

CHAPTER III.

GIBRALTAR—THE STRAITS—ALGIERS.

England, we love thee better than we know—  
And this I learnt when, after wanderings long  
'Mid people of another stock and tongue,  
I heard, at length, thy martial music blow,  
And saw thy warrior children to and fro  
Pace, keeping ward at one of those huge gates  
Which, like twin giants, guard th' Herculean Straits.

R. C. TRENCH.

ON the first of January, we left Southampton; on the evening of the second we took leave of England at Falmouth.\* On the morning of the third we entered the much calumniated Bay of Biscay, which is no longer formidable, since the introduction of steam. On the fifth we caught a glimpse of Cape Finisterre, and then passed from the Bay of Biscay into waveless waters, sheltered by the Spanish shore. Thenceforth, every morning rose with brighter suns, and balmier breezes, until we came in sight of Capes St. Vincent and Trafalgar, relieved off the distant, but beautiful mountain coast of Barbary. The thoughts evoked by the scenes of Nelson's death and victory were not interrupted by the next bold headland. There was Gibraltar, and there England's flag was flying.

There was not a cloud in all the calm and glowing sky; the crescent moon, the emblem of Moslem power, was trembling over the picturesque land of the Moor, almost dissolved in a flood of sunshine; the sea, a filagree of blue and silver, faintly reflected the mountains of Medina Sidonia, among whose snowy summits we seemed to steer: all nature seemed in a pleasant trance, and all Spain was taking his siesta as we dashed into the Bay of Gibraltar.

\* The Oriental steamers now go direct from Southampton, thus saving twenty-four hours.