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The Story of Spain

Charles Horne

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Far back among the shadows of prehistoric times, a horde of Celts swarmed over the Pyrenees into this land of the Iberians, encountering possibly a still earlier race, whose descendants of to-day are the Basques. The Celts swerved to the west and settled in what now is Portugal and Gallicia. In civilization and physique, the invaders were much superior to the Iberians. As the centuries rolled on, the two peoples fought for mastery. They gradually blended in the central part of Spain, while the Celts continued dominant in the west and northwest of the peninsula, and the Iberians held their own in the east and south.
Such were the inhabitants of the country when the enterprising mariners of Phoenicia began planting colonies on the coast. They found the country fair and inviting, with fertile alluvial valleys; sheep with the finest of wool, and a soil rich with minerals, such as the quicksilver of Almaden, the silver and gold, the copper and tin from which bronze was formed, and the corals, pearls, and precious stones, which made the Phoenician colonies rivals in wealth of Carthage herself. It is said that the Phoenicians gathered such enormous quantities of gold that their ships would have sunk had they tried to carry it all away.
Cadiz was the most important settlement made by the Phoenicians, who induced the natives to develop the mines, whose richness became famous, and soon led other nations, among them the Greeks, to send expeditions thither. The strangers were welcomed, and since their only purpose was to procure all the gain they could, they made no attempt to interfere with the government of the country. We owe to the crude alphabet brought by them the more reliable history that has come down to us from those remote times…

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