower-embroidered band, thrust back on his head, allowed a wave of curls to fall around his face, brown, spare and mischievous, animated by African eyes of intense lustrous black.

The girl it was who attracted the greatest attention with her accordeon-plaited green skirt beneath which the presence of other skirts could be divined, forming an inflated globe of several layers which seemed to make still smaller her fine and graceful feet encased in white sandals. The prominent curves of her breast were concealed beneath a small yellow jacket with red flowers. It had velvet sleeves of a different color decorated with a double row of filigree buttons, the work of the Chueta silversmiths. A triple shining gold chain, terminated by a cross, hung over her breast, but so enormous were the links, that, had they not been hollow, they must have borne her down by their weight. Her black and glossy hair was parted over her forehead and concealed beneath a white kerchief tied under her chin, appearing again behind in long heavy braids tied with multi-colored ribbons falling to the hem of her skirt.

The girl, with her basket over her arm, stood looking at the strange sights, admiring the tall houses and the terraces of the cafés. She was pink and white, without the hard coppery roughness of the country women. Her features had the delicacy of an aristocratic and well cared for nun, the pale texture of

milk and roses, lightened by the luminous reflection of her teeth and the timid glow of her eyes, under a kerchief resembling a monastic head-dress.

Impelled by curiosity Jaime approached the father and son whose backs were turned to the girl and who were absorbed in contemplation of the show window. It was a gun store. The two Ivizans were examining the weapons exposed with ardent eyes and gestures of adoration, as if worshipping miraculous idols. The boy pressed his eager, Moorish face against the glass as if he would thrust it through the pane.

"Fluxas—pa're, fluxas!" he cried with the excitement of one who meets an unexpected friend, calling his father's attention to the display of huge Lefaucheux pistols.

The admiration of the two was concentrated upon the unfamiliar weapons, which seemed to them marvelous works of art—the guns with invisible locks, repeating rifles, pistols with magazines which could hurl shot after shot. What wonderful things men invent! What treasures the rich enjoy! These lifeless weapons seemed to them animate creatures with malignant souls and limitless power. Doubtless such as these could kill automatically, without giving their owner the trouble of taking aim!

The image of Febrer, reflected in the glass, caused the father to turn suddenly.

"Don Jaime! Ah, Don Jaime!"

Such was his astonishment and surprise, and so great his joy, that, grasping Febrer's hands, he almost knelt before him, while he spoke in a tremulous voice. He had been killing time along the Paseo del Borne so as to reach Don Jaime's house

about the time he should arise. Of course he knew that gentlemen always retire late! What a joy to see him! Here were his children—let them take a good look at the Señor! This was Don Jaime; this was the master! He had not seen him for ten years, but he would have recognized him among a thousand.

Febrer, disconcerted by the peasant and by the deferential curiosity of the two children who stood planted before him, could not recall his name. The worthy fellow guessed this slip of memory from Jaime's hesitant glance. Truly did he not recognize him? Pèp Arabi, from Iviza! Even this did not tell much, because on that little island there were but six or seven surnames, and Arabi was borne by a fourth part of the inhabitants. He would explain more clearly—Pèp of Can Mallorquí.

Febrer smiled. Ah, Can Mallorquí! A poor predio in Iviza, a farm where he had passed a year when he was a boy, his sole inheritance from his mother. Can Mallorquí had not belonged to him for twelve years. He had sold it to Pèp, whose fathers and grandfathers had cultivated it. That was during the time when he still had money; but of what use was that land on a separate island to which he would never return? So with the geniality of a benevolent gran señor he had sold it to Pèp at a low figure, valuing it in accord with the traditional rents; and conceding easy terms for payment, sums which, when hard times pressed upon him, had often come as an unexpected joy. Years had passed since Pèp had satisfied the debt, and yet the good souls continued calling him master, and as they saw him now they experienced the sensation of one who is in the presence of a superior being.

Pèp Arabi introduced his family. The girl was the elder, and was called Margalida; quite a little woman, although but sev-

enteen! The boy, who was almost a man, was thirteen. He wished to be a farmer like his father and grandfathers, but Pèp had determined that the boy should enter the Seminary at Iviza since he was clever at his letters. His lands he would hold for some good hard-working youth who might marry Margalida. Many young men of the island were already chasing after her, and as soon as they returned the season for the festeigs, the traditional courtship, would begin, so that she could choose a husband. Pepet was destined for a higher calling; he would become a priest and after singing his first mass he would join a regiment or embark for America, as had done many other Ivizans who made much money and sent it home to their fathers with which to buy lands on the island. Ah, Don Jaime, and how time passes! He had seen the señor, still a mere child, when he spent that summer with his mother at Can Mallorquí. Pèp had taught him to use the gun, and to shoot his first birds. "Does your lordship remember?" It was about the time that Pèp married, while his parents were still alive. Since then they had only met once in Palma, when they arranged the sale of the property (a great favor which he would never forget) and now, when he presented himself again, he was almost an old man, with children as tall as himself.

As he talked of his journey the rustic displayed his strong teeth in mischievous smiles. It was a wild adventure of which his friends there in Iviza would talk a long time! He had always been of a roving and venturesome disposition—a vicious habit formed when he was a soldier. The master of a small trading vessel, a great friend of his, had picked up a cargo for Majorca, and had invited him just for a joke to come along.

But it was risky to joke with him. As soon as the idea was suggested he accepted. The youngsters had never been in Majorca; in the entire parish of San José, in which he lived, there were not a dozen persons who had seen the capital. Many of them had visited America; one had been to Australia; some neighbor women talked of their trips to Algeria with smugglers in their feluccas; but no one ever came to Majorca, and with good reason! "They don't like us here, Don Jaime; they stare at us as if we were strange animals; they think we are savages, as if we are not all the children of God." And here he and his children had been subjected to the gaze of the curious throughout the whole morning just as if they were Moors. Ten hours of sailing on a magnificent sea! The girl had a basket of lunch for the three of them! They would return tomorrow at break of day, but before sailing he wished to speak to the master on a matter of business.

Jaime made a gesture of surprise, and listened more attentively. Pèp expressed himself with a certain timidity, stumbling over his words. The almond trees were the greatest source of wealth on Can Mallorquí. Last year the crop had been good, and this year it did not look unpromising. It was being sold to the padrones, who were bringing it to Palma and Barcelona. He had planted nearly all his fields to almonds, and now he was thinking of clearing and cleaning off the stones from certain lands belonging to the señor, and of raising wheat on them—no more than enough for the use of his own family.

Febrer did not conceal his surprise. What lands did he mean? Did he really have anything left in Iviza? Pèp smiled. They were not lands exactly; it was a stony hill, a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, but he might cultivate it by ter-