

ISABEL OF CASTILE  
AND THE MAKING OF THE  
SPANISH NATION  
—  
IERNE L. PLUNKET



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the making of the Spanish nation, 1451-1504**

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ISABEL OF CASTILE

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ZITTOZ

FROM "TORQUEMADA AND THE SPANISH  
INQUISITION" BY RAFAEL SABATINI

# ISABEL OF CASTILE

AND

THE MAKING OF THE SPANISH NATION

1451-1504

BY

IERNE L. PLUNKET

AUTHOR OF "THE FALL OF THE OLD ORDER, 1763-1815"

*Illustrated*



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
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## FOREWORD

Isabel of Castile is one of the most remarkable, and also one of the most attractive, figures in Spanish history. Her marriage with Ferdinand the Wise of Aragon brought about the union of the Spanish nationality, which had so long been distracted and divided by provincial prejudices and dynastic feuds. She is the ancestress of the Spanish Hapsburg line. But she is also important in Spanish history as a wise and energetic ruler, who rendered invaluable assistance to her husband and to some extent moulded his policy. Under their government Spain was reduced from anarchy to order and took her place among the great Powers of Europe. Isabel is perhaps best known as the patroness of Christopher Columbus and the unflinching ally of the Spanish Inquisition. But her career presents many other features of interest. In particular it reveals the problems which had to be faced by European governments in the critical period of transition from mediæval to modern forms of national organization.

H. W. C. D.

BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
Dec. 17, 1914.

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# **ISABEL OF CASTILE**

# CHAPTER I

## CASTILE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

There are some characters in history, whose reputation for heroism is beyond reproach in the eyes of the general public. There are others, however, whose claims to glory are ardently contested by posterity, and none more than Isabel of Castile, in whose case ordinary differences of opinion have been fanned by that most uncompromising of all foes to a fair estimate, religious prejudice. Thus the Catholic, while deploring the extreme severity of the methods employed for the suppression of heresy, would yet look on her championship of the Catholic Faith as her chief claim to the admiration of mankind. The Protestant on the other hand, while acknowledging the glories of the Conquest of Granada and the Discovery of the New World, would weigh them light in the balance against the fires and tortures of the Inquisition and the ruthless expulsion of the Jews.

One solution of the problem has been to make the unfortunate Ferdinand the scapegoat of his Queen's misdeeds. Whatever tends to the glory of Spain, in that, if not the originator, she is at least the partner and moving spirit. When acts of fanaticism hold the field, they are the result of Ferdinand's material ambitions or the religious fervour of her confessors; Isabel's ordinarily independent and clear-sighted mind being reduced for the sake of her reputation to a condition of credulous servility.

Such a view has missed the consistency of real life. It is probably responsible for the exactly opposite summary of another critic, who denies Isabel's superiority to her husband in anything but hypocrisy and the ability to make her lies more convincing. He even fails to admit that, this being granted, her capacities in one direction at least

must have been phenomenal, since Ferdinand was the acknowledged liar of his day *par excellence*.

Faced by the witness of the Queen's undoubted popularity, he sweeps it away with a tribute to Spanish manhood: "The praise bestowed on the character of Isabel is, to no small amount, due to the chivalrous character of the Spaniards, who never forgot that the Queen was a lady."

Such an assumption must be banished, along with Isabel's weak-mindedness on religious matters, to the realms of historical fiction. The very Castilians who extol her glory and merit do not hesitate to draw attention in bald terms to her sister-in-law's frailties. Indeed a slight perusal of Cervantes' famous novel, embodying so much of the habits and outlook of Spain at a slightly later date will show it was rather the fashion to praise a woman for her beauty than to credit her with mental or moral qualities of any strength.

The Catholic Queen, like other individuals of either sex, must stand or fall by the witness of her own actions and speech; and these seen in the light of contemporary history will only confirm the tradition of her heroism, which the intervening centuries have tended to blur. The odium that sometimes attaches to her name is largely due to the translation of Spanish ideals and conditions of life in the Middle Ages into the terms that rule the conduct of the twentieth century.

"Quien dice España dice todo," says the old proverb,—“He who says Spain has said everything.”

This arrogance is typical of the self-centred, highly strung race, that had been bred by eight centuries of war against the Infidel. The other nations of Western Europe might have their occasional religious difficulties; but, in the days before Luther and Calvin were born, none to the same extent as Spain were faced by the problem of life in daily contact with the unpardonable crime of heresy, in this case the more insidious that it was often masked by outward observance of rule and ritual.

The greater part of the modern world would dismiss the matter with a shrug of its shoulders and the comfortable theory that truth, being eternal, can take care of itself; but this freedom of outlook was yet to be won on the battlefields of the Renaissance and in the

religious wars of the sixteenth century. It would be an anachronism to look for it in Spain at a time when the influence of the new birth of thought and culture had extended no further than an imitation of Italian poets.

Isabel's bigotry is an inheritance she shared with the greater part of her race in her own day, the logical sequence of her belief in the exclusive value of the divine in man's nature, as against any claims of his human body. If she pursued her object, the salvation of souls, with a relentless cruelty, from which we turn away to-day in sick disgust, we must remember that Spain for the most part looked on unmoved. Where opposition was shown, as in her husband's kingdom of Aragon, it was rather the spirit of independence than of mercy that raised its head.

Indeed the religious persecution was in no way disproportionate to the severity of the criminal procedure of the reign, as will be seen by a glance at the usual sentences passed on those convicted of any crime. The least with which a thief could hope to escape from his judges was the loss of a limb, but the more likely fate was to be placed with his back to a tree, and there, after a hasty confession of his sins, shot or burnt.

Many of Queen Isabel's contemporaries remark her intolerance of crime and disorder, and a few of the younger generation who had grown to manhood in the atmosphere of peace she had established, condemn her justice as excessive. By modern standards it is undoubtedly barbarous; but long centuries of anarchy had bred a spirit of lust and brutality little above the barbarian level, and only drastic measures could hope to cure so deep-rooted an evil. Isabel herself, throughout her childhood, had been a forced witness of her brother's policy of "sprinkling rose-water on rebellion" instead of employing the surgeon's knife; and her strength of character despised the weakness, that under the pretext of humanity made life impossible for nine-tenths of the population.

It is her great achievement that she raised the crown, the mediæval symbol of national justice, from the political squalor into which seventy years of mingled misfortune and incapacity had thrown it, and that she set it on a pedestal so lofty, that even the haughtiest Castilian need not be ashamed to bow the knee in reverence. By this substitution of a strong government for a weak, of impartiality for

favouritism, she secured peace at home and thus laid a firm foundation for Ferdinand's ambitious foreign policy, and the establishment of Spain as the first nation in Europe.

It is perhaps difficult to apportion exactly the respective shares of Isabel and her husband in the administrative measures of their reign; for their unanimity of aim and action was in keeping with their motto *tanto monta*,—"the one as much as the other." Yet in this connection it is necessary to realize the contrast between the two kingdoms. Aragon, with its three divisions of Aragon proper, Valencia, and the Principality of Catalonia, measured in all scarcely a quarter of the territory of its western neighbour. Moreover the spirit of the people and the democratic character of its laws rendered it a soil peculiarly ill-suited for the growth of the royal prerogative. Thus, in spite of the sovereigns' best endeavours, it stubbornly withstood their centralizing policy, and the main burden of taxation and governmental measures fell on Castile. The latter, "the corona" or "big crown," in contradistinction to the "coronilla" or "little crown" of Aragon, continued throughout the Queen's lifetime to look on her husband as more or less of a foreigner; and all the many documents signed "Yo, El Rey" could not weigh with a true Castilian against Isabel's single "Yo, La Reina." It is she, who, when "Los Reyes" are not mentioned together, is hailed to-day in Spain as the chief representative of national grandeur, just as "castellano," the speech of the larger kingdom, has become synonymous with our term "Spanish."

The word "Castile" itself conveys to an imaginative mind a picture of that mediæval land of castles, whose ramparts were not only a defence against the Moors but also the bulwark of a turbulent nobility. In vain the Crown had striven to suppress its over-powerful subjects. The perpetual crusade upon the southern border proved too alluring a recruiting-ground for the vices of feudalism; and many a mail-clad count led out to battle a larger following of warriors than the sovereign to whom he nominally owed obedience.

So long as the crusade continued, rulers of Castile could not attempt to disband the feudal levies on which their fortune depended; and each acquisition of Moorish territory was followed by fresh distributions of lands amongst the conquering troops. Sometimes these grants carried with them complete fiscal and

judicial control of the district in question, at others merely a yearly revenue; but, whatever the tenure, the new owner and his descendants were certain to take advantage of royal embarrassments and national disorder to press their claims to the farthest limit. A few communities, *behetrias*, succeeded in obtaining the privilege of choosing their own over-lord with the more doubtful corollary of changing him as often as they liked, a process fruitful of quarrels which not unnaturally resulted in their gradual absorption by more settled neighbours.

Since the practice of primogeniture was common in Castile and lands were inalienable, large estates were rapidly built up, whose owners, unable to rule all their property directly, would sublet some of their towns and strongholds to other nobles and knights in return for certain services. These dependencies, or *latifundia*, yielded ultimate obedience not to the King but to the over-lord from whom their commander had received them. On one occasion Alvaro de Luna, the favourite minister of John II., appeared before the castle of Trujillo and demanded its surrender in his master's name. To this the "Alcayde," or Governor, replied that he owed allegiance to the King's uncle, John of Aragon, and would open the gates to none else: an answer typical of the days when aristocratic independence ran riot in Castile.

A great territorial magnate could also renounce the obedience he owed to his sovereign by the simple method of sending a messenger who should, in the King's presence, make the following declaration: "Señor, on behalf of ... I kiss your hand and inform you that henceforth he is no more your vassal."

The weakness of the Castilian Crown was further aggravated in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries by disputed successions and long minorities; the nobles using the confusion these engendered to wring concessions from the rival claimants, or to seize them from inexperienced child rulers.

"A breastplate would have served him better!" exclaimed the Count of Benavente, when at the beginning of Queen Isabel's reign he heard of the death of some man bearing a royal safe-conduct.

"Do you wish then that there was no King in Castile?" asked the Queen indignantly; to which the Count replied cheerfully: "Not so! I would there were many, for then I should be one of them."

His words are the expression of the aristocratic ideal of life in his own day. It was perhaps most nearly realized in the case of the Grand Masterships of the three great Military Orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara. These Orders had been called into existence by the crusade; but their original purpose was gradually obscured by the wealth and influence that made them the resort of the ambitious rather than of the enthusiast. Like the Monastic Orders, their members were bound by vows: obedience, community of property, strict conjugal fidelity, sometimes celibacy; but dispensations could be bought, and the gains to be reaped more than compensated for any theoretical austerities or submission.

The main canon of their creed, war against the Infidel, was readily accepted by every aspirant knight; the only drawback being that his inborn love of fighting led him to take part as well in whatever other kind of war happened to dawn on the horizon, no matter if it were against his own sovereign. How formidable this would prove for the sovereign we can imagine when we learn that in the fifteenth century the combined revenues of the Orders amounted to something like 145,000 ducats,<sup>[1]</sup> while the Master of Santiago could call into the field a force of four hundred fully-armed cavaliers and one thousand lances. In addition he possessed the patronage of numerous "commanderies," rich military posts that brought with them the rents of subject towns and villages, and that were eagerly sought by the highest in the land.

1. "The monetary unit of Castile was the 'maravedi,' anciently a gold coin of value; but, in the fifteenth century, diminished to a fraction of its former estimation."—Lea, *History of Spanish Inquisition*, vol. i., Appendix III.

The ducat would be worth about 374 maravedis, or about 8s. 9d. in English money.

Extreme power and privilege are often their own undoing; and from the fruits of its triumph the Castilian aristocracy was to reap a bitter harvest. Had the fight with the Crown been more strenuous and the victory less certain, the *ricos-hombres* or great men of the land, might have learned to combine if not with other classes at least amongst themselves; but the independence they had gained so easily they placed in jeopardy by individual selfishness and mutual distrust. It has been said with truth that it was almost impossible to persuade the mediæval Castilian noble to act with his fellows. Pride, ambition, the courage that vaunts itself in duels, the revenge that lurks, dagger-

drawn, in back streets or lonely roads: these were the source of constant feuds and internecine warfare, incapable of a final settlement save by the pressure of some outside force.

Nor could the noble, who distrusted the members of his own class, rely in times of danger on the co-operation of his humbler neighbours. Believing that war was the profession of the gentleman, he despised the burgher, the artisan, and the farmer. Like the French "seigneur" he had won freedom from direct taxation as the privilege of his Order, and thus lost touch completely with the *pecheros* or "taxable classes." He had appropriated the majority of the high-sounding offices of state, the Grand Constable, the Admiral of Castile, and so forth; but he valued them from the wealth or honour they conveyed, not from any sense of responsibility. The very fact that such offices had tended to become hereditary had done much to destroy their official character. An "Enriquez" was Admiral of Castile, not on account of his seamanship, nor even on the system of the modern English Cabinet because of a certain "all-round" ability to deal with public business, but because his father and grandfather had held the post before him. The *ricos-hombres* might, from personal motives, defy the government or nullify its measures; but in placing themselves above the law they had lost the incentive to control legislation. A world of experience, or rather a lack of it, separated them from those below, to whom edicts and ordinances were a matter of daily concern.

The Castilian Church was also in a sense above the law; for the clergy were exempt from ordinary taxation, paying to the Crown instead a small portion of their tithes. Like the nobles they could neither be imprisoned for debt nor suffer torture; while legally they came under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and were subject only to its penalties and censures. Archbishops, bishops, and abbots, were for the most part younger sons of wealthy nobles and shared the outlook and ambitions of their class. The Castilian prelate of the early fifteenth century found it as natural to don his suit of mail and draw his sword as to celebrate Mass or hear confessions. It would not be dislike of shedding blood nor a faint heart that would distinguish him from laymen on the battlefield, but the surcoat embroidered with a cross, that he wore in deference to his profession.

The worldly character of the higher ranks of the clergy had permeated also to the lower; and vice, ignorance, and careless levity sapped the influence of the ordinary parish priest and corrupted the monasteries and convents. Here and there were signs of an awakening, but for the most part the spiritual conscience of the Castilian Church lay dormant.

Its sense of nationality on the other hand was strong; that is to say if dislike of foreign interference and strong racial prejudice deserve such a definition. Partly from very worldliness, local and provincial interests tended to predominate over any claims of a universal Church; and submission to Rome was interpreted with a jealous regard to private ambitions. The members of the episcopate, concerned in the civil wars of Henry IV.'s reign, looked on with cool indifference when a papal legate, vainly seeking to arbitrate between the armies on the eve of a battle, was forced to save his life by flight. Similarly, the Archbishop of Toledo, Primate of Castile, thought little of throwing into a dungeon the candidate who, armed with letters of appointment from Rome, had dared to dispute a rich living in the diocese with his own nominee. The Pope was a convenient "King Log"; but his subjects had not the least wish for him to develop the authority of a "King Stork."

The Castilian Church also displayed her national prejudice, as we shall see later, in her hatred and suspicion of the alien races that formed such a large element of the Spanish population. These had sunk their roots deep in the soil during the centuries of Moorish conquest when, from behind the barrier of the Asturian mountains in the far north-west, the pure Castilian alone had been able to beat back the advancing waves of Mahometanism. As he at length descended from his refuge, where the sword or the hunting-spear had been his sole means of livelihood, he might profess to despise the believers in Allah, from whom he wrested back the land of his fathers, but in practice he was glad enough to accept them as a subject race. The Moorish warriors, who fell on the battlefield or retreated southwards before their foes, left in Christian territory a large residue of the more peaceful Arabs and Berbers, willing to till the fields, work at the looms, and fulfil all those other tasks of civilized national life that the Castilian was inclined to imagine degrading to his own dignity. Left behind also were colonies of

prosperous Jews, whose ancestors, hounded from every Christian court, had found a home under the tolerant rule of the caliphs of Cordova.

Agriculture, industry, and commerce thus became stamped, unfortunately for Spain, with the taint of subjection. Not that the Castilian took no share as the years passed in the economic life of his country; for the legislation of the fifteenth century shows the middle and lower classes busily engaged in occupations such as cattle-breeding, sheep-farming, and mining; and, more especially in the south, of fruit-growing, and the production of silk, wine, and oil. The basis of a progressive national life was there; but perpetual war against the Moors and internal discord, combined with racial prejudice against the industrious alien, gave to the profession of arms a wholly disproportionate value.

Many of the towns were in their origin border outposts; and their massive towers, fortified churches, and thick walls, with the suburbs huddling close against them for protection, marked the enveloping atmosphere of danger. Since it had been difficult at first to attract the industrial classes to such surroundings, rulers of Castile had been driven to grant *fueros* or charters, to the inhabitants embodying numerous privileges and a large measure of self-government. Then the time of danger passed; the Castilian boundary pushed farther south, and other fortified towns were needed to defend it; but the citizens of the old outposts clung jealously to the *fueros* of their fathers and defied either royal or seignorial control.

“Ce sont de veritables petits états,” says Mariéjol, speaking of the Castilian municipalities in mediæval days; but the description that implies peculiar powers shadows forth also peculiar difficulties. The city that would keep its independence would have to struggle continually against the encroachments both of the Crown and of neighbouring territorial lords. It must for this purpose maintain its own militia, and, most arduous of all, watch carefully lest it should fall into subjection to its very defenders. Not a few of the municipal councils came in time to be dominated by a class of “knights,” or nobles of secondary rank, whose quarrels and feuds endangered industry and filled the streets with bloodshed.

The principal civic official was the “regidor”; but the Crown had by the early fifteenth century succeeded in introducing in many cases a

representative, the “corregidor,” whose business it was to look after royal interests. His presence was naturally resented by the more influential citizens and, where he dealt corruptly with the people, disliked by all; but an honest corregidor, who was unconnected with local families and therefore without interest in the local feuds, and who had no axe of his own to grind, was a Godsent help to the poorer classes.

Besides appointing corregidores, the Crown had also begun to influence the municipalities in another way, through a gradually increasing control of the “Cortes,” or national parliament of Castile. This body consisted of three “Estates”; the nobles, whether *ricos-hombres* or *hidalgos* of lesser grade; ecclesiastics; and the Third Estate, or “Commons.” On an occasion of outward or obvious importance, when a succession or a Council of Regency were under dispute, or if an oath of homage to a new sovereign or the confirmation of some unprecedented act were required; all three “Estates” would meet together at whatever town the King happened to be staying. Such was a “General Cortes.”

An ordinary Cortes was of a very different character; for, since its business mainly concerned taxation, only the Commons, or “taxable” element of the population was in the habit of attending. In the early days of Castilian history the number of places represented was unlimited; but a right that in the disordered state of the country was both expensive and tiresome, if not actually dangerous, was regarded as a burden by most of the municipalities. By the fifteenth century only seventeen cities and towns sent members to the Cortes. These were: Toledo, Burgos, Seville, Cordova, Murcia, Leon, Segovia, Avila, Salamanca, Zamora, Cuenca, Jaen, Valladolid, Madrid, Toro, Soria, and Guadalajara, while Granada was added after her conquest in 1492.

The “Procuradores,” or representatives, were in theory free to act at their own discretion; but in practice they went tied by the instructions of their fellow-citizens. Nor had they much scope for independence in the Cortes itself; for though they might and did air their grievances and press for reform, redress rested with the Crown and did not precede but follow the assent to taxation. All legislative power was in fact invested in the King; who might reject, amend, or accept suggestions as he thought fit.

“We hold that the matter of your petition is to our service.” “We command that it shall take effect.” Such phrases expressed sovereignty in a gracious mood, and all were satisfied; while the absence of royal sanction sent the *procurador* back to his city, his efforts wasted. He could, of course, on the next occasion that the King, in need of money, summoned his deputies to grant it, refuse the supply; but in the meantime three more years might have elapsed and conditions and needs would have altered. Moreover a system of bribes and flattery went far to bring the Commons into line with the royal will; while the shortsighted complaints of some of the municipalities at the expense of maintaining their representatives paved the way for the Crown to accept the burden, thereby establishing an effective control over those who became practically its nominees.

That the towns missed the future significance of this change is hardly surprising. The civil wars that devastated Castile had taught the people that their most dangerous enemies were not their kings but the turbulent aristocracy; and they often looked to the former as allies against a common foe. In the same way the more patriotic of the nobles and ecclesiastics saw in the building up of the royal power the only hope of carrying the crusade against the Moors to a successful conclusion, or of establishing peace at home. At this critical moment in the history of Castile, national progress depended on royal dominance; and it was Queen Isabel who by establishing the one made possible the other.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.: MISGOVERNMENT**

### **1454–1463**

“I the King ... make known to you that by the grace of Our Lord, this Thursday just past the Queen Doña Isabel, my dear and well-beloved wife, was delivered of a daughter; the which I tell you that you may give thanks to God.”

With this announcement of her birth to the chief men of Segovia was “Isabel of Castile” ushered by her father John II. into public life; but on that April day of 1451 none could have suspected the important part she would play in the history of her country. The future of the throne was already provided for in the person of her elder half-brother, Henry, Prince of Asturias; and nearly three years later the birth of another brother, Alfonso, made that inheritance apparently secure from any inconvenience of a female succession.



HENRY IV.

FROM "BOLETIN DE LA REAL ACADEMIA  
DE LA HISTORIA," VOL. LXII.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY HAUSER AND  
MENET

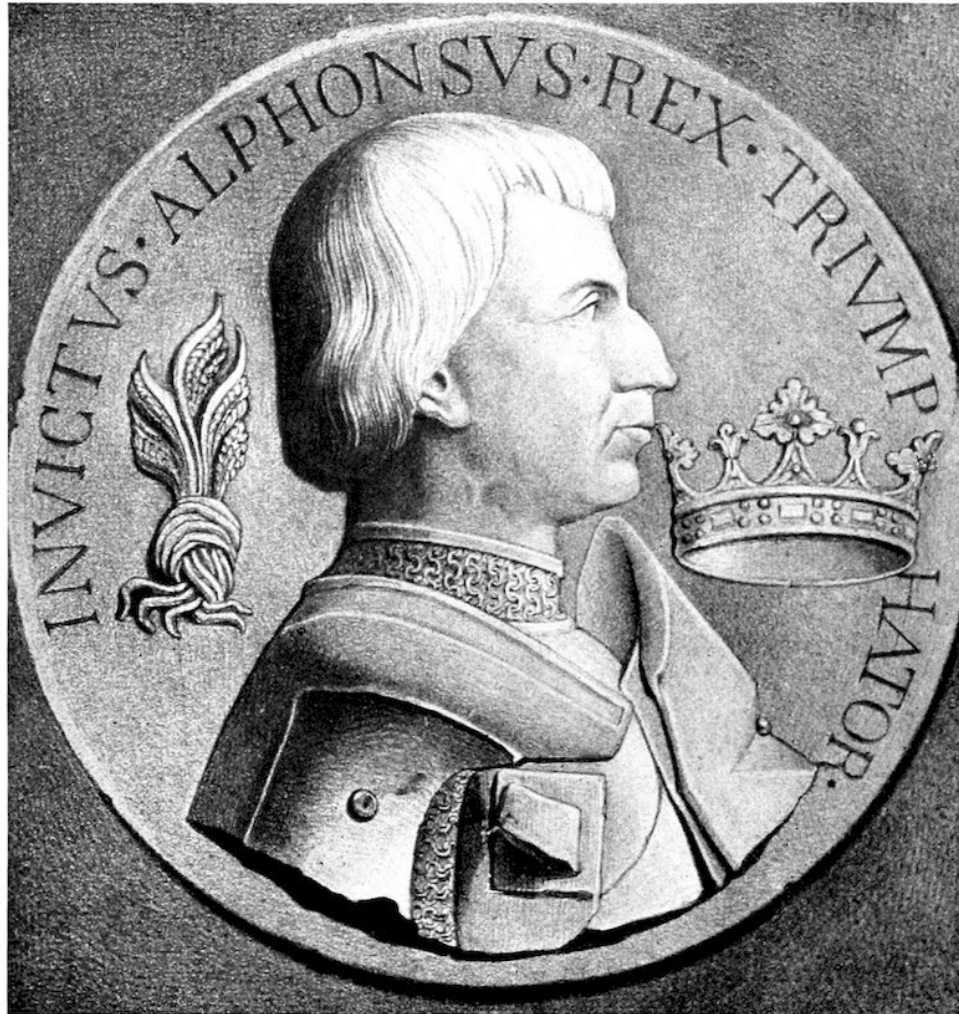
Castile was at this time nearing the end of a long and inglorious reign, signalized by the struggles of the King and his selfish favourite against the domination of an equally selfish nobility. The latter triumphed; the favourite was beheaded and John II., broken-hearted at his own weakness in agreeing to the sentence, died in the following year. His life had been one long negation of everything for which true kingship stands,—dignity, honour, and power; but the son who succeeded to his title and troubles was even less fitted for the task.

Feeble and vain, Henry, Prince of Asturias, had been from boyhood the puppet of his father's rebellious nobles, led by their

flattery into attacking the royal authority that it would be one day his duty to maintain.

“In him,” says the chronicler Pulgar, “desire had the mastery over reason”; and, when he ascended the throne, it was with a character and constitution that self-indulgence had utterly undermined. One virtue he possessed, strangely out of keeping with his age, a compassion arising from dislike of bloodshed; but, since he failed to draw any distinction between justice and indiscriminate mercy, this attribute rather endangered than distinguished his rule. A corresponding indifference, also, to his property, and a reluctance to punish those who tampered with it, might have a ring of magnificence, but it could hardly inspire awe of the King’s law.

The problems by which Henry was faced at the beginning of his reign were not acutely dangerous; and their chief difficulty lay in the constant friction between Castile and the neighbouring kingdom of Aragon. Between these two the tie of mutual descent from the House of Trastamara had been drawn ever closer by frequent intermarriage. Henry IV. was not only cousin of Alfonso V. of Aragon, but also his nephew, while he was son-in-law to Alfonso’s ambitious brother, John, King of Navarre. Here was scope for the time-honoured right of family interference, a right strengthened by quarrels as to confiscated property and abused privileges.



ALFONSO V. OF ARAGON

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

It is only fair to say of Alfonso V. himself, that he took little part in these feuds. A true Aragonese by instinct, though of Castilian descent, his interests were not so much directed towards acquiring Spanish territory as to extending a maritime empire in the East. Such had been for generations the ambition of a kingdom, whose backbone was the hardy race of Catalan merchants and sailors. Alfonso dreamed of making Barcelona and Valencia the rivals of Genoa and Venice. To this purpose he strengthened his hold over Sardinia, and fought with the Genoese for the sovereignty of Corsica. Foiled in his designs on that island by a superior fleet, he sailed away to make good a claim that Joanna II. of Naples had allowed him to

establish, when in a capricious moment she had adopted him as her son. What favour and affection she had to bestow, and she was capable of very little, she had given to the House of Anjou; and when she died without descendants, Naples became the battleground of Aragonese and French claimants.

Alfonso V., after a series of misfortunes, was at length victorious; and delighted with this new kingdom, the land of sunshine and culture in spite of the grim background of its history, he established his court there, and henceforth ranked rather as an Italian than a Spanish sovereign.

While, at his ease, he wove chimerical schemes of a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, and extended a liberal patronage to Renaissance poets and philosophers; his wife, Queen Maria, remained as regent at home, and strove to keep peace with Castile and temper the ambitions of her brothers-in-law. This was a well-nigh impossible task, for John the eldest and most turbulent, in default of any legitimate descendants of Alfonso, was heir to the Aragonese throne. A judicious marriage with Blanche, the heiress of a small state of Navarre, had made him virtual master of that kingdom, when on her father's death in 1425 they assumed the joint sovereignty.

Fiction has never devised a more painful domestic tragedy than resulted from this match. Of the three children of Blanche and John of Navarre, the death of two was to be laid at their father's door, the third to earn the unenviable reputation of connivance in a sister's murder. The Queen, with some premonition of the future, strove feebly on her death-bed to guard against it, and in her will, that left her son Charles of Viana as the rightful ruler of Navarre, she begged him not to claim the title of King in his father's lifetime. To this the Prince agreed, but the attempt at compromise was to prove ineffectual.

In 1447, King John married again, a woman of very different temperament to his former wife. This lady, Joanna Enriquez, daughter of the Admiral of Castile, was as unscrupulous and greedy of power as her husband, and from the first adopted the rôle of "cruel stepmother." The birth of her son, Ferdinand, in March, 1452, set fire to the slumbering jealousy she had conceived for Charles of Viana,

and henceforth she devoted her talents and energy to removing him from her path.

It is the penalty of public characters that their private life is not only exposed to the limelight, but its disagreements involve the interference of many who are not directly concerned. The hatred of Queen Joanna for her stepson not only convulsed Navarre and Aragon but dragged Castile also into the scandal.

Throughout the long reign of John II. of Castile, the King of Navarre had on various pretexts interfered continually in his cousin's affairs. On some occasions he had posed as the protector of sovereignty from the schemes of an ambitious favourite. On others he had been an open rebel, harrying the royal demesnes, or sulkily plotting revenge when, as the result of his rebellion, the estates he had inherited in Castile were taken from him. Through all these vicissitudes the thread of his policy ran clear,—to fish in waters that he himself had previously troubled. If his own haul proved empty, he could at least boast of spoiling the sport of others.

In 1440, in a brief moment of reconciliation with Castile, he married his eldest daughter Blanche to Henry, then Prince of Asturias, and was thus provided with a plausible excuse for henceforth thwarting his cousin in his son-in-law's interests. From no other point of view could the alliance be called a success. Henry proved as faithless a husband as he was disloyal a son; and, after thirteen years of fruitless union, the marriage was annulled on the grounds of impotence.

Blanche returned to her own land; but her father found the man who had been her husband too useful an ally to resent her repudiation, and as soon as Henry became King he agreed to a treaty by which, in return for an annual income, he surrendered any rights he might have to estates or property in Castile. With such a settlement the political horizon seemed fair; but the Castilian royal favourite, Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena, to whom a lion's share of the said estates had fallen, mistrusted its serenity, believing that as soon as the King of Navarre succeeded his brother Alfonso V. on the throne of Aragon, he would revive claims so obviously to his advantage.

The Marquis of Villena was deaf to the voice of patriotism or personal loyalty to his master, but he was more than ordinarily acute,

where his own prosperity was concerned. He had garnered successfully the confiscated property, but “he lived” we are told “always with the fear of losing it, as those live who possess what does not belong to them.”



JUAN PACHECO, MARQUIS OF VILLENA

FROM “ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA” BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

In this malicious but eminently shrewd estimate of his attitude lies the clue to the tortuous mazes in which he involved Castile. Pacheco was a noble of Portuguese extraction, who had entered Prince Henry’s service as a page, being created Marquis of Villena by John II. When that sovereign died, the favourite succeeded to the practical sovereignty of Castile through the influence he had acquired over his

master's weak and impressionable nature. It was a position that would have dazzled and satisfied most favourites, but Pacheco despised all but the most tangible gains. Power was reckoned in his vocabulary as a means towards procuring fresh wealth, and for this his thirst was insatiable. All King Henry's eagerness to alienate royal estates and revenues in his favour failed to meet his constant demand for fresh grants either to himself or to his immediate relatives. The gift of half a province, with the lordship of all its towns and castles would leave him envious of the small village across the border, whose rent-roll passed into other pockets.

"He knew," says the chronicler, "how to conceal all other vices save his greed: that he could neither conceal nor moderate."

In pursuance of his own interests Villena, who distrusted the King of Navarre's future intentions, suggested a counter-alliance with Portugal. This western kingdom had always seemed in danger of absorption by its more powerful neighbour; once their common enemy, the Moor, had been driven southwards; but good fortune and a spirit of sturdy independence had preserved its freedom. By the great victory of Aljubarrota in 1385 Portugal had vindicated her claim to be a separate nationality; and Castile, leaving the flower of her chivalry dead on the battlefield, had retired to nurse her resentment in secret. Nearly a century had passed, and mutual hatred still smouldered between the two peoples, though frequent intermarriage had long broken down the barriers in the case of the royal families.

The bride now selected by Henry IV. was the Infanta Joanna, sister of the reigning King, Alfonso V., a lady of sufficient youth and beauty to appeal, at any rate temporarily, to her bridegroom's jaded taste. Her journey to her new home was a triumphal progress of banquets and receptions, culminating in jousts and feasts at Madrid, where a crowning touch of extravagant display was given by Alonso de Fonseca, Archbishop of Seville, when, after a magnificent banquet, he ordered salvers, laden with rings and precious stones to be handed round, that the Queen and her ladies might take their choice.

Unfortunately, real feelings, if they had ever been in tune, ceased to correspond with these outward rejoicings. Henry soon tired of his bride, probably because he was legally bound to her, and bestowed his attentions instead on a Portuguese lady of her retinue, Doña

Guiomar. The latter increased the Queen's mortification by her insolent behaviour; and, after a stormy scene, in which royal dignity was thrown to the winds and slaps and blows were administered, Henry removed his mistress to a country-house. The Court, watching to see which way the wind would blow, divided into factions according to its decision; the Marquis of Villena supporting the Queen, the Archbishop of Seville the cause of Doña Guiomar.

Matters became even more serious when scandal, always busy with the King's name, began to attack the honour of his bride. Queen Joanna, who according to Zurita had objected to the match from the first, was incapable of the gentle resignation of her predecessor, Blanche of Navarre. As extravagant and devoted to pleasure as her husband, she had no intention of playing the rôle of deserted wife.

"She was a woman to whom love speeches were pleasant ... delighting more in the beauty of her face than in the glory of her reputation." Such was the court chronicler's summary of her character; nor did public opinion remain vague in its accusations.

Amongst the principal Castilian nobles was a certain Beltran de La Cueva, who by his handsome looks and adroit manners had gained for himself the King's confidence and the lucrative office of "Mayordomo," or Lord High Steward.

On one occasion the King and Queen had been entertaining the ambassadors of the Duke of Brittany at their country-house at Pardo. Returning to Madrid after three days' hunting, they found on nearing the city that Beltran de La Cueva, gorgeously arrayed, was waiting lance in hand to challenge all who came by that road. This was a form of entertainment highly popular with the chivalry of the time; and the tiers of scaffolding erected for spectators were soon crowded.

Every knight, as he rode up, was summoned to tilt six rounds with the Mayordomo or to leave his left glove in token of his cowardice. If he succeeded in shivering three lances, he might go to a wooden archway, resplendent with letters of gold, and from there take the initial of the lady of his choice. This famous "Passage of Arms" lasted from morning till sunset; and thus to the satisfaction of the Court did Beltran de La Cueva maintain the cause of an unknown beauty, to whom rumour gave no less a name than that of royalty itself.

If the King had his suspicions, they did not hinder his pleasure in the spectacle; and he proceeded to celebrate the event by establishing a monastery on the site, to be called "San Jeronimo del Paso," or "Saint Jerome of the Passage of Arms." Such an origin for a religious foundation was to say the least of it bizarre; yet it compares favourably with Henry's cynical appointment of a discarded mistress as abbess of a convent in Toledo, on the excuse that the said convent was in need of reform.

Little good could be expected from a Court whose rulers set such an example of licence and selfish pleasure; but, fortunately for Castile, her hopes for the future lay not in the idle throng that surrounded Henry IV. and Joanna, but in the old walled town of Arévalo. Here, since the death of John II., had lived his widow, Isabel of Portugal, and her two children, in an atmosphere rendered doubly retired by her own permanent ill-health.

"Her illness," according to the chronicler, "was so grievous and constant that she could in no way recover"; and with conventional propriety he attributes the cause to grief at the loss of her husband. This may have been, though John II. was hardly the type of man to inspire *une grande passion*. It is more likely that her mind was already the prey of the burden of melancholy that became the curse of her descendants; and that the malady was aggravated by the uncertainty of her new position.

According to one of the royal chaplains Henry treated his half-brother and sister "with much love and honour and no less the Queen their mother." This account, however, conflicts with Pulgar's description of Isabel as "brought up in great necessity." It is more than probable that the fortunes of the family at Arévalo varied with the policy or whim of the Marquis of Villena; and thus, in her most impressionable years, the little Princess learned her first lessons in the hard school of experience. Such a theory would explain the extraordinary discretion and foresight she displayed at an age when most girls are still dreaming of unrealities. If the contrast is not wholly to her advantage, and precocity is seldom charming, we must remember that only sheltered fruit can keep its bloom. What Isabel lost of childish softness, she gained in self-reliance and a shrewd estimate of the difference between true and false.

Though far enough removed from the succession to escape the flattery that had ruined her elder brother, she was early a pawn on the political chess-board, and by the age of six had made her début in the matrimonial market. Henry IV. and King John of Navarre were at that time eager to show their mutual love and confidence; and a double alliance was suggested that would make this patent to all the world. For Isabel was destined John's favourite son, the five-year-old Ferdinand, while the latter's sister Leonora was chosen as bride for the little Alfonso, Henry's half-brother.

Amid all the turns of Fortune's wheel that were to bring in search of Isabel's hand now one suitor, now another, this first alliance alone was to reach consummation; yet few, versed in the changing politics of the day, could have believed it likely. The kings had sworn eternal friendship; but in little more than twelve months an event happened that made of their treaties and complimentary letters a heap of waste paper.

In 1458, Alfonso V. died at Naples leaving his newly acquired Italian kingdom to his illegitimate son Ferrante, and the rest of his dominions, including the island of Sicily, to his brother John. The latter was now in a far stronger position than ever before; he need not depend on Henry's friendship; indeed his inheritance from past rulers was rather a policy of feud and aggression against the neighbouring kingdom, while the influence of his father-in-law, the Admiral of Castile, drew him in the same direction.

This Admiral, Don Fadrique Enriquez, was himself a descendant of the royal House of Trastamara; and his haughty and choleric nature found the dreary level of loyalty little to its taste. His sense of importance, vastly increased by his daughter's brilliant marriage, revelled in plots of all sorts; and soon conspiracy was afoot, and he and the majority of Castilian nobles were secretly leagued with John of Aragon against their own sovereign. Even the Marquis of Villena consented to flirt with their proposals, in the hope of reaping some benefit; while his uncle, the Archbishop of Toledo, and his brother, Don Pedro Giron, Master of Calatrava, were amongst the leading members of the league.

Looking about him for an ally, Henry's glance lit naturally on Charles of Viana, whose disputes with his father had reached a stage beyond the chance of any peaceful settlement. Navarre, always a prey

to factions as irreconcilable as Montagues and Capulets, had broken into civil war on the advent of Queen Joanna as regent; the powerful family of the Agramonts welcoming her eagerly; while the Beaumonts, their rivals, out of favour at Court and wild with jealousy, called hourly upon Charles to avenge their wrongs and his own. His mother's will, leaving Navarre to her husband during his lifetime, had, they declared, been made null and void by the King's subsequent remarriage. Not only was it the duty of a son to resist such unlawful tyranny, but it was folly to refuse with imprisonment or a poison cup lurking in the background.

The latter argument was convincing; but never was rebellion undertaken with a heavier heart. The Prince of Viana was a student and philosopher who, like the Clerk of Oxenford, would have preferred a shelf of Aristotle's books at his bed's head to the richest robes, or fiddle, or psaltery. The quiet of a monastery library, with its smell of dust and parchment, thrilled him more than any trumpet-call; and he would gladly have exchanged his birthright for the monk's garb of peace. Fortune willed otherwise, laying on his shoulders in pitiless mockery the burden of the man of action; and the result was the defeat that is the usual reward of half-heartedness.

His uncle's Court at Naples proved a temporary asylum for him in his subsequent enforced exile; and also the island of Sicily, where he soon won the affection of the people, and lived in happiness, till Alfonso's death awoke him rudely from his day-dreams. He was overwhelmed by fear for his own future; though, had he been a different man, he might have wrested away the sceptre of Sicily. In Aragon itself public opinion had been growing steadily in his favour, and not only in Navarre were there murmurs at his absence, but up and down the streets of Barcelona, where the new King was far from popular, and his haughty Castilian wife an object of dislike.

Prudence dictated to King John a policy of reconciliation; and after prolonged negotiations the exile returned; but the cold forgiveness he received from his father and stepmother for the wrongs they had done him was in marked contrast to the joyous welcome of the nation. No outward ceremony of a loving father pardoning a prodigal son could mask the lack of confidence that still denied the Prince his recognition as rightful heir, and drove him to enter into a secret alliance with Henry IV. of Castile.

As a result of these negotiations, a marriage was arranged between Charles and the Infanta Isabel. That the suggested bride was only ten and the bridegroom nearing forty was a discrepancy not even considered; and the messengers, who went to Arévalo to report on the appearance of the Princess, returned to her suitor, as the chroniclers expressed it, "very well content." Far different were the feelings of the King of Aragon, when he learned of the intended match from his father-in-law, the Admiral of Castile. Isabel had been destined for his favourite son, and, in spite of the conspiracy to which he had lent his aid, this alliance still held outwardly good. It did not need the jealous insinuations of his wife to inflame afresh his hatred of his first-born; and the Prince of Viana soon found himself in prison, accused of no less a crime than plotting against his father's life.

Unfortunately for King John, popular belief ran in a contrary direction, and his son's release was soon demanded by all parts of the kingdom. In Barcelona, the citizens rose, tore down the royal standard and took the Governor prisoner. Revolt flamed through the land; but even more alarming was the sudden declaration of war by Henry IV., who, taking advantage of the King of Aragon's embarrassments, hastily dispatched a force to invade Navarre, where the Beaumonts were already in the field.

It was a bitter moment for King John. Realizing his critical position, he agreed to his son's release; and Charles of Viana passed in triumph to Barcelona. For once, almost without his intervention, Fortune had smiled on him; but it proved only a gleam before the final storm. Three months after he had been publicly proclaimed as his father's heir, the news of his sudden illness and death fell on his supporters with paralysing swiftness.

Nothing, on the other hand, could have been more opportune for King John and his Queen; and their joy can be gauged by the haste with which they at once proclaimed the ten-year-old Ferdinand heir to the throne, demanding from the national Cortes of the three kingdoms the oath they had so long denied his elder brother. Yet Queen Joanna's maternal ambitions were not to be satisfied by this easy assumption of victory. Charles of Viana dead was to prove an even more potent foe than Charles of Viana living.

Gentle and unassuming, yet with a melancholy dignity that accorded well with his misfortunes, he had been accepted as a national hero by the impulsive Catalans; and after death they translated the rather negative qualities of his life into the attributes of a saint. Only the halo of martyrdom was required to fire the general sympathy into religious fervour; and this rumour supplied when it maintained that his tragic end had been due to no ordinary fever, but to poison administered by his stepmother's orders.

The supposition was not improbable; and the inhabitants of Barcelona did not trouble to verify the very scanty evidence for the actual fact. They preferred to rest their accusations on the tales of those who had seen the Prince's unhappy spirit, like Hamlet's father, walking abroad at midnight demanding revenge. Soon his tomb became a shrine for pilgrims, and there the last touch of sanctity was added. He who in life had suffered acutely from ill-health became in death a worker of miracles, a healer whom no absence of papal sanction could rob of popular canonization.

The effect upon the public mind was to fan smouldering rebellion into flames; and when Queen Joanna, having gained the recognition of her son as heir to the throne by the Aragonese Cortes at Calatayud, proceeded with the same object to Barcelona, the citizens rose and drove her from their gates. Only the timely intervention of some French troops, which Louis XI. had just hired out to King John, saved her and Ferdinand from falling into the hands of their furious subjects.

This foreign assistance had contributed not a little to the bitterness of the Catalans, for the French King had secretly encouraged their turbulence and disaffection, promising them his support.

"As for peace he could hardly endure the thought of it," wrote Philip de Commines of his master, Louis XI. That monarch, like King John of Aragon, had studied the art of "making trouble," and in this truly mediæval pursuit excelled all rivals. It suited his purpose admirably that his ambitious neighbour should be involved in civil war, just as it fitted in with his schemes that his troops should prevent that conflict from going too far. The question was all part and parcel of his policy of French aggrandizement; the ultimate object of his design nothing less than the kingdom of Navarre, that

semi-independent state, nominally Spanish, but projecting in a tantalizing wedge across the Pyrenees.

With Charles of Viana the male line of Evreux had come to an end, and the claims on Navarre had passed to his sister Blanche. On Blanche's death, and Louis in his schemes leapt to the possibility of such a fortunate accident, the next heir would be Eleanor, her younger sister, wife of a French Count, Gaston de Foix. It would be well for France to establish a royal family of her own nationality on the throne of Navarre. It would be even better for that family to be closely connected with the House of Valois; and, calculating on the possibilities, Louis gave his sister Madeleine in marriage to the young Gaston de Foix, Eleanor's son and the heir to her ambitions.

It only remained to turn the possible into the certain: to make sure that Blanche's claims should not prejudice those of her younger sister. At this stage in his plans Louis found ready assistance in the King of Aragon, who included in his hatred of Charles of Viana a still more unnatural dislike of his gentle elder daughter, whose only sins were that she had loved her brother in his misfortunes and proved too good a wife for Henry of Castile.

Thus the tragedy was planned. Blanche must become a nun or pass into the care of her brother-in-law in some mountain fortress of Navarre. Then the alternative was whittled away. Nunneries and vows were not so safe as prison walls and that final silence, whose only pleading is at God's judgment-bar. Eleanor, fierce and vindictive as her father, was determined there should be no loophole of escape, no half-measures by which she might miss her coveted inheritance.

John of Aragon went himself to fetch his elder daughter to her fate, assuring her of his intention of marrying her to a French prince, once they had crossed the Pyrenees; but his victim was not deceived. Powerless to resist, as she had been in bygone days to help her brother, Blanche made one last desperate appeal before the gates of the castle of Orthez closed for ever behind her. On the 30th of April, 1462, she wrote a letter to Henry IV. of Castile, ceding to him her claims on Navarre, and beseeching him by the closeness of the tie that had once united them, and by his love for her dead brother, to accept what she offered and avenge her wrongs.

It was in vain. Even before Charles of Viana's death, Henry IV., repenting of his rash invasion of Navarre, had come to terms with

the Aragonese King, regardless of his ally's plight; while just at the climax of Blanche's misfortunes, an event happened in Castile that was to make all but domestic affairs slide into the background.

In March, 1462, Queen Joanna gave birth to a daughter in the palace at Madrid. The King had at last an heir. Great were the festivities and rejoicings at Court, many the bull-fights and jousts in honour of the occasion. Below all the sparkle of congratulation and rejoicing, however, ran an undercurrent of sneering incredulity. It was nearly seven years since the Queen came a bride to Cordova, and for thirteen before that had Henry been married to the virtuous Blanche of Navarre, yet neither by wife nor mistress had he been known to have child.

"Enrique El Impotente," his people had nicknamed him, and now, recalling the levity of the Queen's life and her avowed leaning towards the hero of the famous "Passage of Arms," they dubbed the little Princess in mockery "Joanna La Beltraneja."

Was the King blind? or why was the handsome Beltran de La Cueva created at this moment, almost it seemed in celebration of the occasion, Count of Ledesma, and received into the innermost royal councils? There were those who did not hesitate to affirm that Henry was indifferent to his own honour, so long as his anxiety for an heir was satisfied.

Whatever the doubts and misgivings as to her parentage, there was no lack of outward ceremony at the Infanta's baptism, in the royal chapel eight days after her birth. The Primate himself, the Archbishop of Toledo, performed the rites, and Isabel, who with her brother Alfonso, had been lately brought up to court, was one of the godmothers, the other, the Marquesa de Villena, wife of the favourite. Two months later, a Cortes, composed of prelates, nobles, and representatives of the Third Estate, assembled at Madrid, and, in response to the King's command, took an oath to the Infanta Joanna as heir to the throne; Isabel and her brother being the first to kneel and kiss the baby's hand.

The Christmas of 1462 found Henry and his Queen at Almazon; and thither came messengers from Barcelona with their tale of rebellion and the fixed resolution they had made never to submit to King John's yoke. Instead the citizens offered their allegiance to Castile, imploring help and support in the struggle before them.

Henry had been unmoved by Blanche's appeal, for he knew the difficulties of an invasion of Navarre, but the present project flattered his vanity. He would merely dispatch a few troops to Barcelona, as few as he could under the circumstances, and the Catalans in return would gain him, at best an important harbour on the Mediterranean, at worst would act as a thorn in the side of his ambitious neighbour. He graciously consented therefore to send 2500 horse, under the leadership of one of the Beaumonts, as earnest of his good intentions; but almost before this force had reached Barcelona, those intentions had already changed, and he had agreed to the mediation of the King of France in the disputes between him and the King of Aragon.

Louis XI., "the universal spider," as Chastellain called him, had been spreading his web of diplomacy over the southern peninsula. By the Treaty of Olito, signed by him and King John in April, 1462, he had promised to lend that monarch seven hundred lances, with archers, artillery, and ammunition, in return for two hundred thousand gold crowns to be paid him on the reduction of Barcelona. Whether he would ever receive this sum was perhaps a doubtful matter; but Louis had accepted the pledge of the border counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne, that commanded the eastern Pyrenees, should the money fail, and would have been more annoyed than pleased by prompt repayment. According to his own calculations he stood to gain in either case; and in the meantime he was well content to increase his influence by posing as the arbiter of Spanish politics.

After a preliminary conference at Bayonne, it was arranged that the Kings of Castile and France should meet for a final discussion of the proposed terms of peace on the banks of the Bidassoa, the boundary between their two territories. It is a scene that Philip de Commines' pen has made for ever memorable; for though he himself was not present he drew his vivid account from distinguished eye-witnesses on both sides. Through his medium and that of the Spanish chroniclers we can see the showy luxury of the Castilian Court, the splendour of the Moorish guards by whom Henry was surrounded, the favourite Beltran de La Cueva in his boat, with its sail of cloth-of-gold dipping before the wind, his very boots as he stepped on shore glittering with precious stones. Such was the model to whom Castilian chivalry looked, the man, who with the

Archbishop of Toledo and the Marquis of Villena dictated to their master his every word.

It is small wonder if Louis XI. had for the ruler of Castile “little value or esteem,” or that Commynes himself, summing up the situation, caustically dismisses Henry as “a person of no great sense.” There could not have been a stronger contrast between the two kings: Henry with his pale blue eyes and mass of reddish hair, his awkwardly-built frame, overdressed and loaded with jewels, towering above his meagre companion; Louis, sardonic and self-contained, well aware of the smothered laughter his appearance excited amongst Castilian courtiers, but secretly conscious that his badly cut suit of French homespun and queer shaped hat, its sole ornament an image of the Virgin, snubbed the butterfly throng about him.

“The convention broke up and they parted,” says Commynes, “but with such scorn and contempt on both sides, that the two kings never loved one another heartily afterwards.”

The result of the interview, May, 1463, was soon published. In return for King John’s future friendship, and in compensation for her expenses as an ally of Charles of Viana, a few years before, Castile found herself the richer for the town of Estella in Navarre, a gain so small that it was widely believed the Archbishop of Toledo and his fellow-politicians had allowed themselves to be bribed.

If the Castilians were bitter at this decision, still more so were the Catalans, deserted by their ally and offered nothing save the unpalatable advice that they should return to King John’s allegiance. The messengers from Barcelona quitted Fuenterrabia as soon as they heard, openly uttering their contempt for Castile’s treachery.

“It is the hour,” they exclaimed, “of her shame and of her King’s dishonour!”

They could not realize to the full the truth of their words, nor to what depths Henry was shortly to fall and drag the fortunes of his country with him.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.: CIVIL WAR AND ANARCHY**

### **1464–1474**

Henry IV. had been merely a figurehead at the meeting of Fuenterrabia, a rôle to which with his habitual lethargy he had no objection. When, however, he attempted to obtain possession of the town of Estella and failed to do so in spite of Villena's outwardly strenuous efforts, he began at last to suspect that he had been also a dupe, and that French and Aragonese money had bribed his ministers to his own undoing.

He could not make up his mind to break openly with the Marquis and his uncle, the Archbishop of Toledo; but a perceptible coldness appeared in his manner where they were concerned, in contrast to the ever-increasing favour that he now bestowed on Beltran de La Cueva, Count of Ledesma. The latter's share in the conferences had been mainly ornamental. Indeed his talents had lain hitherto rather in the ballroom or the lists than in the world of practical politics; but success had stirred his ambitions, and especially his marriage with the daughter of the Marquis de Santillana, head of the powerful family of Mendoza. With this connection at his back he might hope to drive Villena and his relations from Court, and with the Queen's aid control the destinies of Castile.

In the struggle between the rival favourites, the Princess Isabel was regarded as a useful pawn on their chess-board. She and her brother had been summoned to Court at Villena's suggestion that "they would be better brought up and learn more virtuous customs than away from his Majesty's presence." Whether irony were

intended or no, Henry had accepted the statement seriously; and while Alfonso was handed over to a tutor, his sister joined the Queen's household.

There were hopes at this time of another heir to the crown; and the King, foreseeing in the prospect of a son the means to raise his fallen dignity, was anxious to gratify his wife's wishes. When she pleaded therefore for an alliance with her own country, to be cemented by the marriage of her brother Alfonso, then a widower, with the twelve-year-old Isabel, he readily agreed. The scheme was the more pleasing that it ran counter to the union of Isabel and Ferdinand of Aragon, still strongly advocated by King John. Villena, who had been bribed into assisting the latter negotiation, received the first real intimation that his ascendancy was shaken, when he learned that the King and Court had set off to the south-western province of Estremadura without consulting him.

Through the medium of the Queen and Count of Ledesma, the Portuguese alliance was successfully arranged; and Alfonso V. was so impressed by the young Princess that he gallantly protested his wish that the betrothal could take place at once. Isabel replied with her strange unchildlike caution, that she could not be betrothed save with the consent of the National Cortes, an appeal to Cæsar that postponed the matter for the time being. Perhaps she knew her brother well enough to doubt his continued insistence that "she should marry none save the King of Portugal"; or she may thus early have formed a shrewd and not altogether flattering estimate of the volatile and uncertain Alfonso.

In the meantime the Marquis of Villena was plotting secretly with his brother, the Master of Calatrava, the Archbishop of Toledo, the Admiral of Castile, and other nobles how he might regain his old influence. After a series of attempts on his rival's life, from which Beltran de La Cueva emerged scatheless with the additional honour of the coveted Mastership of Santiago, he and his fellow-conspirators retired to Burgos, where they drew up a schedule of their grievances. Secret measures having failed they were determined to browbeat Henry into submission by playing on his well-known fears of civil war.

The King's hopes of an undisputed succession had been shattered by the premature birth of a still-born son; and thus the question of

the Infanta Joanna's legitimacy remained as a convenient weapon for those discontented with the Crown. Nor had the gifts and honours heaped on Beltran de La Cueva encouraged the loyalty of the principal nobles. The new favourite was rapacious and arrogant, while even more intolerable to courtiers of good family and wealth was the rise of an upstart nobility, that threatened to monopolize the royal favour.

Louis XI. was astute enough to develop such a policy to his own advantage; but the feeble Henry IV. was no more able to control his new creations than their rivals. Almost without exception they betrayed and sold him for their own ends, poisoning his mind against the few likely to remain faithful, and making his name odious amongst his poorer subjects by their selfishness and the corruption of their rule.

The conspirators of Burgos were thus enabled to pose as the defenders of national liberties; and their insolent letter of censure took the colouring most likely to appeal to popular prejudice. Complaints of the King's laxity in religious matters, of the unchecked violence of his Moorish guard, of the debasement of the coinage, and of the incompetence and venality of the royal judges—these were placed in the foreground, but the real crux of the document came later. It lay in two petitions that were veiled threats, first that the King would deprive the Count of Ledesma of the Mastership of Santiago, since it belonged of right to the Infante Alfonso, and next that the said Alfonso should be proclaimed as heir to the throne. The illegitimacy of the Princess Joanna was openly affirmed.

Henry received this letter at Valladolid, and, calling together his royal council, laid it before them. He expressed neither resentment at its insolence nor a desire for revenge; and when the aged Bishop of Cuenca, who had been one of his father's advisers, bade him have no dealings with the conspirators save to offer them battle, he replied with a sneer that "those who need not fight nor lay hands on their swords were always free with the lives of others."

Peace at all costs was his cry, and the old Bishop, exasperated, forgot prudence in his anger. "Henceforth," he exclaimed, "you will be thought the most unworthy King Spain ever knew; and you will repent it, Señor, when it is too late to make amends."

Already knights and armed men were flocking to the royal standard, as they heard of the rebels' ultimatum. Many of them were genuinely shocked at the attack on the dignity of the Crown, but for the greater number Henry's reckless prodigality of money and estates was not without its attractions.

The King, however, proved deaf alike to warnings and scorn. After elaborate discussions he and the Marquis of Villena arranged a temporary peace, known as the Concord of Medina del Campo. Its terms were entirely favourable to the conspirators, for Henry, heedless of the implied slur on his honour, agreed to acknowledge Alfonso as his heir, on the understanding that he should later marry the Infanta Joanna. With incredible shortsightedness he also consented to hand his brother over to the Marquis; and on the 30th of November, 1464, the oath to the new heir to the throne was publicly taken. This was followed by the elevation of the Count of Ledesma, who had resigned the Mastership of Santiago in favour of the young Prince, to the rank of Duke of Alburquerque.

The question of the misgovernment of the country and its cure was to be referred to a committee of five leading nobles, two to be selected by either party, while the Prior-General of the Order of San Geronimo was given a casting vote. This "Junta of Medina del Campo," held in January, 1465, proved no lasting settlement, for the King's representatives allowed themselves to be won over to the views of the league, with disastrous results for their own master.

"They straitened the power of the King to such an extent," says a chronicler, "that they left him almost nothing of his dominion save the title of King, without power to command or any pre-eminence."

Henry was roused at last, but it was only to fall a victim to fresh treachery.

Two of the most prominent members of the league in its beginnings had been Don Alonso Carrillo, Archbishop of Toledo, uncle of the Marquis of Villena, and the Admiral of Castile, Don Fadrique Enriquez. The former had little of his nephew's suave charm and adaptability, and his haughty, irascible nature was more suited to the camp than the Primacy of the Castilian Church.

"He was a great lover of war," says Pulgar in his *Claros Varones*, "and while he was praised on the one side for his open-handedness

he was blamed on the other for his turbulence, considering the religious vows by which he was bound.”

At the time of the Concord of Medina del Campo, he and the Admiral of Castile had professed themselves weary of the consistent disloyalty of their colleagues, and had returned to Court with the King. They now denounced the “Junta” and advised their master to revoke his agreement to the Concord, and to demand that the Infante Alfonso should be instantly restored to his power. As might be expected, the league merely laughed at this request. They declared that they held the young Prince as a guarantee of their safety, and that, since the King had determined to persecute them, they must renounce his service.

Not a few of those at Court suspected the Archbishop and Admiral of a share in this response, but Henry refused to take a lesson from the ill-results of past credulity. Instead he submitted entirely to his new advisers, surrendering at their request two important strongholds. This achieved, Don Fadrique and the Archbishop deserted to the league without further pretence; and when the royal messengers discovered the latter in full fighting gear, on his way to one of his new possessions, and ventured to remind him that the King awaited him, that warlike prelate replied with an air of fury: “Go, tell your King that I have had enough of him and his affairs. Henceforward he shall see who is the true Sovereign of Castile.”

This insult with its cryptic threat was explained almost immediately by messengers hurrying from Valladolid, who brought word that the Admiral had raised the standard of revolt, proclaiming in the market-place, “Long live the King—Don Alfonso!”

From defiance in words the rebel leaders proceeded to show their scorn of Henry IV. in action. On June 5th of the same year, they commanded a wooden scaffold to be set up on the plain outside the city of Avila, so that it could be clearly seen from all the surrounding neighbourhood. On it was placed an effigy of the King, robed in heavy black and seated in a chair of state. On his head was a crown, before him he held a sword, and in his right hand a sceptre—emblems of the sovereignty he had failed to exercise. Mounting the scaffold, the chief members of the league read aloud their grievances, declaring that only necessity had driven them to the step they were about to take. Then the Archbishop of Toledo removed the crown

and others of the league the sword and sceptre. Having stripped the effigy of its royal robes, they threw it on the ground, spurning it from them with their feet.

Immediately it had fallen and their jests and insults had died away, the eleven-year-old Alfonso ascended the scaffold, and when he had been invested with the insignia of majesty, the nobles knelt, and kissed his hand, and took the oath of allegiance. Afterwards they raised him on their shoulders, shouting, "Castile for the King, Don Alfonso!"

Messengers soon brought Henry news of his mock dethronement; and reports of risings in different parts of the land followed in quick succession. Valladolid and Burgos had risen in the north; there were factions in the important city of Toledo; a revolt had blazed up in Andalusia, where Don Pedro Giron, Master of Calatrava, had long been busy, sowing the seeds of disaffection.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall the earth receive me," exclaimed the King when he was told, and he found a melancholy satisfaction in quotations from Isaiah concerning the ingratitude of a chosen people. The tide had, however, turned in his favour. Even in Avila, amid the shouts of triumph and rejoicing, when Henry's effigy was thrown to the ground, some of those present had sobbed aloud with horror. More practical assistance took the shape of an army that rapidly collected in response to Henry's summons, "eager," as the chronicler expressed it, "to come to blows with those tyrants who had thus dishonoured their natural lord."

Villena who much preferred diplomacy to the shock of warfare had in the meanwhile induced his master to agree to a personal interview, with the result that the King broke up his camp, compensating his troops for their inaction by large gifts of money. The league, it was understood, would return to Henry's allegiance within a certain time; but its leaders had fallen out amongst themselves, and at length Villena thought it as well that he and his family should seek advantageous terms on their own account.

He demanded with incredible insolence that Henry should give his sister Isabel in marriage to Don Pedro Giron, Master of Calatrava. In return the Master would pay into the impoverished royal treasury an enormous sum of money, amassed by fraud and violence, besides entering the royal service with the 3000 lances, with which he was

just then engaged in harrying the fields of Andalusia. By way of securing future peace, the Infante Alfonso was to be restored to his brother, and the Duke of Alburquerque and his brother-in-law, the Bishop of Calahorra, banished.

For all his folly and weakness, it is difficult to believe that Henry would consent to such terms, but so low were the straits in which he found himself that he immediately expressed his satisfaction, sending word to Don Pedro Giron to come as quickly as he could. Isabel on her part was aghast and, finding entreaties and remonstrances of no avail, she spent days and nights upon her knees, praying that God would either remove the man or herself, before such a marriage should take place. Her favourite lady-in-waiting, Doña Beatriz de Bobadilla, moved by her distress, assured her that neither God nor she would permit such a crime, and, showing her a dagger that she wore hidden, swore to kill the Master, if no other way of safety should present itself.

Help, indeed, seemed far away, for the bridegroom, having obtained from Rome a dispensation from his ill-kept vow of celibacy, was soon on his way to Madrid at the head of a large company of knights and horsemen. His only reply to those who told him of the Infanta's obstinate refusal of his suit was that he would win her, if not by gentleness then by force.

At Villa Real, where he halted for the night, the unexpected happened, for, falling ill of an inflammation of the throat, he died a few days later.

“He was suddenly struck down by the hand of God,” says Enriquez del Castillo; while Alonso de Palencia describes how at the end “he blasphemously accused God of cruelty in not permitting him to add forty days to his forty and three years.”

Both the King and the Marquis of Villena were in consternation at the news. The latter had begun to lose his influence with the league, who justly suspected him of caring more for his own interests than theirs; and, while he bargained and negotiated with a view to securing for himself the Mastership of Santiago, a position that he no longer considered belonged to the young Alfonso “of right,” the Archbishop of Toledo and the Admiral were bent on bringing matters to an issue by open war.

Henry was forced to collect his loyalists once more; and on the 20th of August, 1467, a battle took place on the plain of Olmedo, just outside the city. The King's army had the advantage in numbers; indeed he had been induced to advance on the belief that the enemy would not dare to leave the shelter of their walls, and by the time they appeared it was too late to sound the retreat. Conspicuous amongst the rebels were the Infante Alfonso clad, notwithstanding his youth, in full mail armour, and the fiery Archbishop of Toledo in his surcoat of scarlet emblazoned with a white cross. The latter was wounded in his left arm early in the fight but not for that ceasing to urge on his cavalry to the attack. On the other side the hero of the day was Beltran de La Cueva, whose death forty knights had sworn to accomplish, but whose skill and courage were to preserve him for service in a better cause.

Alone, amongst the leading combatants, Henry IV. cut but a poor figure, for, watching the action from a piece of rising ground, he fled at the first sign of a reverse, persuaded that the battle was lost. Late that evening a messenger, primed with the news of victory, discovered him hiding in a neighbouring village, and he at last consented to return to the camp.

The royalists succeeded in continuing their march, but since the enemy remained in possession of the larger number of banners and prisoners, both armies were able to claim that they had won.

The battle of Olmedo was followed by the treacherous surrender to the league of the King's favourite town of Segovia. Here he had left the Queen and his sister; but while the former sought refuge in the Alcazar, which still held out for her husband, Isabel preferred to remain in the palace with her ladies-in-waiting. She had not suffered such kindness at the hands of Henry IV. as would make her rate either his love or his power of protection highly; and, when the rebels entered the town she surrendered to them with a very goodwill.

Henceforward her fortunes were joined to those of Alfonso; but death which had saved her from marriage with a man she loathed, was soon to rob her of her younger brother. It is difficult to form a clear estimate of either Alfonso's character or abilities from the scanty references of the chroniclers; but already, at the age of fourteen, he had proved himself a better soldier than Henry IV.; and we are told that those who knew him personally judged him more

upright. The news of his death, on July 5, 1468, was therefore received with general dismay. His death had been ostensibly the result of swollen glands, but it was widely believed that the real cause of its seriousness was a dish of poisoned trout prepared for him by a secret ally of the King.

With his disappearance from the political chess-board, the whole balance of affairs in Castile was altered; and Isabel emerged from comparative obscurity into the prominent position she was afterwards to hold. Would she take Alfonso's place as puppet of the league? or would she be reconciled to her elder brother? In the latter case, how would the King decide between her claims and those of Joanna "La Beltraneja"? These were the questions on whose answers depended the future of the land.

The principal members of the league had no doubts at all as to her complete acquiescence in their plans, and in the town of Avila they made her a formal offer of the throne, inviting her to assume the title of Queen of Castile and Leon. Isabel received the suggestion with her usual caution; for though but a girl of seventeen, she had few illusions as to the glories of sovereignty. She knew, moreover, that several prominent insurgents had taken the opportunity of reconciling themselves at Court, while the Marquis of Villena, now acknowledged Master of Santiago, was once more hand in glove with the King. She therefore replied that while her brother lived she could neither take the government nor call herself Queen, but that she would use every effort to secure peace in the land.



ALFONSO, BROTHER OF ISABEL OF  
CASTILE

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

This answer deprived the league of any legitimate excuse for rebellion; and they therefore sent letters to the King, declaring their willingness to return to his service, if he would acknowledge Isabel as heir to the throne. The Marquis of Villena also pressed the suggestion, thinking by this means to re-establish his influence completely; since his enemies, the House of Mendoza, and especially its cleverest representative Pedro Gonzalez, Bishop of Sigüenza, who had been promoted from the See of Calahorra, had taken up the cause of Queen Joanna and her daughter.

Henry, anxious for peace, no matter what the price, fell in with Villena's schemes. On the 19th of September, 1468, a meeting was held at the Toros de Guisandos near Avila; and there, in the presence of the Papal Legate, Henry swore away for a second time the honour of his so-called daughter, and recognized Isabel as legitimate heir to the throne and Princess of Asturias. By the terms of an agreement previously drawn up, he also promised that his sister should not be compelled to marry against her will, while she in return agreed to obtain his consent; furthermore he declared that he would divorce and send back to her own land his wife, whose lax behaviour had now become a byword.

Isabel's own position had materially improved; and there were no lack of suitors for this eligible heiress. Amongst them was a brother of Edward IV. of England, but whether the Duke of Clarence or Richard of Gloucester, the chroniclers do not say. The English alliance was never very seriously considered, whereas a veritable war of diplomacy was to be waged around the other proposals.

The Infanta's chief adviser at this time was the Archbishop of Toledo, though it does not appear that she was as much under his thumb, as Enriquez de Castillo would have us believe. There is evidence of considerable independence of judgment both in her refusal of the crown on Alfonso's death, and in her willingness to meet her brother at the Toros de Guisandos, in spite of the Archbishop's violent opposition. Throughout the negotiations, the Archbishop had been on the watch for evidence of some hidden plot, and only Isabel's tact and firmness had induced him to accompany her to the meeting.

Nevertheless it was natural that a girl of her age should rely considerably on the judgment of a man so well versed in the politics of the day, especially as the alliance that he urged appealed in every way to her own inclinations. Ferdinand of Aragon, the Archbishop's protégé, was her junior by eleven months; a slight disparity in comparison with the age of former suitors such as Charles of Viana, Alfonso of Portugal, and the Master of Calatrava, all her seniors by at least twenty years.

In modern reckoning, Ferdinand would be called a boy, but his childhood had been spent amidst surroundings of war and rebellion, from which he had emerged as his father's right hand; and John II.,

in token of his love and confidence, had created this son of his old age King of Sicily to mark his dignity and independence. Shrewd, practical, and brave, Ferdinand united to a well-set-up, manly, appearance all those qualities that Henry IV. so conspicuously lacked. It was little wonder then if he found grace in the Infanta Isabel's eyes, not only as an eligible husband, but as a fitting consort with whose help she might subdue the turbulence of Castile.

It can be imagined that Ferdinand found no grace at all in the eyes of the Marquis of Villena, to whom opportunities for turbulence were as the breath of life, and whose affection for the House of Aragon had never been sincere.

Policy dictated to him a counter-alliance and at first the importunate Alfonso of Portugal won support. Villena had re-established his old influence over his master, and at this time formed an ambitious scheme, by which his son should marry the Infanta Joanna; the idea being to draw up a new settlement, settling the crown on his own descendants, if Isabel and her Portuguese husband had no children.

At Ocaña, where Henry IV. and his sister held a meeting of the Cortes in 1468, a magnificent embassy appeared from Alfonso V., with the Archbishop of Lisbon at its head, seeking the betrothal of their master to the Infanta Isabel.

"They thought it an easy matter to bring about the marriage," says Alonso de Palencia; but they were destined to return to their own land, with their mission unfulfilled. Isabel had never been attracted to the Portuguese King; and her coldness was hardened into antipathy by the Archbishop of Toledo, who sent her secret warnings that the alliance was a plot to ruin her prospects. Once married, she would become a foreigner in the eyes of Castile, and while her children could not hope to succeed to the throne of Portugal, since Alfonso had already an heir, the Infanta Joanna would be preferred to her in her own land. Isabel, moved both by these arguments and her own feelings, thereupon gave a secret promise to marry her cousin Ferdinand, returning a steady refusal to her brother's persuasions and threats.

Henry now made an attempt to capture her, with a view to imprisoning her in the Alcazar at Madrid; but the attitude of the principal knights of Ocaña, who loved neither Villena nor the

Portuguese, was so threatening that he quickly changed his manner. Assuring the Archbishop of Lisbon that some other means would be found to placate the Princess, whose opposition would only be increased by violence, he sent him and his fellow-ambassadors away, not altogether despairing but with their confidence somewhat shaken.

In the meanwhile the fires of rebellion were alight once more in Andalusia and burnt so furiously, that it was felt only the King in person could hope to allay them. With great reluctance he left his sister in Ocaña, but he dared not risk further unpopularity by using force. At the Master of Santiago's suggestion he demanded that she should promise to take no new steps about her marriage until his return, thinking in this way to place her in an equivocal position. Either she would refuse, in which case she would stand self-convicted of some secret plot, or she would take the oath, condemning herself as a perjurer if she broke it.

Isabel, appreciating the situation, gave her promise. Even the Master of Santiago, for all his vigilance, did not know that her consent to the Aragonese alliance was of previous date, and therefore arrangements concerned with it could be argued not to fall under the heading "new." As soon as Henry IV. and his favourite had gone southwards, she herself left Ocaña, with the ostensible object of taking her brother Alfonso's body to be buried in state at Avila, and from there went to Madrigal her birthplace, where her mother was living. It was her hope that here she would be able to complete her negotiations with King John and his son, undetected; but she found the Bishop of Burgos, a nephew of the Master of Santiago, in the town ready to spy on all her actions.

The King had by now planned for his sister a new match, with Charles, Duke of Berri, brother and heir-presumptive to Louis XI. Not only would this alliance cement the customary friendship of Castile and France, but Isabel's close connection with the French throne would remove her very thoroughly from the danger zone of Castilian affairs. When the Cardinal of Arras arrived in Andalusia he was therefore encouraged by Henry to go to Madrigal in person and urge the Duke's suit.

Nothing doubting the success of his mission, for he was a man famed for his oratory, the Cardinal, having gained admittance to the

Princess, brought forward all his arguments, laying stress not only on the wealth and personal charms of the Duke, but on the joy such an alliance would give her father in the other world. Now Isabel had previously sent secret messengers to report on the respective appearance and bearing of Ferdinand and the French Duke, and the comparison was hardly favourable to the latter, who was a weakling with thin ungainly limbs and watery eyes. She could thus estimate the worth of the Cardinal's statements and replied firmly that "she could not dispose of her hand in marriage save by the advice of the leading nobles and knights of the kingdoms, and that having consulted them she would do what God ordained."

This was equivalent to a refusal; and the Cardinal, having exerted his eloquence once more in vain, returned to France, nursing his resentment and wrath. He left the Princess in a critical position; for her brother could draw but one conclusion from her refusal of such an advantageous match; and he and the Master of Santiago now strained every effort to stop her marriage with the King of Sicily.

Unable to leave Andalusia themselves, they warned the citizens of Madrigal that any favour shown to the Princess would be regarded as an act of treachery to the Crown, while she was so surrounded by spies and enemies that even her faithful lady-in-waiting, Beatriz de Bobadilla, grew frightened and besought her to break off the Aragonese alliance. Isabel knew that, once intimidated into doing this, she would remain absolutely at her brother's mercy, and she therefore implored the Archbishop of Toledo to come to her assistance before it was too late. A lover of bold and decisive actions, that warlike prelate was soon at the gates of Madrigal at the head of an armed force; and Isabel, refusing to listen to the threats of the Bishop of Burgos, at once joined him, going with him to Valladolid, the headquarters of the Admiral, Don Fadrique.

She had burned her boats, and it only remained for the man on whom she had pinned her faith to play his part in the drama adequately. Both Ferdinand and his father realized the seriousness of the situation. If the treaty of Fuenterrabia had spelled trouble and disaster for Castile, it had been the source of even greater evils in Aragon; for the Catalans, far from returning to their old allegiance, as they were advised, had continued to maintain their desperate resistance in Barcelona. They had elected as their Count first one

prince of royal extraction and then another; each new puppet doomed to ultimate failure, but leaving behind him a defiance increasing in ferocity as it lost power in other ways.

Nor was chronic rebellion John II.'s only serious trouble. The important counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne, pledged to Louis XI. in return for troops, had been seized by that monarch, as soon as he saw his neighbour too involved in difficulties to show practical resentment; and the web of French diplomacy was now being spun over Navarre, through the medium of the King of Aragon's son-in-law, the Count of Foix. Personal sorrows added their quota: the loss of sight at a time when political clouds looked blackest, followed by the death of Queen Joanna, whose courage and brains had made her a fitting helpmate for her ambitious husband, whether in the council-chamber or on the battlefield. John was indeed repaid with added measure for the turbulence and treachery of his early days; but like many men of his type he showed better in adversity than in success.

Doggedly he laid fresh plans, and Providence that seldom hates the brave rewarded him by the recovery of his eyesight.

The realization of his son's marriage with Isabel of Castile, always favoured by him, was now his dearest ambition; for he believed that the final union of the two kingdoms would mean the death-blow to Louis XI.'s hopes of dominating the Pyrenees, as well as the building up of the power of the Crown at home against unruly subjects. Such designs were, however, of the future, while the immediate steps to achieve them were fraught with danger.

Isabel, the bride-elect was at Valladolid, temporarily protected by the Archbishop of Toledo and the Admiral; but to the north lay the hostile Bishopric of Burgos, to the south-east a line of fortified strongholds, all in the hands of the Mendozas, the chief supporters of Joanna La Beltraneja and therefore enemies of the Aragonese match. It only needed the return of Henry IV. from Andalusia to make her position untenable.

Isabel and the Archbishop of Toledo therefore dispatched messengers to Aragon in haste to insist that the King of Sicily should come to Valladolid. They found him in Saragossa, and suggested that, as every moment of delay increased the danger, he should disguise himself and go to Castile with only a few adherents, thus hoodwinking the Mendozas, who would never expect him to take this

risk, and who also believed the negotiations for the marriage to be at a much earlier stage.

Notwithstanding his later reputation for a hard head and a cool heart, Ferdinand in his youth possessed a certain vein of adventurous chivalry. It was with difficulty that he had been prevented from leading an entirely rash expedition to Isabel's rescue at Madrigal, and he now readily agreed to a scheme, whose chief merit lay in its apparent impossibility.

Sending one of the Castilian messengers on before to announce his coming, he and a few of the most trusted members of his household boldly crossed the frontier. The rest were disguised as merchants, Ferdinand himself as a servant; and at the inns where they were forced to halt he played his part, waiting at table and tending the mules. They did not stop often, riding in spite of the intense cold by day and night; with the result that they arrived before they were expected at the friendly town of Burgo de Osma. Ferdinand, whom excitement had rendered less tired and sleepy than the others, spurred forward as they came in sight of the gates, narrowly escaping death at the hands of an over-zealous sentry. Soon, however, their identity was explained, and amid the blowing of trumpets and joyful shouts the young King was welcomed by his allies.

At Valladolid the news of his arrival into safe territory was the signal for feasting and jousts, and preparations for the marriage were pushed on apace. Ferdinand came by night to Valladolid, and, being met at a postern gate by the Archbishop of Toledo was led to the house where the Princess lodged.

Four days later, on October 18, 1469, the formal betrothal took place. Isabel and Ferdinand as second cousins stood within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity; but the Archbishop of Toledo produced a bull, affording the necessary dispensation. This bore the signature of Pius II., who had died in 1464, and authorized Ferdinand to marry within the third degree of consanguinity, on the expiration of four years from the date of the bull. Granted its authenticity, the marriage was perfectly legal; but it is almost certain the document was an elaborate forgery, constructed by John of Aragon and the Archbishop to meet their pressing needs.<sup>[2]</sup> The dispensation was essential to satisfy, not only Isabel, but any wavering supporters of orthodox views. On the other hand, apart

from the haste required and known dilatoriness of the Papal Court, Paul II., who at that time occupied the See of Saint Peter, was the sworn ally of Henry IV.; and those who were negotiating the Aragonese alliance recognized that there could be no successful appeal to his authority.

2. See Clemencin, *Elogio de Isabella*, Ilustracion II.

Another matter requiring delicate handling had been the marriage settlement that, signed by Ferdinand and ratified by his father, was read aloud at the betrothal ceremony by the Archbishop of Toledo. In it Ferdinand declared his devotion to the Mother Church and Apostolic See, and his undying allegiance to Henry IV. The document then went on to say that the signatures of both husband and wife must be affixed to all ordinances and public deeds; while the remainder of the clauses were directed to allaying the suspicions of those who feared that the King of Sicily might use his new position for the good of Aragon rather than Castile. In them he promised not to leave the kingdom himself without consent of the Princess, nor to remove any children that they might have, whether sons or daughters. He would not on his own account make peace nor war nor any alliance. He would not appoint to offices any save natives of Castile; while he pledged himself to take no new steps with regard to the lands that had once belonged to his father but had since been alienated.

After the ceremony was over, Ferdinand retired with the Archbishop to his lodging in Valladolid; and the next day, October 19th, he and Isabel were married; and for six days the town kept festival in honour of the event.

Henry learned of his sister's marriage from the Master of Santiago, and naturally nothing of the insolence of such proceedings towards himself was lost in the telling. The news found him in broken health, the result of his life-long self-indulgence, and with his vanity badly wounded by the scorn and defiance he had encountered in Andalusia. He was therefore in no mood for conciliation, and received Isabel's letters, explaining the necessity under which she had acted and her assurances of loyalty, in gloomy silence, lending a willing ear to the Master of Santiago's suggestion that he might retract the oath he had taken at the Toros de Guisandos.

Circumstances favoured such a course; for Louis XI., who looked on the Castilian-Aragonese alliance with alarm as inimical to French expansion, offered Isabel's rejected suitor, Charles, now Duke of Guienne, to the Infanta Joanna, the underlying condition being of course that Henry should disinherit Isabel in her favour. Negotiations were at once begun; and in 1470, the Cardinal of Arras appeared at the Spanish Court charged with the final conclusion of the terms. He had never forgiven the Infanta's indifference to his oratory; and, as diligent enquiry had made him cognizant of the fact that Pius II.'s bull must be a forgery, he proceeded to denounce her in words, according to Enriquez de Castillo, "so outrageous that they are more worthy to be passed over in silence than recorded."

Henry far from being shocked was obviously pleased; and, having completed the agreement with the Cardinal, in October, 1470, he publicly withdrew his oath, taken at the Toros de Guisandos, and acknowledged the Infanta Joanna, then nine years old, as his daughter and heir. Her formal betrothal to the Duke of Guienne followed, and then the little Princess was handed over to the care of the Master of Santiago, much to the indignation of the Marquis of Santillana and the Mendozas, in whose keeping she had hitherto been.

Henry now published a manifesto, in which he declared that his sister had broken her oath in marrying without his consent, and had aggravated her offence by her choice of an enemy of Castile, and by not waiting to obtain a dispensation from the Pope. He had therefore judged her unfit to succeed to the throne and had restored Doña Joanna to her rights.

This document did not meet with general approval. Indeed the principal towns of Andalusia, already disaffected, openly expressed their refusal to consent to its terms. Yet to Isabel in Dueñas, where her first child, a daughter named after herself, had been born in the October of this year, the prospect seemed bleak enough. Her difficulties in Castile were intensified by the ill-fortunes of John of Aragon in his war against Louis XI. for the recovery of Roussillon and Cerdagne; so that in spite of the critical position of affairs at home, she was forced to let Ferdinand go to his father's assistance.

Hiding her fears, she replied to Henry's manifesto by a counter-protest, in which she recalled her own moderation in refusing the

crown on her brother Alfonso's death, and vindicated her marriage as performed on the advice of the wiser and larger section of the leading nobility. Henry, she declared had broken his oath, not only in acknowledging Joanna, who was known to be illegitimate, as his daughter and heiress; but long before, when he had failed to divorce and send away the Queen as he had promised, and when he had tried to force his sister to marry the King of Portugal against her will.

In the meanwhile, in spite of the flourish of trumpets with which the betrothal had taken place, the French marriage hung fire. Gossip maintained that the Duke of Guienne's interest in Joanna had been merely the result of pique at Isabel's refusal; while Louis XI. had used it as a temporary expedient against his enemy, the King of Aragon. At any rate the French Prince was openly courting the heiress, Mary of Burgundy, when death cut short his hopes in May, 1472.

Various bridegrooms were now suggested for the Infanta Joanna; amongst them her own uncle the King of Portugal.

Henry IV. was at this time at Segovia, whose Alcayde, Andres de Cabrera, husband of Isabel's lady-in-waiting, Beatriz de Bobadilla, had always been one of his faithful adherents. In the Alcazar was stored a considerable sum of money; and the Master of Santiago now advised the King to demand its surrender and also that of the fortress, hoping to get them into his own hands, as he had done with the Alcazar at Madrid. Cabrera, suspecting rightly a plot for his own ruin, stoutly refused; and his enemy, after stirring up in the town a rebellion which the Alcayde promptly quelled, left the city in disgust. Henry, who loved Segovia, remained behind, unable to make up his mind to any decisive action.

The favourite's departure was the opportunity for which those inclined to Isabel's interests had long been waiting; and Beatriz de Bobadilla urged her husband to effect a reconciliation between the King and his sister. This plan met with the approval of no less important a person than Pedro Gonsalez de Mendoza, Bishop of Siguenza, whose material position had been lately increased, not only by the Archbishopric of Seville, but also by receiving a long-coveted Cardinal's hat. At the time of the Aragonese marriage the Mendozas had been amongst Isabel's most formidable opponents, but their enforced surrender of the Infanta Joanna to the Master of

Santiago after the French betrothal, had quite altered their views; and the Cardinal of Spain, as Pedro Gonsalez was usually called, now worked to secure Isabel's accession, as the best means of ruining his rival.

Another person, who had set himself to negotiate an agreement, was the Papal Legate, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, by birth a Valencian. John of Aragon's old enemy, Paul II. had died in 1471; and Sixtus IV., his successor, when dispatching Cardinal Borgia to Castile, in 1473, to demand a clerical subsidy, gave him at the same time a bull of dispensation, which legalized Ferdinand and Isabel's marriage, and also affirmed the legitimacy of their daughter and her rights of inheritance.

Isabel's prospects had considerably brightened, and a bold action on her part was to put them to the test. One day, Beatriz de Bobadilla, who had secretly kept her informed of the current state of affairs, disguised herself as a countrywoman and, mounted on an ass, rode out to the city of Aranda, where her mistress was living. She begged her to come to Segovia immediately; and, on a day arranged, Isabel and the Archbishop of Toledo appeared in the city before dawn and were received into the Alcazar. Henry was then in his hunting-box in the woods outside, but that evening he returned to the palace and saw his sister. With his usual impressionability he echoed the joy of all around him, and embracing her informed her of his goodwill and the pleasure her coming had given him. The next day they rode through the city together, his hand on her bridle-rein; and some little time afterwards Ferdinand, who had been hastily summoned, was reconciled to his brother-in-law.

Andres de Cabrera, delighted at the success of his hazardous scheme, arranged an elaborate dinner on the Feast of the Epiphany of that year, 1474, in order to celebrate the occasion; but unfortunately Henry, who was in delicate health, fell ill. Secret supporters of the Master of Santiago cleverly suggested that he had been poisoned, and that this had been the main object of the reconciliation. Henry, thoroughly alarmed, in spite of all his sister's efforts to allay his fears, left Segovia, as soon as he was well enough to bear the journey, joining the Master of Santiago and the Infanta Joanna at Madrid.

All the old trouble and discord seemed destined to begin once more, but in reality the labours of both schemer and dupe were nearly at an end. Early in the autumn the Master of Santiago hastened to Estremadura to gain possession of a certain fortress, and there, on the eve of achieving his purpose, he fell ill and died.

Henry, though almost inconsolable at the news, transferred his affections to his favourite's son, the Marquis of Villena, confirming him in all his father's offices and titles and creating him Master of Santiago. It was to be almost the last of the many honours and gifts that he bestowed in the course of his long reign, for on December 11, 1474, a few weeks before his fiftieth birthday, he also died.

The same atmosphere of vacillation, in which he had moved in his life, enveloped his death-bed. When questioned as to the succession, the chronicler, Alonso de Palencia, declares that he equivocated, saying that his secretary knew what he wished; other writers that he confessed to a friar that the Princess Joanna was indeed his daughter, and that he left a will to this effect. Enriquez del Castillo, his chaplain and chronicler, makes no mention of Joanna's name. Henry's personal beliefs and wishes had availed little in his own day, and he may have guessed that they would carry no weight after his death. One at any rate was fulfilled, and he was buried, as he had asked, in the Church of Sancta Maria de Guadalupe, at the foot of his mother's tomb.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ACCESSION OF ISABEL: THE PORTUGUESE WAR**

### **1475–1479**

The news of Henry IV.'s death was the signal for Isabel's proclamation as Queen in Segovia. Riding through the crowded streets, her palfrey led by two of the "regidores" of the city, she came amid the shouts of the people to the principal square. Before her walked four kings-at-arms, and after them Gutierre de Cardenas, bearing a naked sword, emblem of the justice that should emanate from kingship. In the square stood a high scaffold, hung with rich embroidered stuffs, and on it a throne, raised by three steps from the surrounding platform. Isabel ascended these and took her place; and then, a king-at-arms having called for silence, a herald cried in a loud voice: "Castile! Castile for the King Don Fernando and the Queen Doña Isabel, his wife." Those watching below took up the shout, and amid cheers the royal standard was raised.

Ferdinand was in Aragon; but news had at once been sent him of the King's death, and in the meanwhile Isabel received the homage of the great nobles and knights who were ready to pledge themselves to her cause. Chief amongst them were the Admiral of Castile, the Cardinal of Spain, his brother, the Marquis of Santillana, and the rest of the Mendozas; while they brought with them Beltran de La Cueva, Duke of Alburquerque, whose fortunes scandal would naturally have linked with the cause of the Infanta Joanna.

Significant was the tardy appearance of the Archbishop of Toledo, once so hot in Isabel's cause. Now he came in the train of all the rest, with little enthusiasm in his homage or in the oath he took in the hall of the palace, his hand resting on a copy of the Gospels. On the 2d of

January he and the Cardinal of Spain rode out to meet the King of Sicily, returning with him, one on either side, amid such crowds that it was past sunset before they reached the palace.

He was a young man of twenty and two years ... [says Colmenares, the historian of Segovia, commenting on Ferdinand's appearance], of medium height, finely built, his face grave but handsome and of a fair complexion, his hair chestnut in shade but somewhat spare on the temples, his nose and mouth small, his eyes bright with a certain joyful dignity, a healthy colour in his cheeks and lips, his head well set on his shoulders, his voice clear and restful. He carried himself boldly both on horse and foot.

His character, his new subjects could not fully gauge; but the contrast with Henry's vacillating puerility was obvious. Here at any rate was a man, who would not fail in what he undertook through indecision or lack of courage.

The Cardinal of Spain and Archbishop of Toledo proceeded to draw up "Provisions" for the future government of the kingdom, adjusting the exact relations of the sovereigns on the basis of the marriage settlement. Royal letters and proclamations were to be signed by both, the seals affixed to be stamped with the joint arms of Castile and Aragon, the coinage engraved with the double likeness. Justice was to be awarded by the two sovereigns, when together; by each, when separated. Castile safeguarded her independence by placing the control of the Treasury in the hand of the Queen, and by insisting that the governors of cities and fortresses should do homage to her alone. She alone, also, might appoint "corregidores" and provide incumbents for ecclesiastical benefices, though the nominations were to bear Ferdinand's signature as well as her own.



FERDINAND OF ARAGON

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

It can be imagined that such a settlement would depend for its success largely on the goodwill and tact of those called on to fulfil it; and Ferdinand though he consented to sign his name to the document did so with considerable reluctance. Many of the nobles in Segovia, though mainly those of Aragonese birth, had professed their annoyance that Ferdinand's position should be in any way subordinated to that of his wife. They declared that the Salic law, excluding women from the royal succession, should hold good in Castile as well as in France; and that, the Castilian House of Trastamara having died out in the male line with Henry IV., the crown should pass directly to the Aragonese branch, in the person of King John and his son, the King of Sicily.

Loud was the indignation of Isabel's Castilian supporters at this suggestion. The Salic law, they maintained, had never been acknowledged in Castile; on the contrary, cases could be cited in which women had succeeded to the throne to the detriment of the obvious male heir.

Thus, between arguments on the one side and the other, feelings ran high, for Ferdinand himself inclined to a theory that flattered his love of power and independence. Isabel, who had no intention of ceding her rights, at length exerted her influence to win him to her point of view.

"Señor," she said, after a stormy council-meeting that had in the end upheld her right of succession, "this matter need never have been discussed, because, owing to the union that, by the Grace of God, there is betwixt us, there can be no real disagreement."

She then alluded to her duty of obedience as his wife; but perhaps to Ferdinand her most convincing argument was the pertinent suggestion that if the Salic law were acknowledged and they should have no male heirs, their daughter Isabel could not lawfully succeed them. It would ill have pleased Ferdinand to leave his possessions to any of his Aragonese cousins. "The King," we are told, "having heard the Queen's reasons was highly pleased, because he knew them to be true; and both he and she gave orders that there should be no more talk on this matter."

The chronicler then goes on to remark on the complete concord that ever afterwards existed between the sovereigns.

And when it was necessary that the King should go to look after affairs in one part of the kingdom and the Queen in another, it never happened that he or she issued a command that conflicted with those that the other gave. Circumstances might separate them, but love held their wills joined.

Ferdinand and Isabel had shown their wisdom in refusing to let the rift between them widen into an open quarrel. In a crisis the least straw may turn the balance; and the condition of affairs required their combined energies in the one scale. It is true that the majority of nobles and knights had either in person, or by deputy, expressed their allegiance; but there still remained a small though powerful

group, headed by the young Marquis of Villena, who maintained that the Infanta Joanna was the rightful Queen.

That their objective was rather self-interest than any deep loyalty to the little Princess was obvious from Villena's letter, mentioning the terms on which he and his followers would consent to submit. For himself he demanded, first his acknowledgment as Master of Santiago, next the confirmation of all lands, castles, and revenues that had belonged to his father, including the Alcazar at Madrid, and thirdly a yearly income of over two million maravedis to be paid by the Crown. The Count of Plasencia, his ally, whom Henry IV. had created Duke of Arévalo with the gift of that town (taken from the widowed Queen Isabel for the purpose), sought also the confirmation of his honours.

With regard to Joanna, whom Villena and his followers styled "Princess of Castile," they insisted that she should be suitably married; and on this demand all negotiations ultimately broke down. Ferdinand and Isabel were willing to grant the Marquis the Mastership, in spite of the clamours of seven other candidates; they agreed to the idea of Joanna's marriage; but their stipulation that, while this subject was under consideration, she should be handed over to some trustworthy person, virtually put an end to all hopes of reconciliation. Joanna was the Marquis's trump card, and he had no intention of playing her until he was certain of his trick, far less of passing her into the hands of anyone, whom her rivals would consider trustworthy.

Dazzled by the schemes he had planned, he believed it would be an easy matter to secure Isabel's ruin, and in this view he was strengthened by the secret correspondence he had been carrying on with his great-uncle, the Archbishop of Toledo. The latter's conduct is on the surface inexplicable; for, having maintained Isabel's cause with unswerving loyalty throughout the negotiations for her marriage, when she was in danger of imprisonment and he of incurring, on her account, not only papal censure but the loss of his archbishopric, he had yet at the end of Henry IV.'s reign reconciled himself to that monarch and his favourite the young Marquis of Villena, to the weakening of his old allegiance. His tardy appearance at Segovia, and the sulky manner he had adopted towards Ferdinand and the Queen, were alike in keeping with a change of policy that in a

man of his ambitions seemed as shortsighted as it was unaccountable. The explanation lies in Carrillo's lack of self-control that made his ambition the plaything of his besetting vice.

Like Juan Pacheco, he loved wealth, the more that he was in secret an alchemist and squandered the revenues of his see in a vain endeavour to make gold; but even the glitter of precious metals lost its charm beside his lust for power and influence. He must be first. This was the motive that had driven him to desert Henry IV., to break with his nephew in the revolt of the League, and now, finally, when the cause for which he had laboured was on the eve of success, to renounce his allegiance to Isabel, because of his jealousy of her new adviser the Cardinal of Spain.

In vain the Queen, who knew his character, tried to dissipate his suspicions. Carrillo's temperament set his imagination afire at the least glimmer of insult or neglect; his manner grew morose and overbearing, his desire for gifts and rewards every day more rapacious. At length, when Ferdinand ventured to oppose his demands, the Archbishop openly expressed his anger and, leaving the Court, withdrew to his town of Alcalá de Henares, where he began to plot secretly with Joanna's supporters.

Between them he and the Marquis hatched a scheme, whose success would, they hoped, make them the arbiters of Castile. This was nothing less than a Portuguese alliance by which Alfonso V., married to his niece, would in her name cross the border, and aided by his Castilian allies drive out Ferdinand and his Queen. With this intention, the Marquis dispatched a letter to Alfonso full of showy promises. The most important Castilian nobles, he declared, including himself and all his relations, the Duke of Arévalo, and the Archbishop of Toledo, were pledged to Joanna's cause; while numbers were only waiting to follow their example as soon as they were reassured by the first victory. Furthermore, he guaranteed the goodwill of fourteen of the principal towns in the kingdom; while, alluding to the factions that convulsed the rest, he prophesied that one side would be certain to adopt the Portuguese cause and with a little help secure the upper hand. Victory was the more certain by reason of the penniless state in which Henry IV. had left the treasury. It was impossible that Ferdinand and Isabel could compete without

financial assistance against the wealth and well-known military strength of Portugal.

Such arguments had a surface plausibility; though a statesman might have asked himself if they did not take Fortune's smiles too much for granted. Was it safe to ignore the deep-rooted dislike that Castile bore Portugal, or to assume the friendliness of the larger towns, on whose possession the ultimate victory must depend? Alfonso V. was not the type of man to ask uncomfortable questions. He saw the object of his desire in a glamour that obscured the pitfalls along the road on which he must travel; and where courage and enthusiasm were the pilgrim's main requisites he was rewarded by success. Three times he had defeated the Moors beyond the sea; and, dowered with the proud title "El Africano," he now aspired to be the victor of a second Aljubarrota. The rôle pleased his romantic and highly strung nature for, while posing as the defender of injured womanhood in the person of his niece, he could also hope to avenge on Queen Isabel the slight his vanity had suffered from her persistent refusal of his suit.

Practical-minded councillors shook their heads over his sanguine expectations and pointed out the untrustworthy reputations of the Marquis of Villena and the Archbishop of Toledo. That these same men had sworn to Joanna's illegitimacy and made it a cause of rebellion against King Henry looked as if love of self rather than love of justice were now their inspiration.

Isabel and the Cardinal of Spain wrote letters of remonstrance to the same effect, begging Alfonso to submit the matter to arbitration; but that credulous monarch chose to believe that their advice arose merely from a desire to gain time, and therefore hurried on his preparations for war.

In May, 1475, having collected an army of 5600 horse and 14,000 foot, he crossed the border and advanced to Plasencia. His plan of campaign was to march from there northwards in the direction of Toro and Zamora, as secret correspondence had aroused his hope of winning both these strongholds. At Plasencia he halted, until the Marquis of Villena and the Duke of Arévalo appeared with his niece, and then he and Joanna were married on a lofty platform in the centre of the city, the marriage awaiting fulfilment pending the necessary dispensation from Rome. A herald, however, using the old

formula at once proclaimed the union: "Castile! Castile for the King Don Alfonso of Portugal and the Queen Doña Joanna his wife, the rightful owner of these kingdoms."

From Plasencia the Portuguese at length marched to Arévalo, where another delay, this time of two months, took place, Alfonso determining to await the troops that had been promised him by his Castilian allies. He had with him the chivalry of his own Court, young hot-bloods, who had pledged their estates in the prospect of speedy glory and pillage. In their self-confidence the easy theories of Villena found an echo; and they loudly boasted that Ferdinand and his wife would never dare to meet them, but were in all probability on the road to Aragon. "Before gaining the victory they divided the spoil," comments Pulgar sarcastically.

The Castilian sovereigns were far from meditating flight. The war had not been of their choosing, but, since it had been forced upon them, they were ready to prosecute it to the end. For the moment affairs looked threatening. Not only was their treasury practically empty, and a hostile army on the march across their western border, but news came from France that Louis XI., who had at first expressed his pleasure at their accession, was now in league with their enemies and intended to invade the provinces of Biscay and Guipuzcoa; Villena and his companions were in arms; the Archbishop of Toledo sulking in Alcalá de Henares.

To him the Queen determined to go and address a last appeal in person, leaving her husband to watch the movements of the Portuguese from Valladolid. Some of those at Court, who knew the pitch of resentment and fury to which the old Primate had brought his broodings, assured her that her mission would be in vain, saying that it was beneath her dignity to thus humble herself to a subject. Isabel replied that she counted as little on his service as she feared his disloyalty, and that if he had been anyone else, she would most certainly have weighed the matter more carefully, but she added, "I would not accuse myself later with the thought that if I had gone to him in person, he would have withdrawn from the false road he now seeks to follow."

She then set out southwards, accompanied by the Marquis of Santillana newly-created Duke of Infantado, and the Constable of Castile, the Count of Haro, sending the latter on in advance as they

drew near to Alcalá to announce her coming. Carrillo listened to the Constable's skilful reasoning in uneasy silence; but he was not to be cajoled either by his conscience or by appeals to his vanity, and at length burst into a storm of passion, declaring that it was his intention to serve the King of Portugal, and none should turn him from it. If Isabel entered Alcalá by one gate, he himself would leave by another.

This was plain speaking; and the Queen, who had planned the interview less from policy than out of regard for the old man, whose restless jealousy she knew so well, continued on her way to Toledo, where she intended to make preparations for the defence of Estremadura and Andalusia.

Ferdinand, in the meanwhile, mustered his forces in Valladolid. So great was the hatred of the Portuguese that many of the towns of Old Castile sent citizens equipped at their own expense; while nobles in mail, and *ginetes*, or lightly-armed horsemen, flocked to the royal standard along with Biscayan archers and hardy mountaineers from the north. Joined with the levies of Segovia and Avila, that Isabel had collected on her journey to Toledo, the whole army mustered about 12,000 horse and 80,000 foot, as it advanced to the relief of the citadel of Toro, both that town and Zamora having surrendered to the Portuguese through the treachery of their respective governors. The enthusiasm was general, and Ferdinand himself burned with the desire to achieve some great deed.

Unfortunately Toro, flanked by fortresses in the power of the Portuguese, and protected on the rear by the Douro, whence provisions could be passed into the town, proved altogether too strong for the besiegers. A stormy council-of-war was held in the Castilian camp, it being decided that the only wise course would be to retreat. This rumour spread, gradually taking the shape that the nobles were forcing the King for their own ends to give up the siege; and in a fury the ordinary soldiery rushed to the royal tent, swearing to stand by Ferdinand in whatever act of daring he sought to do, and above all to protect him from traitors. In bitterness of spirit they learned that he also counselled retreat, and in disorderly fashion they shook the dust of Toro from their feet and returned to Valladolid. Their departure resulted in the surrender of the citadel to the Portuguese, with whom the Archbishop of Toledo now openly allied

himself, rancorously declaring that he had called Isabel from her spinning-wheel and would send her back to it again.

From Valladolid Ferdinand was summoned to Burgos. The city was almost entirely in his favour, but the fortress and the church of Santa Maria La Blanca were held by the men of the Duke of Arévalo, whose catapults caused so much destruction that the inhabitants declared unless help was given they must surrender. In one of the principal streets alone, over three hundred houses had been burned, while the firing never ceased by night or day.

Ferdinand and his illegitimate brother, Alfonso, Duke of Villahermosa, were soon on the scenes, for Burgos was too important a place to be lost; and earthworks and fortifications were hastily constructed over against the citadel to prevent help reaching it from the King of Portugal. All this, however, cost time, and, still more disastrous, money; for the contents of the treasury in Segovia, handed over by Andres de Cabrera, were exhausted, and the land, impoverished by Henry IV.'s misgovernment, could obviously yield few taxes.

The sovereigns, in deep gloom, called a meeting of the Cortes in Medina del Campo, and laid their monetary difficulties before it. How was the army to be paid? The problem was the harder for the reckless generosity of the Portuguese, who gave fine promises of lands and revenues to all who joined them, the fulfilment depending on the success of the war. One solution was to permit the Castilian troops to provide for themselves by pillage and robbery. This the sovereigns at once rejected, nor would they consent to alienate the few royal estates still remaining to them. A third suggestion was to exact a loan from the Church, and it speaks well for the reputation that Ferdinand and Isabel had already established, that the clergy at once consented to this arrangement. In the end it was settled that the Church should surrender half her silver plate to specified royal officials, and that this should be redeemed at the end of three years by the payment of thirty millions of maravedis.

The war now continued with unabated vigour, not only in the north-west corner, occupied by Alfonso V., but throughout Castile and even across the Portuguese border. On hearing of the proclamation at Plasencia, Ferdinand and Isabel, by way of retaliation, had added to their titles that of King and Queen of

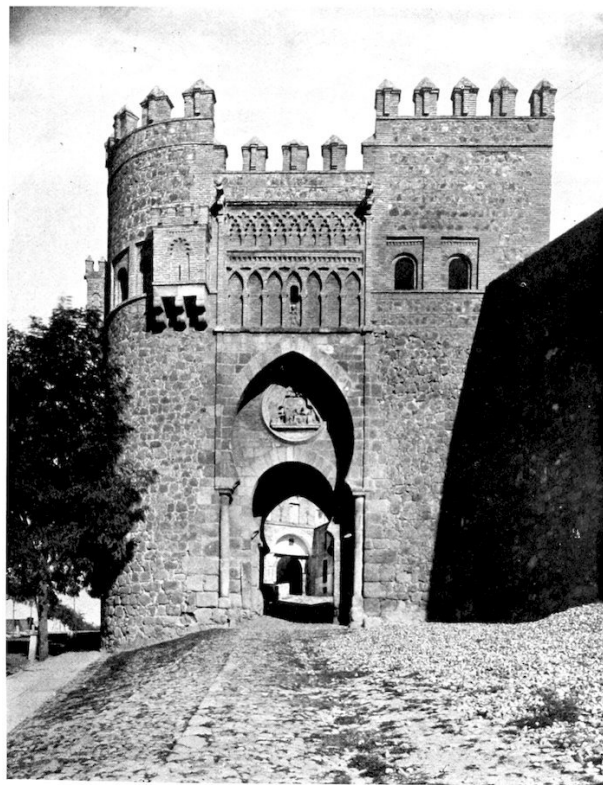
Portugal. This encouraged their partisans in Galicia and Estremadura to cross the frontier and seize certain of the enemy's strongholds, from which they raided the country round, carrying off cattle and burning villages. In the neighbourhood of Toledo, those who were discontented with the over-lordship of Archbishop Carrillo and his nephew the Marquis of Villena took the opportunity to proclaim their allegiance to Isabel, and in the latter's name threw off the yoke they hated. The Count of Paredes, an old warrior who had fought against the Moors, and who was one of the candidates for the Mastership of Santiago, joyfully went to their assistance with a large body of troops, collecting his rival's revenues at the point of the sword, until the turmoil forced Villena to leave the King of Portugal and hurry to the protection of his own estates.

He did not attempt to conceal his indignation with his ally, insisting that Alfonso should go immediately to Madrid, that from there he might aid those who had put their trust in him. To this the King replied with equal bitterness that he saw no reason to risk the loss of Toro and Zamora by leaving the north; nor was his conscience burdened with the ill-luck of his allies, seeing that their help had fallen far short of their promises. This was very true. But a small portion of the nobles committed to Joanna's cause had appeared when expected at Arévalo, the majority of the defaulters not having dared to leave their own territory, where Ferdinand and Isabel's partisans kept them occupied in the defence of their houses and lands.

Isabel herself from Valladolid placed careful guard over the road to Burgos, that the King of Portugal might not send relief to that citadel. Ever since the beginning of the war, she had spared herself no pains or trouble, in her effort to aid Ferdinand in his campaign. At one time she had journeyed to Toledo to raise the levies of New Castile, at another hastened northwards to rescue Leon from a governor suspected of treachery; then again collected and dispatched troops to the help of Guipuzcoa, where Louis XI. was endeavouring to win a stretch of coveted seaboard. One evil result of the strain entailed by such exertions had been her miscarriage in the summer of 1475. Her daughter Isabel was now doubly precious; and her parents for her better safety had sent her to Segovia, where she remained in the

charge of Andres de Cabrera, lately created for his services Marquis of Moya.

While the siege of Burgos still delayed, Ferdinand succeeded in gaining possession of the town of Zamora, after secret correspondence with the captain who had guard of the main entrance, a strongly fortified bridge. The Portuguese King was forced to retreat to Toro, and the Castilians, entering at once, placed siege to the citadel; Isabel supplied troops and artillery from Valladolid, while each day fresh loyalists appeared from Galicia.



TOLEDO, LA PUERTA DEL SOL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON,  
ROME

Alfonso now found himself cut off from Portugal, and, aware that his fortunes had not matched his hopes, began to try and negotiate favourable terms of peace. These were still in keeping with his lofty pretensions; for, in addition to a large sum of money and the

permanent surrender of Toro and Zamora, he demanded that the kingdom of Galicia should be joined to Portugal.

These conditions Ferdinand and Isabel indignantly refused; whereupon Alfonso, who had been reinforced by his son, Prince John, and a large body of troops, advanced once more on Zamora, pitching his tents near the river-bank. On the other side was a formidable array of earthworks and ramparts, making communication with the citadel impossible; and after a few weeks he broke up his camp and slipped away one dark night as silently as possible in the direction of Toro.

This was the opportunity for which the Castilians had been waiting, and as soon as they discovered what had happened they swarmed over the fortifications in hot pursuit. The Portuguese had broken up the bridge behind them to cover their retreat, so that long hours were spent in repairing it sufficiently for the transit of the troops. The road also was often narrow, winding between the Douro and the hills, and it was almost dusk before Ferdinand came in touch with the enemy's rear-guard about three leagues from Toro.

Then the battle began in grim earnest. Prince John of Portugal, who was on his father's left, by the use of his small ordnance followed by a daring charge, succeeded in shattering the forces opposed to him; but on the centre and right a prolonged struggle ensued, intensified by all the bitterness of national hatred. Here fought the rival kings, and hard by, with a lust of war ill becoming their office, the Archbishop of Toledo on the one side, the Cardinal of Spain on the other. After three hours of hand-to-hand combat, the Portuguese broke and fled. In the darkness and the rain, Prince John sounded his trumpets and, rallying such of his forces as he could, retreated in good order towards Toro. Before him went a mass of flying fugitives who, coming to the city, beat in vain upon the closed gates for admittance.

"Where is your King?" cried those within. "You guarded his person in his room and at his table, in his pleasures and at his feasts, but when his life and honour were most in your care, you left him alone in the battle. Where is your King?"

Those of the royal body-guard that stood without hung their heads in shame and misery. They could not answer. The Archbishop of Toledo appeared, later Prince John, but neither knew aught of

Alfonso. The Portuguese looked at their Castilian allies askance. Had these betrayed him? The Castilians returned their glances with defiance. Little good had foreign help ever brought them!

In this suspense the city continued till morning, when messengers came from Castronuño, a small fortress in the neighbourhood, to say that Alfonso had taken refuge there. As easily cast into the depths of despair, as buoyed by main hopes, he had believed all lost when the retreat began and imagined Toro already in Ferdinand's power. This mood of depression did not last long; for his dispatches to Lisbon narrated a signal victory.

Isabel was at this time in Tordesillas and celebrated her husband's triumph by a religious procession to the church of San Pablo, where barefoot she gave thanks to God for the mercy He had shown them. She and Ferdinand also founded the magnificent monastery of San Juan de Los Reyes in Toledo in memory of the event.

The battle of Toro did not end the Portuguese war, which was destined to drag on its somewhat uninteresting course for another three years; but it was decisive enough to show with whom the final victory would be. Alfonso, in spite of claiming success, left Toro in the charge of a lieutenant and retired in disgust to his own land. He complained bitterly of his Castilian allies and the failure of their promises, but soon recovered heart in the conception of another scheme. This was nothing less than a personal interview with Louis XI., by which he hoped to persuade that monarch to join with him in an invasion of Castile; and with this intention he left his government and niece to the care of his son, and set sail for France.

Less sanguine of the future, most of his captains in Castile struck the best bargains with their opponents that they could; the citadels of Burgos and Zamora both surrendering at once, while Toro followed their example in the early autumn. Characteristic also of the trend of events was the appearance of the Duke of Arévalo's son at Tordesillas to beg forgiveness for his father; a petition to which Isabel, who was more anxious to pacify the country than to extort vengeance, readily agreed. The Duke restored to her the town of Arévalo, changing his title to Plasencia.



TOLEDO, CHURCH OF SAN JUAN DE LOS  
REYES

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON,  
ROME

The Marquis of Villena and Archbishop of Toledo, deprived of their friends, also sued for mercy, thinking that it was better to lose a portion of their estates than the whole, but there was little sincerity in the homage they offered. The rift had widened too far between Carrillo and his royal mistress ever to be bridged again by mutual trust; and the Primate remained on his estates brooding over his fallen fortunes.

Ferdinand in the meanwhile, having realized that the crisis of the war was over, had gone to Aragon to see his father. The old King, clear of mind and enterprising as ever at an age when most men have set aside their life work in weariness of spirit, was planning new schemes for gaining Roussillon and Cerdagne, while he worked to keep Navarre, now owned by his grandson Francis Phœbus, from undue French influence. He had fought through his other difficulties, recovered his sight, subdued Barcelona, achieved the Castilian

alliance; perhaps time would be given him to realize the rest of his ambitions. If not, there was the son in whom he had always believed to carry on his work; and he greeted Ferdinand, not with the mediæval condescension of father to child, but with the reverence one sovereign offers to another of somewhat higher rank.

From Aragon Ferdinand was called to help the men of Biscay and Guipuzcoa in their struggle against their French invaders; while Isabel, left as sole ruler in Castile, carried on her policy of mingled suppression and reconciliation.

At the beginning of August, 1476, what threatened to be a serious rebellion broke out in Segovia, during the absence of the governor, Andres de Cabrera, now Marquis of Moya. The malcontents, whose disaffection had been roused by his appointment of certain officials, succeeded by a ruse in gaining entrance to the citadel and seized the deputy governor, the father of Beatriz de Bobadilla, while the rest of the garrison were forced to take refuge in one of the towers with the Infanta Isabel.

The Queen, warned by messengers, came in haste from Tordesillas and found the city in confusion, all but one of the gates being in the hands of the insurgents. The latter begged her not to enter by the gate of San Juan, which remained faithful to Moya, nor to take with her Beatriz de Bobadilla his wife nor the Count of Benavente his friend, as such actions would be bitterly resented by the mob. To this Isabel sent prompt reply:

Tell these knights and citizens of Segovia that I am Queen of Castile and this city is mine.... I need not laws nor conditions, such as they would impose, to enter into my own.

Then with the Count of Benavente and the Cardinal of Spain, one on either side, she rode through the gate of San Juan and so to the Alcazar. Behind her surged the crowd, crying death to the Marquis and his adherents. So threatening was their attitude that the Cardinal of Spain begged her for her own safety to have the doors tightly closed and barred; but she, bidding them stay within, went out alone to the top of the staircase overlooking the big courtyard. At her command the gates were flung wide, and the mob surged

through them, howling and gesticulating, but at the sight of the Queen their cries died away to silence.

“My vassals, what do you seek?” she demanded, “for that which is for your good is for my service, and I am pleased that it should be done.”

One of the crowd, speaking for the rest, begged that Andres de Cabrera might no longer have command of the Alcazar.

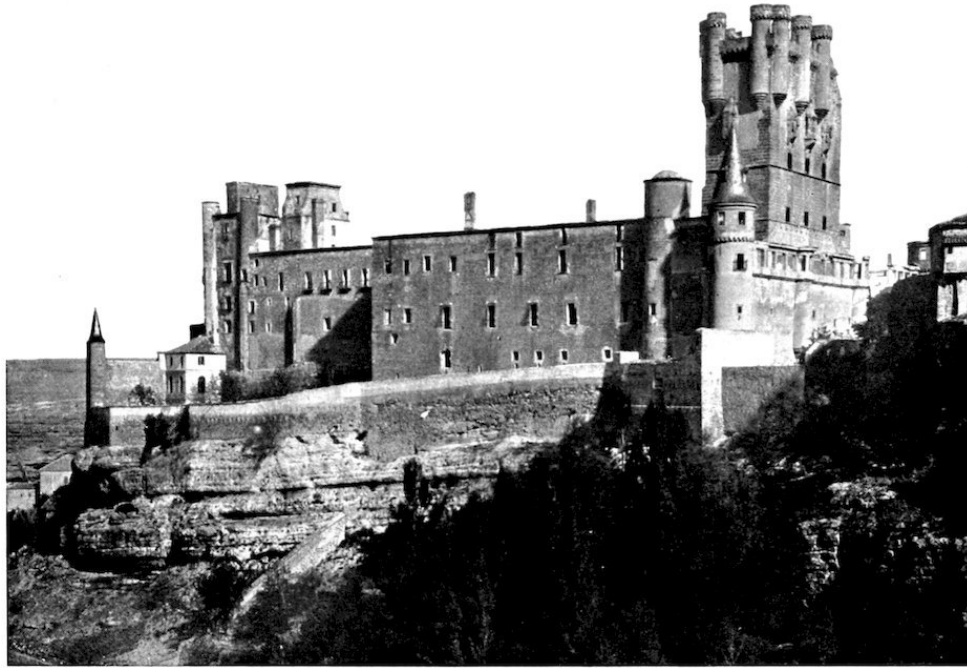
“That which you wish, I wish also,” answered the Queen.

She then bade them go up at once to the towers and walls and drive out all who were in possession, whether of Cabrera’s following or the actual rebels who had since occupied the place.

“I will entrust it,” she added, “to one of my servants, who will guard both his loyalty to me and your honour.”

Her words put an end to the rebellion for, both Cabrera’s adherents and the insurgent leaders being suppressed, the city remained quiet, and Isabel was able to enquire into the true facts of the case. This resulted in the punishment and dismissal of various minor officials, but the Marquis of Moya, whose conduct was cleared, was restored to his responsible post.

When Ferdinand returned from Biscay, the sovereigns, after a short time together, were separated once more; he remaining in the north to watch over the affairs of Aragon and France, while she went south to Estremadura and Andalusia. The civil war was practically at an end. Here and there some strongly fortified place still floated the Portuguese standard; or the nobles, like wild horses bridled for the first time and unable to believe themselves mastered, chafed in secret conspiracies or flamed into spasmodic rebellion. The history of their suppression is connected rather with the work of reconstruction than of actual warfare. For the moment this one change, effected by the sovereigns’ methods, challenges our attention,—that the great cities of the south, lately the scenes of chronic feuds and rebellions, were turning again to be the centres of civilization and justice for their neighbourhoods.



SEGOVIA, THE ALCAZAR

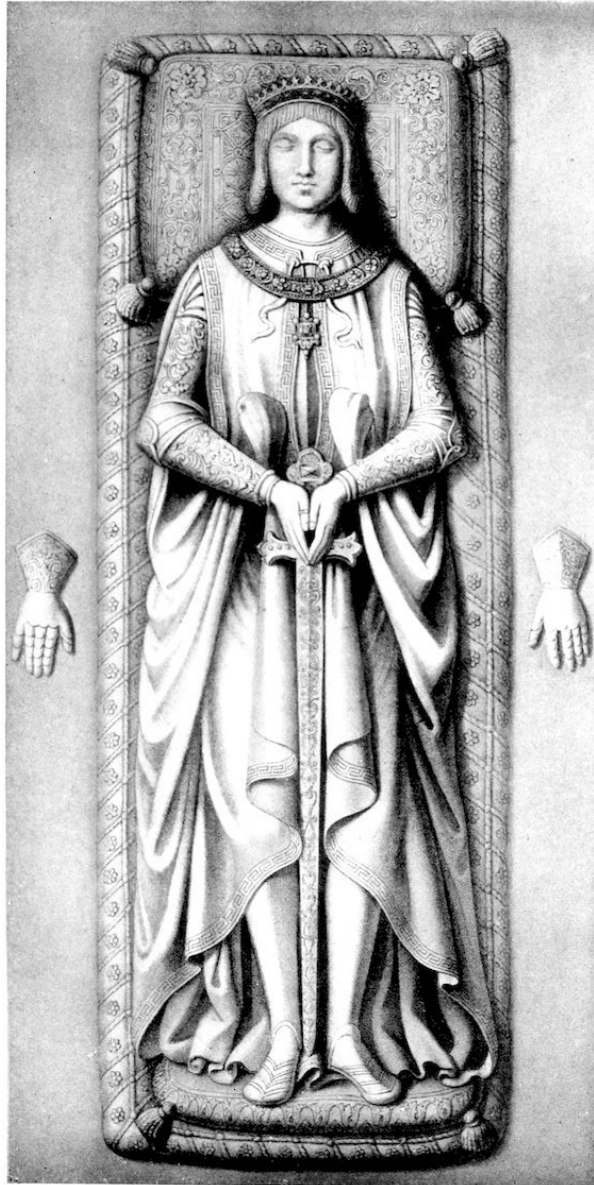
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE, MADRID

It was in Seville, whose streets had often run red in the faction fights of the Duke of Medina-Sidonia and the Marquis of Cadiz, that Isabel made her headquarters; and here on the 30th of June, 1478, the long-hoped-for heir to the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon was born. John, Prince of Asturias, opened his eyes on a world of fairer prospects than the dangers and doubts that had hung about his sister's cradle. Not only within their own territories but elsewhere in Europe the sovereigns had begun to make their power felt, and as their influence grew that of Alfonso of Portugal diminished.

His journey to France, so magnificently conceived, had ended in even greater ignominy than the rest of his castles in Spain; perhaps because Louis XI., so necessary a *persona* of his drama, utterly failed to play the part assigned to him. Alfonso's reception at Orleans had been all that his heart could desire; citizens had bowed themselves before him, the torchlit streets had been hung with tapestry, feasts and music had entertained him at his lodging. From Orleans he passed to Tours and here Louis XI. met him, and the two sovereigns affectionately embraced. They declared that the one hour in their

lives for which they had always longed had come; but when they descended to business the French King showed himself coldly obtuse to his companion's eloquence. He admitted the heinousness of Isabel's offence, but protested that he had already shown his indignation by his invasion of Biscay and Guipuzcoa. At present he was too fully occupied with his quarrel with Charles of Burgundy to do more, but when that was settled he would have his hands free to embark on wider schemes. Besides by that time Alfonso would have obtained the dispensation for his marriage and so stand on far surer ground. It would be as well for all concerned to have Joanna's claims acknowledged by the Papal Court.

The King of Portugal was in no position to apply pressure and could only wait in blind trustfulness for the fulfilment of these hints. He on his part did his best to carry out the conditions suggested; and messengers were sent at once to Rome, who, mainly through French influence, wrung the desired bull from Sixtus IV. Fortune seemed to throw her weight into his scales, for in January, 1477, Charles the Bold was killed at Nanci, and Alfonso now looked eagerly for his ally to turn his attention to Spanish affairs.



PRINCE JOHN, SON OF FERDINAND AND  
ISABEL. (FUNERAL EFFIGY.)

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

Disillusionment followed. Far from having his hands free, Louis XI. was busier than ever. It had been more arduous work perhaps to set pitfalls and traps for the warlike Duke than to attempt the annexation of Biscay and Guipuzcoa; but the profits and interest to be gained from robbing Charles's daughter and heiress, the Duchess Mary, of her outlying lands and possessions were infinitely greater

than any to be found in Spain. Thus the Duke's death had not only advanced the Portuguese schemes no further, but the French King had begun to look on his royal guest as an unmitigated bore, of whom he was only longing to see the last.

The truth that he was being duped dawned on Alfonso at length, and in abject despair he vowed that he would cast aside his crown and go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, or at least end his days in a monastery. So vehement were the messages that he dispatched to Lisbon to this effect that his people took him at his word; and when, having somewhat recovered his spirits, he landed on his own shores, it was to learn that his son had been proclaimed King in his stead. His adventures had now reached a stage when they might easily have drifted from the ludicrous into the tragic, had not Prince John generously withdrawn his claims in his father's favour. Alfonso V. reigned once more.

With unabated anger he laid his plans for a new invasion of Castile and allied himself with malcontent nobles of Estremadura. Rebellion blazed again along the border, fomented by the Bishop of Eborá at the head of some Portuguese troops, but it was the last spurt of an almost exhausted fire.

Sympathy at home and abroad were alienated. Louis XI., more hopeful of adding Franche Comté to his possessions than the hostile population of Northern Spain, had come to terms with Castile; Sixtus IV., under pressure from Castile, Aragon, and the Aragonese House of Naples, had revoked his bull of dispensation for Joanna's marriage; Ferdinand himself, in January, 1479, had succeeded his father peacefully in the three divisions of the western kingdom.



JOANNA "LA BELTRANEJA"

FROM SITGES' "ENRIQUE IV, Y LA  
EXCELENTE SEÑORA."

Circumstances thus urged peace; and Alfonso, bowing to necessity, consented to negotiations which ended in the treaty of Lisbon, signed on September 24, 1479. The sovereigns on either side renounced the titles they had usurped; the King of Portugal bound himself by oath never to marry with his niece; Isabel and Ferdinand agreed to pardon their rebellious subjects. For Joanna there was a choice of three things: either to wed the little Prince of Asturias, sixteen years her junior, when he should have reached a marriageable age; or else to enter a convent of the Order of Santa Clara; failing these, to leave Portugal and its dominions for ever.

Joanna had been given six months, within which to make her decision. She had suffered much in her troubled life from suitors who had asked her hand for their own ends and for the same reason repudiated her. She had found in her mother's land her only refuge.

These remembrances may have coloured her choice, for in the following year she entered the convent of Santa Clara at Coimbra; two ambassadors from Castile being present.

One of these, Isabel's confessor Fra Fernando de Talavera, while making her a last offer of the hand of the Prince of Asturias, assured her that she had chosen the better part, from which no true friend or adviser would tempt her to turn aside. To this the Princess answered that her decision had been given willingly and without reward; and thus passed for the time being from the pages of history.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **ORGANIZATION AND REFORM**

Isabel and Ferdinand had emerged victorious from the Portuguese war; but the wounds their power had received were to be long in healing; and one at least, the poverty of their exchequer, remained a constant sore and vexation.

A certain Canon of Toledo, in an oration made to the Catholic sovereigns at the height of their power, recalls the opening of their reign:

You received your sceptre [he said] from the hands of the Most High God ... at a time when the flames of civil war burned fiercely and the rights of the community were well-nigh lost. Then were our swords employed, not to defend the boundaries of Christendom, but to rip up the entrails of our country. Enemies at home drank greedily the blood of our citizens; he was the most esteemed among us who was the strongest in violence; justice and peace were far removed.

Murder, rape, and robbery! These, according to the Sicilian historian Lucio Marineo, were hourly crimes, perpetrated without fear of punishment by the marauding bands, who haunted the highways, and even commandeered royal fortresses and strongholds as bases of operations for their raids.

“Many a man was taken prisoner,” says Marineo, “whose relations ransomed him no less dearly than if he had been a captive of the Moors or of some other enemy of the Holy Catholic Faith.”

In a letter, written in the autumn of 1473, Hernando de Pulgar portrays no less clearly the absolute negation of government in Southern Spain. Andalusia is the prey of rival families; for the moment they have consented to a truce, but none knows whether the

exhausted land will bear, nor who will reap the harvest. As to the neighbouring province of Murcia, "I dare swear, Señor," adds Pulgar, "that we look on it as a country more alien than Navarre, seeing that it is now over five years since letter, messenger, procurador, or magistrate, either went or came from thence."

Amid such scenes of anarchy, the mass of the people made what shift they could to protect their lives and goods. In their despair, "God," in the words of the chronicler, "inspired them," so that they endeavoured to take the justice that had been denied them into their own hands. Here and there throughout the country troops of armed men were raised who, under the title of "La Santa Hermandad," or "Holy Brotherhood," bound themselves to maintain the peace of their district and to punish evildoers.

The idea was not original. Introduced towards the end of the thirteenth century as a political expedient, the organization of local levies had developed as the years passed into a recognized means of providing armed police in times of danger or distress. Yet, in spite of charters and laws determining its functions and resources, the Holy Brotherhood had never hardened in practice into a permanent institution. It depended too largely for its upkeep on a class of men, whose sole interest was the preservation of the commerce and industry by which they earned their livelihood. Only the anxiety of the moment could persuade such peace-loving citizens either to take arms themselves, or to buy immunity by opening their shallow purses. Thus, when the crisis of any disturbance was over, enthusiasm for the scheme of protection would almost certainly wane; and the police-machinery either collapse or waste its energies in contentions with local magistrates.

Henry IV. had joyfully welcomed the reappearance of the "Santa Hermandad." Here was an ally to whom he could leave the summary administration of justice that he found so irksome, and for whose maintenance he need not beggar his exchequer. When told of a brotherhood formed at Tordesillas, he exclaimed with his usual glib quotation of scripture: "This is God's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes." Acknowledging his own helplessness, he addressed the chief officials in terms of encouragement that for all their extravagance cost him little:

Go forth with your pennons! Display your banners! That ten may conquer a hundred, and that a hundred may be as a thousand, and that a thousand may quell all who come against you. For should you not go, Castile will cease to be. Should you not rouse yourselves her ruin is certain.

Whether the Hermandad, thus exhorted, found the praise satisfying chroniclers do not say. In the face of the almost universal anarchy, purely local efforts, whether inspired by panic or genuine patriotism, were doomed to failure: and when the horrors of a foreign invasion were added to domestic discord, the last feeble attempts at self-defence flickered out into helplessness.

In this extremity the new sovereigns, recognizing that the restoration of order must originate with them, consented in the Cortes of Madrigal of 1476 to a proposal that there should be a general Hermandad for the kingdoms of Castile, Leon, and Asturias. Two months later the deputies, assembled in Dueñas, discussed its organization and character, the authors of the suggested reform meeting at first with stormy opposition. Some present denounced the methods under question as entirely wrong, while others complained that the good to be reaped would not balance the necessary expenditure; but in the end all such arguments were overridden, and the Santa Hermandad was established for three years on its new basis.

The executive was to consist of some two thousand horsemen and a number of foot-soldiers to be held in perpetual readiness to pursue and punish evildoers. At the head of this force was placed Ferdinand's illegitimate brother, Alfonso, Duke of Villahermosa; and below him captains for each locality, whose business it was to raise the hue and cry, as soon as a well-authenticated tale of crime came to their ears.

Wherever there was a case of burglary or rape; wherever, in the open country some assault or act of violence was perpetrated; or if the offender, having committed his crime within the precincts of a town, fled for safety to the woods and fields beyond the walls; or if, being charged with some offence, he resisted the summons, the matter fell within the jurisdiction of the local Hermandad.

Raising his force, the captain of the district must pursue his man relentlessly, summoning to him as he went all the privates and

officers of the Brotherhood within sound of his alarm, till at some five leagues distant from his home, a colleague would take up the chase; and so from boundary to boundary the suspected criminal would be hunted down. Led back in triumph to the scene of the crime, he would be hailed at once before the local "Alcaldes," or Judges of the Hermandad, and there, if convicted, receive summary justice, of which this one thing was certain, that it would not err on the side of mercy.

The least punishment administered was mutilation, the loss of a foot for some small robbery that the thief, whatever his inclinations, should have power to steal no more. In the majority of cases there was but one sentence—"death." A priest was fetched, and the convicted man, having confessed his sins and received the Sacraments as a "Catholic Christian," was at once bound to a tree, and there met his doom from the arrows of the troopers who had so lately captured him. Of the lasting power of the repentance expressed by such ruffians contemporaries had their doubts, for an ordinance of the Hermandad commanded that the guilty man "should die as speedily as possible that his soul might pass from him with the greater safety."

The whole of the proceedings, from the hasty trial to the merciless sentence and its immediate enactment, bears the taint of barbarism. It can only be estimated rightly in connection with the burning homesteads and their murdered and tortured inhabitants that such stern justice came to check. One safeguard against local tyranny the regulations of the Hermandad provided,—an appeal in doubtful cases from the Alcaldes to a central Junta, or Supreme Court, and if necessary beyond that to the sovereigns themselves. Save for royal supervision the decisions of this court, which was composed of a deputy from each province with the Bishop of Cartagena as its president, were absolute; and thus it was given full scope for its work of controlling the different branches and for securing cohesion between their officials.

The expenses of the new machinery were met by a tax of 1800 maravedis on every one hundred householders, to provide for the maintenance and equipment of a single horseman. In a country, poverty-stricken through long years of internal unrest and consequent commercial insecurity, such a burden could only be

justified by extreme need; but time was to prove the compensation more than adequate.

“None of the reforms of Ferdinand and Isabella were so efficient in restoring order,” says a modern historian, speaking of the Santa Hermandad, and, he also adds, “none did more to centralize power.” This latter fact was realized by many of the nobles. Here was the nucleus of a standing army, controlled by a central council under royal supervision. Its officers, when in pursuit of their prey, claimed the right of entry, not only within the gates of walled cities under municipal jurisdiction, but into fortified castles hitherto inviolable. Thus the Santa Hermandad, in attacking anarchy, threatened territorial independence; and an aristocracy, that had zealously fomented trouble for its private ends, received the due reward of its efforts.

In vain a gathering of prelates and nobles complained at Corbeñas of the arbitrary and illegal character of the new police force. They had lived as a class apart and could expect no sympathy from the mass of the nation. Neither with peasant nor burgher were the expenses of the Holy Brotherhood popular, but both were willing to pay a high price for the security of their lives and goods.

The citizens and artisans and all the poor people desirous of peace [says Pulgar] were very joyful; and they gave thanks to God, because they saw a time in which it pleased Him to have pity on these kingdoms, through the justice that the King and Queen began to execute, and because each man thought to possess his own without fear that another would take it from him by force.

At the end of three years the Hermandad, to the general satisfaction, was granted a new lease of life. Its path was also smoothed by the conduct of the Constable of Castile, Pedro Fernandez de Velasco, Count of Haro,—the same who had once argued with the recalcitrant Archbishop of Toledo on the subject of loyalty. Eager to prove his own, he willingly gave the officers of the Hermandad access to his demesnes, even joining with the members of his household to assist them in their work. As he was accredited with more vassals than any other of his peers, his example was followed by those of the leading nobles who wished to win royal favour. Lesser territorial magnates yielded perforce to the trend of

popular opinion; and the sphere of action enjoyed by the Hermandad widened, not only to include the entire dominions of Castile but also the kingdom of Aragon.

Its work was the more effective from the attitude adopted towards it by Ferdinand and Isabel. Had they sought only the aggrandizement of their own power, using the judges and officials merely as royal agents to gratify their personal dislikes, or to bring money into their coffers, they would have speedily disillusioned the nation. Tyranny that apes justice can never conceal for long its guiding principle of self-interest; but in the case of the Queen it soon became obvious that she entered into the spirit of righteous dealing as eagerly as the poorest and least protected of her subjects.

It must not be inferred from this that the Castilian Princess had been endowed with a love of truth under any circumstances. Her life had been spent for the most part in an atmosphere of treachery, where he who was the least reliable or conscientious scored highest in the game of politics; and, when necessity forced her to play a hand as in the case of her marriage, she had proved herself capable of "bluffing" with the best. The threading of such intricate mazes was an ordinary statesman's career, and Isabel had been born with an aptitude for statecraft. What was worth a great deal more to Spain was her aptitude for kingship.

Throughout the troublous years, spent first at the Court of one brother and then wandering in rebellion with another, she had seen the Crown dragged through the mire. Instinct had taught her that its degradation was largely deserved. The sovereign who fails to keep the respect of his subjects has forfeited the claim even to respect himself; he has truly abdicated his rights.

Isabel's conscience might suffer no pangs for those she had deceived in the war of politics, but her whole soul revolted from a lowering of her ideal of sovereignty. "The king was the father of his people, the fountain of law and justice." The pride that insisted on the recognition of this dignity insisted also on a king's fulfilment of its conditions.

Isabel had been the first to repudiate the notion that the Santa Hermandad should be suppressed directly the crisis of public unrest was ended, but she had no mind that it should earn an evil reputation for the Crown by unbridled tyranny. In 1483 she and

Ferdinand held an enquiry into its past administration, and punished not only those who had defied its justice, but also judges convicted of favouritism and officials who had been guilty of excessive demands, or who had appropriated more than their share of the funds.

Such equitable dealing was in marked contrast with the methods of Henry IV., whose practice it had been to farm out the posts of "corregidor" amongst his dissolute favourites and to allow them to recoup themselves for the purchase by what means they liked. In vain the citizens had complained that under this system any robber or murderer could buy his freedom. The "corregidores," as they released those who bribed them, were ready with the cynical justification that human blood would neither pay the King nor reward them for their labours.

The appointments made by Henry's successor were based on a totally different standard, that of capability for the office in question. Great was the surprise of men who had supported Isabel in the civil war, when their petitions for royal agencies met with the response that their services would be recompensed in some other way. This promise, we are told, was faithfully kept; but the offices they had coveted passed into different hands. The Queen's experience had taught her that the loyal soldier is not always gifted with the best business head, nor with the most persuasive tongue.

An instance of the difficulties encountered by the new régime may be seen in the settlement of Galicia at the end of the Portuguese war. That turbulent province had been the prey of tyrant nobles since the days of John II., Isabel's father. Mushroom fortresses had sprung up to defend the bands of robbers who infested its highways and oppressed the smaller towns and villages. Rents and tithes were collected by those whose only right was the sword with which they emphasized their demand; while even the lands belonging to the monasteries and churches had been sequestered for secular purposes.

In 1481, two officials appeared at Santiago, charged by Ferdinand and Isabel with the Herculean task of restoring peace and justice. In response to their summons the Procuradores of the various towns and country districts came to assist them; but, though all bore witness to the prevailing anarchy, none showed enthusiasm for its

cure. Their sole response to the suggestions offered was that “disorder was sanctioned by custom and must therefore be the natural state of affairs.” It is a type of argument that centuries of use have not worn threadbare.

By dint of persuasion and encouragement the royal officials at length discovered the true objection to their mission. The Procuradores could remember the visits of previous officials who had undertaken a like work. Either they had proved worse rogues than those they came to punish, or else they had found their means of justice totally insufficient and had fled, leaving the men who had supported them to face the rebels’ vengeance. Not till the newcomers had taken a solemn oath that they would never desert the province until they had established peace and order there, would those who listened agree to give them aid.

With this mutual understanding a strange day dawned for Galicia. Here were a governor and corregidor established in Santiago, just and incorruptible, who enforced their sentences with a swift certainty that struck terror into the most hardened bravado. Fired by this example the Procuradores, when they went to their own homes, adopted like measures, and within three months over 1500 robbers had been driven from the province to seek fresh fields of plunder. Many of the leaders were dead. They had been unable to believe that money would not save their lives when captured, and eagerly but in vain had made offers of their ill-gotten riches.

Royal agents, both in Galicia and other parts of Castile, might have proved more susceptible to bribery but for the example set by the Queen herself, whose path of justice was not without its temptations. On one occasion, when in Medina del Campo, a poor woman threw herself at her feet and begged for assistance and protection. Her husband, who was a notary, had disappeared and she felt certain he was the victim of some cruel plot. Isabel commanded her officials to make instant enquiry, and the body of the notary was discovered, buried in the courtyard of a certain wealthy noble of the neighbourhood, called Alvar Yañez. At the trial it was proved that Yañez had first induced his victim to sign a forged document, by which he himself hoped to gain possession of a neighbour’s property, and that he had then murdered his witness, never expecting that

anyone would dare to lay the accusation at his door, far less that he would be punished if discovered.

On account of his wealth he still hoped to save his life, and cunningly offered, in return for a pardon, the enormous sum of 40,000 ducats to go towards the expenses of a war against the Infidel. This was a project that Isabel was known to have much at heart; and, since its main hindrance had been the poverty of the royal exchequer not a few of her counsellors urged her to let such a pious gift atone for the crime.

“The Queen,” we are told, “preferred justice to money”; and Alvar Yañez was beheaded. Even then she might, on some specious pretext, have seized the guilty man’s possessions; but instead she commanded that the inheritance should go to his sons, so that all might recognize her object in maintaining the sentence had not been to enrich herself but to punish evil.

Other instances of her rigorous justice there are many, but none more characteristic than her famous “Audiences” in Seville. Thither she had gone in the spring of 1477 to supervise the pacification of Southern Spain; while Ferdinand in the north kept watch over the Portuguese army and the chronic disturbances on the Pyrenean border.

The Duke of Medina-Sidonia, riding out from the city to meet her with the four-and-twenty gaily clad nobles of his suite and a throng of royal officials and clergy, tended her with complacent homage the keys of the different gates. Was he not lord of the city? “Duke of Seville” he was popularly called, since he had succeeded in driving his rival, the Marquis of Cadiz, beyond the walls. The Marquis, it is true, had retaliated by seizing the strong fortress of Xerez; but the Duke now meant to recover this through the Queen’s influence and favour. By good fortune his rival had married a sister of that arch-rebel the Marquis of Villena, and chastisement of the brother-in-law could therefore, he hoped, be looked on as a piece of disinterested patriotism.

It was in this spirit the Duke had chosen to regard the faction fights that had decimated the population of Seville and forced many of its leading citizens into exile. Not so those, whose fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers had died fighting in sheer self-defence, their backs against the very houses now hung with tapestries and

brocades! Not so those, whose wives and daughters had been the prey of dissolute mercenaries! Not so those, who had been dispossessed of their lands, or whose shops had been raided and sacked!

It was the cry of such as these that made Isabel hold public audience every Friday, that the injured might bring her their complaints. Raised high on a dais in the large hall of the Alcazar, with the prelates and knights below her on the one side, and the Doctors of her Council on the other, she listened, weighed evidence, and gave judgment, referring the more doubtful cases for enquiry by special "Alcaldes," with the injunction that there should be no delay. As a result hundreds of criminals were executed, and lands and goods were restored to their rightful owners; while in some instances so strong was the fear aroused that voluntary restitution was made, in the hope of avoiding a trial.

It is characteristic of Isabel that the ever-increasing revelation of crime failed to shake her purpose. It was her will, as "the fountain of justice," to see justice prevail; and through all the long hours of accusation and defence, through case after case, she and her fellow-judges listened with a grave impartiality that won for her tribunal a respect bordering on the horror accorded to the superhuman. If there was to be nothing but strict justice, who in Seville should be saved?

At length the Bishop of the city and its leading citizens ventured to remonstrate. The number of murders and robberies committed had been so great, they declared, that scarcely a family could call itself guiltless; and they petitioned that an amnesty might be granted, lest the people in despair were driven to fresh crime.

A ruler of more obstinate fibre would have contended with pitiless logic that justice being equivalent to right could never prove excessive. Isabel had too much inherent common-sense to make this mistake; and, realizing that the advice was good, she consented to the publication of a general pardon for the city and its environs, that should cover all crimes and offences with one exception, the unpardonable sin of heresy.

Seville at large heaved a sigh of relief; but the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, at this stage of the proceedings, was not so pleased. He had been steadily poisoning Isabel's mind against his rival since her

advent to the city, accusing him of giving secret support to some fortresses in the neighbourhood that still upheld the claims of "La Beltraneja." Nothing but force, he protested, would succeed against such a traitor; but in the midst of his denunciations the Marquis of Cadiz appeared in Seville, accompanied only by a few attendants. Riding to the Alcazar, he petitioned for a private audience with the Queen, and there pleaded his cause with a brevity and directness that appealed to his listener more than the most subtle arguments. Plain speaking was almost a virtue to Isabel's mind.

Declaring that individuals were responsible for their own conduct alone, he repudiated any connection with Villena save the tie of marriage with his sister. His sword had been drawn in self-defence when the Duke attacked him in his house and drove him from the city; but he had neither the time nor inclination to help the Portuguese. In token of his loyalty he offered to hand over Xerez and the other fortresses in his power to whatever officials Isabel chose to send in her name.

Such a complete surrender bears witness to the impression already created in Castile by the new sovereigns. It was the certainty that he would obtain justice that had brought the Marquis of Cadiz so trustingly to Seville. It was fear of what disobedience might cost him that made the Duke of Medina-Sidonia submit to his enemy's return to favour. The Queen on her part accepted their compliance as if she thought it the only possible course they could have adopted; but she knew their rivalry still smouldered, and, having gained control of their fortresses, took steps to prevent further trouble. Neither Duke nor Marquis, she declared, should put foot in Seville henceforth without her leave; though she and Ferdinand gave their promise that they would enquire into the quarrel when leisure permitted, and would see what could be done to effect a settlement, that both might return to the city in safety. Circumstances, however, were to make this interposition unnecessary, as will be seen in a later chapter.

The justice shown in Galicia and Seville was typical of the measures adopted elsewhere; measures so widespread that the old machinery of government proved totally inadequate for their execution. Reconstruction went perforce hand in hand with reform; and, just as in the Cortes of Madrigal and Dueñas the Santa Hermandad had been placed on a new and more practical basis, so in

the Cortes of Toledo of 1480 the whole executive and judicial system was subjected to a close revision.

Amongst the changes effected, none was to prove of more lasting influence than the decided bias there given towards the employment of the lawyer class in all important matters of state. Sprung mainly from the *bourgeoisie*, or from the ranks of the lesser nobility, the lawyers had for a long time rendered to Castilian sovereigns their services of penmanship and technical knowledge; but the preponderating power in the royal counsels had remained the higher aristocracy with its claims of blood and wealth.

Ferdinand and Isabel did not set themselves openly to humble the latter class, as Henry IV. had attempted in his new creations; but the fact that the government was daily growing more specialized made it necessary that trained and expert officials should take the place of amateurs, however high their personal qualifications. Thus, in the Cortes of Toledo, the composition of the Royal Council, before mainly aristocratic, was officially settled as one bishop, three "caballeros," or knights, and eight or nine lawyers. This does not mean that the greater nobles suddenly received an intimation that their presence was no longer required. They were welcomed as before with profound respect, but the feeling that it rested with themselves whether they attended or no would soon encourage the less strenuous to withdraw. A further impetus to their exclusion would be given by the division of the government into the specialized departments described by Hernando de Pulgar in his account of the Cortes of Toledo.

Hitherto the Royal Council, "Nuestro Consejo" as the sovereigns were fond of alluding to it, had been the chief medium of their will. At times a consultative committee, its functions were also administrative and judicial; and, in the latter aspect, it had tended to absorb much of the work belonging to the other Courts of Law, such as the "Royal Audiences" or "Chancery" for civil cases, and the supreme criminal court of the "Alcaldes de Corte."

In response to the deputies' petitions, the encroachments of the Royal Council in this respect were forbidden; while a scheme was discussed by which the Court of Chancery, which had followed the sovereigns from place to place to the great inconvenience of litigants, was in 1485 permanently established in Valladolid for the benefit of

Northern Castile. Another similar court was also placed in Ciudad Real to supply the needs of the country south of the Tagus, being removed however at the end of the Moorish war to the more important town of Granada.

At first sight it would seem from these measures as if the judicial functions of the Royal Council had been destroyed, whereas on the contrary they were to develop an authority, that not only threatened but dominated the "Audiencias" of Valladolid and the South. Of the five departments of government defined by the Cortes of Toledo, it was in the Council of Justice that the true nucleus of the Royal Council, their common ancestor, remained. Here sat the King and Queen in person, the recognized source of all Castilian law; here, in their absence, ruled a President, whose authority was reckoned in the kingdom as second only to that of Sovereignty itself; here was a body of highly trained lawyers, whose official acts demanded the unqualified obedience of every subject, and whose decisions on legal matters were final. It is little wonder if the Council of Justice became the dominating element of the Castilian Government.

The Council of State, the second of the new departments for public affairs, was also presided over by the King and Queen, but it dealt mainly with foreign negotiations, hearing embassies and transacting business with the Court of Rome. In addition there was the Supreme Court of the Santa Hermandad, a Council of Finance, and a Council for settling purely Aragonese matters.

A link between these central councils and the local government of the country was found in "pesquisidores," or inspectors, sent out from headquarters to enquire how the law was being administered and obeyed. Were the repressive measures against the Jews sternly enforced? Were the "corregidores," now in 1480 imposed by royal authority on all cities and towns, doing their duty both by the Crown and also by the municipalities in which they were placed? Had any governor of a fortress or other official oppressed the people in his neighbourhood, or for his own ends shown favouritism to certain families? These were some of the questions to which the inspector must require an answer, and where those answers were unsatisfactory it rested with him to see justice performed.

Such was the revised machinery of government, revealing already that decisively bureaucratic stamp that was to be so marked a feature

of its later development. Obvious also was its fatal dependence on the Crown, the motive power alone capable of supplying the councils with initiative, nor could any counterpoise to sovereignty be hoped for in the type of official now prominent. The exaltation of the Crown was the first article of belief for lawyers steeped in Justinian's code with its theories of imperial absolutism. Yet it must be remembered that, although this system contained within itself the germs of tyranny, in the early days of Ferdinand and Isabel's rule centralized power stood for the triumph of right over wrong, of order over anarchy. By no other means could these ends have been so effectively and speedily won. "Justice, which seems to have abandoned other lands," wrote Peter Martyr in 1492, "pervades these kingdoms."

It had been bought by the sovereigns at the price of unflagging industry and watchfulness, now employed in a struggle against foreign enemies or subject rebels, now against the prejudices of class or community, now against the corruption of trusted officials.

Sometimes the chief enemy to be faced was bewilderment,—the difficulty of administering a law that was not one but many. The judge must have a clear head who could steer his way through the mazes of the old "Fuero Juzgo" of the Gothic kings, or the later compilations of Castilian sovereigns, such as the "Fuero Real," the "Siete Partidas," or the "Ordenamiento de Alcalá." Even these did not cover the field of legislation, further complicated by local charters and royal edicts, involving a thousand variations and discrepancies.

After the matter had been discussed in the Cortes of Toledo, a noted jurist, Alfonso Diaz de Montalvo, undertook by the Queen's command the task of clearing away the rubbish and compiling what remained into a comprehensive code. Within four years the work stood completed in eight bulky volumes, and the "Ordenanzas Reales" took their place on the legal bookshelves; but though undoubtedly of great authority the new compilation failed to fulfil the general expectations. A study of its pages revealed not only mistakes and repetitions, but also many serious omissions; while a further publication by the same author a few years later scarcely proved more satisfactory. So conscious was Isabel of these defects that in her will she entreated her daughter, Joanna, "to select a learned and conscientious bishop and other persons wise and

experienced in the law,” that they might undertake this formidable task anew.

Legal, judicial, and administrative abuses had thus received their share of amendment; but it is scarcely too much to say that all the reforms in these directions would have proved useless, but for the steps taken to check financial disaster. That commerce and industry should have sunk to a low ebb was the inevitable corollary of a foreign and civil war, but still more evil in its influence had been the steady depreciation of the coinage. Not only had the five royal mints turned out bad metal to supply Henry IV. with the money which he squandered so lavishly, but his very monopoly of coining rights had been squandered too, or disputed by rebellious subjects. By the end of his reign the five mints had grown into one hundred and fifty, and the *reals* and *blancas* produced by private furnaces had descended to a mere fraction of their former value.

The decay of industry and the worthless coinage combined to inflate prices extravagantly, with the result that men of moderate means were ruined, and the distrust increased till no one would accept the current issues either in payment of debts or in return for goods.

Such was the state of perdition into which the kingdom had fallen [says a contemporary writer], that those who travelled by the highways could not satisfy their hunger either for good money or for bad; nor was there any price at which those who laboured in the fields were willing to sell.

A primitive system of barter had sprung up when, in the first year of their reign, Ferdinand and Isabel once more established the monopoly of the royal mints, and fixed a legal standard to which the coinage must approximate. These reforms were absolutely necessary to restore public confidence, but they involved a drain on the treasury which it was impossible to satisfy by ordinary means. We have seen already that in 1475 the sovereigns had recourse to a loan raised on the ecclesiastical plate, but it was an expedient that would not bear repetition, even if the Queen had not regarded the repayment of the original sum as her most sacred duty. Some other way must be found that would not threaten the property of the Church, if it was to find approval in her eyes.

The deputies assembled at Toledo shook their heads gloomily over the suggestion of increased taxation. They represented the *pecheros*, or taxed classes, and knew that the little that could be raised by this method would slip in and out of the treasury as through a sieve. Taxation might prove a momentary makeshift, but in the exhausted state of the country it could offer no permanent solution of the problem.

On examination, the chief cause of the poverty was shown to be the wholesale alienation of royal estates in the previous reign. Henry IV. had silenced the remonstrances of his treasurer by announcing that prodigality was a king's duty. "Give to some," he commanded, "that they may serve me; to others lest they should rob me; for by the grace of God I am King and have treasures and rents enough to supply all men."

It was a boast that did not hold good, for towards the end of his reign the wretched monarch had been driven to meet expenses by selling annuities levied on his estates; and the Court, taking advantage of his necessities as it had of his generosity, beat down the price till the sums they paid often represented no more than a single year's income. Such transactions were not far removed from robbery; and the Cortes of Toledo soon came to the conclusion that the only hope of lasting financial reform lay in a resumption of the alienated lands and rents.

This decision was warmly approved by the Cardinal of Spain, the leading nobles of the Court, and Doctors of the Royal Council; but Ferdinand and Isabel were reluctant to take so large a step without further consultation.

And because this business was difficult and of great importance [says Hernando de Pulgar] the King and Queen wrote letters to all the dukes, prelates, and barons of their kingdom, who were absent from their Court, telling them of their great necessities and asking their opinion, pressing them either to come themselves or to send word what they thought should be done; and all were of opinion that the alienated estates should be restored.

It was a resolution that reflected credit on a class of men who had too often shown themselves selfish and disloyal. Many, however, like the Count of Haro who threw open his lands to the Santa

Hermandad, were weary of anarchy and knew they must pay for its suppression. Others were fired by the energy and courage of their rulers, or else hoped to propitiate royal favour. Loyalty, so long dormant, was in the air.

By general consent it was agreed that the Cardinal of Spain should hold an enquiry into the tenure of estates and rents acquired during the last reign. Those that had not been granted as a reward for signal services were to be restored without compensation; while those that had been sold at a price far below their real value were to be bought back at the same sum. The delicate work of apportioning these deductions was entrusted to Isabel's confessor, Fra Fernando de Talavera, a man respected throughout Spain for his integrity and saintly life.

His settlement cost some of the nobles the half or even the whole of their acquisitions, others some smaller fraction; but by Isabel's command there was no revocation of gifts made to churches, hospitals, or the poor. The treasury became the richer by the substantial addition of thirty millions of maravedis, of which Henry IV.'s old favourite, Beltran de La Cueva, Duke of Alburquerque, contributed over a million. The rest of the leading nobles suffered heavily though in a less degree, nor was the Cardinal's own family, the Mendozas, spared. "Some were ill-content," says the chronicler, "but all submitted, remembering how these gifts had been obtained at the expense of the royal patrimony."

In spite of their losses the nobles still remained the predominant class in wealth, as the tales of their private resources during the Moorish war bear witness. Ferdinand and Isabel themselves did not hesitate to bestow large gifts on loyal servants such as the Marquis of Moya, nor to confirm the aristocratic privilege of freedom from taxation; but the fact that they were able to curb unlawful gains shows the new spirit that had entered into Castilian life. Significant also is the social legislation of the day that forbade even dukes to quarter the royal crown on their scutcheons, or to make use of expressions such as *es mi merced!* "It is my will!"

The sovereign had ceased to be *primus inter pares* and had become a being set apart by right of peculiar dignity and power.

Such a change would have been impossible, had the Military Orders retained their old independence. They have been described as

“states within a state”; for the Masters with their rich “commanderies” that they could bestow at pleasure, their fortresses and revenues, and their private armies of knights had influence and wealth nothing less than royal. The elective character of their office led almost invariably to civil war; and we have seen that, in the case of the Mastership of Santiago, when the old Marquis of Villena died, no less than seven candidates appeared in the field, ready to contest the honour.

One of these, the aged Count of Paredes, had obtained confirmation of his title many years before from Pope Eugenius IV., but had always been cheated out of its enjoyment by the greed of royal favourites. In 1476 he died, and the Chief Commander of Leon, Don Alonso de Cardenas, having mustered as large an armed force as possible hastened at once to the Convent of Uccles, where the election was to be held, to press his claims on the chapter. He had been one of Isabel’s most loyal adherents and took her sanction for granted; but unfortunately for his hopes she proved to have very different views.

Directly she heard of his designs, she wrote to the Pope begging that the administration of the Order might be given into her husband’s hands. Then, having dispatched the messenger, she mounted her horse and set off at once from Valladolid, where she was staying. It was a three days’ journey to Ocaña, and when she reached that town it was already nightfall, and the rain was descending in torrents, but she refused to wait. Continuing her road to Uccles, she appeared before the astonished commanders and told them of the request she had sent to the Pope, begging them to suspend the election until she had received an answer. Don Alonso de Cardenas was not unnaturally sulky at this frustration of his ambitions; but on Isabel’s promise that she would faithfully consider his claims, he at length agreed to withdraw them temporarily, and the King in due course received the administration of the Order.

Alonso de Cardenas now redoubled his efforts to prove his loyalty; and Ferdinand and Isabel at last consented to give him his long-coveted honour; but they took care to make a favour of what he had sought as a right. Each year he paid three millions of maravedis into the royal treasury to be used for the defence of the frontier against the Moors, and on his death his office lapsed finally to the Crown.

During the course of the reign, Ferdinand also assumed the administration of the other two Orders of Calatrava and Alcántara, and thus found himself possessed not only of vastly increased revenues, but of a widely extended patronage.

The absorption of the Military Orders marked the decisive victory in the sovereigns' war against aristocratic pretensions; but the campaign had other battles no less serious, though they did not involve such important financial considerations. If it had been a difficult matter to impress the idea of justice on the country at large, it was equally arduous to persuade the leading families of Castile that they also stood below the law and were expected to obey it.

They might surrender estates wrongly acquired, and even sink their ambitions before the claims of royalty, but to admit of arbitration in their private feuds, instead of dealing with them by the old-fashioned method of duel or assassination, was a tax on their self-control too great for Castilian pride.

On one occasion, when Queen Isabel was in Valladolid, high words broke out between Don Fadrique Enriquez, son of Ferdinand's uncle the Admiral of Castile and a certain Ramir Nuñez de Guzman, Lord of Toral. In spite of the fact that his enemy had received a safe-conduct from the Queen, Don Fadrique attacked him in a public square, striking him several times. Isabel's indignation was unbounded, and she at once rode to Simancas, whose fortress belonged to the Admiral, demanding either its instant surrender or that of his son. The Admiral, faced by this plain issue, dared not disobey; and, since he was ignorant of his son's hiding-place he gave up the keys of his stronghold. Isabel then returned to Valladolid, but her anger was unappeased; and when questioned as to its cause she replied: "I am suffering from the blows that Don Fadrique hath struck at my safe-conduct."

Not till the offender appeared himself at Court to sue for pardon would she relax her coldness to his family; and even then she refused to see him, but ordered that he should be led a prisoner through the streets and thence to a fortress at Arévalo. Here he remained in close confinement, until at his relations' intercession he was instead exiled to Sicily, there to remain at the Queen's pleasure.

His enemy, Ramir Nuñez de Guzman, refusing to take warning from his rival's fate, attempted to assassinate the Admiral in revenge

for the attack made on himself, as soon as he had recovered from his wounds; with the result that he was brought before the royal judges and deprived of all his goods and revenues.

Such stern but impartial justice was of the type to inspire awe, but severity alone might have defeated its own ends. The chivalry of Castile had been fostered from its cradle in scenes of war and carnage. It could not cool its hot blood suddenly to accept the discipline of what it regarded as inglorious peace. Some outlet must be found for the wild strain that looked to the rapier and the dagger rather than to books or arguments. That outlet the sovereigns provided, when they took up the challenge of the Moorish Sultan, and began again the old crusade, that was the heritage of eight hundred years.

“Master, God give you good fortune against the Moors, the enemies of Our Holy Catholic Faith.” With these words Ferdinand and Isabel had handed to the new Master of Santiago his standards, when they gave him the insignia of his Order at the Cortes of Toledo in 1480. Little over twelve months was to find those standards in the battlefield, and the nobility of Spain risking its life, not in private brawl nor a vain struggle with the law, but against the enemies of its Queen and Faith.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE MOORISH WAR**

### **1481–1483**

“A people that for generations had lived to fight.” This summary of the Castilian race explains the fervour of enthusiasm with which the project of renewed war against Granada was greeted. Other nations, similarly exhausted by misgovernment and internal strife, might have welcomed a period of peace, which would enable them to pursue industry and commerce undisturbed; but neither Isabel nor her subjects regarded the matter in this light.

To them, the establishment of justice and order and the restoration of the royal finances were but a prelude to the great crusade, that every Castilian king inherited from his ancestors. It was a duty no true son of the Church would dare to neglect; and even the sluggish Henry IV. had made a pretence of raising the Christian banners. No less than three incursions into Moorish territory had been organized at the beginning of his reign; though by royal orders the army confined its attention to a work of pillage and robbery amongst the villages scattered over the fruitful “Vega.”

“The King was pitiful and not cruel,” says Enriquez del Castillo in excuse. “He said that life has no price nor equivalent ... and thus it did not please him that his men should take part in skirmishes or open battles.”

Such a policy awoke anger and derision in Castilian hearts, the more so that large quantities of money had been raised by means of a bull of indulgence, especially granted by the Pope for the purposes of a holy crusade. According to one of the chronicles, the sum realized was over a hundred million maravedis, of which very little went to its

professed object. Henry quickly wearied of the display and pageantry that had alone reconciled him to camp life; and he had neither the fanaticism nor love of glory that could have held him to his task when this outward glamour faded.

Moreover he soon began to suspect that his worst enemies were amongst his own followers; and the picked Moorish guard that he adopted for his protection became the scandal of all the faithful. "He eats, drinks, and clothes himself after Moorish fashion," wrote a Bohemian who visited his Court; and we have already noticed that the conspirators of Burgos began their complaints by censuring the open infidelity of those nearest to the royal person. Orthodoxy proved a convenient weapon for rebellious nobles; but it did not prevent the chivalry of Murcia and Andalusia from accepting the hospitality of the Sultan of Granada, when they wished to settle their private quarrels undisturbed.

The kingdom of the Moors which had once embraced the whole peninsula, save the mountains in the north-west, had shrunk to somewhat less than two hundred leagues; but this area comprised all that was best in soil and atmosphere. In its fertile valleys was ample pasturage for flocks of sheep; in the depths of its mountains, no lack of the ore and metals that its furnaces converted with unrivalled skill into ornaments and weapons. Its plains, protected from the northern winds by snow-capped mountain peaks, and preserved from the ill effects of the sun by a careful system of irrigation, were covered with maize and other grains, producing between them a perpetual harvest. Its villages nestled amidst vineyards and olive-groves; oranges, citrons, and figs grew in its orchards; here and there were plantations of mulberry trees. The silk woven in the looms of Granada could stand comparison with the coveted fabrics of Bagdad and the Orient, and with Moorish tissues, velvets, and brocades, found ready purchasers in Venetian markets, through the medium of thriving ports on the Mediterranean, such as Velez-Malaga and Almeria.

By these same ports, the rulers of Granada could receive assistance from their Mahometan allies on the African coast, whether in the shape of provisions or of men, though of the latter they possessed sufficient for any ordinary campaign. Not only did the healthy climate and abundance of food tend to a natural increase of the

population, but for centuries there had been a steady influx of Mahometan refugees from the provinces reconquered by the Spaniards.

It has been estimated that towards the end of the fifteenth century, the population of Granada was between three or four millions, and was capable of sending into the field a force of 8000 horse and 25,000 foot. The Moors, whether supple Arab or hardy Berber, were as fine soldiers as they were skilful artisans and traders. Trained to shoot from early boyhood, their archers had no match with the cross-bow; while their lightly armed cavalry could manœuvre on the wide plains, or make their way by narrow mountain paths, to the utter discomfiture of the crusader in his heavy mail.

These were facts the Christian army was to learn to its cost during ten years of unceasing war. They were not unknown beforehand to the more seasoned warriors; but the peaceful character of the old Sultan Ismail, and his readiness to pay the yearly tribute to Castile of 20,000 doblas of gold rather than take advantage of Henry IV.'s weakness, had aroused the latent scorn felt for the Infidel by a hot-headed younger generation.

In 1476, Aben Ismail died; and his successor, Muley Abul Hacen, a chieftain already famous in his own land for various daring raids into Christian territory, ceased to send the required tribute to Castile. When the ambassadors of Ferdinand and Isabel came before him to remonstrate, he replied haughtily:

“Go, tell your sovereigns that the kings of Granada, who were wont to pay tribute, are dead. In my kingdom there is no coin minted save scimitars and iron-tipped lances.”



SPANISH HALBERDIER, FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY

FROM "SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR"

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE  
AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

The sovereigns, who were in Seville at the time delivering justice, received his message with indignation. "I will tear the seeds from this pomegranate one by one," exclaimed Ferdinand, punning on the meaning of the word "granada." But he and Isabel were still busy with the Portuguese war and the task of restoring order in Andalusia. They therefore dissembled their real feelings, and consented to a temporary treaty, in which there was no mention of the disputed tribute; but they did not cease from this time to redouble their

preparations for the inevitable crusade. In the end it was Muley Hacen who was to set the spark to the mine.

Just over the Andalusian border, not many leagues distant from the Moorish stronghold of Ronda, stood the fortress of Zahara, which had been stormed in old days by the King's grandfather and namesake "Don Fernando de Antequera." Raised on a height, surmounted by a fortress, and approached only by slippery mountain paths, its Christian defenders believed it almost impregnable, and had allowed themselves to grow careless in their outpost duty. One night in the year 1481, when the truce between Castile and Granada still held good, a band of Moors led by Muley Hacen himself drew near under cover of the darkness. The wind and rain were blowing in a hurricane across the mountain peaks, but the Moors, heedless of its violence, placed their ladders against the rocks above them, and scaled the ill-protected walls. Then they poured into the town. The sound of their trumpets, as scimitar in hand they cleared the narrow streets, was the first warning of their presence; and the inhabitants of Zahara awoke to find themselves faced by death or slavery.

It seemed to the affrighted inhabitants [says Washington Irving in his vivid *Conquest of Granada*] as if the fiends of the air had come upon the wings of the wind, and possessed themselves of tower and turret. The war-cry resounded on every side, shout answering shout, above, below, on the battlements of the castle, in the streets of the town; the foe was in all parts, wrapped in obscurity but acting in concert by the aid of preconcerted signals. Starting from sleep, the soldiers were intercepted, and cut down, as they rushed from their quarters, or, if they escaped, they knew not where to assemble or where to strike. Wherever lights appeared, the flashing scimitar was at its deadly work, and all who attempted resistance fell beneath its edge. In a little while the struggle was at an end.... When the day dawned it was piteous to behold this once prosperous community, which had lain down to rest in peaceful security, now crowded together without distinction of age, or rank, or sex, and almost without raiment during the severity of a winter storm.

The next day the unhappy prisoners, first fruits of the Moorish triumphs, were led back in chains to the capital; but the sight of their misery aroused not so much rejoicing amongst the people as pity and dismay. Courtiers might crowd to the palace of the Alhambra to congratulate their warrior sovereign, but the general feeling of foreboding found vent in the cries of an old dervish, as he wandered through the streets wringing his hands:

Woe to Granada! Its fall is at hand. Desolation shall dwell in its palaces, its strong men shall fall beneath the sword, its children and its maidens shall be led into captivity. Zahara is but a type of Granada.

In Medina del Campo, where the news of the disaster reached Ferdinand and Isabel, there was burning indignation, and demands on all sides for instant revenge. The gallant Don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, took upon himself the task of retaliation. Having learned from the "Asistente" of Seville, Don Diego de Merlo, that the town of Alhama, only eight leagues from the Moorish capital and a regular granary and storehouse for the neighbourhood, was ill-defended and quite unprepared for any attack, he collected a considerable force both of horse and foot, and set off at their head to effect its capture. Pushing forward by night, and hiding at daybreak in whatever cover was afforded by ravines and woods, on March 1, 1482, he arrived at his destination, unperceived. He then selected some picked men; and these under the command of Diego de Merlo, placed their ladders against the steepest part of the citadel, from which attack would be least expected, and scaling the walls slew the sentries whom they found on guard. Soon they had opened the gates to admit the Marquis and their companions, and all within Alhama was in confusion.

The Moors, waked from their sleep, fought desperately to preserve the town itself from the fate of the citadel, throwing up barriers in the streets, and maintaining a heavy cross-bow fire upon their assailants, whenever they tried to emerge from the shelter of the gates. It seemed for a time as if the Christian forces could make no headway; and some of the captains counselled that the citadel and all the houses within reach should be fired and the order for retreat should be sounded.

To this the Marquis replied with a stern negative. They had not made such a splendid capture merely to reduce it to ashes; and he promised his soldiers that once the city was taken he would allow them to put it to the sack and keep what booty fell to their swords. Encouraged by this prospect his troops made a breach in the wall of the citadel on the side towards Alhama, and swarming through this opening and the main gateway in great numbers, they succeeded in beating back their enemies and destroying the barriers.



SPANISH CROSSBOWMAN, FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY

FROM "SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR"

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE  
AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

*Ay de mi Alhama!* "Woe is me Alhama!" was the cry in Granada, when wounded fugitives brought news of the fate that had overtaken their town. Muley Abul Hacen said little, but, putting himself at the head of some 3000 horse and 50,000 infantry, advanced on Alhama to exact vengeance on the Christians who had so daringly crossed his frontier. As he approached the walls, his troops uttered groans of mingled fury and horror, for the ground lay strewn with the dead bodies of their countrymen, thrown out by those within the walls to the mercy of vultures and pariah dogs.

The Marquis had made what preparations for defence he could, but he had begun to realize that his situation was rather desperate. Not only was he separated from his country by a wide stretch of

hostile territory, from which he could expect no provisions, but the food stored within the town had been much of it squandered or destroyed during the sack. Large quantities of grain had been deliberately burned by the Castilian soldiery who, hearing it rumoured that they were about to retreat, determined to leave nothing intact for their enemies. In the weeks that followed, when the forces of Muley Hacen ranged themselves round the walls, and his engineers turned aside the stream that supplied Alhama with water, the Christians, fighting by day and night, half-starved and tortured with thirst, were to pay dearly for their recklessness.

Messengers had been dispatched at once to Andalusia and Medina del Campo, bearing news of the victory but demanding instant succour, lest glory should be dimmed in even more signal defeat. Leaving Isabel to send out letters and enroll captains and troops throughout Castile, Ferdinand hastened south to Cordova; but it was only to find that he came too late, and that help was already well on its way to the beleaguered city. This prompt action was due to no less a person than the Duke of Medina-Sidonia who, having received a piteous letter from the Marquesa de Cadiz in which she described her husband's plight, generously put his old enmity aside and went to his rival's assistance.

Bernaldez the chronicler, more often called the Curate of Los Palacios, who was an eye-witness of much of the Moorish war and knew Andalusia well, once described the Duke and Marquis as "the two columns on which the province rested." Their combined retinues provided an army that Muley Hacen, with his hastily collected troops, dared not face; and the Duke arrived before the gates of Alhama, as the last of the Moorish banners dipped below the far horizon. It was a meeting worthy of a chronicler's pen, when with hands clasped the gallant young Marquis and his former enemy pledged eternal friendship amid the applause and shouting of their troops. Alhama was saved.

Its maintenance was a different matter, for hardly had the Duke and the Marquis of Cadiz, leaving Diego de Merlo and a strong garrison behind them, departed for Cordova, than Muley Abul Hacen made a new and more strenuous attack on his old fortress. From every side the Moors swarmed up by ladders or projecting masonry and hurled themselves upon the ramparts. The Christians thrust

them back only to face a fresh avalanche; and when at length, after a prolonged struggle, some seventy warriors who had made their entrance unnoticed were hemmed in and cut down, the garrison although victorious was both exhausted and dismayed. Fresh help must come from Cordova or they were lost.

The advisability of burning and deserting Alhama, as a too costly capture, was warmly advocated in the royal councils; but Isabel who had arrived at Cordova would not hear of it. Every war, she declared, must have its heavy expenses; and, since she and the King were determined on the conquest of Granada at all costs, the surrender of the first city they had gained could appear nothing but cowardice.

Then the King [we are told] and the Cardinal of Spain and all his host came to the city of Alhama, and they built up the fortifications and supplied it with all things necessary for its defence.

It was not the last time that Isabel was to spur the lagging energies of the Christian army to fresh enthusiasm and endeavours.

In the meantime Muley Abul Hacen was called on to cope with serious trouble at home, as well as a campaign against foreign invaders. For this the mixed character of the Moorish population could partly account. The haughty Arab, with his sense of racial and mental superiority, had not after centuries amalgamated well either with his Berber ally of African origin, or with the Spanish *muladies*, that suspected sect whose ancestors had changed their religion with their masters in the old days of Moorish conquest, thus cutting off their descendants from their natural kith and kin.

Belief in “one God and Mahomet as His Prophet,” alone held together these heterogeneous peoples, whose mutual suspicion proved ever fertile soil for plots and rebellions. Had the latter depended for their source only on race hatred, Muley Hacen, prompt, cunning, and pitiless, might have proved their match. It was that curse of Eastern politics, the quarrels of the harem, that acting on his sensual nature betrayed his statesmanship.

When well advanced in middle age, the Sultan had fallen a victim to a slave girl of Christian origin and had raised her to the position of his favourite wife, the Arabs calling her for her beauty “Zoraya,” or

“Light of the Morning.” This woman, who was as ambitious and unscrupulous as she was fair, made common cause with a certain Emir, Cacim Venegas, a descendant of an old Cordovan family, to ruin all who opposed their power; and to their machinations had been due the horrible massacre of the Abencerrages in the Alhambra, whose name still marks the scene of the crime.

Chief of Zoraya’s enemies was the deposed favourite of the harem, “Aixa,” “the Pure,” a Moorish lady of high birth and spotless character, whose son, Abu Abdallah, more often alluded to by the chroniclers as “Boabdil,” was universally regarded as his father’s heir. To bring about his death and thus prevent his accession was the main object of Zoraya’s life; but her rival was well aware of this and, taking advantage of the fall of Alhama and the consequent loss of Muley Hacen’s reputation as a general, she laid her schemes for placing the sceptre in Boabdil’s hands.

The Sultan learnt of the plot on his return to Granada; and, determining to exact vengeance at his leisure, he imprisoned his wife and son in one of the strong towers of the Alhambra. All seemed lost; but Aixa, inspired by the courage of despair, knotted together the gaily coloured scarves that she and her ladies were wont to wear, and by this rope let down Boabdil from her window to the banks of the Darro. Here some attendants, who had been secretly warned, awaited him; and the Moorish prince, setting spurs to his horse, went swiftly to Guadix, a town perched amid the mountains of the Alpujarras.



ARMS BELONGING TO BOABDIL

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑOLA," VOL. VII.

The standard of rebellion was raised; and Muley Hacen, returning one day from the gardens beyond the city walls, where he had been dallying in idleness with Zoraya, found the gates closed against him. The people, who had secretly hated him for his tyranny, now despised him, and had therefore readily welcomed Boabdil, when he came riding from Guadix to usurp the throne. The old Sultan was forced to fly, but his spirit was far from broken; and, being joined not only by Cacim Venegas and all his clan of relations and followers, but also by his brother, the renowned warrior, Abdallah "El Zagal," "the Bold," he determined to have his revenge.

One night, soon after dark, he appeared unexpectedly before the city, and, scaling with his men the walls of the Alhambra, fell upon the sleeping inhabitants sword in hand, sparing in his rage neither grey-beards, women, nor children. For hours the fight raged through the narrow streets, dimly lit from the windows above by hanging lanterns and guttering torches. It was war to the death and no quarter was given; but though Muley Hacen and his brother fought with a courage that equalled their ferocity, the sympathy of the people was with their enemies, and with difficulty at last they made their escape. Malaga, on the shores of the Mediterranean, became

their new capital; and thus, just at a time when union was most needed, the kingdom of Granada was divided against itself.

The final triumph of the Christian forces, though undoubtedly hastened by the divisions amongst their enemies, was not to prove an easy achievement; for the capture of Alhama and its subsequent successful defence were soon counterbalanced by two disasters. In both cases the cause was a self-confidence on the part of the Castilian commanders, that blinded them to the ordinary precautions of warfare.

Ferdinand, in the later years of his life, was regarded by his fellow sovereigns as a model of sagacity and caution; but we have already noticed the strain of romance and daring that rendered his youth the less responsible if the more attractive. Nothing exasperated him so much as to be told it was a king's place to remain in safety and to allow his generals to fight for him; and it had been a bitter moment when he arrived at Cordova and found his intended relief-expedition had been forestalled by the Duke of Medina-Sidonia. He had perforce contented himself with meeting the party on their return at the border town of Antequera; but he waited impatiently for a response to the Queen's letters that would enable him to take the initiative on his own account. In time it came, and the sturdy mountaineers of Biscay and Guizpucoa, to whose help he had once gone against the French, now joined his banner along with the levies of Galicia and Estremadura, and cavaliers from New and Old Castile.

Having collected his army, Ferdinand crossed the Moorish border late in June, 1482, while Isabel dispatched a fleet to patrol the Western Mediterranean and prevent assistance from Africa reaching Muley Hacen in his retreat at Malaga. The objective of the Christian army was the town of Loja, whose capture would ensure safe communication with Alhama. It lay to the north-west of that outpost in a deep valley traversed by the river Genil, almost like a gateway to the Vega of Granada; and its wealth and natural beauty of situation in the midst of frowning mountains had won for it the name of "the flower amongst the thorns."

The Christian forces, eager to pluck this flower and heedless of the dangers in the path, advanced with rash haste between the ridges. Ferdinand in his anxiety to approach the city pitched his camp on uneven ground amid the surrounding olive-groves, in a position

wholly to the disadvantage of either his cavalry or artillery. At the earnest entreaties of the Marquis of Cadiz and the Duke of Villahermosa, who had preached caution from the first, an attempt was made to rectify these mistakes, but it proved too late.

Aliator, the Governor of Loja, who was father-in-law of the young Sultan Boabdil, had been on the watch from the first for any opportunity of throwing the besiegers into confusion. He therefore skilfully arranged an ambush; and, some of the Christians falling into it, a sudden panic spread through the camp, that had begun to realize the perils of its locality. Only a hasty retreat saved Castile from a general massacre of her leading chivalry, nay even the loss of the King himself; while many a gallant warrior, such as the Master of Calatrava, came by his death. Ferdinand, in disgust at his ignominious five days' siege and the failure of his tactics, departed to Cordova, leaving the command of the frontier in other hands.

Early in February, 1483, the Christians once more took the offensive, hoping to wipe out their previous defeat by some victory of unprecedented magnitude. Alonso de Cardenas, the Master of Santiago, who had been placed in command of the border country in the neighbourhood of Ecija, had learned through certain of his scouts that, once an army had pierced the mountains near Ajarquia, it would find itself in a fertile plain, not far removed from the city of Malaga. Here would be a new *vega*, stocked with fat herds and with opulent towns and villages, providing spoils for its conquerors even more alluring than the riches of Alhama. In vain the Marquis of Cadiz protested that these scouts were renegade Moors and should not be trusted; the daring of the enterprise had won the assent of Alonso de Cardenas and the other commanders against their better judgment, while the bait of pillage was eagerly swallowed by the ordinary soldiery.

From Antequera the army set out on its journey through the mountains, more than three thousand horse and a thousand foot with the banners of Seville, Cordova, Jerez, and other principal cities of Andalusia, waving in their midst. Rarely had more famous names graced a military enterprise: the Master of Santiago, hero of the Portuguese war; the Marquis of Cadiz, victor of Alhama, with some five more of the warlike house of Ponce de Leon; the Count of Cifuentes now Asistente of Seville; and Don Alonso de Aguilar, a

renowned general whose star has somewhat paled before the brilliance of his younger brother's fame, Gonsalvo de Cordova—the "Great Captain." Behind these warriors and their troops came a heterogeneous crowd of merchants and adventurers, their pockets well stocked with gold for barter, and their hands ready for any robbery that would bring them profit so long as the swords of those in front had cleared a way to it in safety.

The selfish motives, that in most hearts prompted the undertaking, were clearly shown on the first day's march through the mountains. High above them, ridge on ridge, stretched ragged peaks bare of all save the most meagre vegetation; the roadway on the slope below became a mere track, winding through ravines and stony river-beds. Here and there were human habitations; but the peasantry, warned by the glitter of spear and helmet, had long climbed to distant heights or hidden with their cattle in secret caves. The Castilians, picking their way in disorderly fashion between marsh and boulder, revenged themselves for the lack of booty by firing the deserted villages and huts until night fell; for of easy ground or promised *vega* there was no sign. Then in the darkness came the sound of stones and rocks clattering down the mountainside. Some of the horses were struck and, with others frightened by the noise, bolted or stumbled; lights began to appear along the ridge; and showers of poisoned arrows to descend; missiles from which the Christians, unable to retaliate, could find no adequate protection. A crowning touch was put to the ever-growing horror, when it was discovered that Muley Hacen, having learned of the invasion by means of beacon fires, had sent his brother "El Zagal" and Abul Cacim Venegas to the assistance of the mountaineers.



ALHAMBRA, COURT OF LIONS

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON,  
ROME

Conscious of their helpless plight, the Castilians turned and fled. “Into such evil case were they fallen,” says the chronicler, “that none listened to the sound of the trumpet, nor followed a banner, nor paid attention to those who were his leaders.”

The Moors, hanging on their rear, and descending in swarms from the ridges above, broke between the lines, preventing one commander from assisting another; while many of the scouts, either of evil intention or from sheer terror, advised ways of escape that ended in impassable ravines or mere goat-tracks across the peaks. But a small portion of the gallant army that had set out with such self-confidence from Antequera returned safe from the “Heights of Slaughter,” as these mountains were ever afterwards known.

The Master of Santiago, finding it impossible to rally his forces, borrowed a horse from his servants, and in the darkness escaped by secret footpaths.

“I turn my back not on the Moors,” he exclaimed, “but on a country that for our sins has shown itself hostile.”

The Marquis of Cadiz and Don Alonso de Aguilar, after many detours and wanderings, also found their way to Antequera; but the former had lost his three brothers and two nephews; while the Count of Cifuentes, and others of the Christian army, almost to the number of a thousand, were captured and led to Malaga.

This defeat [says the Curate of Los Palacios] was marvellous for the small band of Moors by whom it was inflicted. It would seem that Our Lord consented, because robbery or merchandise rather than His service had been the thought of the majority. For many of the same acknowledged that they went not to fight against the Infidels, as good Christians who had confessed their sins and received the Sacrament, and made their will, and wished to fight against their enemies and conquer them for the sake of the Holy Catholic Faith;—for but few of them had this desire.

The shame and sorrow, aroused by the retreat from Loja, was as nothing to the lamentations over this new disaster. There was scarcely a man or a woman in Andalusia, it was said, who had not cause to weep; but Castilian fortunes had touched their lowest depth.

“The good are punished for a time,” says the Curate of Los Palacios, “because they have neglected God; but always He returns to succour and console them.”

The victory of Ajarquia had redounded to the credit of Muley Hacen, and still more to that of his brother “El Zagal,” with the result that the popularity of Boabdil began to wane. Necessity demanded that the young Sultan should take some steps to show his ability as a general; and, since he was neither devoid of courage nor ambition, in April, 1483, the gates of Granada were opened to permit the exodus of himself and the flower of his nobility at the head of a picked army of horse and foot. His plan of campaign was, marching through the *vega*, to cross the Genil near Loja, where he would be reinforced by his father-in-law, Aliator, and then on again beyond the Christian frontier, till he arrived at Lucena in Andalusia, the object of his attack.

So much he achieved without difficulty; but the more superstitious of his following shook their heads. Had not the King’s horse stumbled in the very gateway of Granada, causing his master to

shiver his lance against the arch above? Had not a fox, also, rushed scatheless through the army, almost in front of Boabdil himself, without suffering hurt from the many arrows aimed at her? These were ill omens.

More disconcerting for military minds was the bold defiance of Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova, the youthful Governor of Lucena. The Moors had hoped to surprise the town, but it was obvious news of their coming had preceded them; for hardly had they spread through the immediate neighbourhood, burning and pillaging, than Don Diego and a small force of Christians flung open the gates and began to attack them. This they would hardly have dared to do, had they believed themselves unsupported; and Boabdil and Aliator, looking behind them to account for this temerity, saw to their horror the sun glittering on Christian spears and banners.

It was the Count of Cabra, uncle of Don Fernandez, with a troop of not more than two hundred horse and double that number of foot; but the sound of his trumpets re-echoing in the hills, and the curve of the road by which he came, as it descended to the plain, lent to his host a phantom size. The Moors at any rate believed it the whole Christian army, and at the first onslaught their infantry broke and fled. The cavalry still continued the battle fiercely, till the arrival of Don Alonso de Aguilar with reinforcements from Antequera, and the death of Aliator deprived them of the last hope of victory. Then defeat became a rout; and some, surrendering, begged for mercy, while others, missing the ford across the river in their hurry to escape, were drowned in the heavy flood. A few returned to Loja, but their king was not amongst them. Crouching amongst the low bushes by the waterside, his scimitar struck from his hand, Boabdil, "the Unfortunate" as astrologers had proclaimed him at his birth, was forced to surrender, and led a captive to the city he had meant to conquer.

The question of his fate was a matter for profound discussion in Castilian councils. At first it was suggested that he should be placed under lock and key in some inaccessible fortress; but the Marquis of Cadiz pointed out that no decision could give Muley Hacem greater pleasure. Better far than to remove Boabdil from Granada was to send him back to his kingdom as a vassal of the Christian sovereigns, that he might continue to foment discord amongst his own nation.

This advice pleased Ferdinand and Isabel, and soon the humiliating terms, on which the Prince should receive his liberty, were drawn up and signed. Boabdil did homage to the rulers of Castile, consenting to pay an annual tribute of twelve thousand doblas of gold, and to surrender four hundred Christian captives. Most galling of all, he publicly promised to appear at the Castilian Court, whenever summoned, and to allow the Christian armies free passage through his territory, in their campaigns against Muley Hacen and "El Zagal." Having surrendered his own son and those of his principal nobles as hostages for his good faith, he returned to his own kingdom, free; yet bound by chains that were to cost him his kingdom and hold him in perpetual bondage.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **THE FALL OF GRANADA: THE MOORISH WAR**

### **1484–1492**

The kingdom of Granada had been cut off by land and sea from outward assistance, her plains and valleys had been ravaged by a foreign foe, her principal towns were torn by the factions of her ruling family, yet she turned a defiant, almost mocking gaze on those who had pledged themselves to her downfall. The thought of this defiance rankled with the Queen as bitterly as had the contempt shown for her commands by the young Enriquez.

There was nothing in her nature of the Oriental acceptance of ill-fortune as the will of a far-seeing Providence. Disaster to her spelt rather divine wrath visited on human incompetency; and Isabel looked on even temporary failure as something unclean and abhorrent, that could only be purified and overcome by perseverance ending in success. So sincere was her conviction, so wholehearted and untiring her share in whatever plan of action was laid down, that she could not but inspire her generals and councillors with something of her own enthusiasm.

At times her will clashed with Ferdinand's ambitions, as when in 1484 he urged her to leave the weary struggle against Granada and help him regain the counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne; but though in later years the foreign policy of Aragon was to assume predominance, on this occasion the interests of Castile were jealously maintained.

Ferdinand argued his cause with no little truth and ability. The death of Louis XI. in the previous summer had left his son Charles VIII., a mere boy, as the figurehead of France, to the natural

weakening of the government. Now was the time, before the child developed into a man, to win back Aragon's lawful possessions, the Pyrenean counties, whose sympathies were Spanish rather than French. Isabel did not attempt to controvert these views. She even admitted that had it been a question of making war on Granada for the first time, or recovering Roussillon or Cerdagne, the latter policy would have been undoubtedly the best.

"But," she continued, "seeing that it is now two years since we began our war against the Moors, and that during that time we have been put to great trouble and expense, I hold it as ill-advised that we should burden ourselves with a fresh campaign elsewhere."

She then departed southwards with the Cardinal of Spain to arrange for a renewed invasion of Moorish territory, leaving the King with some Castilian troops to settle his own projects in the north according to his fancy. The result was, after due reflection, to bring him back to her, with his designs on Roussillon and Cerdagne temporarily shelved. There was nothing petty in the relation of either husband or wife; and it is probable that the secret of their unanimity of action lay in their mutual readiness to respond to reason.

It was about this date that their military policy developed a new and more modern trend. The surprise of Alhama, the expedition to Ajarquia, and the hasty march to Loja had all been in keeping with the tactics of earlier crusades. That two out of the three expeditions had failed showed either a lack of judgment or of courage; and the reckless daring of the Castilian race forbade even the momentary consideration of the latter suggestion. Where then did the error lie?

Experience showed that, in spite of her isolation, the kingdom of Granada would not succumb to ordinary measures of ravage and blockade. Even in the districts trampled underfoot, and burned and pillaged by Christian armies, the vegetation hardly awaited the departure of the invaders to spring up in fresh luxuriance. Ravages that would have made the plains of Castile a desert were quickly effaced in this land of sunshine, both by the help of nature and of the industrious inhabitants. There were, moreover, hidden *vegas* and tracts of seaboard, protected on the north both from cold winds and foreign armies by high mountain ranges, whose southern slopes, with the land stretching beyond them, were a veritable paradise of

fruits and crops. Granada might soon find her luxury curtailed, but to starve her into submission would be a Herculean task.

Another lesson learned was the futility of a campaign of midnight assaults and surprises. These were well enough for a single expedition that aimed at no more than intimidating the enemy, or establishing a reputation for heroism amongst the leaders, though it has been shown such glory could be dearly bought. In scaling walls or planting an ambush the Castilian had not anything to teach his foe; while the majority of Moorish fortresses were built in commanding positions by the entrance to ravines, or were perched on almost inaccessible heights that gave to the defender with his javelin and cross-bow an enormous advantage over those scrambling up to the attack from below.

The reduction of such strongholds was a necessary part of the conquest of Granada; but eight more years were to pass before the task was completed, and the capital, whose ramparts were a series of fortresses, was to surrender, subdued not so much by wild valour as by untiring patience.

During these years the Castilian army lost much of its feudal character, a transformation to be completed later, on the battlefields of Italy under the supervision of Gonsalvo de Cordova. The levies of the principal nobles had been the backbone of the war against the Portuguese, and still supplied no mean contribution to the Christian forces in the kingdom of Granada. The military retainers of the Cardinal of Spain numbered some two thousand men, while, as we have already seen, a combination of the vassals of the Duke of Medina-Sidonia and Marquis of Cadiz was sufficient to make Muley Hacem raise the siege of Alhama. This same Duke, in addition to his land forces, was able, in 1487, to dispatch a private fleet and convoy of provisions to the royal camp at Malaga, then suffering from famine; but the wealth and power that could give these substantial proofs of loyalty were not without their drawbacks. The patriotic Duke, when touched in his vanity, did not hesitate to refuse Ferdinand's commands as to the disposal of his troops, exclaiming touchily: "I have brought them to his service, but they shall go nowhere save under my command."

The sovereigns dealt with such aristocratic independence by their usual policy of creating a counter-balance. They had established a

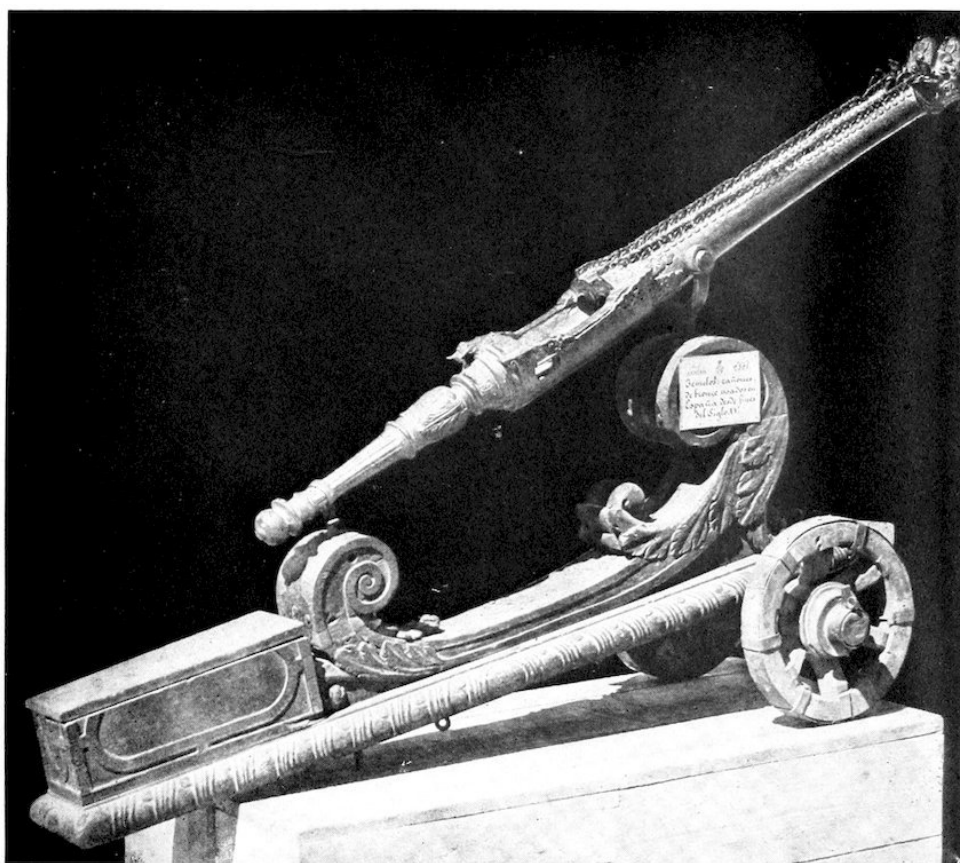
permanent troop of soldiers in Galicia, paid by their treasury, to enforce the sentences of the royal judges in that unruly province; while the natural sequence of their employment of the Santa Hermandad for the restoration of order was the dispatch of its well-armed bands to the seat of war.

The royal forces were further recruited by numbers of the robbers and evildoers, who had created such havoc in Castile in the early years of the reign. It had been impossible to punish them all, as was shown in the case of Seville; and now a free pardon was offered to those who would take their share in the great crusade and turn their love of violence to patriotic use. Strict regulations prevented them from yielding to their old habits; for the work of pillage and plunder was kept within the bounds then considered legitimate, the women and the camp followers who preyed upon the troops were banished; and even gambling, a customary pastime of the soldiery and ever-fruitful source of quarrels, was suppressed.

In addition to the troops already mentioned Ferdinand also possessed what might be called his own private army, amounting to three thousand men, personally pledged to his service. It consisted of vassals of the royal demesnes led by their *adelantados*; an escort of young nobles and knights and a royal guard of some five hundred *ginetes*, or light horse, with an equal number of heavily armed cavalry.

As the war grew more serious the purely Spanish troops were augmented by mercenaries, principally Swiss mountaineers. "Hardy warriors who fight on foot," Pulgar describes them, "so resolved never to turn their back on the enemy that they wear defensive armour only in front, and are thus able to move with the greater ease." The Swiss had won their laurels against Charles the Bold on the fields of Granson and Nanci; but even farther reaching than their vindication of national independence had been the triumph in their persons of infantry over cavalry; another blow struck at the old feudal ideas. In the war of Granada, it is still the cavalry who hold sway; but the presence of the Swiss foot-soldiers was not without its influence in the history of Spain, whose infantry, drilled and disciplined after their method by Gonsalvo de Ayora in the latter years of Ferdinand's reign, was to become the admiration and fear of Europe.

More immediate in its effects was the improvement of the artillery, a department of war that came under the Queen's special supervision, and on which she expended her usual vivid interest and energy. A study of the almost barren results of the first two years of fighting had made it obvious that future campaigns must resolve themselves into a war of sieges, a war whose ultimate issue depended not so much on cavalry or infantry as on gunners and engineers. Isabel had already summoned from Germany and Flanders the men most gifted in this particular branch of military science, placing at their head Francisco Ramirez, a knight of Madrid, whose knowledge and experience was to win him the nickname "El Artillero."



DOUBLE BREECH-LOADING CANNON, IN BRONZE; USED IN SPAIN FROM THE END OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

FROM "SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR"

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

During the campaigns against the Moors in the reign of John II., Isabel's father, the Christian army had been proud of its five "lombards" or heavy guns; but the growing importance of the artillery can be estimated, when we learn that in 1486, at the second siege of Loja, there were twenty lombards in action, while in two of the batteries placed before Malaga there were eleven heavy pieces, without counting the smaller ordnance.

Some of the very lombards employed in the attack on Baeza can still be seen in that city, constructed of thick bars of iron clamped together by rings of the same metal; while in the fields around the peasants dig up balls of iron and marble, that once made such havoc of the ramparts. Beside a modern field-gun these cannon appear ludicrously clumsy. Fixed so that they could be pointed neither to the right nor left, without changing the position of the whole machine, and built only to fire horizontally, the weight of their ammunition prevented the powder used from igniting quickly; yet compared with the artillery of bygone days their discharge had the swiftness of the wind. When two lombards could arrive between them at one hundred and forty shots within the day, their gunners could proclaim a marvellous achievement; and Isabel looking round on her formidable batteries could boast, as Prescott has complimented her, on having "assembled a train of artillery, such as was probably not possessed at that time by any other European potentate."

The kingdom of Granada, regardless of her enemy's heavy guns, still kept her derisive smile. Fatal to the most solid masonry these lombards might prove indeed, when once in action, but who should bring them by river-bed and goat-track to assault fortresses and castles built on crags, that had hitherto defied the approach even of a battering-ram?

It was a question that might have dismayed the most intrepid of generals; but Isabel was of the fibre of which Hannibals and Napoleons are made. She recognized difficulties but to overcome them; and the actual provision of guns was merely a section of her extensive preparations. Carpenters, blacksmiths, stone-masons, bricklayers, colliers, weavers of ropes and baskets; these were but a few of the army of workmen and engineers who built bridges, filled in valleys, and levelled heights, that the artillery might reach their destination. At the head of each department was an official deputed

to see that nothing was lacking to his branch of the work, whether food for the troops, fodder for the horses, wood for carts and bridges, forges for iron-moulding, powder fetched from Sicily, Flanders, or Portugal, or marble and stone to be fashioned into shot.

In the end two thousand gun-carriages, drawn by oxen, lumbered heavily across the frontier, and soon were winding up the mountains into the heart of Granada by peak and ridge. Pulgar describes how a road more than three leagues in length was constructed within twelve days “by the command and great insistence of the Queen”; while the Curate of Los Palacios, lost in awe and admiration, declares that “he who had not seen the passes by which those monstrous lombards and heavy artillery made their way would have deemed it a thing incredible.”

“The Queen has provided for every need,” wrote the Italian scholar, Peter Martyr, to the Archbishop of Milan, when at the seat of war before Baeza; and his letter shows that Isabel’s thoughts were not wholly occupied with the destruction of the Infidel.

It is well worth while [he adds] to see the four large hospital tents that her goodness of heart has designed, not only for the succour and cure of the wounded, but for every imaginable illness. Such is the number of doctors, chemists, surgeons, and their assistants; such the organization and energy; such the quantity of supplies that it is in no way inferior to your Hospital of the Holy Ghost outside the city, or to the great one in your Milan.

The “Queen’s Hospitals,” as they were called, were in keeping with the other methods of warfare now adopted by the sovereigns, and show their intention that the old careless campaigning of the past should cease. On the one hand the Castilian soldier should be assured in return for his patriotism of all that foresight and care could do for him; on the other there should be meted out to the enemy either the prospect of submission or the alternative of death or slavery. Ferdinand showed himself ready to grant favourable terms to those cities that opened their gates at his summons; allowing the inhabitants to seek their fortunes elsewhere with what goods they could carry, or to remain if they preferred as his subjects. In the latter case he assured them of his protection, a promise that he strictly enforced to the admiration of the chroniclers and dismay of his own troops.

His vengeance on rebellious *mudejares*, as the Moors were called who had at any time accepted the Castilian yoke, was in inverse ratio to this clemency, as the smoking ruins of Benemaquez were to bear witness.

And the King [we are told] commanded justice to be executed on those Moors who were within; and there were put to the sword, or hung, one hundred and eight of the principal men, and he commanded the rest with the women and children to be made captive, and that the town should be burnt and its walls razed to the ground.

Equally drastic was the new campaign of devastation that marked the trail of the Christian army. No longer were inroads to be made only in the spring, but instead a perpetual invasion, slackening in the hottest months when the sun forbade strenuous action, and renewed again with the coming of autumn, that neither crops nor fruit might have time to recover from the previous onslaught. For this work of destruction were set aside thirty thousand foragers, whose task it was, spreading out on either side of the main army often to the distance of two leagues, to burn all the mills, orchards, and trees within that area.

“Both to the right and left we lay waste fields, houses, demesnes, everything in fact that we see,” says a letter of Peter Martyr, describing the Christian advance on Granada, “and every day we press on further. Thus the Moors grow more and more enfeebled.”

Such a policy of siege and destruction, carried out with the pitiless logic that humaner ages have condemned, and backed by the united resources of Castile and Aragon, though necessarily slow, was certain of its ultimate success.

As the Marquis of Cadiz had foreseen, the issue was further hastened by the release of Boabdil, that at once threw the kingdom of Granada into fresh convulsions of civil war. During the young Sultan’s imprisonment, his father, Muley Hacen, had appeared in the capital and established himself in his old palace of the Alhambra, relying on the disgust that he knew his son’s failure would awaken amongst Moorish patriots.

True to his expectations the majority of the inhabitants received him joyfully; but the poorest quarter of the city, called the Albaycin where Aixa had taken refuge on his approach, still maintained its

former allegiance; and thither one dark night came Boabdil with the few Moorish nobles who had remained faithful to his cause. Before dawn a desperate struggle was in progress; Boabdil being unable to drive his enemy from the Alhambra but gaining possession of the Alcazaba, its twin fortress on the opposite hilltop. At length, when the extermination of one or other faction seemed the only prospect, an armistice was arranged, by which Muley Hacen retained Granada, while his son retired with kingly honours to the port of Almeria on the Mediterranean coast.

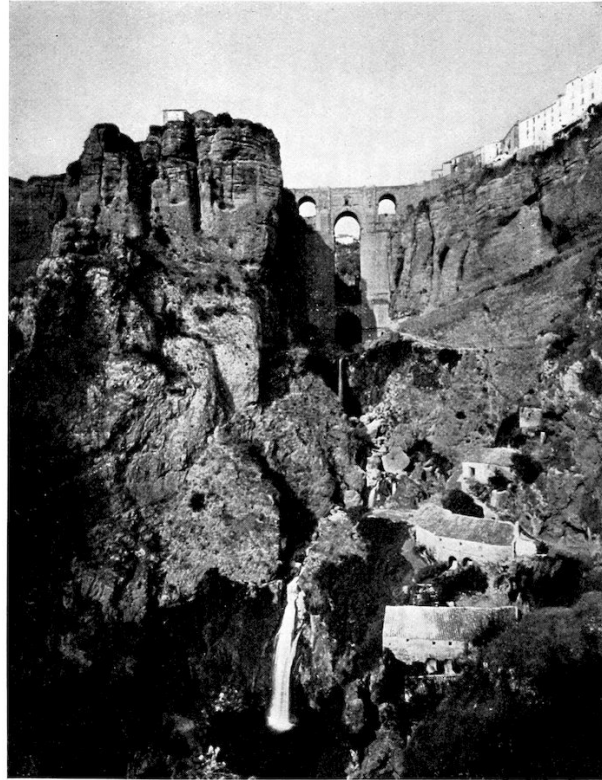
Such a settlement could not prove lasting, nor was the young Sultan, in spite of his personal bravery, the man to alter its terms to his own advantage. Without strength of purpose either to break his Christian shackles, or to take the initiative once more against his father, he remained inactive at his new capital, until the discovery in 1484 of a plot amongst his garrison to sell him to his uncle "El Zagal" sent him in hot flight to Cordova. The sovereigns somewhat contemptuously granted him an asylum. He was a pawn in their game they could not afford to ignore; but their hatred of the Infidel, combined with the self-reliance that was so marked a feature of both their characters, inspired them with little pity for his helplessness.

Muley Hacen, in the meantime, had fallen heir to the ill-luck that seemed to dog the rulers of Granada; for, in his efforts to satisfy the popular demand for Moorish victories, his army suffered in the autumn of 1483 a defeat approaching the disaster of Lucena. The fault did not lie in the calibre of the troops, mainly recruited from the half-savage Berbers who inhabited the mountains in the neighbourhood of Ronda and Malaga, nor with its famous commander Hamet "El Zegri," who lived but to shed Christian blood. It lay rather, as in the case of the Christian routs at Ajarquia and Loja, in the futility of an isolated expedition, with the enemy everywhere on the watch. Surprised and outnumbered by the levies of Andalusia and the Holy Brotherhood, the Moors after a fierce struggle on the banks of the Lopera broke and fled, leaving many of their generals dead or captured. Hamet "El Zegri" himself escaped, but fifteen of his standards were carried to Vittoria, where the sovereigns celebrated their triumph by illuminations and religious processions.

The battle of Lopera was followed by the reduction of numerous Moorish strongholds on the western frontier, that were now too weak to withstand the Christian advance. Most joyful of all was the recapture of Zahara, whose fall had marked the original outbreak of the war. This triumph won for the Marquis of Cadiz, its principal hero, the title "Duke of Zahara"; but he declined to surrender the name under which he had gained so many laurels, and compromised by styling himself Marquis-Duke of Cadiz.

The culminating moment of the campaign was the capture of Ronda in May, 1485. This town, believed by its defenders impregnable, stood on the summit of a precipice six hundred feet high.

Its walls [says a modern traveller, impressed by the grandeur even of its ruins] are built on the very edge of the cliff and look as weather-beaten and as solid. Indeed one could hardly tell where wall begins and rock ends but for the Moresque arches that span the rents in the face of the cliff to afford a firm basis for the continuous fortification.



RONDA, THE TAJO OR CHASM

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE,  
MADRID

To this stronghold Hamet “El Zegri” had retired after his crushing defeat at Lopera; but, being informed that the Christians were meditating a second attack on Loja, he hastily sent part of his garrison to assist “El Zagal” in its defence. This did not, however, satisfy his own desire for vengeance, and believing that his enemies were occupied elsewhere he sallied out with a contingent of his fiercest troops to lay waste the Duchy of Medina-Sidonia. His immediate mission was successful; but Hamet “El Zegri” soon found his joy turned to ashes. His cunning had been overreached.

A portion of the Christian army had in truth set out in the direction of Loja; but the main body, under the command of Ferdinand himself, the Marquis-Duke of Cadiz, and other great Castilian generals, only waited till this subterfuge should take effect to march on Ronda. With them went their deadly train of artillery; and soon the walls and towers were battered from three sides,

without those within being able to retaliate. Breaches were made, and through these the Castilian chivalry rushed to the assault, driving before them up the streets the diminished garrison. At length a knight, more intrepid than the rest, leaping from roof to roof along the low white houses, planted his banner on the principal mosque. His action completed the enemy's despair; and on Ferdinand's offer of generous terms the inhabitants surrendered.

Had they known it, even while they bargained, help was on the way; for Hamet "El Zegri," driving before him the herds of Medina-Sidonia, was returning across the mountains, when the sound of distant cannon and falling masonry caused him and his men to put spurs to their horses. It was nightfall when they arrived in the neighbourhood of Ronda, and descending from the mountains, sword in hand, attacked the sleeping camp. Up and down the precipitous slopes the battle raged, but, fierce as each onslaught proved, the Castilians beat it back; and "El Zegri," at length acknowledging his defeat, withdrew in sullen fury. Ronda had fallen, and the western frontier of the Moorish kingdom was in Christian hands.

Such a loss did not help to rebuild Muley Hacen's military reputation; indeed there was murmuring in Granada that no land could prosper whose ruler was almost in his dotage, unable either to lead his armies or to cope with the work of government. Things would have been different, if only their King had been a hero like his brother Abdallah "El Zagal," "the Valiant."

Muley Hacen, both weary of war and intrigue and terrified lest the populace in their anger should clamour for his death, hastily abdicated; whereupon El Zagal, who had only been awaiting a favourable opportunity to seize the throne, hurried to the capital. Fortune threw a glamour over his advent; for, as he passed through the Sierra Nevada, he surprised by chance a body of Christian knights enjoying a halt in one of the fertile valleys. These were Knights of the Order of Calatrava, sent out from Alhama to forage for the garrison; but the success of their raid had rendered them careless, and no sentry warned them of the enemy's approach. Dismounted and scattered, some without arms, and none fully prepared, they broke before the thunder of the Moorish cavalry; and

“El Zagal” and his men entered Granada with a train of captives and the heads of those whom they had slain hanging from their saddles.

It was an omen to delight the patriotic; but the new Sultan’s peace of mind was soon rudely shaken, for Muley Hacen died within the year, and rumour at once connected his sudden end with the brother who had usurped his power. Boabdil also, from his refuge at Cordova, declared himself the undoubted King of Granada now that his father was no more, and the sovereigns, who saw their way to fomenting new discord amongst their enemies, instantly offered him any assistance in their power.

Boabdil, Abdallah “El Chico” “the Young,” as he was often called to distinguish him from his rival Abdallah, “El Zagal,” could count as well on the support of many Moorish families who hated and feared his uncle; and though on the whole the chances of the duel were against him, yet the issue was sufficiently doubtful to make both parties willing to compromise. In the end a treaty of partition was signed. By this “El Zagal” kept the seaboard with the important towns of Almeria, Malaga, and Velez, the mountainous tract of the Alpujarras famous for its warriors, and half the town of Granada with the palace of the Alhambra. To Boabdil were left the Alcazaba and poorer quarter of the city, with all the northern part of the kingdom adjoining Andalusia.

Delighted to be once more sovereign in his own land, the young Sultan sent to inform his Christian patrons of the settlement he had made, begging them in virtue of his submission to spare his territories in their future invasions. Such a concession was far from Ferdinand’s thoughts; and he replied by denouncing his vassal as a traitor who had perfidiously allied himself with the open enemies of Castile. At the same time he and his army advanced on Loja, one of the few important towns that had been left to Boabdil, and whose possession the Christians had long desired in order to establish easy communication with their outpost of Alhama.

The unfortunate Abdallah “El Chico,” victim alike of craft and circumstances, collected his Moorish supporters and sallied out to the relief of his city with what show of scorn and defiance he could muster, hoping by personal bravery to triumph over those whose skill and cunning he had learned to dread. The ensuing combat, according to the chronicles, was marked on both sides by striking

deeds of valour, but perhaps the honour of the day rested, amongst the Christians at least, with an English noble, who had lately joined in the crusade with some four hundred foot-soldiers of his nation, armed with bows and axes.

This knight, called by his Spanish allies the “Conde de Escalas” from his family name of Scales, finding the scope for cavalry action too restricted for his taste, dismounted and led his men to an assault on the walls of Loja. He was already mounting a ladder, when a stone well-aimed from above caught him full on the face, hurling him to the ground, and he was with difficulty extricated and carried to his tent. Here it was discovered that the blow had deprived him of two of his front teeth, a loss likely to disturb the equanimity of a cavalier of fashion however courageous. The Conde de Escalas nevertheless rose to the occasion; and when the King, going to visit him during his convalescence as a mark of favour, condoled with him on what he had suffered, he replied cheerfully: “God Who hath made this building, my body, hath but opened a door, that He may the more clearly see what passeth within.” Rewarded for his assistance and valorous deeds by rich gifts he departed not long afterwards to his own land.

Of the Moors, both Boabdil and his principal general, Hamet “El Zegri,” were wounded, and after negotiations with the young Gonsalvo de Cordova on behalf of the Christians, consented to the capitulation of Loja on the 29th of May, 1486. The terms were sufficiently humiliating to punish Boabdil well for his supposed perfidy; for he agreed to surrender his title “King of Granada” and to become merely Duke of Guadix, with the lordship of that town, if within six months he or his Christian allies should succeed in wresting it from his uncle. On the latter he promised to make unceasing war. In contrast to this severity, the inhabitants of Loja were allowed to depart where they would, carrying with them their movable property.

The capture of the famous “Flower among the Thorns” opened up a way into the heart of Granada, of which the Christians were not slow to take advantage, its possession being quickly followed by the reduction of several Moorish fortresses of minor importance. To the camp before Moclin, one of these strongholds, came the Queen

herself to share in the triumph of her army, and with her the Infanta Isabel, now a Princess of marriageable age.

The Curate of Los Palacios has described the scene of her arrival with a minute attention to detail that would have made his fortune as a modern journalist of fashions. From him we know the exact costumes worn, not only by the Queen and her daughter, but by Ferdinand and the young English Conde de Escalas who rode in his train, while we are given a curious little picture of the formal greeting between husband and wife.

Before they embraced, they bent low each of them three times in reverence, and the Queen took off her hat, so that she remained in her coif with her face uncovered; and the King came to her and embraced her and kissed her on the cheek. Afterwards he went to his daughter and embraced and kissed her also, making the sign of the cross in token of his blessing.

Isabel remained with the Christian forces for the rest of the campaign; while in the following spring she and Ferdinand collected a new army at Cordova, mainly recruited from the levies of Andalusia. It was their intention to attack the town of Velez-Malaga, now left high and dry, but then a flourishing seaport, situated at the extremity of a long ridge of mountains stretching down to the Mediterranean. Its capture would not only lay bare the fertile valley to the west, but would also insert a hostile wedge between the important city of Malaga some five miles distant and the capital, where El Zagal maintained his uneasy throne.

The relations between the rival Sultans had not been improved by the capitulation of Loja; and soon afterwards an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the uncle to poison his nephew had led to renewed struggles in Granada itself. Boabdil, in his eagerness for revenge had appealed to Ferdinand for help; but the commander of the Christian troops sent to the scene of action, while pretending to lend support, contented himself with fomenting the discord that he found, thus encouraging the “King of the Alhambra” and the “King of the Albaycin” to work their mutual destruction.

When the news came that the Christian army had pitched its camp before Velez-Malaga, bringing with it all its heavy guns, “El Zagal” was torn with indecision. To go to the assistance of the besieged was

to leave his palace of the Alhambra exposed to Boabdil's attack; to stay was to sacrifice an important harbour, besides losing his popularity with the inhabitants of Granada, who looked to him for the deeds of valour befitting his name. His choice was that of the warrior; and the despairing inhabitants of Velez-Malaga who were on the point of surrender rejoiced to see the mountains lit up with bonfires, warning them of their Sultan's approach. The Christians on their part were fully prepared to defend their camp; the bravest of their chivalry under the Marquis-Duke of Cadiz opposed themselves again and again to the Moorish onslaughts, until "El Zagal" was beaten back in confusion from Velez-Malaga as Hamet "El Zegri" had been from Ronda.

The capitulation of the town followed at the end of April, 1487; and then the Christian army pushed forward to Malaga, a port famous for its commerce from the days of Phoenician traders. The enthusiasm of the troops was raised to white heat by success and by the personal bravery of Ferdinand, who, on one occasion during the late siege, seeing a company of Castilians about to retreat, had hurled himself on the enemy armed only with his breastplate and sword. On the remonstrances of his generals, who besought him in future to remember what his death would cost them, he replied: "I cannot see my men in difficulties and not go to their aid." It was an answer more likely to endear him to Castilian hearts than any act of legislation.

The courage that inspired the Christians was not lacking in Malaga, where the fierce Hamet "El Zegri" and his garrison had pledged themselves to starve rather than yield. The fire of the heavy lombards, disembarked from the Castilian ships and pointed on the Moorish towers and ramparts, was answered by cannon equally deadly in their aim; the mines planted deep behind trenches were met by counter-mines; the Christian raids on the suburbs by midnight sallies of such unexpected ferocity that often massacre ensued, until reinforcements at length drove the invaders back to their walls.

The summer months passed slowly; and hunger and pestilence added their gaunt spectres to the sufferings of the besieged. In vain Ferdinand, courting a speedy surrender, sent messengers to offer generous terms, such as he had granted at Ronda and Loja; in vain he threatened the alternative of slavery in case of prolonged

resistance; in vain the more peace-loving citizens pleaded with their governor to accept a settlement that would save the prosperity of their port. Hamet "El Zegri" returned a scornful refusal. Soon, he declared the rainy season would begin, and the Christian camp would be turned into a swamp, fit breeding-ground for death in all its forms. Malaga had only to hold firm to triumph. What matter if the victory cost her the ruin of her commerce? It was a question to which garrison and merchants returned a different answer.

In the meanwhile Isabel had appeared in person at the Christian camp, not, as the Moors expected, to persuade her husband to raise the siege, but to second his efforts. Her presence was heralded by the fire of all the guns at once, a thunder that shook Malaga to its foundations and filled Castilian hearts with pride. Fanaticism was now to play its part in the history of the siege, persuading Hamet "El Zegri" and his supporters of divine interposition, when all human aid had failed them. Their first would-be saviour was a certain Abraham "El Gerbi," a dervish of holy life imbued with a hatred of the Christians. This man, gathering to his standard some four hundred warriors of Guadix, whom he had inspired with the belief that he was protected by the angels of Mahomet, led them to an attack on the camp before Malaga. Had his efforts ended here the incident would have been speedily forgotten, for in spite of its bravery the band of fanatics was too small to create more than a momentary panic. Abraham "El Gerbi," however, was captured alive. No one suspected in that saintly face and wasted form the man who had planned the mad expedition; and when the old dervish declared himself a prophet, and begged for an interview with the King and Queen that he might explain how Malaga could be taken, the Marquis-Duke of Cadiz led him at once to headquarters.

There was some delay in seeing the sovereigns, so the prisoner was made to wait in a neighbouring tent, where a Portuguese Prince, Don Alvaro, a cousin of the Queen, and Beatriz de Bobadilla, Marchioness of Moya, were playing chess. Unable to understand Castilian, the dervish believed the players the object of his fanatical hatred, and, drawing a knife he had concealed in the folds of his cloak, he attacked the Prince, wounding him in the head. Next he hurled himself on the Marchioness of Moya, but before he could achieve his purpose the swords of those standing by had ended his life. That

night the body of Abraham “El Gerbi” was hurled by Christian catapults into the Moorish town.

It would seem as if Malaga’s faith in dervishes might have been shaken; but a new prophet shortly appeared, this time within the city, pledging himself by a certain sacred banner to bring victory to Moorish arms. His preaching, seconded by Hamet “El Zegri’s” fiery patriotism, stirred the flagging energy of the besieged to a more desperate sally than any that had yet been made. Out of the city they poured, the white standard floating at their head, and before this unexpected avalanche of spears and scimitars the Christians for the moment quailed; the next, their courage returning, they closed upon their foes from all sides. The battle wavered, then a stone from a catapult struck the dervish prophet down, and with a shout of triumph the Christians saw the sacred banner fall and drove back the Moors, routed and dismayed, within the walls of Malaga.

The city was doomed. Even Hamet “El Zegri” acknowledged this, and leaving the citizens to their fate, withdrew with some of his warriors into the fortress of the Gibralfaro; but the offers of peace and safety he had before derided could be no longer claimed. Fanaticism had left its mark also on the Christian camp; and amongst the Castilian soldiery the enemy’s entreaties for life and freedom were met by threats of a general massacre.

Since hunger and not goodwill prompts you to the surrender of your city [said the Chief Commander, of Leon, replying to an embassy from Malaga], either defend yourselves or submit to whatever sentence shall be pleasing to the King and Queen;—to wit, death to those for whom it is destined, slavery to those for whom slavery.

It was a bitter answer; and only sheer necessity drove Malaga to a submission from which she could hope so little. Amid fear and wailing, the capitulation was signed, and on August 20th, the sovereigns made their triumphal entry into the city. Hamet “El Zegri” still withstood their power in the Gibralfaro, but treachery amongst his garrison at length led to his betrayal, and the whole of Malaga lay at the Christian mercy. Its renegades, where they were discovered, were put to death, and on the rest of the inhabitants the sovereigns passed the sentence of perpetual slavery;—so many to be distributed amongst the Castilian nobles, so many to be sold for the benefit of

the treasury, so many apportioned for the ransom of Christian slaves in Africa. A picked group of one hundred and eighty warriors were dispatched to the Pope as fruits of the crusade, while the Queen of Portugal and the Queen of Naples each received fifty of the fairest maidens.



MALAGA TO-DAY

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE,  
MADRID

“The fate of Malaga,” says Prescott, “may be said to have decided that of Granada.” Cut off entirely from the western part of the kingdom, that had proved so valuable a storehouse of men and the necessaries of life, she lay ringed round by enemies, who only awaited the moment to strike her death-blow. Yet for this low estate to which she had fallen she could not hold herself blameless. In her passionate distrust of failure she had made and unmade her rulers, regardless of the handicap thus placed upon their actions. “El Zagal” had been right in his fears for his throne, when he sallied forth to the relief of Velez-Malaga. The dread of the fickle populace he had left behind him had hung over his wild encounters with the chivalry of Spain; and when he returned, beaten but patriotic and valorous as of old, it was to find the gates of the capital closed against him, and his rival Sultan, not only of the Albaycin, but the Alhambra. In bitterness of spirit he marched eastwards to protect the cities of Guadix, Baeza, and Almeria, that still remained loyal to his cause; and it was against these that the Catholic sovereigns planned their next campaign.

The early part of the year 1488 they spent in Aragon, settling the affairs of that kingdom, and receiving the acknowledgment by the national Cortes of Prince John, now a boy of ten as heir to the Spanish throne. By June, however, Ferdinand arrived in Murcia and soon pushed southwards with a large army; but the campaign was not destined to follow the glorious lines of its predecessor. El Zagal, from his headquarters at Guadix, and his brother-in-law Cid Haya at Baeza knew the country well, and were on the watch for the least rash or mistaken move that their opponents might commit. Several of the smaller fortresses succumbed to Castilian lombards; but such gains were fully counterbalanced by a repulse from Almeria, and a well-planned ambush, from which the Marquis-Duke of Cadiz only extricated himself and his troops with considerable difficulty and loss.

Ferdinand, despairing of further efforts at the moment, withdrew to winter at Valladolid; but in the next spring he and Queen Isabel appeared in Jaen, determined on the reduction of Baeza, the most important town in eastern Granada. The preparations were on a scale that surpassed all former efforts of the kind; for the neighbouring country with its thick orchards and easily flooded rivers was difficult and treacherous; while the inhabitants were even more hostile to the Christians than their western compatriots.

The cornfields of Baeza had not ripened at the time of the enemy's advance; but the grain was already cut and stored within the city lest the hated unbelievers should reap it for their own consumption. The supply of food was but one of the many pressing problems that the sovereigns were called on to solve; and, as the time passed, Ferdinand was almost tempted to raise his camp and retire until he should have made himself master of the surrounding district. To this policy he was urged by the majority of his generals, who contrasted the massive fortifications of Baeza, her hardy soldiers, and her stores of provisions, with the Christian lines, then threatened by inundations of water and decimated by disease.

Don Gutierre de Cardenas, Commander of Leon, alone protested against a retreat that would represent the waste of so much labour and money; and he was to find a staunch supporter in the Queen, who from Jaen implored her husband not to listen to advice as cowardly as it was mistaken. If he would continue the campaign, she

on her part pledged herself to keep a line of communication open, pouring daily into the camp all that it should require in the way of food or ammunition.

The chroniclers have left us minute accounts of her labours to this end, carried through with the characteristic thoroughness that had so often brought her success. The purchase of the crops of Andalusia and the lands belonging to the Military Orders; the transference of this grain and hay by a procession of fourteen thousand mules to the seat of war and the outposts already in Christian hands; the repair of the roads, worn by traffic and the heavy rains, by the vigilance of an army of engineers, kept ever at hand for the purpose; the enrollment of fresh troops and workmen to replace those lives lost in the great crusade; most arduous of all the continual disbursement of the money that came so slowly again into the royal treasury. At times the attempt to adjust the balance between demand and supply appeared impossible; and rents and subsidies failed as expenses grew, but Isabel's hand on the helm of affairs never wavered. The crown jewels were pawned to the merchants of Valencia and Barcelona, but the campaign against Baeza did not slacken.

Ferdinand and his generals, certain of support from their base of operations, took new heart; and to the dismay of the besieged huts made of clay and timber began to replace the old tents, and traders to appear with their merchandise of comforts and luxuries, till the camp gradually assumed the air of a permanent settlement or village.

To it amongst other strangers came Franciscan friars from the Holy Land, bearing despatches from the Sultan of Egypt, in which he complained of the destruction that was being wrought against the Mahometans in Spain. Unless such hostility ceased, he declared his intention of venting his wrath on any Christians he might find in Palestine. The sovereigns, in answer, protested their right to reconquer the kingdom of Granada which had belonged to their ancestors; but they expressed their willingness to deal kindly by such Moors as proved themselves good subjects. Not content with explaining the situation by letter they even sent an embassy to the Sultan some years later, with Peter Martyr, the young Italian noble who had been an eye-witness of so much of the war, at its head; and his eloquence succeeded in establishing friendly relations.

In November, 1489, Isabel herself visited the camp; and Cid Haya, with that courtesy that often lent so fine a shade to mediæval warfare, granted a truce that she might go and inspect the farthest trenches and outposts in safety. Pulgar declares enthusiastically that her advent changed the whole spirit of the campaign, putting an end to the vindictive bitterness that had hitherto marked the contest on either side. Moors and Christians alike were weary of fighting; and Cid Haya, who had none of Hamet "El Zegri's" fierce intolerance, recognized that he was waging a lost cause and decided to make good terms while he was in a position to do so. At the beginning of December, Baeza capitulated on the promise of security of life and property for all its defenders and inhabitants; with the proviso that they might live if they chose as Castilian subjects, keeping their own religion and laws.

Cid Haya himself was received by the sovereigns with such marked attention and honour that he was speedily led to abjure his faith and become a Christian, marrying in later years one of the Queen's favourite ladies-in-waiting. His first service to his new masters was to visit his brother-in-law, "El Zagal," at Guadix and to persuade him of the futility of further resistance. Almeria had already surrendered, and but for Guadix no independent city of importance remained save Granada, with whom there could be no hope of any alliance.

"El Zagal," bowing his pride to necessity, agreed to a treaty of capitulation that left him the title "King of Andaraz" with the district of that name and a considerable revenue; but he did not possess Cid Haya's light-hearted temperament, and soon found life in Spain intolerable under the new conditions. Determined to break with all that could remind him of his lost glory, he sold his estates to Ferdinand and sailed to Africa; but he was to experience worse treatment at the hands of co-religionists than from his Christian foes. A tale of his wealth had spread abroad, and the King of Fez at once proceeded to rob and imprison him. When at length he gained his freedom, "El Zagal," the once valiant warrior king, whose name had been the terror of the Andalusian border, had fallen to beggary, and blind and ragged sought alms from door to door, until a man who had known him in prosperity took pity on him and granted him an asylum.

With the conquest of eastern Granada, the Moorish war entered on its last phase. Boabdil was nominally at peace with Castile; but pretexts were not lacking to embroil him afresh, as soon as the close of the struggle with his uncle left Ferdinand and Isabel free to embark on a fresh campaign.

By the terms of the capitulation of Loja Boabdil had agreed to surrender his claims to the throne on the capture of Guadix, and to retire to that city with the title of Duke. The sovereigns now demanded the fulfilment of this promise; but the outlook had changed since the days when the young Sultan had been merely doubtful "King of the Albaycin," and knew not if the next week would find him in exile. Lord of the whole of Granada, the prospect of the Duchy of Guadix was not alluring to his ambitions; nor, had he wished to surrender, was he in a position to do so. Raised to the throne by all the martial element in the kingdom, that had not bowed the knee before the Cross, his very life depended on his popularity with the fierce warriors of the Alpujarras and the rest of the Moorish soldiery, who for one reason or another were pledged to maintain the city's independence.



BOABDIL, LAST KING OF GRANADA

FROM ALTAMIRA'S "HISTORIA DE  
ESPAÑOLA"

Thus it was that the Christian demands were met by defiance, and the sovereigns provided with an excuse for prosecuting the war to its bitter end. The Moorish messengers had found them in Seville, whither they had gone in April, 1490, to celebrate the betrothal of their daughter Isabel with Don Alfonso, the heir to the Portuguese throne; but, this concluded, Ferdinand collected an army and, crossing the Sierra Elvira, proceeded to ravage the plains of Granada. Within sight of the city he knighted his son Prince John, on whom so many hopes were centred, that in this last act of the crusade, inheritance of his race, the boy of twelve might receive initiation into a great future.

Boabdil, in the meanwhile, had not waited to be attacked; and his generals, taking the offensive, endeavoured to recapture some of the smaller fortresses that had fallen into Christian hands, besides stirring up revolt in the larger towns which had lately surrendered, such as Guadix and Baeza. Both efforts met with a measure of

success; for many of the Moors, who had faithfully served "El Zagal" throughout his struggles with his nephew, were so disgusted at seeing his banner in the Christian camp, and at witnessing the soft complacency of Cid Haya, that they turned willingly from their old allegiance to the Prince who offered them deliverance from a foreign yoke.

Their patriotism came too late. The hour had passed when rebellion could do more than temporarily retard the waning Crescent; and the punishment of failure was meted out by Ferdinand and his generals with no unsparing hand. Yet this severity had its semblance of mercy. The inhabitants of the town in question might choose between exile with their movable property, or a full judicial inquiry into their conduct. Who were guilty? The citizens looked at one another and knew that few would be able to prove complete innocence before a hostile judgment seat, with racial hatred holding the balance; and their decision was not long in forming.

From the fairest cities in Granada passed away the population that had made her fame; and, as the exiles sailed to Africa, Castilians took possession of their deserted homes. The Curate of Los Palacios, in the case of Guadix, congratulates himself on Ferdinand's cleverness in thus winning this town so completely from the enemies of the Holy Catholic Faith. "It is one of the mysteries of Our Lord," he adds, "who would by no means consent that so noble a city should remain longer in the power of the Moors."

Round Granada itself the Christian lines were closing in; and successful though arduous campaigns into the mountains of the Alpujarras had cut off the beleaguered city from hope of succour in that direction. Christian Europe, humbled by the fall of Constantinople, awaited the issue with expectant joy; and it seemed in this supreme moment as if the chivalry of both the Crescent and the Cross, conscious of universal interest, were inspired to a last emulation in the quest of glory. Never before in the crusade had the sallies of the besieged or the furious attacks of besiegers exhibited such contempt of personal danger; never before had schemes emanating from the council-chamber been supplemented by such deeds of individual bravery.

Chief hero of these days was the young Castilian noble, Hernando de Pulgar, "He of the Exploits," as his countrymen proudly named

him. Already in the earlier stages of the war he had earned a reputation for reckless daring; but the crowning touch to his fame was given by his midnight entry into Granada with fifteen companions of the same hazard-loving temperament. Led by a converted Moor, the little band of Christians scaled the walls and, making their way through the town by deserted streets, arrived unperceived at the principal mosque. Here Hernando de Pulgar drew from his pocket a strip of parchment, on which were inscribed the words dear to every Catholic but anathema to the sons of Islam, "Ave Maria!" and fixed it by his dagger to the door. Before he could follow up his intention of setting fire to the neighbouring houses, he was discovered; but nevertheless he and his friends succeeded in making their escape by dint of hard riding and a liberal use of their swords, before the majority of the inhabitants were even aware of their inroad.

It was an action to fire the imagination of all the young hot-bloods in the camp; and when in the summer of 1491 Isabel and a number of her ladies-in-waiting appeared at the seat of war, the incentive to deeds of prowess was redoubled. The sovereigns, though delighted with Hernando de Pulgar's exploit, for which they rewarded him with every mark of honour and favour, were yet too practical to encourage a needless loss of life. They had long recognized, as we have seen, that in patience rather than in daring lay their hope of success; and when a fire broke out in the Queen's tent and destroyed a good part of the camp, they determined to prepare for a long siege and to build more solid accommodation, as they had done at Baeza.

To this end the Spanish soldier was converted into a workman; and under his willing hands a city arose, not merely of clay and timber, but of stone. In shape a square, cut into four by wide crossroads, each quarter with its fine houses contained a block of marble inscribed with the names of those cities of Spain that had helped in its construction, the whole being finished within eighty days from its commencement.



ALHAMBRA, PATIO DE L'ALBERCA

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON,  
ROME

The building of Santa Fé, “Holy Faith,” as Isabel characteristically christened the city when asked to name it after herself, had been witnessed from the walls of Granada; and Boabdil’s heart sank within him at this token of the iron determination he knew and feared. Already hunger was rife amongst his subjects; and though he might prolong the siege for months or even longer he realized that only ultimate failure lay before him. So did his principal councillors, and in October, 1491, acting on their advice, he entered at last into negotiations for surrender.

The terms to which both sides finally agreed, besides guaranteeing to the inhabitants of Granada the safety of their lives and property, granted them also the free exercise of their religion, laws, and customs. They were to speak their own language, keep their own schools, and appoint their own judges and priests, submitting to no Christian authority save that of the Governor-General of the city. For three years they were to pay no taxes, and after that date none that should exceed those that had been ordinarily exacted by their Mahometan rulers. These rights were to be enjoyed by Jews as well as Moors; while the Christian captives then in the city were to be exchanged for an equal number of Moorish slaves. Above all Boabdil stipulated that no partisan or servant of “El Zagal” should be allowed a share in the government.

The surface value of these conditions was fair enough; treacherously fair, according to the Moorish warriors still disinclined for peace.

“If you think,” exclaimed one of them, “that the Christians will remain faithful to what they have promised, or that their sovereign will prove as generous a conqueror as he has been a valiant enemy, you deceive yourselves.”

His contemptuous refusal to have part or parcel in the transaction was echoed through the streets.

“Traitors and cowards all!” cried an old dervish, gathering behind him the more excitable element of the town; and soon a mob was beating on the gates of the Alhambra.

Boabdil succeeded in restoring order; but the fear of another riot made him hastily dispatch a letter to Ferdinand and Isabel, asking them in view of his critical position to take possession of the town some days earlier than they had settled. His interest in smoothing out all difficulties is explained by the secret stipulations affixed to the general terms of surrender. By these he and his immediate relations were to keep the lands that already formed their private patrimony, while he himself was to receive in addition the lordship and revenue of a large district in the Alpujarras, the sovereigns paying him the sum of thirty thousand castellanos on the day of their entry.

Thus Boabdil hoped to buy peace, and in the guise of a territorial magnate to free himself from the unlucky star that had haunted his path as King.<sup>[3]</sup> On the 2d of January, 1492, at the signal of a cannon fired from the Alhambra he left for ever the palace that had been the scene of so many vicissitudes in his life. At the same moment the Christian army in festival attire, with banners flying and amid the blare of trumpets issued from the gates of Santa Fé; the Cardinal of Spain and Don Gutierre de Cardenas leading the triumphal march that was to end at last in the goal of all their ambitions.

3. Boabdil, like his uncle “El Zagal,” finally sold his patrimony to the Catholic sovereigns and sailed to Africa. He was killed in a battle some years later fighting on behalf of the King of Fez against an African tribe.

The two Kings met on the banks of the Genil, where Boabdil would have knelt to kiss the other’s hand, had not Ferdinand with quick courtesy prevented him. “Take these, Señor, for I and all in the city

are thine,” exclaimed the Moor, as in profound melancholy he yielded up the keys of his capital. Then he passed on his way. As the turrets of the Alhambra grew dim behind him, the vanguard of the Christian army crossed its threshold; and Ferdinand and Isabel without the gate saw raised on the Tower of Colmares, first, the silver cross that had been blessed at Rome, and then the royal banner and the standard of Santiago.

“Granada! Granada! for the sovereigns Don Fernando and Doña Isabel,” cried the king-at-arms in a loud voice; and the Queen falling on her knees and all with her, the solemn chant of the *Te Deum* rose to Heaven. The object of ten years of arduous warfare was achieved, the dream of eight centuries realized; and none of those who knelt in heartfelt thankfulness doubted that the gift was of God.

Four days later, on the 6th of January, 1492, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Catholic sovereigns made their formal entry into Granada.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INQUISITION

Some allusion has already been made in our introductory chapter to the character of the Castilian Church in mediæval times. Strongly national in its resentment of papal interference, as in its dislike of alien races within the Spanish boundaries, its wealth and popularity were a sure index of the large part it must play in any difficult crisis. Amongst churchmen both Henry IV. and the rebels who opposed him had found their councillors and their generals; to the Church Queen Isabel had turned, with a confidence that was not belied, for financial help against the Portuguese; and it was a churchman, sitting in constant deliberation with her and Ferdinand, who gained amongst contemporaries the proud title of “the Third King.”

Pedro Gonsález de Mendoza had been a favourite of fortune from his birth. A member of one of the proudest and wealthiest families in Spain, the settlement of his profession had been almost coincident with his admission to its material benefits; and, from holding a curacy in early boyhood and a rich benefice at twelve years old, he had passed through the lesser offices of the episcopate to succeed Don Alonso Carrillo, on his death in 1482, as Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Castile. Judicious influence had previously obtained him a Cardinal’s hat; but, marked though her favour had been, his reputation was not solely of fortune’s weaving.

Pedro Gonsález was in himself a striking personality. Nature had made him a Castilian noble, and, in adopting one of the few careers considered worthy of his rank, it never occurred to him that the claims of religion should exclude those of his blood and class. A clear-headed practical statesman, whose loyalty proved none the less valuable that it had been inspired by a cautious regard to the

interests of himself and his house, he was also a liberal patron of education and philanthropy, and an accomplished soldier and courtier.

“There was never a war in Spain during his time,” we are told, “in which he did not personally take part, or at least have his troops engaged”; nor did he disdain the amours, that with conspiracies and duelling formed the fashionable life of Henry IV.’s Court. When that impressionable monarch succumbed to the charms of the Portuguese lady-in-waiting, Doña Guiomar, the name of Gonsález de Mendoza, then Bishop of Calahorra, was linked with that of the favourite’s cousin; and the chronicles record that two of his sons in later years intermarried, through their father’s influence, with connections of the royal family.

Illegitimacy carried with it little stain amongst a people whose standard of life was as low as their ideals were often high; and the Church, sharing deeply as we have seen in the national life, paid the penalty of this intimacy in a blinding of her own eyes to the distance many of her sons had wandered from their Master’s footsteps. Queen Isabel, whose personal purity was a standing witness to the high code of morality in which she believed, was yet daughter enough of her age to accept Cardinal Mendoza at his popular value. He had been her protector and advisor through many of her difficulties, showing himself subtle and far-seeing in politics, as well as the kindly friend a man of mature years will often prove to young ambitions. Ferdinand and Isabel owed him much, and they paid their debt by a trust and reverence that gained him honour in Spain only second to that accorded to themselves.

Peter Martyr, in a letter to the Cardinal, addresses him as, “You, without whom the King and Queen never take the smallest step, whether engaged actively in war or enjoying peace, and without whose advice they arrive at no important conclusion.” It is the language of eulogy, but it touches truth at bottom; and the strength of Isabel’s affection for her chief councillor may be gauged by her deference to his will, on those occasions that it happened to clash with her own. When, in 1485, she would have carried the royal jurisdiction with her to Alcalá de Henares, superseding temporarily with her prerogative all local justice, as elsewhere on her progress, the Cardinal declined to admit her claims within the boundaries of

his diocese of Toledo. To all her expostulations he returned an obstinate refusal, till Isabel, seeing that the matter must end either in an open breach or her own surrender, yielded the point. It was a concession she would have made to few of her subjects.



THE CARDINAL OF SPAIN, DON PEDRO  
GONSÁLEZ DE MENDOZA

FROM "HISTORIA DE LA VILLA Y CORTE  
DE MADRID" BY AMADOR DE LOS RIOS

Very different was her attitude when a criminal of Trujillo, on being hailed for his misdeeds before the royal judges, protested that he had received the tonsure and therefore he should be tried in the ecclesiastical courts. To this plea, a trick to which men who had no intention of taking orders resorted, that they might escape the rigours of the secular law, the judges paid no heed; whereupon some priests, relations of the accused, took up arms in his favour. "The Faith," they declared, "was in danger of perdition," and having roused the mob by inflammatory speeches, they attacked the house of the corregidor and the local prison. The criminal was released; but the triumph of ecclesiastical privilege was short-lived; for, some

companies of men-at-arms appearing on the scenes in response to the corregidor's appeal to the Queen, the principal lay rioters were hung. The clerical offenders, saved by their cloth from a like fate, spent the rest of their days in exile, meditating on the long arm of royal justice.

Equally firm was the position maintained by Ferdinand and Isabel in their dealings with the Roman See. From one aspect they were sincerely loyal and devoted to their "Holy Father in Christ," seeking his sanction for all those actions where orthodoxy demanded papal consent; and informing him, in sure confidence of his blessing, of every success they enjoyed in their struggle with infidels and heretics. The very nature of the war of Granada earned for them a reputation in Europe as special champions of the Faith; and, though the honour was prompted rather by his needs than their deserts, no title could have been more fitting than "Los Reyes Católicos," "The Catholic Kings," bestowed on them by Alexander VI. in 1494.

Yet, from another point of view, these same "Catholic Kings" were as staunch opponents of papal encroachments as any imperial Frederick II. or Henry VIII. of England. It might be said that their disputes with the Holy Father savoured rather of the spoilt than the rebellious child. Conscious of their merits as perpetual crusaders and chasteners of the unorthodox, they preferred, instead of making war on the general principle of Roman interference in ecclesiastical matters, to demand exemption as their special right,—the right of those who, with their ancestors, had won back the soil of their native land in conflict with a heathen race.

Their hand was none the less iron that it was discreetly gloved. When in 1491 an appeal to Rome was admitted by the Court of Chancery at Valladolid, in a case falling by law solely within the royal jurisdiction, Isabel in her indignation did not hesitate to remove all the judges who had consented to this step, appointing others in their place.

Still more drastic was the action taken by Ferdinand and herself in 1482, when the question of the extent of Roman patronage came prominently to the fore. Sixtus IV., anxious to provide for a host of needy relatives, had appointed a Cardinal-nephew to the rich see of Cuenca, then vacant. Quite unprepared for the indignation with which this announcement was received in Spain, he was soon

disillusioned by the sovereigns, who utterly refused to acknowledge his protégé, declaring that it had always been the custom to appoint natives of the country;—and this, not only as a reward for the services rendered by Spain to Christendom, but as a national safeguard, since the majority of the sees carried with them the control of fortresses and strongholds.

Sixtus replied by alleging his unlimited right to provide incumbents to all and every church in Christendom. In vain ambassadors passed to and fro suggesting compromise. The dispute had reached an impasse that no arguments could remove, when Ferdinand and Isabel, by commanding all their subjects at Rome to leave the Papal dominions without delay, removed the matter to an altogether different plane. Spaniards in the Holy City were less afraid of Papal anger than of the threat that their goods at home would be sequestered, if they failed to obey the royal edict; and Sixtus, witnessing the preparations for their departure, realized the seriousness of the issue. A loss of revenue, a Spanish appeal to a General Council that might depose him, these and many other possible results of his obstinacy floated before his mind; and it was an embassy of conciliation that he next despatched from Rome.

The sovereigns, who were at Medina del Campo, at first received the overture with unbending pride, bidding the ambassador depart as they saw no reason why he should be admitted to their presence. When at length, by the mediation of the Cardinal of Spain, negotiations were once more entertained, the Pope agreed to withdraw his nephew's claims and to appoint one of the Queen's chaplains. Henceforth he conceded to the sovereigns the right to petition in favour of candidates, whom they might deem suitable for the episcopate, reserving for himself the actual nomination.

This decision was equivalent to a triumph for the Crown; but it proved only the first of a series of battles, and the instructions issued to Spanish ambassadors at Rome throughout the reign continually pressed the royal prerogative in ecclesiastical matters. In the case of presentment to livings, of which patronage the Pope was peculiarly jealous, Ferdinand and Isabel were often able to achieve their purpose indirectly, by laying an embargo on the rents of the nominee to whom they objected, until he saw his way to complying with their views.

If, in matters of practical administration, the sovereigns accepted their duty of obedience, like certain brides, with reservations, they did not let their enthusiasm for Catholic dogma blind their eyes to the scandals of the Roman Court, and more especially to the evil reputation it acquired during the pontificate of Alexander VI., the notorious Rodrigo Borgia. Conscious of the harm his example wrought in the Church, they sent private ambassadors to petition him that he would send away his children from Rome, “purify his life, reform his house, and cease to allow the sale of benefices and ecclesiastical offices.”

That their motive was a genuine desire to raise the prevalent low standard of morality may be gathered from their rigorous policy of ecclesiastical reform at home. Hitherto all efforts in this direction had proved abortive; and the instructions issued by Alonso Carrillo, Archbishop of Toledo, at the Council of Aranda in 1473 show how deep-seated was the evil. Open immorality of life and more venial habits, such as dicing and the wearing of gaily-coloured clothes are amongst the ordinary offences scheduled; but even the standard recommended for the future scarcely touched a high level. Bishops were not to take money in return for conferring ordination, nor to accept as fitting candidates those unable to speak Latin, the language of the Church. Priests must celebrate Mass at least four times a year and bishops three, while both were strongly urged not to lead a riotous or military life. The latter charge, as emanating from Don Alonso Carrillo, has its humorous aspect, but criticism was disarmed by the grave addition, unless it should be to take service with kings or princes of the blood.

The character of the episcopate, in whose hands these measures of reform were left, fully explains the failure that attended them. An Alonso Carrillo could not be expected to quench military tendencies; an Alonso Fonseca, the giver of banquets, to suppress luxury; a Pedro Gonsález de Mendoza to inveigh heavily against broken vows of celibacy. This Queen Isabel realized, and with the exception of Cardinal Mendoza, her advisers in spiritual matters were men of a very different type.

“He is a gentle-natured priest, somewhat narrow of mind perhaps, but a sound theologian without bitterness or passion.” Thus wrote Peter Martyr of Fra Fernando de Talavera, Isabel’s confessor, who

exercised so large an influence over her mind throughout the earlier part of her reign. The story of his introduction to his duties is characteristic of both man and Queen. At their first confessional, the Friar, seating himself on a low stool, bade his companion kneel before him; but she, unwilling to lower her dignity, reminded him gently that it was the custom for her confessors also to kneel.

“Señora,” replied Fra Fernando, “this is the tribunal of God, and therefore must you kneel and I be seated.”

“He is the confessor whom I have long sought,” was the Queen’s comment on this interview, the acknowledgment of her readiness to bow before the spiritual director she could respect. To some minds his answer might have savoured of arrogance; but the friar’s personal humility forbade such an interpretation; and when, on the surrender of Granada in 1492, he was appointed as first Archbishop of that city, he accepted the office with a shrinking reluctance that was wholly sincere.

He took away with him to his southern diocese much of the saner and kindlier influences at work on Isabel’s soul; for, though she continued to rely on his advice both in religious and worldly affairs, yet other and less tolerant directors were helping to shape her conscience.

The name of her new confessor, Ximenes de Cisneros, is famous in Spanish history,—the name of one of the world’s chosen few, who solely by their natural gifts climb from poverty and obscurity to pluck her richest fruits. His success is the more arresting that, by the irony of fate, he cared nothing for the world or her rewards. Literary fame had stretched before him as chaplain of the cathedral church of Sigüenza, and he deliberately turned his back on it to exchange the free life of the chapter for the monk’s cell. Here he donned the Franciscan habit; not as the cloak for idleness and evil customs it had become with many of the Order but as the rough garment of humility and self-abnegation that Saint Francis had offered to his followers of old.

The Franciscan community was split at this time into two distinct sections: the Conventuals, wealthy, influential, and prosperous, who in the decadence of their life had ceased even to realize the loss of their ideals; and the Observants, those who observed the old rules with an austerity and fire that burned all the more brightly for their

brothers' failings. Between these two was war; and it was natural that Cisneros should be found in the camp of the ascetics, natural also that even in this retreat his talent should be discovered, and his gift for preaching and organization win him uncoveted renown.



XIMINES DE CISNEROS

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

He was already fifty-five years old at the time of the fall of Granada when Cardinal Mendoza, consulted by the Queen as to her new confessor, remembered his own light-hearted days as Bishop of Sigüenza and a certain austere but brilliant chaplain of his cathedral, who had turned his back on the world for the sake of his religious ideals. The portrait caught Isabel's fancy; and Cisneros was duly summoned to Court and named her confessor, an appointment that filled him with even more dismay than the frivolous courtiers.

"Behold!" says Peter Martyr, "an Augustine in his piercing intellect, a Jerome in his self-inflicted penances, an Ambrose in his zeal for the Faith."

It was a combination to leave its mark on the spiritual life of those around him; the more that the admiration which his character inspired in the Queen was soon to widen his sphere of action. At the beginning of the year 1495 Pedro Gonsález de Mendoza died. The Queen had visited him during the last days of his illness and consulted him as to a fitting successor in the Primacy; on which the old Cardinal frankly advised her not to give the office to any man of great family or wealth, lest he should be tempted to use it for his own ends. Instead he suggested the humble Franciscan friar, whose life to both their minds represented the highest earthly fulfilment of Christianity. Isabel joyfully agreed, refusing to yield to Ferdinand's wish that the honour should go to his own illegitimate son, Alfonso, Archbishop of Saragossa.

Knowing her confessor's character, she sent secretly to Rome for the bull of nomination. When it arrived, she handed it to him; but Cisneros, reading the opening address, "To our venerable brother, Fra Ximenes de Cisneros, Archbishop-elect of Toledo," pushed it away, saying "Señora, this cannot be meant for me."

He quitted the royal presence abruptly and hastened from Madrid, replying to all appeals and arguments that he did not feel himself worthy to enter on so high an office. It was not till some six months later, on the receipt of another bull from Rome, commanding him to accept the archbishopric without delay, that the friar withdrew his opposition.

Never had the Spanish Church witnessed a more curious transformation. The humble Observant had become an ecclesiastical prince, the holder of the see in Christendom coveted, according to contemporaries, next to Rome itself. Henceforth his annual revenue would amount to over 80,000 ducats a year, the value of the patronage at his disposal far exceed that sum, his military retainers would make a small army, his judicial rights over his diocese were to be those of a viceroy.

Warned by the Pope that it befitted the Primate of Castile to maintain a certain state and dignity, Cisneros grimly adopted the splendour of his predecessor's régime, tolerating as a necessary evil the rich furniture and food, the household of young nobles, and the velvet and silk of his outward clothing, that to many a priest of the day would have filled the foreground of the picture. Some indeed

believed that the Archbishop had shed the fine ideals of the monk; and once in his presence a Franciscan boldly preached to this effect. Cisneros listened in silence; but after the service was over took his critic apart and, drawing aside the gorgeous vestment in which he was clothed, showed beneath it the friar's rough woollen shirt. This, with the frugal dishes, that were his own portion from his loaded tables, and the hard straw mattress that shamed his canopied bed, were the realities of Ximenes's material life in the midst of all his glory.

His indifference to the soft things of this world was equalled by his contempt of popularity; and the revenues that had bought for other archbishops of Toledo influence and fame amongst the wealthy and well-born of the kingdom now went to ameliorate the lives of the poor and to enrich hospitals and schools. From the first, also, he had set his face against patronage bestowed for any reason except the personal merit of the candidate in question.

Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, a brother of the Cardinal, had been appointed Adelantado of Cazorla, a military office in the diocese of Toledo. Fearful, lest he should now be deprived of it, he obtained a recommendation from the Queen, but Cisneros would not look at it. "Archbishops of Toledo," he declared, "should administer their patronage freely and not on any recommendation. My Sovereign Lord and Lady, whom I deeply respect, can dismiss me to the cell from which they fetched me, but they cannot force me to act against my conscience and the laws of the Church."

Isabel received the report of this interview with the serenity that ordinary court flatterers found so baffling; while Cisneros, on his part, satisfied on enquiry as to Diego Hurtado's character and capability, consented to ratify his nomination.

The work of reform, undertaken by Queen and confessor, proceeded with renewed energy after the latter's appointment as Primate. With regard to the secular clergy, the sovereigns had from the beginning of their reign endeavoured to leaven the worldly character of the episcopate by conferring vacant bishoprics on men of the lower nobility or middle class, who were distinguished for their mental or moral qualities. Nor did they leave to the lax arm of the ecclesiastical courts the administration of the numerous laws and edicts designed to check the widespread immorality of the lesser

clergy; and it was royal officials who “fined, scourged, or banished” the women kept by priests in defiance of their vow of celibacy.

This policy of amendment and repression met with Cisneros’s full approval; but the reform in which as a friar he was most interested was that of the monastic orders. In 1493 the sovereigns had obtained a papal brief, authorizing them to appoint “visitors,” who should inspect the various Religious Houses, correct the errors that they found, and punish evildoers.

From this tour the Conventual section of the Franciscans did not emerge scatheless; and the indignation, aroused amongst its members, at the penalties inflicted and changes introduced was so great that an appeal against the Archbishop’s tyranny was finally lodged at Rome. Four hundred friars, it was declared, rather than submit to the new order of things had been driven to turn Mahometan and seek refuge in Africa. Such a tale might well have inspired the conviction that the drastic measures of the Queen and her adviser were fully justified; but in Alexander VI. it only prompted a heartfelt sympathy with the Conventuals; and in January, 1496, he dispatched a bull, forbidding further reform until he was satisfied as to its necessity. Isabel replied by sending special ambassadors to plead her side of the case; a transaction in which they succeeded so admirably that the Pope withdrew his opposition.

In the meanwhile she and Cisneros had continued with unwavering energy the task they had begun. Her own share was no sinecure; for, taking her needlework or her spinning, she would visit the convents and, seated amongst the nuns, strive by her personal influence to win them back to a sense of their duties, and the devotion that could alone inspire their calling. According to his biographer, success also attended the harsher treatment meted out to the Franciscans by Cisneros, till at length “few monasteries remained where the rules of the Observants were not kept, to the great satisfaction of the Archbishop and edification of the people.”

The reform of the morals and customs of the Spanish Church was now well in train; but it formed only a part, and the smaller part, of the sovereigns’ general scheme for the promotion and safeguard of the Catholic Faith within their realms. If the foundations of a building are insecure, the beauty and strength of its walls will soon prove valueless; and Ferdinand and Isabel, regarding “right belief” as

the foundation of “right action,” and identifying “right belief” with “acceptance of the doctrines and practice of the Holy Catholic Faith,” were led by logical reasoning to establish the monstrous tyranny of the Inquisition. There can be few things so pitiless as logic when carried to its extreme, and few so faulty when the conclusions concern the soul; perhaps because it is in this sphere that human intelligence most often fails to test the truth of its premises. Heresy was to the mediæval mind “the unpardonable sin”; the heretic in the language of the day, “a venomous reptile requiring to be exterminated, lest he should spread contagion by his very breath.” And in Spain this unpardonable sin was more diffused and difficult to eradicate than amongst her neighbours; for, through the centuries of reconquest, her population had been exposed to constant intercourse with races of alien creed, endowed moreover with the subtlety of mind that is the heritage of the Oriental. However high the barriers built by racial prejudice, so long as Christian, Jew, and Moor stood side by side on Spanish soil, a certain amalgamation and interchange of ideas were inevitable. The Church, jealous for the safety of the Catholic Faith, made the construction and maintenance of barriers her lifework, and issued frequent canons prohibiting mixed marriages as well as the friendly intercourse arising from shared feasts and common dwellings. This proved unavailing; and finally Jews and Moors were segregated in special quarters, called “Juderías” and “Morerías,” and compelled to wear a dress or a badge, that would distinguish them from their Christian neighbours when they walked abroad.

Such legislation was to have far-reaching results, little foreseen by those who framed it, though the immediate effect was highly satisfactory. Some there were amongst the subject races, who preferred to keep their own religion and suffer ignominy, rather than accept the Faith they had learned to hate; but the majority, faced by a choice between conversion and the scorn, disabilities, and even danger, that became the daily portion of the professed Jew or Mahometan, chose the easier path. At first the movement was gradual; but an outburst of Christian fanaticism and racial prejudice towards the close of the fourteenth century, led to a general massacre of the Jews, throughout all the large cities of Spain, and this in turn to a wholesale conversion of the survivors.

The “Conversos,” or “New Christians,” as they were often called in contradistinction to the “Old Christians” of unblemished Catholicism, were to introduce another jarring element into the already complicated society of Spain. Welcomed by the Church as “brands plucked from the burning,” they took full advantage of the opportunity to enter offices and professions hitherto closed, as well as to continue unmolested in the commerce and business they had formerly carried on under sufferance. Since conversion affected neither their natural industry, nor their racial capacity for making money, the New Christians soon developed the wealth and power that have followed the footsteps of the Jew in all ages and countries, where he has been free to pursue them. From the collection of rents and taxes to the control of the King’s treasury, they invaded every corner of the financial and economic life of Spain, wringing from the carelessness of the Spaniard and their own foresight the wealth that was one of the causes of their future ruin.

The Jew has always believed himself “the chosen of God,” and regarded Gentiles with a scorn akin to that felt by the Greeks of old for their “barbarian” neighbours. He might under pressure forsake his religion, but his inborn sense of racial superiority remained; and the envy excited in “Old Christians” by the accumulated honours of “the New” was often fanned to the white heat of passion by the arrogance with which these honours were borne.

An additional barrier was religious distrust that, removed in theory by conversion and baptism, existed still in a more insidious form. Enforced conversion is rarely sincere; and though some of the New Christians out-heroded Herod in their hatred and denunciations of the religion they had abandoned, the majority were content with a nominal or lukewarm profession of the Catholic Faith. Old habits and customs cling; and the Conversos, while attending Mass and other services of the Church, would often observe in private the Jewish sabbath, and practise the rites and ceremonies of their forefathers.

This laxity tended to increase during the reigns of weak or tolerant kings, such as John II. and Henry IV. of Castile; while the anger it excited amongst the mass of the people became proportionately more violent as they watched their unorthodox neighbours “wax and grow fat.” The growing spirit of fanaticism left its trail in riots

instigated by the “Old Christians” against “the New” in Toledo, Segovia, Ciudad Real, Cordova, and Seville; rebels made use of it to threaten the unorthodox Henry IV., and at length, in the Concord of Medina del Campo of 1465, a resolution was passed, advocating that power should be given to the archbishops and bishops of the kingdom to imprison, fine, and punish “evil Christians and those whose faith was suspect.”

The Concord failed, but the desire for the castigation of heresy did not die with the resolutions. When, in 1477, Ferdinand and Isabel came to Seville, they were approached by a body of leading laymen and clergy, who petitioned that “as Catholic Princes they would punish this detestable sin, because if they left it ... unchecked, it would grow so rapidly that great harm would befall the Holy Catholic Faith.”

Commissioners were appointed to hold an inquiry; and these gave their opinion that the evil was so widespread that nothing but the establishment of the Inquisition would have power to eradicate it.

“So rampant was this heresy,” says the Curate of Los Palacios, “that lawyers almost preached the law of Moses”; while in another place he adds: “These heretics and cursed Jews fled both Christian doctrines and customs, avoiding when they could the baptism of their children, or, if they must have them baptized immediately washing away the sign in their own homes.”

Ferdinand and Isabel had in 1474 resisted an attempt of Sixtus IV. to plant the papal Inquisition in Spain, by endowing his legate with inquisitorial powers; their motive being not so much humanity as their strong dislike of Roman interference in ecclesiastical matters, to which attention has already been drawn. Now that an Inquisition of some kind appeared a necessity, their whole endeavour was directed to obtaining a bull that would secure for them the control of the new institution. For this Sixtus was most unwilling; but their obstinacy, as on another occasion, proved greater than his, and in November, 1478, he issued a bull, authorizing the sovereigns to appoint as inquisitors three bishops or other suitable men, with the right to remove them at pleasure.

The way lay clear; but Ferdinand and Isabel did not take advantage of it till 1480, when a scheme of Cardinal Mendoza to combat heretical beliefs by instruction and persuasion had been proclaimed

by its author totally unavailing. Seville was the first seat of the Holy Office, but its sphere was soon extended to Cordova, and then to the other towns of Andalusia and Castile; while, in 1485, Aragon also fell under its iron yoke.

The dread assizes would be opened, on the arrival of the inquisitors, by the publication of an “Edict of Grace,” granting to those conscious of heresy a period of from thirty to forty days, during which they could, without fear of death, make full confession of their errors and, after due penance, be reconciled with the Mother Church. This term of indulgence expired, the real work of the Inquisition would begin, and the suspected heretic be summoned before the judges to clear himself of the charges brought against him, the justice of the day holding him guilty until he had proved his innocence.

The situation of the accused [says Lea] was helpless. Standing up alone before the stern admonitions of the trained and pitiless judge; brooding in his cell, cut off from all external communication, during weeks or months of interval between his audiences; apparently forgotten, but living in constant uncertainty of being at any moment summoned to appear; torturing his mind as to the impression which his utterances might have made, or the deductions drawn from his admissions or denials ... it required an exceptionally resolute temperament to endure the prolonged strain, with the knowledge that the opponent in the deadly game always had in reserve the terrible resource of the torture chamber.<sup>[4]</sup>

4. Lea, *History of Spanish Inquisition*, ii., p. 483.

Death, imprisonment for life, scourging, a loss of property, and public ignominy: these were the main penalties inflicted. Since the object of the Inquisition was to impress the populace with a terror of heresy and its consequences, care was taken that the *Auto-de-Fe*, or “Act of Faith,” regarded by many as a manifestation of the last Judgment, should be as widely seen as possible. Amid the jeers or horror of the spectators, and the low chanting of attendant priests the condemned marched from their prison to their death, clad in “sanbenitos” or the coarse woollen garment of the penitent. Across their breasts and shoulders were embroidered, for those who were reconciled to the Faith, crosses; for the obstinate heretic, flames and devils, symbols of the everlasting torment that awaited his soul, when earthly judges had finished their task.

The “Conversos,” terrified by the storm that had at last broken over their heads, sought shelter where they could. Some took advantage of the Edicts of Grace, and, caught in the toils of the

demand that their confession must be “full,” or it would avail them nothing, accused in their panic neighbours and even relations, that their own repentance might seem the more sincere. Others, leaving their lands and houses to pay toll for their unorthodoxy, fled to Portugal, Italy, or France. Pulgar tells us that the number of houses deserted in Seville, Cordova, and the other cities of Andalusia amounted to over four thousand.

And although [he adds] through the exodus of this race, a great part of the land was depopulated, and word was brought to the Queen that trade was diminishing, yet she, esteeming little the loss of her revenues and as of great value the purity of her dominions, declared that, putting aside her own interests, she would seek to cleanse the land from this sin of heresy; because she believed that thus she fulfilled God’s service and her own. And the supplications that were made to her on this matter could not turn her from her purpose....

According to Bernaldez, the single tribunal of Seville, during the first eight years of its office, committed to the flames seven hundred persons, and condemned five thousand more to perpetual imprisonment or rigorous penance. So fierce was the persecution that even the dead were not spared; the bones of those suspected of heresy were exhumed and publicly burnt, their children forbidden to hold any office or benefice, and their property seized and employed to meet the heavy expenses of the Inquisition.

It will be seen that Isabel brought to the task of exterminating heresy the same unshrinking thoroughness that marked her share in the restoration of law and order, and the continuance of the Moorish war. Nor was Ferdinand less zealous. It was in his name that most of the business of the Inquisition was transacted, and his correspondence on the subject shows that the minute interest he exhibited was prompted far more by religious fervour than by financial greed or policy. Lea has described him as “sincerely bigoted”; but though founders and patrons, neither he nor Isabel was the moving spirit of the Holy Office.



TORQUEMADA

AFTER A PAINTING ATTRIBUTED TO  
MIGUEL ZITTOZ, FROM "TORQUEMADA  
AND THE  
SPANISH INQUISITION"

REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF  
THE AUTHOR, MR. RAFAEL SABATINI

The appointment of Tomas de Torquemada as Inquisitor-General of Castile in May, 1483, placed in control of the practical working of this institution a judge, whose bigotry was untempered by ordinary humanity. A Dominican of Jewish extraction, he was for a time the Queen's confessor and won her favour, like Fra Fernando de Talavera and Cisneros, by his austerities and contempt of the world. From regard for the dignity of his office he accepted an escort of fifty horse and two hundred foot, and wealth, which he lavished freely on churches and monasteries; but his personal asceticism remained unchanged. Till the day of his death, he ate no flesh, nor would he consent to wear linen next his skin, nor to sleep on any bed save a

wooden plank; while he sternly refused to a sister more financial help than would enable her to enter a Dominican convent.

Under his presidency the Inquisition received what might be called a constitution and laws; for in 1484 a "Supreme Council," "La Suprema" as it was afterwards known, was established; and "Instructions for the governance of the Holy Office" were issued, informing judges and officials of the exact nature and extent of their duties. They reveal, as Rafael Sabatini remarks in his *Life of Torquemada*,

a spirit at once crafty and stupid, subtle and obvious, saintly and diabolical, consistent in nothing,—not even in cruelty, for in its warped and dreadful way it accounted itself merciful, and not only represented but believed that its aims were charitable.

Ordinary conceptions of mercy were to Torquemada synonymous with weakness; and an acquittal of an accused heretic by a subordinate would be sufficient excuse in his eyes for a second trial. Was it not better for an innocent man to perish, than for a guilty man to pass out again into the world through negligence and sow eternal damnation amongst his neighbours? The penitent condemned, when the Inquisition was first introduced, to wear his sanbenito for twelve months as a sign of his repentance, now found himself cut off for the rest of his life from all true Catholics by this badge of his shame. The orthodox son of the convicted dead, whose bones had been committed to the flames, saw hanging up before him, whenever he entered his parish church, the garment of infamy that kept alive the memory of his parent's sin.

None were safe; for the indefinable sphere of the Holy Office and the royal favour and protection it enjoyed enabled Torquemada to encroach with safety on the rights of other courts, both civil and ecclesiastical, and to add as he thought fit to the number of inquisitorial ordinances and decrees. Proceedings were even taken against two bishops of Jewish lineage, on account of the supposed apostacy of their ancestors; with the result that one of them, Pedro de Aranda, Bishop of Calahorra, found himself despoiled of his see and revenues, while the other, the aged Juan Arias Davila, Bishop of Segovia, died at Rome, after successfully pleading his cause there before the Pope.

The complaints and appeals lodged against Torquemada's unbridled tyranny grew so loud that in 1494 Alexander VI. appointed four other inquisitor-generals with equal power, in the hope that they would exercise a restraining influence over their colleague's actions. He, however, continued his work with unshaken zeal, until in 1498, he died tranquilly at the monastery he had founded at Avila, confident of a life well spent in devotion to the Faith, and revered as a Saint by the rest of his Order.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly how many heretics were burned during his term of office; some historians placing the number at more than 8000, and others at 2000, while 90,000 are declared to have been subject to various forms of penance. Whatever the exact statistics, they represent but a small section of the results of the Inquisition during these years. Men die and are forgotten but the suspicion and treachery that are born of terror, the spirit of pitiless fanaticism that springs from licensed intolerance, the intellect bowed into subservience to an iron yoke of uniformity,—these were to leave their mark for generations and lessen the force of progress that Ferdinand and Isabel fostered so strongly in other directions.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS AND MUDEJARES**

The Inquisition, which made life impossible for Spanish heretics, had no direct power over unbaptized Jews, since it could not convict them of apostasy in connection with a faith they had never professed. Some of their race, indeed, were summoned before the Holy Office, accused of subverting Christian neighbours to Judaism; but their pronounced reluctance to share the privileges of their religion with Gentiles prevented any widespread application of this charge.

Nevertheless it was obvious that in a land where their converted brethren had been subject to torture, imprisonment, and death, they themselves could not long hope to escape the fury of popular fanaticism. Their wealth and their pride aroused envy and dislike so violent that their very qualities and virtues appeared to Spanish prejudice as though born of malignant design. The Curate of Los Palacios, enumerating the posts of responsibility and the openings in the skilled labour-market to which their talents and industry gave them access, declared that "they sought only comfortable berths, where they could gain much money with little toil"; as if the work of merchant, land-agent, weaver, tailor, or silversmith, demanded less capacity than tilling the soil or laying bricks.

Similarly, their unsurpassed knowledge of medicine and skill in surgery were proclaimed, about the middle of the fifteenth century, by a Franciscan friar of high reputation, to have been acquired solely from a desire to harm their Christian neighbours. It was a suggestion to which the close connection at that time between medicine, astrology, and the black arts, lent some colour.

In 1480, Ferdinand and Isabel forbade Christian patients to be attended by Jews; but it is significant that some years later the

Spanish Dominicans petitioned for a dispensation from this decree, on the plea that doctors of their own creed were almost impossible to find. It was to a Jew also that John II. of Aragon, Ferdinand's father, had turned for advice, when overcome by blindness in his old age; with the result that this physician successfully performed a double operation for cataract.

Of all the professions and employments, however, to which the unpopularity of the Jew may be traced, it was the office of money-lender that most earned for him the hatred and suspicion of his fellow citizens. The Church had from very early days condemned any lending of money at interest as a form of usury; but since it was impossible to carry on business or trade on a large scale without borrowed capital, Christian financiers as well as needy spendthrifts were driven to have recourse to a people, whose moral code permitted them to effect the loan at a profit.

“That cunning race,” says the Curate of Los Palacios, “who battered on usury exacted from the Christians, and of whom many, poor but a short time before, became speedily rich.” Scarcity of coinage, the lack of certain security for their bonds, and the secret favour they enjoyed with many of the Spanish sovereigns, who, besides borrowing from them, reaped a large revenue from the Jewish poll-tax, account for the high rate of interest that they usually charged. At the beginning of the fifteenth century this has been reckoned as from twenty per cent. in Castile to thirty per cent. in Aragon.

The enactment that Jewish doctors should not attend Christians is typical of the attitude of Ferdinand and Isabel towards this subject race. Toleration and protection on a limited basis were at first a matter of necessity, both on political and financial grounds; but the lines of separation and segregation were tightened, and the “Ghetto” of the Spanish Israelite became an unfortified camp, whose enemies only awaited a favourable opportunity to sound the attack that would leave it a ruin.

So long as the Moorish war lasted, Jewish taxes and Jewish financiers contributed too largely to the expenditure and organization of the various campaigns, for their supply and safety to be endangered; but the conquest of the Infidel rang the knell of the Hebrew unbeliever. The sovereigns' hands were free; the Crescent lay

trampled on the battlefields of Granada; and the sword that had been suspended for so many years over the Juderías at length fell.

Later history, weaving a popular tale round the crisis, informs us that two of the richest Jews, aware of the danger in store, tried to avert it by heavily bribing Ferdinand and Isabel. While the latter were considering their offer, Torquemada appeared suddenly in the royal presence. Holding up a crucifix, he exclaimed: "Lo! Here is the Crucified, Whom Judas sold for thirty pieces of silver. Will you sell Him again for thirty thousand?" Then, passionately declaring that he at any rate would have no part in the transaction, he threw down the crucifix and left the room.

The story is typical at least of the Inquisitor-General's remorseless fanaticism; and the edict issued on March 30, 1492, expressed the triumph of his views. By it the Jews of Spain were allowed five months in which to choose between baptism and exile. In the latter case, they might sell their property or take with them to other lands as much of their goods as they could carry; but, since the export of gold and silver was strictly forbidden, this permission savoured more of mockery than of indulgence.

Perhaps it was believed that, faced by the terror of expulsion, the Jews would welcome baptism; but the men and women to whom the choice came were descendants of those who in a previous time of danger had remained staunch to their faith; while the sufferings of the New Christians at the hands of the Inquisition were hardly an incentive to conversion.

The majority, therefore, trusting vainly, as the Curate of Los Palacios points out with fanatical joy, that God would guide them through this new wilderness, accepted exile with all its unknown horrors. The shortness of the term of grace allotted to them, and the necessity of selling or losing their property made real bargaining impossible.

They went about seeking purchasers and found none who were anxious to buy; and they gave a house in exchange for an ass, and a vineyard for a length of cloth or linen, because they might not take gold nor silver.

Fearful lest their misery should soften popular hatred (and even Bernaldez admits that none saw them leave their homes without pity), Torquemada had forbidden the Christians to hold any intercourse with Jews after August 1, 1492, or to allow them food or shelter as they started on their exodus. He also took care that all the old calumnies of devilish rites and of insults to Christian relics and objects of veneration should be published abroad to impress the credulous. The theft of the consecrated wafer for use in a sacrilegious plot, the murder of a Christian child as a necessary portion of the Jewish rites, the revival of these and many other such tales helped to keep fanaticism at white heat.

In defiance of the law, many of the exiles hid money about their clothes and persons; but those, who were not discovered and despoiled before they left the country, spent most of it in attempts to buy the food and protection they could not obtain from friendliness and compassion. The rulers of the synagogues, who made arrangements for the future of the community, were forced also to accept asylums where they could at the owner's price; and the weary masses, who crossed the Portuguese border, paid to its king a *cruzado* a head, for permission to spend six months within his boundaries on their way to some permanent refuge. From there many of them crossed to the north coast of Africa to join those of their race, who had sailed direct from Spain to the kingdom of Fez; but so frightful were the sufferings they endured that numbers in despair returned home seeking baptism. Robbed and maltreated by the native guards, whom they had paid to protect them, their wives and daughters violated before their eyes, the unhappy exiles, in their feebleness and poverty, found no favour in the sight of the Moorish King and were driven from his capital.

A like inhumanity was shown to those who had made Navarre or Italy their destination; and thus by the sword, pestilence, slavery, or starvation, Christian vengeance on pride of race, wealth, and unbelief was exacted to the uttermost farthing. Here is the witness of a son of one of the exiles:

For some the Turks killed to take out the gold which they had swallowed to hide it; some of them the hunger and plague consumed, and some of them were cast naked by the captains on the isles of the sea; and some of them were sold for men-servants and maid-servants in Genoa and its villages, and some of them were cast into the sea.... For there

were, among those who were cast into the isles of the sea upon Provence, a Jew and his old father fainting from hunger, begging bread, for there was no one to break unto him in a strange country. And the man went and sold his son for bread to restore the soul of the old man. And it came to pass, when he returned to his old father, that he found him fallen down dead, and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto the baker to take his son, and the baker would not give him back, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry for his son, and there was none to deliver.<sup>[5]</sup>

5. Lea, *History of the Spanish Inquisition*, i., Ch. III.

The statistics of the expulsion have been variously estimated; but the latest and most trustworthy investigation reckons the number of those baptized at 50,000, and of those who emigrated or died at 185,000, though this may err on the side of exaggeration.

“Do you call this king a statesman, who impoverishes his land and enriches mine?” asked the Sultan of Turkey, who, alone of European sovereigns, held out a welcoming hand to the refugees.

It is probable Ferdinand and Isabel realized their political folly in driving from their shores that most valuable of all national wealth, talent, and industry. Fanaticism not policy had dictated their edict; and to their determination that one faith alone should be held within their dominions they were prepared to sacrifice even the economic welfare that they had next at heart.

It seemed at first as if the “Mudejares,” or subject Moors, would escape the general persecution. They had neither the strong racial characteristics of the Jew, nor, though industrious and able workers, the same capacity for fleecing their Christian neighbours; and thus their conquerors came to regard them with contemptuous toleration rather than antipathy. For eight years after the fall of Granada peace reigned in that city, in spite of the difficulties attending the terms of capitulation, to which Ferdinand and Isabel had been forced to agree in their eagerness for a speedy surrender.

Such a treaty [says Prescott] depending for its observance on the good faith and forbearance of the stronger party would not hold together a year in any country of Christendom even at the present day, before some flaw or pretext would be devised to evade it.

That it had been possible so long was chiefly due to the conciliatory policy adopted by the military governor, the Count of Tendilla, and by the Archbishop, Fra Fernando de Talavera. The

latter had entered on his office in a spirit of humility that was to serve him far better than any self-assurance. Convinced of the inborn righteousness and appeal of the Christian Faith, he believed that it had only to be understood to be accepted; and, in order to bring himself mentally in touch with the "Alfaquis," or Doctors of the Mahometan law, he proceeded to learn Arabic himself and to exhort his subordinate priests to do the same. By his orders an Arabic vocabulary and grammar were written, while the catechism and liturgy, with portions from the Gospels, were translated into the same language.

The Moors of Granada had been subject to tyranny all their days, whether under a Boabdil or an Abdallah "El Zagal," and, though at first suspicious of their conquerors, they soon began to respond to the justice and sympathy that they encountered. Numbers, after discussions and talks with "El Santo Alfaki," "The Holy Priest" as they called Fra Fernando, accepted baptism; while those who held to their old religion learned to revere and trust him. Granada was in fact adapting herself fast to the new conditions of life; and, when in 1499 Ferdinand and Isabel visited the city, they expressed their appreciation of the peace and order that they found there. So little wrath did they feel against the Mahometans that, when two years before King Emmanuel of Portugal had offered to his Moorish subjects a choice of baptism or expulsion, they had welcomed the exiles as a valuable addition to their population, taking them under their special protection.

Ximenes de Cisneros had accompanied the sovereigns to Granada; and by misfortune when they left he remained to assist his fellow-Archbishop in the task of conversion. Impatient of the slow process of religious absorption that he found in progress, he mistook the friendliness of the Mudejar for weakness and declared that only a little firmness was now needed to induce the whole population to accept Christianity. As a preliminary he summoned the leading "Alfaquis" to various conferences in which he harangued them on the truths of Catholicism, endeavouring to gain their agreement with his views, not only by eloquence but by liberal gifts of rich stuffs and clothing that he guessed would appeal to Oriental taste.

The result was so successful that Cisneros was confirmed in the conviction that he was indeed on the right track, and the humble Fra

Fernando was deeply impressed. The majority of the "Alfaquis," whether intimidated by a consciousness of approaching storms, or moved by the Primate's arguments and gifts, accepted conversion, bringing with them to the font those who looked to them for spiritual guidance. On a single day three thousand candidates were said to have presented themselves for baptism, a number so great that the ordinary individual ablution proved impossible and the kneeling crowd had to be sprinkled with holy water from a brush.

The stricter Mahometans protested angrily that the Archbishop's methods were a violation of the terms of surrender that had guaranteed them the free exercise of their religion without any undue influence; whereupon Cisneros, equally irritated at this opposition, seized and imprisoned its ringleader, a certain Zegri Azaator. Strict confinement in fetters, under the charge of a Castilian official called Leon, soon led the prisoner to repent of his temerity and to express a desire for baptism, with the rueful admission that if "this lion," as he referred to his gaoler, were let loose in Granada few would be able to resist his arguments.

Such a remark could only add fuel to the Archbishop of Toledo's already ardent belief in the efficacy of strong measures; and from this time the old toleration and confidence vanished for ever. The new spirit may be seen in Cisneros's scornful criticism of Fra Fernando's scheme for translating the scriptures completely into Arabic, as he had done with the liturgy and catechism. "Will you," he asked, "cast pearls before swine? or can they in their ignorance fail to interpret the Word of God to their own destruction?"

Determined that at any rate the Moors should not continue their heretical studies, he began to make inquiries as to Arabic literature; and, as a result of this inquisition, instituted *autos-de-fé* of illuminated manuscripts, priceless because they were often unique. Out of the many thousand treasures of eastern lore that perished in the flames, a few hundred treatises on medicine were alone saved to grace the shelves of the Toledan library at Alcalá de Henares.

It was a sight to make cultured Moors weep with rage, but Cisneros was soon no less unpopular with the poorer and more ignorant citizens. These numbered in their ranks a fair proportion of Christian renegades, men who for various causes had passed into the service of the Moors, and with their allegiance changed their faith. It had been

necessary to insert special clauses for their protection in the terms of capitulation; for the Christians regarded them with special loathing, as guilty of treachery in its vilest form; and Cisneros, quibbling between the spirit and the letter of the law, now asserted that the treaty did not hold good where their children were concerned. As descendants of persons who had once been baptized, these should be baptized also, and for the same reason come under the jurisdiction of the Holy Office.

One day he sent two of his officials to arrest the daughter of a renegade who lived in the Albaycin, a quarter of the city whose turbulence we have already noticed. The girl, screaming as they dragged her from the house, that she would be compelled to become a Christian against her will, attracted a large crowd from the surrounding streets; and in the scuffle that followed one of the officials was killed by a heavy stone thrown from a window above, while the other barely escaped with his life.

Having thus drawn blood, the mob, in a dangerous mood, clamoured for the death of the unpopular Archbishop, and seizing arms rushed to the fortress of the Alcazaba where he resided. The Count of Tendilla, who was in the Alhambra, came to his assistance and managed to disperse the rioters; but the disaffection increased, and the situation grew every hour more strained.

At this crisis, Fra Fernando de Talavera, unarmed and accompanied solely by a cross-bearer, made his way where the throng of rioters was densest. The effect was magical; for, almost in a moment, the prevailing anger and suspicion vanished, and many of the ring-leaders crowding round the old Archbishop humbly knelt to kiss his robe. The Count of Tendilla, seeing a hope of reconciliation, came forward also with a few of his men-at-arms, and throwing his scarlet cap upon the ground in sign of peace, induced them, by the surrender of his wife and children as hostages for his good faith, to lay down their arms and return to their homes.

Accounts of the riot and its causes were hastily dispatched to the King and Queen at Seville; and, Cisneros's particular messenger being delayed, their anger was at first directed against him; and Isabel wrote, demanding an explanation of his provocative action. In response Cisneros himself soon appeared at Court, and, undaunted by the failure of his last efforts or the coldness with which he was

received, justified his conduct with much the same reasoning that Torquemada upheld the righteousness of the Inquisition. The people of Granada, he declared in conclusion, had forfeited the terms of capitulation by their outburst of rebellion; and he urged that the sovereigns should not let them go unpunished, and that they should push forward the Faith with unswerving devotion by every means in their power.

His arguments, with their obvious flaw that he himself by an evasion of the terms was mainly responsible for the rebellion in question, yet carried conviction in an atmosphere, whose natural intolerance of heretics and infidels had been considerably stimulated by the persecution of the last twenty years—for it is a commonplace that fanaticism breeds fanatics. The milder counsels of Fra Fernando de Talavera and the Count of Tendilla were rejected; and a certain patriotic sanction seemed given to the rigorous proceedings taken against the rioters, when threatening letters were received from the Sultan of Egypt, showing that the Mahometans of Granada had dared to appeal to him for assistance.

Cisneros's triumphant return to the southern capital was marked by the baptism of from fifty to seventy thousand Moors within the city and its environs. Outward peace reigned; but trouble was brewing in the mountains of the Alpujarras to the south-east, where many of those who were determined not to accept conversion had taken refuge to plan and plot.

The sovereigns, alarmed at this news, dictated a letter of conciliation to their secretary, and sent it to the disaffected area:

“Be it known unto you [they said] that, a report having reached our ears that some declare it is our will that you should be compelled by force to embrace Christianity, and, since it never was, nor is it our will that any Moor should turn Christian under compulsion, we therefore assure and promise you, on our royal word, that we have not consented nor allowed this; and that we wish that the Moors, our vassals, should remain secure and meet with all justice as our vassals and servants.

Given in the City of Seville, in the twenty and sixth day of the month of January.... I the King. I the Queen.”

The matter of the writing was fair enough, but the Moors might be forgiven if they considered the royal word a somewhat dubious safeguard. Ferdinand, despite his pacific protestations, was

collecting an army; and the rebels hastened to seize the nearest fortresses and to make raids in the Vega beyond.

The Count of Tendilla, and Gonsalvo de Cordova, who happened at this time to be in Granada, marched against them; and, although the enemy flooded the deep furrows of the ploughland across which the troops must ride until they floundered up to their horses' girths, yet the Christians succeeded in storming the important stronghold of Guejar. The arrival of Ferdinand and his army led to the reduction of other fortresses, conquests stained by sanguinary deeds of vengeance, as when the Count of Lerin blew up with gunpowder a mosque, in which a number of Moors had taken refuge with their wives and children.

The rebels, realizing at length the futility of resistance, sued for peace; and by the mediation of Gonsalvo de Cordova conditions were arranged, and Ferdinand departed to Seville. He and the Queen were now convinced that Southern Spain would never be quiet or secure so long as its inhabitants remained Mahometans, and were thus more closely allied in sympathy with the tribes of Africa than with Castilians or Aragonese. They therefore sent Franciscan missionaries to Baeza, Guadix, Almeria, and the Alpujarras, arming them with the alternative weapons of concessions or threats; a provision so efficacious that by the close of the year the friars could boast of a wholesale conversion of their flock.

In the meantime the disaffection that had died down or been smothered in the south-east broke out with greater violence in Western Granada, where the Berber race that inhabited Ronda and its mountainous environs suddenly raised the standard of revolt.

Washington Irving, in his legend of *The Death of Don Alonso de Aguilar*, has left a graphic account of the punitive expedition commanded by that famous warrior. He took with him Don Pedro his son; and, as they rode out of Cordova in March, 1504, the people, punning on the family name so closely resembling the Spanish word for eagle, cried aloud: "Behold the eagle teaching her young to fly! Long live the valiant line of Aguilar!"

Many of the rebels, who knew his reputation, came and surrendered at his approach; while the rest, under the leadership of a certain El Feri Ben Estepar, retreated before him into the fastnesses of the Sierra Vermeja. The Christians pursued hot after them, and

coming one evening upon a fortified camp, where the enemy had placed their women and children and stored their possessions, the vanguard recklessly rushed to the assault. The fierceness of their attack, backed up by the speedy reinforcement of Don Alonso and the rest of his army, carried the position in the teeth of far superior numbers; whereupon the besiegers, thinking their victory assured, began to plunder. They were soon punished for their lack of caution, since, through a spark falling on a keg of gunpowder, the whole scene was momentarily lit up, and showed the weakness of the scattered troops to the Moors, still hovering on the mountainside above. With a shout of triumph these returned to renew the combat, and descending from peak and ridge, drove their foes before them in hopeless confusion.

Don Alonso and some few hundred knights alone disdained to escape. "Never," cried the leader, "did the banner of the House of Aguilar retreat one foot in the field of battle." His young son was seriously wounded, but would have struggled on still had not his father ordered some of his men to carry him to a place of safety, saying: "Let us not put everything to venture upon one hazard.... Live to comfort and honour thy mother." He himself remained fighting valiantly till wounded and already exhausted, he met in personal combat with El Feri Ben Estepar, and the latter's dagger ended his life.

Thus fell Alonso de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry; one of the most powerful grandees of Spain, for person, blood, estate, and office. For forty years he had waged successful war upon the Moors; in childhood, by his household and retainers; in manhood, by the prowess of his arm and the wisdom and valour of his spirit; he had been general of armies, viceroy of Andalusia, and the author of glorious enterprises, in which kings were vanquished and mighty *alcaydes* and warriors laid low.



TOMB OF FRANCISCO RAMIREZ ("EL ARTILLERO")

FROM "HISTORIA DE LA VILLA Y CORTE DE MADRID" BY AMADOR DE LOS RIOS

The anger and sorrow that swept through Spain at the news of this disaster can be imagined, the more that Don Alonso had found a fitting companion in death in Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, the famous artillery-captain of the Moorish war. As they saw these heroes, lying surrounded by the corpses of unknown Christian knights and soldiers, the very Moors were appalled at the extent of their own victory. What direful vengeance would be exacted for lives so precious? they asked one another; and all felt that only instant submission could save them from extermination.

Ferdinand was never the man to let passion obscure his ultimate object; and, in response to the rebels' petition for mercy, he agreed to grant an amnesty; but he insisted that they and the rest of their race must choose between baptism and expulsion. In the latter case, he offered to provide ships to convey the exiles to the African coast, on the payment of ten doblas of gold per head,—a sum that, according to Bleda the chronicler, few of them could hope to raise. The majority therefore accepted baptism; and, with the conversion of the

“Moriscos,” as these new Christians were called, the Mahometan Faith vanished from the soil of Granada.

One last crowning work was needed to complete the edifice of religious unity; and that was the conversion of the “Mudejares,” descendants of the Moorish villagers and artisans left on Spanish territory by the receding waves of Islam. In February, 1502, their knell was also struck; and a royal proclamation determined the baptism or exile of all males over fourteen years or of females over twelve; so many restrictions as to the wealth and destination of the exiles being imposed that the choice was virtually narrowed to acceptance of the other alternative. Plainly, the sovereigns did not intend to lose any more of their prosperous and hard-working subjects.

The proclamation, evaded and even rescinded in Aragon, held good in Castile; and Isabel, looking round on her dominions, could pride herself on having attained her spiritual ideal. The Catholic Faith, and that alone, was acknowledged in Castile.

## **CHAPTER X**

### **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**

The name of Christopher Columbus stands already on the roll of "Heroes of the Nations." "Hero of two nations" we should perhaps call him,—by birth a son of Genoa, and by adoption of Castile to whom, in his own words, "he gave a new world."

Those who would read of his voyages should turn to the pages of Washington Irving, of Thacher, and of Filson Young; for it is chiefly in his immediate connection with Castile and her Queen and not for his actual work as mariner and discoverer that his life falls within the scope of this biography.

Here is the man who has made the name of Spain ring with glory down the centuries. Here, in the background, somewhat dimmed in the sight of posterity through the radiance of a greater genius, is Isabel of Castile, she whose tireless patriotism made it possible for Spain to enter on the newly discovered heritage of wealth and empire. Between pioneer and Queen there is the link not only of mere capacity but of that greatness of vision and unfaltering determination to reach a desired goal, that finds in obstacles an incentive to renewed efforts rather than a check. It is a fitting harmony, not often granted in history, that two such spirits should act in unison. Yet in truth the proposed harmony threatened more than once to end if not in discord at least in silence; and the discoverer was to gain the sanction of his patroness to his schemes only after many vicissitudes and trials of his patience.

The son of a Genoese wool-carder, the history of his youth and early manhood is obscured by numberless conflicting statements and traditions, a confusion only increased by the information volunteered by Columbus himself. From the suburb of a busy

commercial city, unknown and poor, he passed to the seats of the mighty, and, in the light of his fame, recalled half-effaced memories of the days he had put so far behind him, an autobiography sometimes more in accordance with imagination than with truth. Admirers added their embellishments, detractors their quota of sneering comments, till the information so combined is almost more baffling than complete silence.



IMAGINARY PORTRAIT

THE AUTHENTIC PORTRAIT OF  
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Even as to the date of his birth there is a divergence of opinion amongst historians varying as widely as some twenty-six years; while tradition has connected him with noble families of Italy and France, has sent him to the University of Pavia, has made him one of an

expedition to place the House of Anjou on the throne of Naples, and has driven him on his journeyings as far north as Iceland. Here, some say, he heard of the voyages to Greenland and the Canadian coast of old Norse heroes of the tenth and eleventh centuries; and that, when in the island of Porto Santo many years later, the whispered tale of a shipwrecked mariner on his death-bed gave him the data, on which he based his belief that land existed beyond the Atlantic.

Of actual fact this much emerges, that, still a boy, probably about the age of fourteen, he gave up his father's trade to which he had been apprenticed and turned to the sea for a livelihood. His voyages were not confined to the Mediterranean but took him as far north as England and to the south along the Guinea coast of Africa, till about the year 1476 they landed him either by chance or mischance on the shores of Portugal. In Lisbon he found a wife and home, living in the house of his mother-in-law, and earning a small income, it is supposed, by drawing the maps and charts demanded by the most seafaring nation of the day. It was a task that with such a temperament would be certain to draw dormant theories of nautical enterprise from the realm of dreams to that of possibilities; and from this time Columbus's ambitions and hopes began to take definite shape.

Amongst men of science, and indeed amongst the cultured people of Europe generally, the idea that the earth was a sphere composed of land and water had been long accepted; though theologians were still found who declared that such a theory conflicted with the Gospels and statements of the early Fathers of the Church and must therefore be false. If an Antipodes existed, how could all the nations of the world see Christ at His coming?

Another popular argument had been based on the assumption that the ever-increasing warmth of the atmosphere, experienced by travellers as they journeyed southwards, culminated in a zone of unendurable heat. The ship that ventured too far in southern waters might find itself driven forward by sudden winds or unknown currents into a belt of perpetual flame and there perish miserably. That fear at least had been dispelled by the enterprise of the very nation with whom Columbus had cast in his fortunes.

Always, from the wide extent of their coast, interested in the sea and its wonders, the Portuguese had received a special stimulus in the field of discovery during the fifteenth century from the brother of their King, the famous "Prince Henry the Navigator." Under his orders, as he sat in his castle at Sagres overlooking the great Atlantic, studying charts and records of exploration by day, the course of the stars by night, his captains had pursued their way, league by league, along the West African coast. Ever as they went, new lands, rich in possibilities of trade, were exposed, and old doubts and fears receded. Madeira and the Canary Islands were added to the dominions of Portugal; Cape Bojador, once believed the gateway to unknown horrors, was doubled; the Cape Verde Islands and the Guinea coast explored.

Prince Henry the Navigator died; and in time his great-nephew, King John II., son of Alfonso V., "El Africano," sat on the throne of Portugal, but the tide of maritime energy never slackened, and the west coast of Africa began to assume in maps something of its real shape. Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher, was one of those who served in the famous expedition of Bartholomew Diaz in 1487, which, tempest-tossed and wholly at the mercy of the elements, unexpectedly doubled the "stormy cape," later to be called with symbolic appropriateness the "Cape of Good Hope."

This, while Christopher drew maps and charts in Lisbon, was yet of the future; nor had ever-widening views on African discovery cast any light across the broad Atlantic, the "sea of darkness" as mariners named it, when, hugging the Portuguese and French shores, they journeyed northwards to England and the Baltic. According to a certain Arabian writer of mediæval times

the ocean encircles the ultimate bounds of the inhabited earth, and all beyond it is unknown. No one has been able to verify anything concerning it, on account of its difficult and perilous navigation, its great obscurity, its profound depth and frequent tempests, through fear of its mighty fishes and its haughty winds.

Yet imagination did not fail to fill in the blank left by lack of knowledge, and from the days of Plato, tradition had planted the Western Ocean with mysterious lands. Here, some maintained, the lost continent of Atlantis had sunk to rest, leaving on the surface of

the water a sluggish mire impassable for ships; here, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, Ulysses had found his “Isles of the Blest,” the Irish Saint Brandan discovered an earthly Paradise, and Gothic bishops, flying before the Moors, built seven cities.

Such tales stood on the ground of conjecture alone; but, where the mind is set on a project, conjecture will often assume a fictitious value. Columbus had decided, with that finality of purpose that is the hall-mark of genius, that he would sail to the west across the “sea of darkness”; and he gravely accepted all that would make his schemes less fearful in popular estimation. He himself had an underlying conviction that, the earth being round, a passage across its surface must be possible either from west to east or east to west. A study of the voyages of Marco Polo, the great Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, had excited his fancy with its descriptions of the territories of the Great Khan and the island of Cipango, where gold and jewels, rich stuffs, spices, and perfumes, were the ordinary possession and barter of its inhabitants. To open up those lands of the Orient to easy commerce with Western Europe would be a task to bring the man who accomplished it not only wealth but that still more desirable reward, power.

Columbus’s idea of India, or “the Indies” as the territories of the far East were called in Europe, was distinctly hazy; but his own desires and his acceptance of the views of an eminent Arabian cosmographer, whose calculations had greatly reduced the circumference of the earth, inclined him to the belief that after a short stretch of ocean he would almost certainly land amid the wonders of Cathay and Cipango. Such a theory was not without biblical confirmation; since the Prophet Esdras had plainly stated that God commanded “that the waters should be gathered into the seventh part of the earth,” thus limiting the sea within the bounds of navigable channels.

To pure romance, scripture, and science, were added sailors’ tales of strange debris cast by the sea on the Azores, the westernmost point of African discovery: bits of wood carved but not with metal, canoes made of hollowed barks of trees, corpses even, whose faces bore no European nor negro semblance. All such evidence was carefully collected and, we may be sure, lost none of its significance in the telling, when Columbus rehearsed his project before King

John and his Court, begging that monarch to grant him the necessary ships, and to promise him, in the event of success, the office of Admiral over all the lands he might discover, with a viceroy's share of the spoils and power.

Perhaps King John considered this demand exorbitant, or else the scheme too hare-brained; it is more likely that he believed he had struck a mine of wealth in Western Africa and saw no reason, so long as that source of profit remained unexhausted, to risk ships and lives in a problematical voyage elsewhere. According to one tradition, he and his councillors obtained Columbus's plans under pledge of secrecy, and then to test their worth hastily dispatched an expedition, whose mariners, quailing before their task, soon returned to pronounce the design impossible. Whether this be true or false, it is certain that, after long delays, the committee especially appointed by King John to inquire into the matter, unanimously decided against Columbus's schemes.

"I went to take refuge in Portugal," wrote Christopher himself some years later, relieving his bitterness by what was probably exaggeration as to the length of his sojourn, "since the King of that country was more versed in discovery than any other; but he put to shame his sight, his hearing, and all his faculties, for in fourteen years I could not make him understand what I said."

From Portugal Columbus passed to Spain in 1485. His wife, it is believed, had died some little time before; and it is likely he was thankful to leave a country whose associations were by this time mainly sad. He took with him his son Diego and settled in Seville, where he succeeded in interesting in his project one of the great territorial lords of the neighbourhood, the Duke of Medina-Celi.

At a first glance it is perhaps curious that Columbus did not find in some rich Castilian noble the patron he required, without being forced to sue the Crown in vain for so many years. It would have been a small matter for the Cardinal of Spain, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, the Duke of Medina-Celi, or the Marquis of Cadiz to equip him with a squadron twice the size of that with which he finally achieved his purpose; but it is not too much to say that such an arrangement would have entirely altered the character of the expedition.

Columbus was a visionary in that he relied on the eye of faith rather than of knowledge; but his visions did not put to sleep the natural shrewdness of an Italian of his class, especially in a matter where his personal interests were so deeply involved. It was not his policy to sow a crop whose harvest he could not to some extent control; and the clue to his object in seeking royal patronage is given in a letter written in 1500, where he says,

Although I know but little, I do not think that anyone considers me so foolish as not to realize that even if the Indies were mine, I would not be able to sustain them without the aid of some Prince.

The discoverer might have succeeded in signing contracts favourable to himself with cardinal, duke, or marquis; but he could not guard against later royal encroachments turning his gains to so much waste paper. It was not only greatness of conception but a strong business instinct that made him a suppliant of the Castilian Queen.

In response to the Duke of Medina-Celi's letter, recommending Columbus to her attention, Isabel commanded his appearance at the Court at Cordova; and thither in 1486 came Christopher to lodge in the house of the Castilian treasurer, Alonso de Quintanilla. We can picture him at this time from the descriptions of contemporaries,—an impressive figure, well above the middle height, with his long face tanned and freckled by exposure to sun and storm, his eyes a vivid blue, his hair ruddy that was soon to be bleached by cares.

The Queen, we are told, “did not consider the undertaking very certain.” Here spoke her habitual caution, prompted by a life in which the demands on her assistance perpetually outran not her interest but her resources; yet it is evident from the first the project caught her fancy, while in Ferdinand it merely aroused a cold distrust. The country was scarcely pacified from the anarchy of civil war and foreign invasion; national credit and patriotism were strained to the uttermost in what, it had become evident, must be a prolonged struggle against the Moors; the French were threatening his own loved kingdom of Aragon, and he could spare neither time nor money to regain command of the eastern Pyrenees; insidious heresy was sapping the Catholic Faith, and wide care and

organization would be required for its suppression. Was this the moment to take up chimerical schemes for reaching China or discovering lands that every man of common-sense or culture had long believed to be fabulous?

His arguments, somewhat to this effect, can be imagined, uttered with a dry, logical force, not without its appeal to Isabel's own logical brain. She could see it all from his point of view, her reason accept his conclusion; and yet deep in her nature was a power that differentiated her statesmanship from his, and that in a crisis prompted her, in the teeth of the logic that ordinarily governed her actions, to run what has been happily called a "divine risk."

If Ferdinand lacked the visionary instinct that made Isabel recognize the Genoese sailor, not as adventurer or fool, but as a possible genius, it must be confessed that in his case faith would have made greater demands. Castile and Aragon were united into a single Spain, but it is reading history from a modern outlook to suppose the individual sympathies of King and Queen Spanish rather than distinctively Aragonese and Castilian.

Throughout past centuries, as we have remarked before, the magnet of Aragonese attraction had been the Mediterranean; and Ferdinand was no less under its spell than his uncle, Alfonso V., the conqueror of Naples. It required an effort to turn his mental gaze westwards; whereas Isabel, heiress of Castilian hopes and ambitions, was imbued with the spirit of rivalry with Portugal and looked on the "sea of darkness" not with bored aloofness but with awed speculation. It might well seem that its secrets held no immediate prospects for Aragon; they were pregnant with possibilities of empire and wealth for the sister kingdom with her Galician and Andalusian seaboard. It is thus that both by character and race Isabel and not her husband was destined to be Columbus's true patron, and that looking back over years of probation he could write later:

In all men there was disbelief; but to the Queen, my lady, God gave the spirit of understanding and great courage, and made her heiress of all as a dear and much-loved daughter.

Yet even Isabel did not understand at once; or, if she did, caution and her intense preoccupation with the Moorish war delayed and

hindered the practical fulfilment of her sympathy. Juntas of learned men met at her summons, and with academic coldness discussed and condemned the discoverer's project. Those who did not make a mock of it declared that it savoured of heresy; while others, according to Columbus, to hide their ignorance invented hindrances and obstacles. A few courtiers, and notably the Marquis of Moya and his wife Beatriz de Bobadilla, Isabel's most trusted servants, remained his staunch friends, but the real friend of Columbus in these years of anxiety, when he vainly followed the Court from Cordova to the frontier, and from siege to siege, was, in the words of Thacher, "Columbus himself."

This was the one man who insisted and persisted ... the man with a single thought, a powerful soul committed to one supreme purpose.... Whether he was inspired, elected, foreordained, it matters not. He thought he was all these things and the result was due to his own conception of himself.



A CARAVEL UNDER SAIL

FROM COLUMBUS'S FIRST LETTER

In spite of his condemnation by learned men, Isabel had not forgotten him, and a quarterly salary of 3000 maravedis, small though it was, and messages, that she would herself examine his claims when she had time, kept them in touch; but such things could not satisfy an explorer, fretting to be once more on the broad seas. In 1491 he renewed his application for assistance.

The Court was then at Santa Fé, pressing Boabdil to his last surrender, and before the conquest of Moslem Granada, the attraction of unknown islands paled. For the second time a committee of the learned declared the proposed journey impracticable and contrary to the opinions of Saint Augustine and the early Fathers; though Alessandro Geraldino, tutor of the royal Infantas, ventured to urge in Cardinal Mendoza's ear, that Saint Augustine, no doubt a good theologian, might yet prove a bad geographer.

Disgusted at his failure and the years he had wasted, Columbus with his son Diego turned his back on Santa Fé. His journey took him near the little seaside town of Palos, where at the Franciscan convent of La Rabida he sought food and shelter for the night. Its prior, Fra Juan Perez, once the Queen's confessor, was delighted to have first-hand news from the seat of war, and eagerly welcomed his guest; with the result that all Christopher's disappointed hopes came pouring out in a stream of eloquence that soon made a convert of his listener.

A secret letter from the prior to the Queen, full of respectful expostulations, her quick response that Columbus should return at once to Court, her gift of 20,000 maravedis to provide him with suitable clothing and a mule,—and Juan Perez could write with fervent joy:

Our Lord has listened to the prayers of His servant. The wise and virtuous Isabel, touched by the grace of Heaven, gave a favourable hearing to the words of this poor monk. All has turned out well.

“All has turned out well!” Face to face, Queen and would-be-discoverer could realize how much their minds were in tune; even more now than in the early days of his project; for, to the material benefits he hoped to reap, Columbus, inspired perhaps by the

crusading character of the Moorish war, had added the burning desire to carry the light of the Catholic Faith across “the sea of darkness.” This was no mere pose. Religion to the sailor as to the Queen was an intrinsic part of daily life, something vital and overshadowing that in the hour of triumph intensified glory, in days of depression or danger spread protecting wings. In the foreword of his journal addressed to the sovereigns, he shows very clearly that he regarded himself not only as pioneer but missionary:

Your Highnesses, as Catholic sovereigns and princes, loving the Holy Christian Faith and the spreading of it, and enemies of the sect of Mahomet and of all idolatries and heresies, decided to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the said regions of India, to see the said princes and peoples and lands, and learn of their disposition and of everything, and of the measures that could be taken for their conversion to our Holy Faith.

Behind and beyond “the spreading of the Catholic Faith” in the far East was another design of still bolder conception, the employment of the wealth to be found in Cathay and the territories of the great Khan towards the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The latter was the crowning enthusiasm of every earnest Christian in mediæval times, and Christopher believing himself “inspired, elected, foreordained,” held amongst his cherished visions the glory of a final crusade, to which he should have contributed the war fund.

Upheld by his inborn sense of power, he had returned to Court far more a conqueror, ready to grant conditions, than a petitioner oft-refused and eager to snatch the least morsel of favour. The Crown in its clemency was now, after its long apathy, willing to confer on him titles and privileges;—all in moderation of course, for Ferdinand and Isabel were never unnecessarily lavish; but Christopher, valuing himself and his task by the measure of his faith in the future, laughed at their moderation. Either he was great enough to succeed and thus prove worthy of a great reward, or he would fail and his pretensions and demands fade away with his dreams. The sovereigns, skilled in striking bargains, might argue and cajole. The Genoese, though his fate trembled in the balance, never wavered, until at last in April, 1492, caution yielded to greatness, and the terms that he demanded were signed and sealed.

Columbus and his heirs were to have the hereditary title of Admiral of all the islands and continents that he might discover, and should for ever hold the office of Viceroy and Governor-General over them. He and his heirs should receive one-tenth of all the wealth, whether metals, jewels, or spices, that should be acquired from these territories; and he and they should have a perpetual right of providing one-eighth of the expenses of every expedition sent to the West, receiving a corresponding profit from the results. These with extensive judicial and administrative privileges formed the basis of the document, in return for which Columbus promised to sail into the unknown and claim it in the name of Castile and her sovereign.

The actual cost of the expedition was, in comparison to the stakes at issue, trifling; in all less than a thousand pounds of English money, of which the Crown contributed some £850, Columbus himself the rest. Three ships formed his fleet; two provided under compulsion by the town of Palos as punishment for some public offence, and as reluctantly manned by its inhabitants who looked on the proposed voyage with horror. Columbus's own flagship, the *Santa Maria*, was a vessel of some hundred tons burden, by modern standards ill-fitted for aught but coasting work; while the *Pinta* and the *Niña*, commanded by Martin Alonso Pinzon and his brother Vicente Yañez, noted navigators of the neighbourhood, were mere merchant "caravels" of half its size.

The story of this first voyage to the New World has been often told: the distrust and grumbling of the crew which, beginning before they left Palos on that morning of the 3d of August, 1492, grew ever in volume as they journeyed westwards, leaving the friendly Azores far in their rear; the complaints that the wind steadily driving from the east would never change and thus make any hope of return impossible; the extraordinary variations of the compass and the expanse of sea traversed, far in excess of the Admiral's calculations, so that, puzzled and anxious at heart himself, he must yet keep a cheerful face and, lying skilfully, hold panic at bay by scientific falsehoods and carefully doctored charts. The many cries of "land! land!" heralding nought save clouds lying low on the horizon; the ever-doomed hopes aroused by birds and floating grass; and then the Sargasso Sea with its leagues of golden gulf-weed lapping against the

ship's side. Was this the impassable ocean where Atlantis had sunk to rest? Were they indeed destined to die here for their folly?

Then, when patience and hope were alike exhausted, and only the Admiral's faith rose triumphant above the general pessimism, unmistakable signs of land appeared at last; and, on the 12th of October the Spanish squadron came to anchor before the little island of Guanahani, one of the Bahamas.

The details of the landing, the astonishment of the natives, "naked as when their mothers gave them birth," at the sight of mail- and silk-clad warriors and the sound of cannons; the account of various expeditions made to other islands and of the fort built in Española;—these like the actual voyages may be read at length in the pages of Washington Irving. It is with the triumphant home-coming of the hero not with his adventures that we are here concerned.

Attention you two most wise and venerable men and hear of a new discovery [wrote Peter Martyr to the Archbishop of Granada and Count of Tendilla]. You remember Columbus the Ligurian, who persisted, when in the camps with the sovereigns, that one could pass over by way of the Western Antipodes to a new hemisphere of the globe.... He is returned safe and declares he has found wonderful things.

Wonderful things indeed! Brown-skinned Indians, green and scarlet parrots, golden nuggets and ornaments, cotton fibre and strange roots and seeds; these that he brought with him were but proofs and trophies of the still more wonderful adventures he hastened to relate before the sovereigns and their Court. In his disembarkation at Palos on the 15th of March, 1493, and still more in his "solemn and very beautiful reception" by the sovereigns at Barcelona graphically described by the historian Las Casas, he was to reap at last the meed of honour and enthusiasm so long denied him. Kneeling before his King and Queen to kiss the hands that afterwards raised him in gracious condescension to sit with royalty upon the dais, flattered and fêted by courtiers who had before patronized or mocked, riding through the crowded streets by Ferdinand's side amid cries of admiration and applause;—in these moments he reached the climax of worldly glory.

Long years stretched before him, when circumstances, his own failings, and the envy and spite of others, were to rob him of ease,

popularity, and even royal confidence; but for the time being he was "Don," "Admiral," the honoured of Kings, the most discussed and admired man in Spain, perhaps in all Europe. In one country at least, the kingdom of Portugal, the result of his voyage was a subject for poignant regret; and Ferdinand and Isabel, having obtained from Alexander VI. papal recognition of their right to the newly discovered territories, were driven to demand a series of bulls, that would provide them with a definition of their empire, lest Portuguese rivals, too slow to forestall them in the discovery, should now rob them of their gains.

By a bull of May 4, 1493, an imaginary line was drawn through the north and south poles, cutting the Atlantic at one hundred leagues distance from the Cape Verde Islands and Azores. To the east of this line was henceforth to stretch the zone of Portuguese dominion, to the west that of Castile. Later, by the Treaty of Tordesillas, signed by the Spanish sovereigns and King John in June, 1494, the boundary was fixed at three hundred and seventy instead of one hundred leagues distance; and there for the moment national rivalry was checked.

In the meanwhile Columbus, having organized a second expedition, had on September 23, 1493, set sail once more for the west. Very different in size and character was his new fleet from the former vessels of Palos with their pressed crews; for more than twice the number of men required for his fourteen caravels had applied for leave to sail with him, and not a few of those refused had chosen to embark as stowaways rather than be left behind. It was a case of unbalanced enthusiasm succeeding to unbalanced hostility, and, as often happens, the second state was to prove more dangerous than the first.

Not patriotism, nor a healthy love of adventure, nor even a cool-headed trading instinct, animated the majority of that idle, quarrelsome throng who were destined to turn the lands their discoverer at first believed the "Earthly Paradise" into a hell of human misery and wrong. It was lust of gold, no hardly-won reward of toil and sweat, but the fabulous wealth of Cipango and Cathay, to be picked in nuggets out of the flowing river, found in the turned surface of the earth, wrung by brutality if necessary from unwilling natives, that brought a wastrel nobility disgusted with orderly

government at home, to serve under the standard of a man whom they secretly despised as an ill-bred foreigner. Not all were of this type. Amid the fourteen crews were some earnest souls, inspired like their Admiral by a sense of responsibility; but the prevailing element was selfish, vicious, and insubordinate.

For this Columbus himself was partly to blame. Blinded to the limits of his achievement by his faith in the glory and wealth yet to come, and, anxious at all costs to maintain the support of the Spanish sovereigns, his eloquence had painted a highly-coloured picture very likely to deceive those who listened. The small quantity of gold so far obtained was merged in the glittering accounts given by natives of kingdoms to the south, where precious metals were to be had for the asking. These, like Amazon islands and lands whose tribes had tails, proved ever beyond the distant horizon, vanishing at the Spanish approach. As they melted into thin air so also did Christopher's inflated reputation; and those who had looked on him as a kind of magician, able to conjure up vast quantities of gold, saw him instead only as a lying adventurer, who had lured them from civilization and luxury on a false plea.

“Why hast thou taken us out into the wilderness to die?” It is the cry that from the time of Moses onwards has assailed the ears of the pioneer enthusiast. The wilderness may prove a paradise; but in that it falls short of human desires it will be condemned and despised. Not all the glory of sunshine and colour, of rich soil, luxurious vegetation, and flowing river, speaking to honest toilers of a possible kingdom of God on earth, can compensate with an idle rabble for shattered dreams of gold mines, of jewels, and of spices.

Murmurings, complaints, secret disobedience, open defiance: these were the fruits of Columbus's autocracy. When he landed for the second time in Española, he found the fort which he had left well-stored with provisions and ammunition burnt to the ground, its garrison dead, the Indians, once his trusted allies, fleeing before him afraid into the woods. Inquiry elicited an all too circumstantial tale of Spanish profligacy, cruelty, and carelessness, once his governing hand had been removed. Then had come retribution in the form of an avenging massacre by a warlike tribe from the interior of the island. The Indians of the coast denied their participation, even swore on oath that they had helped the garrison to the best of their

ability; and Columbus, anxious to believe them, tried to restore the old relations. Mutual suspicion, however, had come to reign. His followers, angry at the fate of their countrymen, accepted it as a legitimate excuse for intimidating and oppressing all natives. The hospitality and gifts once so generously lavished were now withheld or, proving totally inadequate to meet ever-growing Spanish necessities, were replaced by an enforced tribute, until the link of willing service was forged into an iron chain of bondage.

Some form of submission of native to European, of the weaker many to the stronger and more civilized few, was an inevitable solution of the racial problem. That it developed into absolute slavery was due, partly to the custom of the day, partly to the difficulties in which Columbus and his colonists soon found themselves involved. They had laid the foundations of the system in the New World when they carried off their first ten Indians in triumph to parade them through the streets of Barcelona, though the individuals in question could boast of generous treatment and a baptism with royal sponsors.

The principle of personal liberty abandoned, Columbus could declare, not without truth, that as slaves the natives would have a better chance of learning the doctrines of the Catholic Faith than in their own wild freedom. Even on the grounds of mercy and good government he could at first justify his attitude; since he and his followers contented themselves for the most part with seizing "Caribs," a fierce cannibal tribe that preyed upon their weaker neighbours.

Among the people who are not cannibals [he wrote home] we shall gain great credit by their seeing that we can seize and take captive those from whom they are accustomed to receive injuries, and of whom they are in such terror that they are frightened by one man alone.

Alas for either pious or kindly intentions! Not these but economic considerations were really to sink the scales. Columbus had promised to find precious metals in abundance, and yet seven years after his discovery Bernaldez, the Curate of Los Palacios, made a note that the expenses of the various expeditions still continued to exceed the profits.

“Since everything passed through the Admiral’s hands,” he adds, “there was much murmuring against him, and he made greater hindrances and delays than he ought in sending back gold to the King.”

Gold there was little in these early years of exploration; and demands for precious metals at home were echoed by demands in his own colony for horses, cattle, and sheep to stock the new settlement. In this dilemma the Admiral fell back on the wealth of human life, for which he could reap a handsome profit in the labour-markets of the Old World besides pacifying some of the grumbling in the New. It was no longer the conversion of the heathen nor the civilization of cannibals, that took the first place in his thoughts, but a momentary respite from increasing financial strain.

A gift of an Indian apiece to each of his greedy crew; a gang of some five hundred captives of either sex shipped to Europe, huddled together “with no more care taken of them than of animals destined for the slaughter-house.”

These, or tales of a like nature, came to the Queen’s ears. “By what right does the Admiral give away my vassals?” she demanded indignantly, and ordered the Indians to be released and re-shipped to their own land.

It must be remembered to her credit [says Filson Young, referring to her attitude towards this question,] that in after years, when slavery and an intolerable bloody and brutish oppression had turned the Paradise of Española into a shambles, she fought almost single-handed and with an ethical sense far in advance of her day against the system of slavery practiced in Spain upon the inhabitants of the New World.

Ferdinand cared little for the sufferings of Indians, but their sale would not bring him the profits he had been led to expect from his new dominions, and he was therefore more than willing to listen to the many complaints of tyranny, favouritism, and deceit, brought against the Governor by those returning from the West. Here the crowning offence had been in reality the employment of all able-bodied Europeans, priests as well as laymen, in the construction of a city in Española to which Columbus gave the name of “Isabella,” “in remembrance,” says Las Casas, “of the Queen Doña Isabel whom he

above all held in great reverence; and he was more desirous of serving and pleasing her than any other person in the world.”

“Columbus,” wrote Peter Martyr, “has begun the building of a city and the planting of our seeds and the raising of cattle.” His words call up a picture of peaceful and slow-rewarded toil, little to the taste of the majority pressed to take their share, their natural dislike of manual labour stimulated by the enervating climate and habits of self-indulgence. The crops grew apace, but so also did fever and disease; and for all that went wrong the people held their foreign Admiral responsible.

Indeed there was often sufficient foundation to make the reports brought home plausible. Columbus was a born leader of men in action, where a strong personality will always dominate; but he had few gifts as a governor, and least of all that invaluable instinct for selecting trustworthy subordinates. His choice of officials was often betrayed; his government, as a rule too kindly towards the cut-throat ruffians he commanded, on occasions varied by excessive severity. Whatever its quality he reaped odium, not only amongst the colonists, but with their relations and friends in Castile.

Enough was obviously at fault to require inspection; and in 1500, when Columbus who had sailed from Spain on a third voyage in 1498 was occupied in exploring fresh islands, Francisco de Bobadilla, an official of the royal household, arrived in Española, charged with the duty of inquiring into the Admiral’s conduct. His high-handed action, in immediately arresting Columbus and his brothers Bartholomew and Diego on their return to headquarters, is one of the most dramatic episodes in history; and its appeal was felt throughout the length and breadth of Spain.

Villejo, the officer in command of the prisoners on the voyage home, offered to remove the fetters in which they had been sent on board, but Columbus sternly refused. He would wear them, he declared, until he knelt before his sovereigns, keep them by him till his dying day. Crippled by gout, his hair whitened by care, he disembarked at Cadiz, the irons clanking on his wrists and ankles; and at the sight horror and shame spread from cottage and shop to castle and palace. Was this the discoverer’s reward for a New World?

“Be assured that your imprisonment weighed heavily upon us,” wrote the sovereigns some years later, still mindful of the shock the

news had given them; and when Columbus knelt before his Queen the sobs of pent-up bitterness with which he recounted his troubles awoke answering tears of regret and understanding in her eyes. "After they had listened to him," says Oviedo, "they consoled him with much kindness and spake such words that he remained somewhat comforted."

Confidence was temporarily restored, but the Admiral's hour of glory and triumph had passed never to return. His bad treatment was acknowledged, but so also was his bad government; for though he might not have deliberately tyrannized and deceived, yet he had failed to keep order or fulfil his promises. The Queen was growing old, and, broken by ill-health and private griefs, took less share than she was wont in public business. Ferdinand had never liked the Genoese sailor; moreover he was no longer necessary to royal schemes and that to the astute King was ever sufficient excuse for discarding a tool.

Columbus sailed for the fourth time to the lands of his discovery in 1502; but it was to find that Nicholas de Ovando, another royal protégé, had succeeded Bobadilla in command at Española, while treachery and ill-luck dogged his own efforts. Bitterness and suspicion had begun to eat like a canker in his mind, and his letters are full of querulous reproaches that the bargain he had made was ill-kept and his due share of the commercial profits denied him. In 1504, he returned home suffering in body and spirit, but no longer to meet with the sympathy for which he craved. Three weeks after he arrived at Seville Isabel died and her will, that contained a special petition for the kindly treatment of the natives, made no mention of his name.

Writing to his son Diego the Admiral says:

The principal thing is affectionately and with great devotion to commend the soul of the Queen, Our Lady, to God. Her life was always catholic and holy and ready for all things of His holy service, and for this reason it may be believed that she is in His holy glory and beyond the desires of this rough and wearisome world.

In these words lie the confession of his own disillusionment. His world, once so fair a place of material visions and dreams, had proved in its essence wearisome; and, clad in the Franciscan habit of renunciation, he himself, on the 20th of May, 1506, passed thankfully into the rest of God's "holy glory."

"His life," says Filson Young, "flickered out in the completest obscurity." No Peter Martyr eulogized his memory in letters to his courtly patrons. No grateful country of adoption bestowed on him a gorgeous funeral. Even the lands he had discovered were destined to receive their name from another, the Florentine sailor Amerigo Vespucci, whom he himself had helped on the road to fame.

Posterity is the audience that can alone judge truly the drama of history, and in the thunder of its applause Columbus has long come to his own.

"The world," says Thacher, "did not observe his final exit from the stage. Yet he was a great character, one of the greatest ever passing before the eyes of men."

## **CHAPTER XI**

### **ISABEL AND HER CHILDREN**

If it is true that the trappings of the monk often conceal the wearer's individuality, it might be added that so also do royal robes. The contemporary historian is apt to portray his King or Queen garbed in a cloak of politics, morality, or pageantry, according to his special enthusiasm; and, unless to his task he brings also the biographer's instinct for personality, his likeness though regal and exemplary will leave the spectator cold. He has forgotten that the abiding measure of our interest in others is the very humanity he has neglected or tried to excel.

In the case of "Isabel of Castile" the conventional atmosphere of a Court is intensified by her own determination to play a royal part. She rarely forgot that she was Queen. On one occasion the Admiral of Castile, Ferdinand's uncle, had ventured to address the King as nephew; whereupon she, overhearing, reproved him sharply.

"My Lord, the King has no kindred or friends but servants or subjects!" A petty snub! Unless in judging it we recall the Court of Henry IV., where Isabel had seen her brother mocked and bullied by insolent nobles, amongst them a former Admiral of Castile.

Her lifework in building up the reputation of the monarchy must be carried out in detail as well as on the broad lines of governmental reform, and the dignity and magnificence of royalty formed part of the scheme, that aimed at the exaltation of the Crown, not only in the eyes of Europe but still more of Spain itself. The Castilian grandee might be losing his official status, the Admiral be no longer essential to the Fleet, the Constable to the Army, the Duke or Marquis to the Royal Council; but in the throne-room and ante-chambers of the

palace etiquette more and more demanded their presence. Silken chains were binding the unruly in a peaceful servitude.

Pulgar, the historian, commenting on Isabel's insistence on the outward forms of state, declared that "it pleased her to be served by grandees and nobles," while in another place he mentions her retinue of the daughters of great families "such that we do not read in the Chronicles that any Queen had before her."

A household maintained on this scale and with corresponding luxury was a costly item in royal expenses and, considering the chronic deficiencies of the Treasury, was perhaps excessive. Yet Ferdinand and Isabel were both by nature simple and abstemious in their tastes, and wont in other matters, as we have seen in the case of Columbus, to err rather on the side of economy than extravagance.

"A King must outshine his subjects," says Pulgar with a conviction born of his intimate knowledge of Spanish character. The easy familiarity of the Emperor Maximilian, "Max the Penniless," and his son might be appreciated in Germany and Flanders; the private thrift of a Louis XI., or lack of ostentation of a Lorenzo de Medici respected in France or Florence; but the Castilian nature demanded magnificence and aloofness in its rulers. Even a Ximenes de Cisneros had been unable to shake off the outward glory of his office when he accepted the Archbishopric of Toledo; and Ferdinand and Isabel, children of their race, were fully alive to the appeal of surroundings suitable to their rank.

Of the impression made by their magnificence on foreigners we can gather from the diary of a certain Roger Machado who, in the capacity of king-at-arms, accompanied an English embassy to the Spanish Court at Medina del Campo in 1488. "People speak," he says, "of the honour done to Ambassadors in England; but it is not to be compared to the honour which is done to Ambassadors in the kingdom of Castile."

The torchlight procession that accompanied them from their lodgings to their evening reception at the palace; the majesty and condescension of the sovereigns; the speeches, dances, bull-fights, tourneys; each in turn arouses his admiration; but it is in his account of the costumes and jewellery that his diary really reaches its apogee of enthusiasm. The King is "dressed in a rich robe of cloth-of-gold, woven entirely of gold, and furred with a rich trimming of fine sable."

The Queen has “a rich robe of the same woven cloth-of-gold ... and over the said robe a riding-hood of black velvet, all slashed in large holes so as to show under the said velvet the cloth-of-gold in which she is dressed.” She wears “crosswise over her left side ... a short cloak of fine crimson satin furred with ermine, very handsome in appearance and very brilliant.”



ISABEL OF CASTILE

CARVED WOODEN STATUE FROM THE  
CATHEDRAL AT GRANADA

FROM “A QUEEN OF QUEENS” BY  
CHRISTOPHER HARE, PUBLISHED BY  
MESSRS. HARPER

Roger Machado, had he lived to-day, would surely have made his fortune as journalist of some fashion-weekly; but even his facile pen finds it difficult to express adequately the splendour of the Queen’s jewellery,—her necklace of gold and jewelled roses,—the ribbon at

her breast adorned with diamonds, rubies, and pearls,—the pouch of her white leather girdle set “with a large balass ruby the size of a tennis-ball between five rich diamonds and other stones the size of a bean.”

“Truly, as I believe,” he comments, “and also as I heard it said at the time, I estimate the dress she then wore at the value of 200,000 crowns of gold”; while on another occasion he declares her dress so rich that “there is no man who can well imagine what could be the value of it.”

At a somewhat similar reception of a French embassy, tales of the Queen’s magnificence evidently spread through Spain; and Fra Fernando de Talavera, Archbishop of Granada, though no longer her official Father-Confessor, felt bound to write and remonstrate. Isabel was, however, able to offer a good defence, declaring that neither the dresses of herself nor her ladies had been new,—indeed her own “made of silk and with three bands of gold as plainly as possible,” she had worn before in Aragon in the presence of these same Frenchmen. If some of the men’s garments were costly, it had not been by her orders, rather she had done her uttermost to discountenance it.

She might have mentioned also how, in the critical stages of the Moorish war, she had pledged the crown jewels to merchants of Barcelona, thus showing that for all her appreciation of the luxuries of dress, they did not rank for a second in her thoughts with more important considerations.

Her magnificence like her severity was calculated and the same might be said of her liberality. She had seen money wasted on ne’er-do-wells and was fully determined that no man, merely because he was powerful or plausible, should prey on her revenues; while for the regular type of Court-flatterer hunting for sinecures her contempt amounted to aversion. Galindez Carvajal tells us in his chronicle that she and Ferdinand kept a book in which they wrote down the names of those at Court whom they thought most capable and worthy of reward, consulting it whenever an office fell vacant, and that they did not hesitate to prefer prudent men of the middle-class to the highly-born incompetent. Their actual gifts, though scarcely lavish, were sufficient to cause satisfaction, and Lucio Marineo declares that “when between the King and Queen there was discussion as to the

fitting reward of any particular service, she on her part always gave more than the sum on which the two had determined.”

Ferdinand was not unlike his contemporary, Henry VII. of England, according to Ayala, the Spanish Ambassador’s description of that monarch: “If gold once enters his strong boxes it never comes out again. He pays in depreciated coin.”

Against this criticism may be set Machiavelli’s praise: “If the present King of Spain had desired to be thought liberal, he would not have been able to contrive, nor would he have succeeded in so many undertakings.”

It is pleasant to turn from calculated policy to uncalculated enthusiasm; and this may be truly said of Isabel’s love of her faith. Both she and the King were strict in the outward observances of catholicism, and every morning would find Ferdinand at Mass before he broke his fast, while we are told that on Maundy Thursday his servants would seek out twelve of the poorest of his subjects and that he would serve them at supper and wash their feet. Isabel herself would recite the hours every day like a priest; and, for all the whirl of ceremonies and duties in which she found herself involved, she would make time for special devotions so that it seemed to those about her that her life was “contemplative rather than active.”

Her marked individuality, and the respect she inspired in Ferdinand, had completely changed the character of the Court from the old licentious days of Henry IV.; priests of the type of Ximenes and Fra Fernando de Talavera thronged her ante-chambers; and courtiers, when they saw her coming, would walk with eyes cast down in the hope of establishing a reputation for sanctity.

Their hypocrisy can have brought them little. The Queen might be a saint in her private life; but those who think saints necessarily fools stand convicted of folly themselves. She was too shrewd a judge of character to desire to change her Court into a convent, and her letters to Fra Fernando de Talavera, while breathing affection and admiration yet venture occasionally to question the suitability to herself and her surroundings of his standard of asceticism.

It is my wish that not only in matters of importance but in all that concern these kingdoms you should give me your advice; ... and this I do most earnestly beg, that you will not cease from writing your opinion on the ground that these things do not concern you

since you are no longer here; for well I know that although absent your counsel will be worth more to me than that of another present.

She then goes on to thank him for the reproofs he had administered on the score of the too-great gaiety at Court and to assure him that in explaining certain matters she is not seeking to free herself from blame.

As for the French people supping with the ladies at table, that is a thing they are accustomed to do. They do not get the custom from us; but, when their great guests dine with sovereigns, the others in their train dine at tables in the hall with the ladies and gentlemen; and there are no separate tables for ladies. The Burgundians, the English, and the Portuguese also follow this custom; and we on similar occasions to this.... I say this that you may see there was no innovation in what we did, nor did we think we were doing anything wrong in it.... But if it be found wrong after the inquiry I will make, it will be better to discontinue it in future.... As for the bull-fights, I feel with you, though perhaps not quite so strongly. But after I had consented to them, I had the fullest determination never to attend them again in my life nor to be where they were held.

One of Queen Isabel's biographers on the contrary tells us that the Queen admired this national pastime for the skill and courage it demanded, a statement it is difficult to reconcile with the avowed distaste in her own letter. Perhaps her enthusiasm was evoked after the adoption of her device to place false horns, turned points inwards, on the horns of the bull, that the frequent loss of human life might be prevented. It was hardly a suggestion to win her popularity with her subjects, whose enjoyment of a spectacle was always proportionate to its risks. Isabel herself did not lack the true sporting instinct, for the chroniclers record a bear-hunt in the woods near Madrid, where one of the most ferocious of the beasts fell a trophy to her javelin.

Courage, the natural heritage of her race, her will and pride exalted almost to a fetish; and Pulgar tells us that "even in the hour of childbirth she disguised her sufferings and forced herself neither to show nor utter the pain that in that hour women are wont to feel and manifest."

Her reserve was deep, in all that concerned her innermost thoughts almost like a curtain veiling some sanctuary, that she felt would be profaned by other eyes, but now and then torn back for the

moment by the stress of some sudden emotion. Her agony of mind was obvious after the attempted murder of Ferdinand in Barcelona in August, 1492. The assassin, a madman who believed the King's death would result in his own accession to the throne, had hurled himself on his victim from behind, as he was descending the palace stairway, inflicting a deep wound in his neck. This, though not fatal, was aggravated by fever, and for many days the King's life hung in the balance.

And on the seventh day [wrote the Queen to Fra Fernando] the fever reached its climax, so that we were then in fear greater than all that through which we had previously passed; and this lasted a day and a night of which I will not say that which Saint Gregory said in the Office for Holy Saturday, more than that it was a night of hell; so that you may believe, Father, never was the like seen amongst the people at any time, for officials ceased their work, and none paused to speak with another. All was pilgrimages, processions, and almsgiving, and more hearing of confessions than ever in Holy Week.

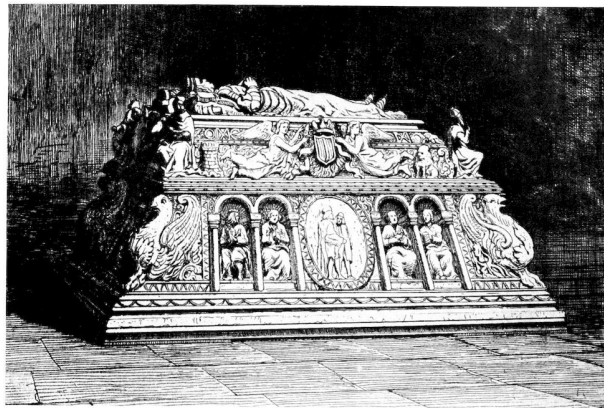
Ferdinand was popular in Barcelona, and the Council of Justice there condemned his assassin to a death of ghastly torment, of which tearing the flesh with red-hot pincers formed but a part. One is thankful that Isabel issued a special command ordering the man to be beheaded before this barbarous sentence was enacted.

Her love for Ferdinand was the strongest of her personal affections, growing rather than diminishing as the years passed, so that, dying, she sought that she should not be parted from him for long.

Let my body be interred in the monastery of San Francisco, which is in the Alhambra of the city of Granada, ... but I desire and command that, if the King, My Lord, should choose a sepulchre in any church or monastery in any other part or place of these my kingdoms, my body be translated thither and buried beside the body of His Highness.

Her wish is fulfilled, and the Catholic sovereigns lie side by side in the Royal Chapel of Granada; but the love she gave in such ungrudging measure was never fully returned. Isabel was fair in her youth, not beautiful perhaps, but graceful and dignified, with soft chestnut-coloured hair, and blue-green eyes that looked out candidly upon the world; and to Ferdinand, arriving in disguise at Valladolid, his blood set on fire by romance and excitement, she had seemed a

bride very worthy of his chivalrous care. Later he learned to respect and admire her both as his wife and Queen, to love her even after his fashion; but he was temperamentally cold and self-centred, and the age set no high standard of fidelity. The chronicles record that he had four illegitimate children by different mothers, of whom one, Alfonso, became Archbishop of Saragossa; and Isabel was destined to suffer bitterly from a jealousy intensified by her pride and strength of will.



TOMB OF FERDINAND AND ISABEL

FROM NERVO'S "ISABELLE LA  
CATHOLIQUE"

Her private life was not, however, unhappy, at least in those years when her own children were growing up around her, and she could find time amid the many cares of state to superintend their education and build dream kingdoms round their future. Her ambitions and Ferdinand's were alike centred on their only son, Prince John, whose birth in Seville on June 30, 1478, we have mentioned in an earlier chapter.

"My angel" Isabel would playfully call the boy, alluding to his fair skin and halo of curls; and she spared no pains in moulding his character that he might one day satisfy her ideal of kingship. The retinue that attended the little Prince of Asturias was in miniature a counterpart of the elaborate household of officials and servants that surrounded his father and mother; and, while from this environment he imbibed a sense of the grandeur and aloofness of his position, he also learned early the lesson of regal responsibility.

As president of a miniature Council of State, he listened to frequent discussions of the economic and political problems of the day by men chosen for their ability and experience; but it must not be imagined that such strong diet was alone provided for his mental digestion. Youth cries out for the companionship of youth; and Isabel, recognizing the wisdom of this decree of nature, established a class of ten boys, five older and five of his own age, against whose wits the heir to the throne might sharpen his intellect in healthy competition.

His love of music, inheritance from his grandfather, John II. of Castile, was encouraged and developed; and often in the evenings the choir boys of the Royal Chapel would assemble in his room, and he and they sing together; or on other occasions he would summon his musicians and play on the organ, or on one of the stringed instruments of the day. Musical proficiency was a sure road to his interest and regard.

In his position as heir to the Spanish dominions, it was natural that Prince John's life should stand more in the limelight of publicity than his sisters': but their education was in fact scarcely less considered and planned than his. The Queen had always possessed an intense admiration for classical learning; and it was one of Ferdinand's regrets that civil war had called him from the schoolroom to the camp, when he could do little more than read and write. He never understood Latin, the common language of cultured Europe; but Isabel made time to study its grammar and composition with Beatriz de Galindo, a famous teacher of her own sex, on whom the Court had bestowed the appropriate nickname "La Latina."

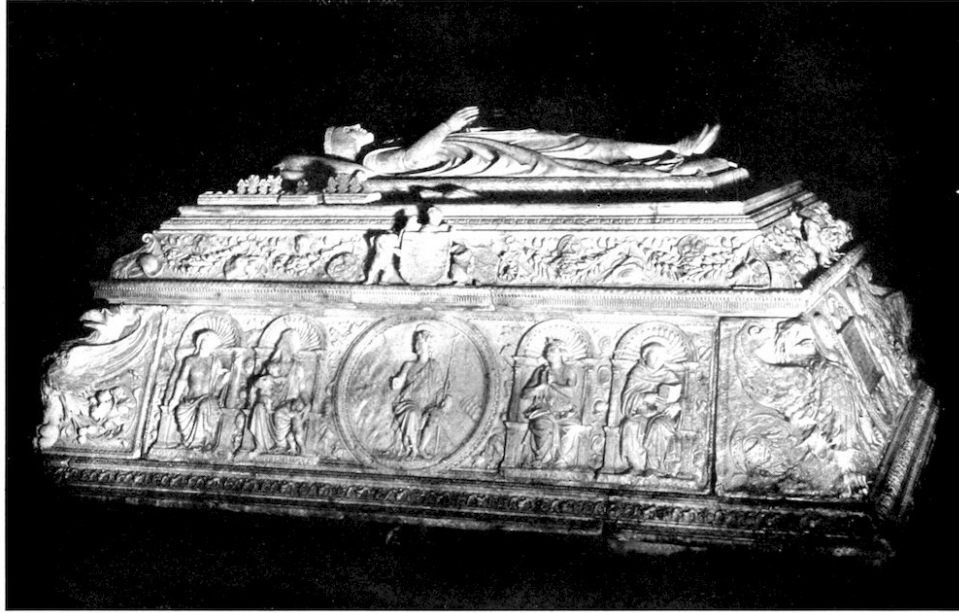
This course of education the Queen pursued with her usual thoroughness and determination; and, if she did not achieve the true scholar's facility in translation and speech, she was at any rate able to understand the orations of foreign ambassadors, and to interpret to her husband the letters of the young Italian diplomat, Peter Martyr, who took so lively an interest in her student's career.

I am very anxious to know how your Highness is progressing with the Latin [he wrote on one occasion]. I say this, Señora, because a certain style of Latin is too difficult to be mastered by those who are much occupied with other matters. Nevertheless my belief in your powers of intelligence is so great that, if you really make up your mind to do it, I am convinced you will succeed as you have done with other languages.

The courtier here permits himself to eulogize; but the compliment if insincere was yet grounded in sincerity. Peter Martyr found in his royal mistress a correspondent ready to grant his letters their due meed of appreciation, a patroness moreover eager to plant the fruits of the classical renaissance in the somewhat arid soil of Castile.

Two other Italians of note at that time in the world of scholarship, Antonio and Alessandro Geraldino, were appointed as tutors to the young princesses; and from their instructions Isabel's daughters emerged fitting contemporaries of the famous D'Este sisters of Ferrara. It is said that Joanna, the second of the Castilian Infantas, astonished the Flemish Court by immediately replying to the Latin oration of some learned scholar in the same tongue; while the youngest, Catherine, won from the great Erasmus the comment, whether intended as praise or otherwise, that she was "egregiously learned."

Castilian chroniclers, when recording with pride the intelligence and learning of Isabel and her daughters, make a point of showing that such ability did not entirely quench more feminine tastes. The Queen's visits to the unruly convents of her kingdom in company with her needle and her spinning-wheel have been already mentioned; while many were the gifts of elaborate vestments and altar-cloths that she and her ladies worked for the new Cathedral of Granada, and the other churches and religious houses founded during her reign. That her share in such employment was no mere occasional easy stitch we may perhaps assume when we learn from Father Florez that "her husband never wore a shirt she herself had not woven and worked." Ferdinand's chivalry was hardly of the type that would suffer rough or badly-fitting clothes for sentimental reasons.



AVILA, TOMB OF PRINCE JOHN, SON OF FERDINAND AND ISABEL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE, MADRID

“With such a mother,” adds Florez, “the daughters could hardly be idle. They learned to sew, to spin, and to embroider.”

Well-brought-up mediæval princesses, indeed, could have little in common with the daughters of kings in fairy-tale romances, condemned to luxurious sloth in high-walled gardens or battlemented towers. From their earliest days they must prepare to play their part in the future destiny of the nation, to tread the matrimonial measure not according to their fancy but at the parental wish; and then, their marriage achieved, to unite with the rôle of wife and mother the arduous task of political agent, maintaining friendly relations, often at the price of nerve-racking strain, between their old home and their new.

To Ferdinand his children were veritable “olive-branches,” emblems and instruments of the web of peace that his diplomacy was slowly spreading over Europe till France his old enemy should stand defenceless before his network of alliances. The foreign policy of Spain developed naturally under his guidance on Aragonese lines; yet Castile, though absorbed into his anti-French hostility against the traditional friendship of centuries, never entirely disregarded her own ambitions. The conquest of Granada and the discovery of the

New World had been mainly Castilian triumphs, the one the extension of her border southwards, the other a successful stage in her rivalry with Portugal on the high seas.

Yet a third Castilian ambition was the maintenance of the *status quo* with Portugal at home, an end by no means permanently achieved by the Treaty of Lisbon in 1479. By its terms Joanna “La Beltraneja” had entered a convent at Coimbra and taken vows that were to separate her for ever from the world; but she was too valuable a puppet in the hands of her mother’s people to be allowed to remain long in such seclusion. More than once she quitted her cloister for the palace at Lisbon, posing according to her own signature as “I the Queen,” though the Portuguese preferred to recognize her by the less provocative title of “the Excellent Lady.”<sup>[6]</sup>

<sup>6</sup>. She died in Lisbon in 1530 in her sixty-ninth year.

Without once more committing themselves in an open manner to her claims as “Queen of Castile,” they could employ her name in projects of alliance with Navarre and elsewhere to the indignation and discomfiture of Ferdinand and Isabel. The latter during the earlier part of their reign were too fully occupied in their war against the Moors to show practical resentment at this infringement of their treaty. Realizing that a conquest of Portugal was beyond their powers, they turned to diplomacy; and in April, 1490, betrothed their eldest daughter Isabel to Alfonso, son and heir of John II., and grandson of the Queen’s old suitor, Alfonso V.



AVILA, THE CATHEDRAL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY HAUSER AND MENET

Isabel was their favourite child,—her gentle, sweet-tempered yet somewhat melancholy nature so recalling her invalid grandmother, that the Queen in private would teasingly address her as “Mother.” It would not be a far journey to the Court of Lisbon; and nothing but rejoicing filled her parents’ hearts at the gorgeous festivities in Seville, which were the background of her formal betrothal. Not only had peace been established on a firm foundation, but one more link was forged in the chain between the Houses of Portugal and Castile, that might at some future date unite all Spain under a single sovereign.

In the autumn of 1490 the young Princess departed to her new home; but contrary to the general expectations she was to reap sorrow rather than joy. A few months of happiness with her bridegroom, whose memory she never ceased to cherish, and the Castilian Infanta was left a widow. She returned to her parents, seeking only a sanctuary, where she might indulge in her grief; and it was with genuine horror, on King John of Portugal’s death in 1495, that she repudiated the offer made for her hand by his cousin and

successor, the new King, Emmanuel. To Ferdinand and Isabel the proposed match was both politically and personally agreeable. Their daughter was too young to let a single sorrow eat away her joy of life; while Emmanuel's obvious anxiety to please and win her augured well for their future domestic peace. They therefore pressed his suit, hoping once more to consummate the union so dear to Castilian ambitions, but at first quite without avail.

We must tell you [wrote the Queen to her ambassador in England] that the Princess, our daughter, is very determined not to marry; on which account we are obliged to give the Infanta, Doña Maria, to the King of Portugal.

Emmanuel, however, preferred the elder sister to the younger; and Maria was destined to wait for her bridegroom till a more formidable barrier than mere disinclination had removed her rival. In the meanwhile, when the Portuguese alliance still hung in the balance, proposals for other marriages, no less fateful for Spain, were occupying the sovereigns' attention. Where should they find a fitting bride for their son and heir?



ISABEL, QUEEN OF PORTUGAL, ELDEST  
DAUGHTER OF FERDINAND AND ISABEL

FROM "ICONOGRAFIA ESPAÑOLA" BY  
VALENTIN CARDERERA Y SOLANO

Since the days, when still almost in his cradle, he had been suggested as a husband for Joanna "La Beltraneja," both gossip and statesmanship had been busy weaving his matrimonial fate. The threads were often broken abruptly; but one design ran clear through all, the circumvention of the growing power of France.

We have already noticed Louis XI.'s desire to establish his influence over Navarre, as shown in his support of Eleanor, Countess of Foix, and her French husband, and in the marriage of his sister Madeleine with their son Gaston.<sup>[7]</sup> His hopes were realized by Eleanor's accession to the throne on the death of her father, John II. of Aragon in 1479, though she did not live to enjoy for more than a

few weeks the sovereignty she had purchased at the price of a sister's blood. She was succeeded by her grandson, Francis Phoëbus, and he on his death in 1483 by his sister, Catherine.

7. See page 43.

Ferdinand and Isabel at once suggested the marriage of this eligible heiress of thirteen with their five-year-old son; but her mother Madeleine of Valois, infinitely preferred to ally her child with one of her own race; and Catherine carried her inheritance to the French House of Albret. Spain was for the moment foiled; but a wedding many years later, its more than doubtful claims on Navarre enforced by arms, was yet to gain for Ferdinand the southern half of the mountain kingdom, whose double outlook across the Pyrenees had been the source of so much crime and bloodshed.

Another alliance proposed for Prince John was with Anne of Brittany, heiress of a duchy, whose independence had always threatened the peace of France. It would have been a fitting revenge for French interference in Navarre and Aragon; but here again Spain was forestalled; and Anne of Beaujeu, regent of France on the death of her father Louis XI., succeeded in marrying her younger brother, Charles VIII., to Anne of Brittany thus linking to the French Crown the most important of its great provincial dependencies.

As it happened, this marriage was to set free a bride for the Spanish Infante, Margaret of Hapsburg, daughter of Maximilian, King of the Romans, a Princess betrothed in her early youth to the Dauphin Charles and even sent to France for her education, but now repudiated in favour of a more advantageous match. Maximilian was by no means a proud man, but even his careless nature burned with resentment at his daughter's return home under such circumstances; and he welcomed the idea of her union with a son of Ferdinand the Catholic, France's antagonist for so many years. To make this Hapsburg-Aragonese friendship the more obvious and complete, the wedding became a double one; and Philip, Archduke of Austria and Count of Flanders, Maximilian's son and heir, took as his bride the Spanish sovereigns' second daughter, Joanna.

With many misgivings Isabel bade the latter good-bye and consigned her to the grand fleet in the harbour of Lerida that was to convey her to the Netherlands and bring back from thence the Prince

of Asturias' betrothed. The Infanta Joanna, in spite of her careful training, had shown at times an alarming lack of mental balance. She could be clever and witty, but also morose or, if roused, recklessly passionate in her speech. From a home, where the air breathed decorum and self-control, she now went to a pleasure-loving Court presided over by a fickle Adonis. Would she cling tenaciously to the orthodox views in which she had been bred amid surroundings palpably lax and cynical? Would she know how to keep her jealousy in leash, if Philip "the Fair," as in all probability, proved faithless? Would she hold her head high and steer her course with dignity amid the many political pitfalls, that would be laid for her in a strange land?

The Queen could only sigh in answer to these questions. Joanna in many ways resembled her grandmother and namesake, the Admiral's daughter, Joanna Enriquez, and that passionate temperament would in a moment of crisis be its own councillor. Advice and warning were of little avail.

The Spanish bride in her ship of state sailed away northwards; and Isabel watched the clouds gather with gloomy forebodings. Weeks passed, and she was tortured with anxiety till at length news came that, although the fleet had been compelled to shelter in English harbours and several of the vessels had been lost, yet her daughter was safe in Flanders and soon to be married at Lille.

Early in March, 1497, Margaret of Austria after an equally adventurous voyage, whose dangers induced her to compose light-heartedly her own epitaph, landed in Spain and was welcomed with all the state and ceremony befitting a future Queen.

How this matrimonial venture, introducing into the close air of the Spanish Court a Paris-bred gaiety and insouciance, would have stood the test of time we cannot tell. The Prince and his bride were young; and, if her contempt of convention scandalized the Castilian grandee, he could blame her youth and build hopeful arguments on feminine adaptability. Thus the brief honeymoon, a triumphal progress from one large town of the kingdom to another, was a period of unmixed rejoicing in Spain. All promised well. Even the Princess Isabel had put aside her long mourning and consented at last to share the throne of Portugal with her patient suitor, demanding however with the fanaticism of her race, so strangely in contrast with her natural

sweetness, that Emmanuel's wedding-gift to her should be the expulsion of the Jews from the land to which she went.

The glory of the Faith! The glory of Spain! Were they in truth achieved? the Queen must have asked herself, as she and Ferdinand attended their daughter's second wedding in the border town of Alcantara.

Fortune's wheel never stands still in this world [says Bernaldez sorrowfully]. It gives and it takes away; it exalts and it humbles; to the poor and miserable it grants long years of which in their weariness they would fain be quit; while to the wealthy, to Princes, to Kings, and great lords,—to all for whom according to human understanding life is a boon, it decrees naught but death.

In the very midst of the wedding rejoicings came the news that the Prince of Asturias, never robust, had fallen ill of a fever in Salamanca; and Ferdinand, hurrying as fast as he could to his bedside, only arrived when the end was all too certain. On October 4, 1497, at the age of nineteen, Prince John died. Apart from the private grief of his parents for a son, whose character had held the promise of all that is best in manhood, his death was a national calamity; and for weeks the shadow of mourning hung alike over cottage and castle.

I never heard [says Commines] of so solemn and so universal a mourning for any Prince in Europe. I have since been informed by ambassadors that all the tradesmen put themselves into black clothes and shut up their shops for forty days together; the nobility and gentry covered their mules with black cloth down to their very knees, so that there was nothing of them to be seen but their eyes; and set up black banners on all the gates of the cities.

Even the hope that an heir at least would be left to their Prince was destroyed when the young widow, nerve-stricken at her sudden loss, gave birth a few months later to a still-born daughter.



AVILA FROM BEYOND THE CITY WALLS

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE, MADRID

The succession to the throne now devolved on the young Queen Isabel of Portugal; and early in 1498 she and her husband appeared in Toledo to receive the homage of the Castilian Cortes. The Aragonese Cortes however utterly declined to follow this example, declaring that they owed allegiance to Ferdinand and his male heirs alone; their obstinacy producing a public tension only relieved when in August, 1498, the young Queen gave birth to a son, whom all were willing to acknowledge.

The longed-for Prince, heir of Castile, Aragon, and Portugal was born at last; the highest ideals of Spanish unity seemed on the eve of fulfilment; but, almost within the hour that gave him life, his mother died; and the Infante Miguel, weak and fragile, was not destined to reach his second year.

Three deaths within three years and those the most precious in the land!

The first keen blade of sorrow that transfixes the Queen's soul [says Bernaldez] was the death of the Prince; the second the death of Doña Isabel her eldest daughter, Queen of Portugal; the third the death of her grandson Don Miguel, for in him she had found

consolation. From this time the life of the famous and very virtuous Queen Isabel, protector of Castile, was without pleasure; and her days and her health were alike shortened.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ITALIAN WARS

### 1494–1504

A cloud of grief hung over Spain, but abroad her sun was rising. The union of Castile and Aragon, the Conquest of the Moors, the campaign against heresy, the discovery of unknown islands in the West—all these had brought her prominently before the eyes of Europe; while yet another harvest of glory still remained for Ferdinand's diplomacy to reap on foreign shores.

In the early years of his rivalry with France the Pyrenees had formed his battleground, but for all his efforts, political or military, he had never succeeded in regaining Roussillon or Cerdagne nor in undermining French influence in Navarre. Diplomacy is a game where the practised hand will always be at an immense advantage; and Louis XI. proved more than a match for the young Aragonese opponent who was to succeed him eventually as the craftiest statesman in Europe.

*Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare* is said to be the only paternal sermon to which the Dauphin Charles was ever subjected; but since Louis XI.'s craven fear of his son denied the boy all but the most rudimentary education, there was little likelihood that he would be able to make use of so subtle a maxim. Ill-developed in brain as in body, his weak but obstinate nature nourished its vanity on schemes requiring the strength of a Hannibal or an Alexander for their realization. His father had with tireless energy extended the boundaries of France north, east, and south; employing the weapons of force, bribery, and lies, as the moment demanded. His success, save on moral grounds, might have prompted the continuation of his

policy; but Charles chafed not at its immorality only its apparent pettiness of scope. To make peace with his neighbours, if necessary, by the surrender of lately-won possessions; and then, freed from Christian molestation, to lead an army in person that should add the kingdom of Jerusalem to French dominions—this was the fantasy that floated ever before his eyes.

A crusade! Mediæval Europe had heard that project discussed for many centuries. It had seen warriors take the Cross for reasons true and false, had watched their victories and their failures, and, by the end of the fifteenth century, was sufficiently disillusioned to smile in private when the idea was mentioned. The recovery of the Holy Sepulchre was a good excuse for governments to impose extra taxes, or for Venice to induce the weak-minded to wage her trade-wars in the Levant. If the Turk, as he threatened, grew stronger it might indeed become a matter of serious politics; but in the meantime, save in Spain or Bohemia, religious fervour stood at a discount.

Yet European statesmen were ready enough to twist the young French monarch's desire for high-sounding glory to their own advantage. Ludovico, "Il Moro," virtual ruler of Milan for his nephew Duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza, saw in an alliance with Charles VIII. a way of extricating himself from political troubles that were likely to overthrow the balance of power in Italy, and with it his own dominion.

"This Ludovico was clever," says Philip de Commines who knew him, "but very nervous and cringing when he was afraid; a man without faith if he thought it to his advantage to break his word."

At the time when Charles VIII., grown to years of manhood if not discretion, was centring his hopes on Jerusalem, Ludovico Sforza lived in a perpetual state of fear. Of old in alliance with the Aragonese House of Naples and the Medici at Florence, he had regarded with calm eyes the hostility of Venice on the eastern border of his duchy and the growing ambitions of the Papacy in Romagna. These five Powers,—Milan, Naples, Rome, and the republics of Venice and Florence, had controlled the peninsula, and in Machiavelli's words made it their object "first that no armed foreigner should be allowed to invade Italy, second, that no one of their own number should be suffered to extend his territory."

Slowly the balance thus established had been shaken, and mutual suspicion began to darken the relations between Naples and Milan. King Ferrante's grand-daughter Isabella was wife of the rightful Duke, Gian Galeazzo, and in her letters home made piteous complaints of his uncle's tyranny. Her husband was fully old enough to reign but was kept instead a prisoner at Pavia, his natural delicacy of constitution aggravated by this restraint. She herself was relegated to a merely secondary position; and her relations, who had intended her to act as their political agent, not unnaturally resented the forced seclusion in which she lived.

The usurper on his side, noting the coldness of Ferrante and his son Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, was haunted by a perpetual nightmare of his own downfall through Neapolitan intervention. Such a revolution would please Venice, who liked nothing better than to see her ambitious neighbour involved in trouble, while little help could be expected from the selfish Papacy, or from Florence which, torn by factions since the death of the wise Lorenzo de Medici in 1492, was too weak to prove either a formidable foe or ally.

In his need of support Ludovico looked beyond the Alps, and instantly his quick brain suggested the rôle which Charles VIII. might play. It was little more than half a century since the last representative of the Angevin claims on Naples had been defeated and driven away from that southern kingdom by his Aragonese rival, Alfonso V.<sup>[8]</sup> Since that date the House of Anjou had been incorporated with the French Crown, and thus Charles stood heir to its Italian ambitions; Naples but a stepping-stone on the road to his conquest of Jerusalem.

[8.](#) See page [25](#).

If you will be ruled by me [declared Ludovico enthusiastically] I will assist in making you greater than Charlemagne; for, when you have conquered the Kingdom of Naples, we will easily drive the Turk out of the Empire of Constantinople.

Such glib assurance awoke no answering belief amongst the older and more experienced of the French King's councillors; but Charles was in the mood of Rehoboam and welcomed only the advice of the young and reckless, which confirmed his own strong desire to

undertake the invasion. Commines, shaking his head over the many difficulties to be encountered, concludes that Providence must certainly have guided and protected the expedition, “for,” he adds, “the wisdom of the contrivers of this scheme contributed but little.”

The first step was for Charles to secure the goodwill of his neighbours; and, having decked out the glory of a crusade against the Turks in its brightest colours, he proceeded to buy the complaisance of England, Flanders, and Spain towards his project by various concessions and gifts. In the case of Spain the price demanded was the surrender of Roussillon and Cerdagne; and it is said that superstition as well as his anxiety for a settlement gained the French King’s final consent to this bargain. Two friars, whether bribed by Ferdinand or no, declared that Louis XI. had sinned grievously in ever taking possession of these provinces, seeing that his rival, though he had failed to redeem the mortgage on them, had spent his funds instead on a holy war against the Moors. Charles, they urged, must make instant restoration or run the risk, when he died, that his soul should dwell for ever in Purgatory.

By the Treaty of Barcelona (January, 1493) Roussillon and Cerdagne passed back therefore into Spanish hands, and Ferdinand with many compliments and protestations of friendship agreed to an alliance with France against all enemies and to assist him in his crusade on the understanding that such terms should not affect his relations with the Holy See. His allegiance to the “Vicar of Christ” must stand before all other claims.

Satisfied that he might now proceed on his road to fame without the interference of the great Powers of Europe, Charles crossed the Alps early in September, 1494. His forces, which comprised not only the chivalry of France eager to prove its metal but also companies of Swiss and German mercenaries armed with pike, halberd, and arquebus, were further strengthened by a formidable array of artillery, mounted on carriages drawn by horses. These could be moved almost as fast as the infantry; and Italy, accustomed to the old-fashioned heavy guns dragged across the country by teams of oxen, heard the report of the invader’s superior ordnance with amazement, even with incredulity.

In Naples, the idea of a new Angevin expedition had at first aroused laughter, and only the old King Ferrante had treated it as a

serious issue. In January, 1494, he died, and his son Alfonso II., realizing at last that Ludovico's threats were no mere cry of "wolf!" leagued himself with the Pope and Florence to protect the frontiers of Romagna and Tuscany.

The campaign that followed is perhaps the most amazing in the history of European warfare. In September, Charles was at Asti, indulging as Ludovico's guest in festivities and excesses scarcely in keeping with the ideal of a Christian crusader. Pleasure thus delayed him a month; but from November, when he entered Florence, master of her principal fortresses and acclaimed as a conquering hero by the populace, his triumphant progress southwards was almost unimpeded. January, 1495, found him in Rome, at peace with the Pope on the strength of a hastily-constructed agreement, and by February, he had reached the northern boundary of the kingdom of Naples.

The abdication of Alfonso in favour of his son Ferrante II.; the latter's retreat from San Germano, where he had intended to make a determined stand against the enemy; and finally a revolution in the town of Naples itself to overthrow its Aragonese defenders—these completed the downfall of what might truly be called a "House of Cards." Ferrante, declaring that the sins of his fathers and not his own had been visited on his head, fled to Sicily; and on February 22d, Charles, clad in imperial purple and holding a golden sceptre in his hand, entered the capital in triumph and was duly crowned as "King of Naples and Jerusalem and Emperor of the East."

Almost without the loss of a soldier and in less than six months he had achieved his stepping-stone. Alexander VI., referring to the campaign, remarked sarcastically that the French needed only a child's wooden spurs to urge on their horses, and chalk to mark their lodgings for the night. For all their previous scoffing the armies of Italy had melted away like mist before the despised "Barbarians," or else had fled in terror at the first encounter.

Contemporary historians are ready enough with their explanations. The wars in the peninsula, says the Florentine Guicciardini, had been waged hitherto chiefly in the study or on paper; and his fellow-citizen, Machiavelli, elaborates this theory. The luxury, the civilization, and the culture, that made the cities of Italy the admiration and the desire of the rest of Europe, had produced an

enervating atmosphere in which the healthy virtues of patriotism and hardihood withered away. States grew to rely for their defence not on their own subjects but on mercenary armies enrolled by *Condottieri* generals; and these, actuated by no motive save to secure their pay for as many weeks as possible, converted war from a grim struggle for existence into an intricate but nearly bloodless pastime.

They spared no effort to relieve themselves and their men from fatigue and danger, not killing one another in battle, but making prisoners who were afterwards released without ransom. They would attack no town by night, nor would those within make sorties against their besieging foe. Their camps were without rampart or trench. They fought no winter campaigns.

Little wonder if men used to a warfare of courtesies shrank appalled from a ferocity that, once aroused, spared neither young nor old, women nor invalids. In the early stages of the invasion the Duke of Orleans had defeated Federigo, brother of King Alfonso of Naples, at Rapallo; and the town, daring to resist the conquerors, had been put to the sack with all the brutality attending a general massacre. Its fate had a paralysing effect on future attempts to hinder the French advance, especially in Naples, where devotion to the reigning House of Aragon was never more than half-hearted.

Ferrante I. and his son, Alfonso II., had been typical Italian despots, ruling by fear rather than by love, and to satisfy their own caprice rather than to win their land prosperity or glory. Ferrante II. was gentle and well-intentioned but too little known to be popular. Thus the Neapolitans, cynically assured that the sovereign did not exist for whom it was worth while to risk their lives, threw open their gates to the French and joyfully acclaimed them as long-hoped for saviours.

In a century that witnessed the perseverance and daring of the Moorish struggle, the campaign of Charles VIII. stands out like a monstrous caricature of triumph. Founded in vanity, its success had startled Europe, but was to prove as evanescent as it was cheaply won. The fault lay to a large extent with the conquerors.

At our first entrance into Italy [says Commines sadly] we were regarded like saints, and everybody thought us people of the greatest goodness and sincerity in the world; but that

opinion lasted not long for our own disorders and the false reports of our enemies quickly convinced them of the contrary.

The Frenchman and the Swiss or German mercenary, conscious of their easy victory, fell into the trap of regarding the Italians as cowards whom it was scarcely worth while to conciliate; and Charles on his part, too little of the statesman to secure what he had won, abandoned himself to idle pleasure. Tyranny and licence worked hand in hand to teach the Neapolitans that a change of dynasty may not be always for the better, and as they groaned under the taxation and insolence of foreign officials they began to remember Ferrante in his exile in Sicily.

Elsewhere in Italy there were also signs of reaction. Ludovico “Il Moro” had swept his Aragonese rivals from his path; and death, not without his assistance if there was any truth in rumour, had removed the young Duke Gian Galeazzo; but it was now the all-conquering French who filled him with dismay. Before the Sforza had established their rule in Milan, the Visconti, had reigned there, and Louis, Duke of Orleans, cousin of Charles VIII. and a near heir to the throne, was a descendant of the Visconti in the female line.<sup>[9]</sup> Since the French had found how easy it was to invade Italy, what should prevent them from claiming not only Naples but Milan?

<sup>9.</sup> Louis, Duke of Orleans, afterwards Louis XII. of France, was grandson of Valentina Visconti, sister of Duke Filippo Maria.

Ludovico, in terror for his duchy, was now as eager to drive out the invaders as formerly to welcome them, and soon persuaded Venice and the Papacy to join him in an alliance for this purpose. Outside Italy, Maximilian, who had been elected Holy Roman Emperor on the death of his father in 1493, was also alarmed at the signal triumph of the House of Valois; but since his promises usually outran their fulfilment the real organization of an effective opposition devolved on Spain.

Ferdinand, in spite of the outward amity signed and sealed at Barcelona, had worked secretly from the first to prevent the success of Charles VIII.’s ambitions. Roussillon and Cerdagne once secured, he had no inducement to keep his bargain; and, when the French King on the eve of the invasion sent to remind him of his promise to

help in the crusade, the elder statesman, though apparently enthusiastic, proceeded craftily to withdraw his support. Charles had placed the idea of ultimate war against the Turks well in the foreground of his public programme, with merely a casual allusion to his designs on Italy; and this enabled Ferdinand, while acclaiming war on the Infidel as the one ambition of his life, to denounce the rest of the proposal with mingled surprise and horror.

His ambassador, Don Alonso de Silva, begged the French King in moving terms to desist from an expedition that could only prove the scandal of Christianity; but still more forcible was his argument that, since Naples was a fief of the Church, any attack made on that kingdom would at once absolve his master from his alliance with France. The allegiance of Ferdinand to the Holy See had been an item of too frequent recurrence in the Treaty of Barcelona for Charles to miss the point; and, as he turned from De Silva in fury, he realized that he had been badly duped.

One of the greatest strokes of good fortune for a man [says Guicciardini] is to have an opportunity of showing that in the things he does for his own interest he is moved by the thought of the public good. This is what shed glory on the enterprises of the Catholic King. What he did for his own security and aggrandizement often looked as if it were done for the advancement of the Christian Faith or the defence of the Church.

Ferdinand may appear a consummate scoundrel to modern minds, but in his own day it can be seen that he was not without admirers.

From grief at an injury offered to a Papal fief, his opposition to France on the Pope's behalf grew so rapidly that Alexander VI. was induced in 1494, not only to grant to him and his Queen, as we have already noticed, the title of "Catholic Kings," but to concede to them as part of their revenue two-ninths of the Spanish tithes and rights of sovereignty over most of the North African coast. Nor was this cordial relationship affected by the peace with France, into which Alexander was temporarily driven when Charles VIII. hammered at the gates of Rome; for hardly had this second Charlemagne and his army vanished southwards than the plots for his undoing were redoubled.

In March, 1495, the "League of Venice" made it patent to Europe that the Empire, Spain, Rome, Milan, and Venice had pledged

themselves to unite for the mutual preservation of their dominions. Secret stipulations explained that this end would be secured by Ferdinand dispatching an army to Sicily to help Ferrante II. in recovering his kingdom, the Venetian fleet meanwhile, attacking the Neapolitan coast-towns in French hands. Spanish and Imperial forces would also assault France on her southern and eastern boundaries; while Ludovico Sforza employed the mercenary levies of Milan in holding the passes of the Alps against any further inroad of "Barbarians."

To Charles, idling at Naples, the menace of the League came like a thunderclap. As timid now as formerly self-confident, he cast Jerusalem from his thoughts, and in May, 1495, turned his face homewards at the head of some ten thousand men. The rest of his army remained to guard his newly acquired kingdom, with the Count of Montpensier as Viceroy and Stuart d'Aubigny, a Scotch soldier of repute, as Governor-General of Calabria.

At Fornovo, in Milanese territory, the retreating invaders were attacked by Ludovico's troops in combination with the Venetians, but succeeded in repulsing them and making their way safely across the frontier. Much of their baggage, however, fell into Italian hands, and the Allies loudly proclaimed their victory. Fortune, hitherto so indulgent, was tired of her incapable protégé, and at her frown his dominion quickly crumbled away. As he quitted Neapolitan territory Ferrante II., supported by a Spanish army under Gonsalvo de Cordova, left Sicily for the mainland, and though at first held at bay by D'Aubigny, had regained the greater part of his inheritance before a year had passed. In July, 1496, Naples "the fickle" opened her gates to him; while later in the same month the Viceroy, Montpensier, whose frantic appeals to his master for reinforcements had been ignored, was driven to capitulate at Atella.

"Of the expedition of Charles VIII.," says a French historian, "no more trace remained than of the exploits of Amadis de Gaula."

Judging by merely tangible results, or rather by the lack of them, it may appear at first sight that in a biography of Isabel of Castile, this campaign has received unmerited attention. The French meteor had come and gone; and the balance of power in Italy, although badly shaken, was restored to its equilibrium. Individual rulers had passed from the board; but Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples once

more checked and counter-checked each other's moves. How could this temporary disarrangement be said to have concerned Spain, save to afford a passing triumph for Ferdinand's diplomacy?

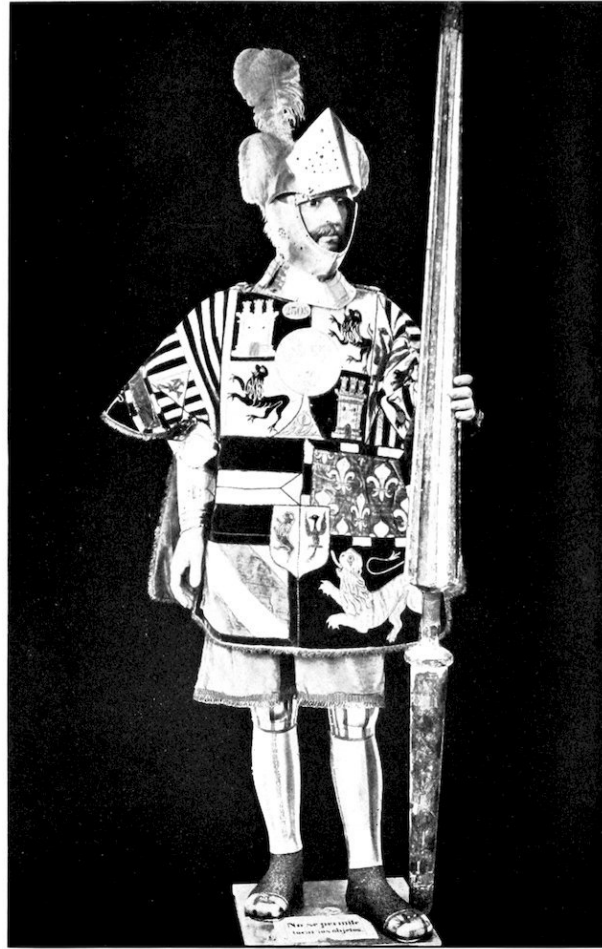
Yet in truth this same expedition was pregnant with results not only for Spain but the whole of Western Christendom, results so far-reaching that the history of modern Europe is often said to have begun at this date. Mediæval Italy had rallied for a moment, but she had none the less received her death-blow, the very incompetence and folly of her conqueror revealing her mortal weakness. Never again, till centuries had passed would her sunny fields and pleasant cities be free from foreign menace; never again would her native rulers be left to plot and plan her future undisturbed. Her beauty, her culture, her luxury had aroused the lust of younger and hardier nations; and against their strength she could offer no adequate defence.

Ludovico Sforza had boasted too soon, when he depicted a map of Italy, with himself broom in hand sweeping the other Powers before him where he would. In April, 1498, Charles VIII. of France died and was succeeded by his cousin, Louis, Duke of Orleans, who at once styled himself King of Naples and Duke of Milan. The assumption of these titles foretold his invasion of Italy, whenever a favourable opportunity should occur, a hint of which other Powers were not slow to take advantage. Venice, at the price of a small stretch of Lombard territory for her mainland empire, agreed to Ludovico's ruin, with a shortsightedness that aroused Peter Martyr's shrewd comment to a Venetian friend: "The King of France, after he has dined with the Duke of Milan, will sup with you."

The Pope, anxious to found a kingdom in Romagna for his family, also put away former anti-French prejudices, and granted a divorce, much desired by Louis XII., in return for a bride and the title "Duke of Valentinois" for his son, Cæsar Borgia.

The way for French ambition was thus paved; and Ludovico "Il Moro," with a retributive justice not often so clearly shown, fell a victim to the storm he had originally evoked; and, captured by his rival in April, 1500, was sent to end his days in the dungeons of Loches. Less deserved but equally irrevocable was the disappearance of the bastard line of Aragon in Naples. Ferrante II. had died in September, 1496; and his uncle and successor, Federigo, menaced by

Louis XII., sought assistance from his relations in Spain without avail. Ferdinand was playing a deeper game than to preserve the throne of those whom he secretly regarded as having cheated him out of a rightful inheritance. Only political and financial embarrassments had caused his father, John II., to acquiesce in Alfonso V.'s will, leaving Naples to an illegitimate son; and Ferdinand, with a united Spain behind him, and an army trained for ten long years in the wars of Granada, saw no reason to continue this policy. His support of Ferrante II. had been a temporary expedient to rid Southern Italy of Charles VIII.; but now he boldly approached the French King with a wholly selfish scheme of spoliation that finally took shape in the Partition Treaty of Granada of November, 1500. Federigo had foolishly given an opening to his enemies, when in despair at his isolation he appealed to the Turks to come to his aid; and the Pope was thus enabled to denounce him as a traitor to the Christian Faith and to demand his instant abdication.



A KING-AT-ARMS

FROM "SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR"

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE  
AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

His kingdom, divided into two by a somewhat vague boundary line, was partitioned by France and Spain, Louis receiving the northern portion with the town of Naples, Ferdinand the provinces of Calabria and Apulia. The unfortunate Federigo after a feeble effort to oppose this settlement, yielded to superior force, and retired to honourable captivity in France with the title "Duke of Anjou."

Machiavelli's contempt for Louis XII.'s share in the treaty was unbounded. "The French do not understand statecraft," was his answer to Cardinal d'Amboise, who on one occasion had suggested sneeringly that the Italians did not understand war; and there is little

doubt that the Florentine considered his own race the more blest. That a King who might have controlled the peninsula should deliberately choose to share his supremacy with a powerful rival was of all acts the most stupid; and stupid indeed it was to prove; though it may be questioned if, in the face of Ferdinand's opposition, Louis could have conquered Naples at all.

Where war in Southern Italy was concerned, Spain had in many ways the advantage over France, above all in her extensive eastern seaboard and her possession of the island of Sicily, which afforded a convenient base of operations for landing reinforcements and provisions. Louis would have needed to maintain an enormous army had he endeavoured to keep Naples entirely free of Spanish aggression; but his alternative policy of sharing the kingdom bordered quite as close on the impossible.

Differences of opinion respecting the imaginary boundary (that had left the ownership of some of the middle provinces undefined); quarrels as to the right of collecting the tolls paid on the cattle and sheep passing from their summer quarters in the Abruzzi to the sheltered valleys of the Capitanata, their winter home; feuds between those Neapolitan barons, who had originally supported the Angevin cause, and their opponents, the former Allies of the Aragonese House—these were matters so productive of strife that any efforts to establish a permanent peace between France and Spain were obviously doomed to failure. Thus, by 1502, the royal thieves had fallen out; and war, occasionally suspended by truces and negotiations, devastated Naples for the next two years.

Its course is hardly a highway in Castilian history, though its battles were waged and its victories secured mainly by Castilian soldiers. The ambitions by which it was dictated were purely Aragonese; and the final success of Spanish arms in 1504, that drove the French from Naples, was the crowning triumph of Ferdinand's career. Yet, in as much as the issue so vitally affected the future of Spain, drawing her definitely into a struggle for the supremacy of Europe, and pitting her against France in a national duel that was to outlast both Ferdinand and Louis, the campaign demands some mention here.

Its actual conduct recalls, not only through its deeds of chivalry and daring but in the character of its warfare, the struggle in

Granada; and, if Spain owed her success largely to her advantageous position, she was also indebted to the thorough training her soldiers had received in guerilla tactics. The mountainous districts of the kingdom of Naples were peculiarly suited to the quick movements of light-armed horse; but Gonsalvo de Cordova, Ferdinand's Commander-in-chief, though recognizing and using to the full this knowledge, did not disdain to learn what his enemies could teach him in other branches of military art; and his infantry, patiently drilled on the Swiss method, was soon to prove the equal of any body of troops in Europe.

The real laurels of victory belong indeed to Gonsalvo de Cordova; for, though the French army could boast heroes of chivalry, such as Bayard the "knight without fear or stain," and generals of skill and courage, such as D'Aubigny, it had no soldier who could in any way approach the genius of the "Great Captain." Gonsalvo had been bred in a school of war, which gave individual talent full scope, and like his elder brother, Alonso de Aguilar, he had been early singled out by Isabel for praise and advancement.



SPANISH MAN-AT-ARMS, FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY

FROM "SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR"

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE  
AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

To the light-hearted chivalry of the courtier, he united the prudence and foresight of a practised statesman, and the patience and equable temperament of the born ruler of men. In the fire before Granada which destroyed the Queen's tent, he had been prompt to put at her disposal his wife's wardrobe; an act of courtesy that caused Isabel to remark she was afraid he and his family had suffered more loss than herself. This and similar deeds of courtesy made him a pattern of manners in his own day, but like the English Sir Walter Raleigh he was no mere carpet-knight in search of royal favour. He was devoid of personal fear, yet, when large issues depended on his

orders, he never let his courage degenerate into recklessness, after the manner of the average Castilian commander, and perhaps his greatest military gift was his power of judging whether the occasion required caution or a daring onslaught. Never was a leader more intrepid in attack, more cool in the hour of retreat, or less easily drawn from a good position by feint or scoff.

“A general,” he once remarked, “must obtain the victory at any price, right or wrong. Afterwards he will be able to make tenfold compensation to those whom he has injured.”

This specious reasoning is characteristic both of the man and the age in which he lived; and Gonsalvo, like many of his contemporaries, was a strange combination of sincerity and unscrupulous dealing. After the campaign against Charles VIII., in which he had assisted Ferrante II. to win back his kingdom, the Spanish General had been rewarded by a lavish grant of Neapolitan territory. When, however, war broke out once more, and Gonsalvo found he must lead his troops against his former Allies, his code of honour prompted him to inform them of his regret at this necessity and to offer the restoration of their gifts before embarking on hostile measures. At the surrender of Taranto in 1502, on the other hand, having promised on oath that the young Duke of Calabria, Federigo's eldest son, should be free to go where he liked, he nevertheless arrested the boy and sent him a prisoner to Spain. It has been argued that, in the latter case, he had received sudden orders from Ferdinand not on any account to let the Duke escape; but the excuse, if true is after all a sorry shelter for his bad faith.

More pleasing, in a country where generals were wont to sell their services to the highest bidder and yield to bribery with little hesitation, was Gonsalvo's persistent loyalty to his sovereign. Ferdinand was not an easy master to satisfy, for neither his thoughts nor actions were ordinarily generous, and his cold distrustful nature was slow to respond to either enthusiasm or anxiety. During the war of Granada, the task of dispatching an adequate supply of soldiers and ammunition to the seat of war had fallen, as we have seen, to Isabel; but with increasing ill-health and worry such affairs had slipped from her fingers, and preparations for the Neapolitan campaigns were left to other hands.

In vain Gonsalvo begged for reinforcements and the necessary money to pay those companies already under his command. Ferdinand had a shrewd conviction that his general was capable, when in straits, of making two men perform the work of four, and doled out his assistance with niggardly craft. Nor did the brilliant achievements of his young Commander-in-chief, in the teeth of difficulties he himself had often aggravated arouse his gratitude or admiration.

“He who is the cause of another’s greatness,” says Machiavelli, “is himself undone”; and Ferdinand looked with suspicion on a subject so successful and popular that his possible disloyalty might prove a source of danger to the Crown. His own reputation as the champion cheat of Europe was perhaps unassailable; but it carried with it this penalty: he lived in mortal terror that he would one day be cheated.

In extenuation of his parsimony, the contrast between his wide ambitions and small treasury must be remembered. Ferdinand, like Elizabeth of England, was forced to imitate the careful housekeeper in making a little go a long way; and habitual economy is a virtue that often borders on vice. Not yet were the gold and silver of South America and Mexico pouring in a rich flood into the royal coffers; while every day fresh schemes of government, fresh wars and discoveries abroad, and the weaving of fresh strands of alliance demanded monetary support, as well as the King’s minute and unswerving attention.

Were Spain to pause for a moment in the race, letting Portugal outstrip her in the Western seas, or France suborn her brilliant generals and entice away her allies, she must inevitably fall behind into the second rank of nations. Thus Ferdinand, straining ever after a prize, whose very magnitude was to prove his country’s ultimate ruin, spun his web of diplomacy in and out amongst the Powers of Europe, never neglecting any opportunity that would draw him nearer his goal.

In the case of Portugal, fate seemed to have willed by the death, first of Prince Alfonso and then of the young Queen Isabel, that no Aragonese Infanta should draw closer the union of the two nations; but in 1500 the spell of tragedy was broken by the marriage of Maria, the sovereign’s third daughter, with the widower King Emmanuel.

One child alone remained with Ferdinand and Isabel, Catherine their youngest; and in the following year she also fulfilled her destiny and carried her father's olive-branch to a northern home. Born in December, 1485, she had been betrothed almost from her infancy to Arthur, Prince of Wales, Henry VII.'s eldest son; and Roger Machado, on his visit to the Spanish Court, did not in his amazement at jewels and fine clothes neglect to mention his future Queen, and how beautiful he had thought her, held up in her mother's arms to watch a tilting-match.

So firmly settled was the alliance, grounded on mutual hatred of England and Aragon for France, that already at the early age of three the little Infanta was styled "Princess of Wales"; but the intervening years before the union could be realized did not on this account pass her over in silence. The correspondence of the time is filled with frequent disputes between the Catholic sovereigns and Henry VII. as to the exact financial value of their respective offspring; and the discussion ranged from Catherine's marriage portion and the size of her household to the comeliness of the ladies-in-waiting, who would accompany her;—the latter a point on which the English King laid great stress.

At length, however, all was satisfactorily settled; and Henry, having welcomed the bride, could write to her parents that

although they could not see the gentle face of their beloved daughter, they might be sure that she had found a second father, who would ever watch over her happiness, and never permit her to want anything he could procure her.

A few short months and Arthur's death had left the little Spanish Princess, then not seventeen years old, a widow in a strange land; while fatherly kindness wrangled furiously over the cost of her maintenance and the disposition of her dowry. It was well for the immediate fortunes of Catherine of Aragon that she soon found a husband in Arthur's younger brother Prince Henry, though perhaps, could she have read the future, she would have preferred to decline the honour.

De Puebla, the Spanish Ambassador entrusted by Ferdinand with the greater part of the marriage negotiations, had also tried his hand during the years that he resided in England, at enticing the King of

Scotland into the anti-French web. The friendship between France and Scotland was of ancient date; but De Puebla felt that the offer of a royal bride from the Spanish Court would make a deep impression on King James's susceptible vanity, and since, at the date when this idea occurred to him, all the Spanish Infantas were either married or betrothed, he suggested instead Doña Juana, one of Ferdinand's illegitimate daughters, concealing as he believed with considerable statesmanship the fact of the bar sinister. Ferdinand, when he heard of it, was most contemptuous. Such a deception, he wrote, could not possibly be maintained and therefore was not worth the lie. Let De Puebla, on the other hand, hold out false hopes if he could of one of the real Princesses, and by this bait induce the Scottish monarch to quarrel with France. Even moderate success in this strategy would prove of considerable value.

James IV. did not marry a Spanish Princess but Catherine of Aragon's sister-in-law Margaret Tudor; and what harm he might inflict on Spain and her Allies in French interests was a mere pin-prick to the stab administered by Ferdinand's immediate family. On the death of Prince Miguel in July, 1500, Joanna, Archduchess of Austria, became heiress to the throne of Castile and Aragon; and, though there was cause for rejoicing that a son had been born to her early in the same year and thus the succession was assured, yet the situation arising from the new importance of her position tended every day to grow more critical. Joanna and her husband had been from the first an ill-matched pair, his light careless nature acting like a spark to fire the mine of her sullen temper and quick jealousy; and his faithlessness and her lack of self-control combined to keep the Flemish Court in a perpetual flame of scandal.

Had they been merely private individuals, the evil effects of their passions might have spread no further than the street or town in which they lived; but unfortunately Joanna had gone to Flanders not merely as a bride but as an agent to influence her husband's policy in her father's favour, and the odium and exasperation her behaviour aroused reacted to the detriment of Spain. Philip had nothing in common with the Castilian race. Their pride irritated him, their deep religious feeling awoke his incredulity, their sense of reverence and gravity a flippant scorn and boredom, that his selfishness found it difficult to disguise. Personal tastes inclined him rather to the

volatile, easy-mannered Frenchman; and, as domestic differences increased, so also did his dislike for the Aragonese and sympathy with their enemies.

“The French rule everything,” wrote Fuensalida, the Spanish Ambassador at the Archduke’s Court despairingly. “They alone surround him and entice him from feast to feast, from mistress to mistress.”



TILTING ARMOUR OF PHILIP THE FAIR

FROM “SPANISH ARMS AND ARMOUR”

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE  
AUTHOR, MR. A. F. CALVERT

Fuensalida suggested that Philip and his wife should be induced to visit Castile as soon as possible, before the evil habits into which the Archduke had fallen took permanent hold of him; and Ferdinand and Isabel warmly seconded this idea. Their son-in-law’s behaviour had

been scandalous; but their daughter's conduct caused them if anything more uneasiness. At times full of loving memories of her old home, so that she confessed "she could not think of her mother and how far she was separated from her for ever without shedding tears," Joanna, on other occasions, was taciturn or even defiant when approached by special emissaries from Spain. Their questions she met by silence, their allusions to her parents or to the religious enthusiasm that had stirred her youth, by indifference. It seemed that jealousy and wounded pride could in a moment slip like a dark curtain across her mind and blot out all save a brooding fury at her wrongs.

The mental balance, once a flaw has shaken its equilibrium, is of all scales the most difficult to adjust; and Isabel's hopes that a personal supervision of her daughter would effect a cure were doomed to disappointment. Philip and Joanna came to Spain in 1502; but their presence was an unwilling acknowledgment that custom required their recognition as Prince and Princess of Castile by the national Cortes. That business concluded, the Archduke was fully determined to return to his own land, if possible as he had come by way of France, for the reception he had been accorded in Paris made him eager to renew its delights.

It was his ambition that his son, Charles, heir not only of his Austrian archduchy and county of Flanders but of all the wide dominions of Spain, should marry Claude, the infant daughter of Louis XII., a scheme of alliance by which he himself would be enabled to pose as the arbiter of European politics, adjudicating between the two great rival nations with whom he had formed connections. Ferdinand might be pardoned if he regarded the Archduke somewhat dubiously in the proposed rôle; and indeed quarrels over the terms of the Partition Treaty and the subsequent war in Naples were soon to wreck the would-be arbitrator's hopes. Yet, even before this failure was assured, mutual suspicion had thrown a restraint over the intercourse of father-in-law and son-in-law, and had even poisoned the relations between Isabel and her daughter.

Joanna was well aware of her husband's intention of leaving Spain at the first possible moment; but she herself was expecting a child and knew the long journey would be beyond her powers. The thought

that Philip would leave her behind, intensified by the fear that he would do so with keener pleasure than regret, assumed in her disordered brain the monstrous proportions of a plot to keep her a prisoner in Castile. In vain she entreated him to stay until she should be well enough to accompany him; the Archduke, his ambition once satisfied by the homage of the Cortes of Toledo and of Saragossa, impatiently counted the days until he could cross the French border, and all the Catholic sovereigns' efforts to entertain him failed dismally.

In December, 1502, he left Madrid; and Joanna, at his going, sank into a mood of sullen despondency from which even the birth of her son, Ferdinand, in March of the following year, could not rouse her. At length she received a letter from Philip suggesting her return to Flanders; but war had broken out between France and Spain, making the journey, if not impossible, at least fraught with danger.

Ferdinand was with his army in Roussillon, and Isabel who was ill in Segovia sent imploring messages to her daughter at Medina del Campo, begging her to do nothing rash. Joanna was however obsessed by the notion that she was the victim of a plot, and in her passionate desire to escape from Spain was deaf to warnings and petitions. One evening, lightly clad and followed by her scared attendants, she started on foot from the castle and was only prevented from leaving the city by the Bishop of Burgos, who had been placed by the Queen in charge of her household and who gave orders that the gates should be closed. The Archduchess commanded that they should be opened, and even descended to prayers and entreaties, when she found her authority was of no avail; to all the Bishop's persuasions that she should return home she replied by an uncompromising refusal. Through the long night, in the darkness and the cold, she maintained her vigil; and when messengers arrived from Segovia the next day, begging her in her mother's name to resist from her project, she would only consent to move into a poor hovel hard by the gates.

On the second evening, Isabel, who had dragged herself from her sick-bed at the tale of her daughter's mad folly, appeared in Medina del Campo; but Joanna at first greeted her with reproaches and anger, "speaking" wrote the Queen in her account of the interview to Fuensalida, "so disrespectfully and so little as a child should address

her mother, that if I had not seen the state of mind she was in, I would not have suffered it for a moment.”



JOANNA “THE MAD,” DAUGHTER OF  
QUEEN ISABEL

FROM “HISTORIA DE LA VILLA Y CORTE  
DE MADRID” BY AMADOR DE LOS RIOS

In the end Joanna’s stubborn obstinacy was conquered, and she returned to the castle; but after such a scene few could doubt that she was at any rate temporarily insane; and the Queen, conscious that her own days were drawing to a close, trembled at the thought of her country’s future, delivered to the moods of such a ruler.

“Cursed fruit of the tree that bore her; ill-fated seed of the land that gave her birth, was this daughter for her mother,” wrote Peter Martyr bitterly; and Isabel’s star, which had risen in such splendour out of the murk of Henry IV.’s misgovernment, was destined to sink amid the shame of Joanna’s folly.

In the spring of 1504 the Archduchess sailed to Flanders; and Queen Isabel, guessing the scandals that would follow her footsteps

when her own restraining influence was removed, said good-bye to her with a sick heart. Feeble in body, so that every task seemed an effort, she herself turned more and more from worldly matters to the prayers and meditations that drew her ever closer in touch with the land of her desire towards which she was hastening. Yet neither her kingdom nor people were far from her thoughts.

In 1503, when Ferdinand had gone north to protect the border counties from what was rumoured to be an enormous invading army, her old martial spirit had revived; and she busied herself in Segovia, as in the old days, in collecting troops and despatching them to the seat of war. With the news of Spanish victories her conscience smote her. The flying French! These also were a Christian race, fighting for their own land. Recoiling from the thought of such a slaughter, she wrote to Ferdinand, praying him to stay his hand; and, whether moved by her wish or his own foresight, he contented himself with driving his foes across the border. Soon afterwards Louis XII. agreed to an armistice that freed the Pyrenean provinces from war.

Triumph in the north of Spain was followed by the news of Gonsalvo de Cordova's victories in Naples; but joy at these successes was counterbalanced by the serious state of the Queen's health. She and Ferdinand had fallen ill of fever in Medina del Campo in the summer of 1504; and, while his constitution rallied from the attack, anxiety for him and her own weakness aggravated her symptoms, and it was feared that these would end in dropsy.

"We sit sorrowful in the palace all the day long," wrote Peter Martyr early in the autumn, "tremulously waiting the hour when religion and virtue shall quit the earth with her."

Isabel herself knew the end was not far off, and bade those about her restrain their tears. When she heard of the processions and pilgrimages made throughout the kingdom in the hope of restoring her to health she asked that her subjects should pray "not for the safety of her life but the salvation of her soul."

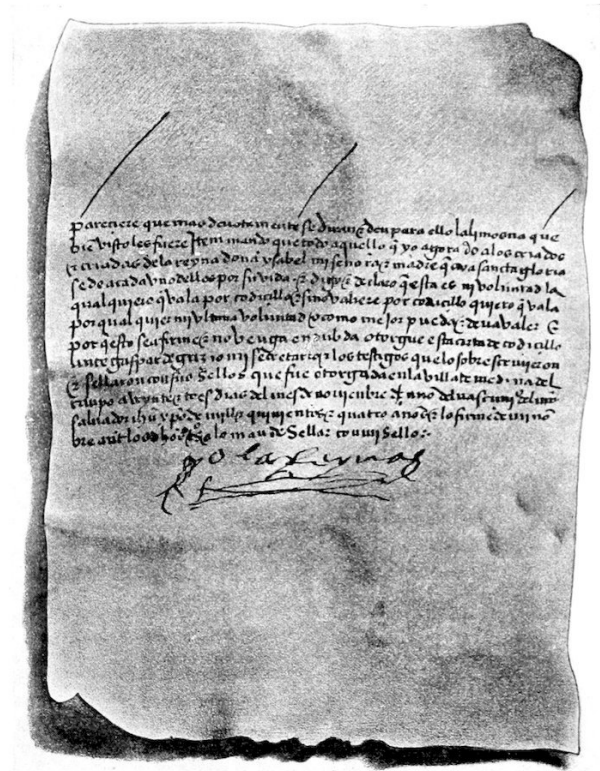
On the 12th of October she signed her will, commanding in it that her body should be taken to Granada, and there buried without ostentation in a humble tomb. The money that would have provided an elaborate funeral was to be spent on dowries for twelve poor girls and the ransom of Christian captives in Africa.

The poverty of the Castilian treasury, in contrast to its heavy expenses, evidently weighed on her mind; and she gave orders that the number of officials in the royal household should be reduced, and gifts of lands and revenues, that had been alienated by the Crown without sufficient cause, revoked. Her jewels she left to Ferdinand, that “seeing them,” she said, “he may be reminded of the singular love I always bore him while living, and that now I am waiting for him in a better world.”

The future government of the kingdom was her special care; and in her will, and its codicil added in November, while acknowledging Joanna as her successor, she begged both her and Philip “to be always obedient subjects to the King, and never disobey his orders.” This injunction was amplified by the command that if Joanna should be absent from Spain, “or although present ... unable to reign and govern,” Ferdinand should act as regent, until his grandson Charles was of an age to undertake this task for himself.

Such were the most important clauses of the document, by which Isabel strove to safeguard her loved Castile from the dangers threatening her. In others, she insisted that Gibraltar, which she had acquired for the Crown should never be alienated from it; that her daughter and son-in-law should not appoint foreigners to any office or post of trust, that the tax of the *alcabala*,<sup>[10]</sup> if found illegal on inquiry, should be abolished; that a new and more accurate code of laws should be compiled; and that steps should be taken to secure the kindly treatment of natives in the New World. It will be seen that Isabel in her last days was still the ruler, holding in her now feeble hands all the threads of national government, but clear in mind to recognize and command the issues.

[10](#). See page [394](#).



CODICIL TO ISABEL'S WILL, WITH HER SIGNATURE

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.

On November 26th<sup>[11]</sup> the end so long expected came; and, having received the Sacraments and commended her soul to God, the Queen, clad in a Franciscan robe, passed peacefully away.

<sup>11</sup>. Peter Martyr says November 22d.

My hand [says Peter Martyr] falls powerless by my side for very sorrow. The world has lost its noblest ornament ... for she was the mirror of every virtue, the shield of the innocent, and an avenging sword to the wicked.

It has pleased Our Lord [wrote Ferdinand to the chief citizens of Madrid] to take to Himself the Most Serene Queen Doña Isabel, my very dear and well-beloved wife; and although her loss is for me the greatest heaviness that this world held in store ... yet, seeing that her death was as holy and catholic as her life, we may believe that Our Lord has received her into His glory, that is a greater and more lasting kingdom than any here on earth.

The day after her death, the coffin with its funeral cortège left Medina del Campo for Granada, amid a hurricane of wind and rain such as the land had rarely witnessed. Peter Martyr, who was one of the escort, declared that the Heavens opened, pouring down torrents that drove the horsemen to shelter in the ditches by the wayside, while the mules sank exhausted and terrified in the road. Never for a moment was there a gleam of either sun or star, until on December 25th, as the funeral procession entered Granada, the clouds lifted for the first time.

There in the city of her triumph, in the Franciscan monastery of the Alhambra, the very heart of the kingdom she had won for Christianity, Isabel of Castile was laid to rest.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CASTILIAN LITERATURE

“Isabel’s death,” says Butler Clarke, “marks the beginning of a period of anarchy.”

The peace that she had done so much to promote and that her presence had insured was threatened by the incapacity of her successor, and by the restless rivalry of the Archduke Philip and his father-in-law. Prescott describes Isabel as “Ferdinand’s good genius,” and her loss was to make obvious to the Castilians his less attractive side,—the suspicion, and want of faith and generosity, that during their joint rule her more kingly qualities had tended to disguise. The old feeling against him as a foreigner, which his personal valour in the Moorish war had partly obliterated, now reappeared and was intensified by disgust at his prompt remarriage. Ferdinand was not in the least sentimental, and thus failed to take into account the large part played by sentiment in national history. The fact that he regretted Isabel’s death would have struck him as a foolish reason for missing any advantage that unfortunate occurrence might afford, and he re-entered the matrimonial market with great promptitude.

He was now fifty-three and the bride selected by him a girl of eighteen, Germaine de Foix, a daughter of the Count of Narbonne, who with her brother Gaston represented the younger branch of the House of Navarre. Such a union was naturally attractive to Aragonese ambitions, ever watchful to establish dynastic links with that northern kingdom, though at the moment as it happened the Navarrese connection was of merely secondary importance. Germaine de Foix was a niece of Louis XII., and by his marriage with her (October, 1505) Ferdinand succeeded in breaking the dangerous

combination of France and Flanders that might otherwise have proved his ruin.

By no arguments on his part, however subtle, could he evade Joanna's right of succession to the Castilian throne; yet in her state of mental weakness its acknowledgment handed over the practical control of public affairs to her King-Consort; and with the Archduke Philip established as a hostile element in Castile, and Louis XII. an enemy hovering on the Pyrenees, Aragon and her King would have fared ill indeed.



FERDINAND OF ARAGON

CARVED WOODEN STATUE FROM  
CATHEDRAL AT MALAGA

Ferdinand's marriage relieved the immediate tension of such a possibility; but its achievement courted even greater national disaster. The birth of a son could only mean the destruction of the union between Castile and Aragon, on which the foundations of Spanish empire had been laid; while by the terms of the marriage

treaty Ferdinand also risked the dismemberment of his own dominions. Louis XII. was willing to cede as dowry for his niece the rights over Naples which he had failed to maintain by force of arms; but the price he demanded in return was the restoration of that half of the Kingdom which was guaranteed to him by the original Partition Treaty, should Germaine and the Spanish monarch have no heirs.

This bargain made and cemented by large quantities of Spanish gold to indemnify Louis for the expenses to which he had been put during the Neapolitan wars, the French King proceeded to forbid the Archduke and Joanna a passage through France, until they had arrived at some amicable understanding with Ferdinand as to the future government of their kingdom. Philip, seeing himself outwitted, sulkily complied, and, in the Treaty of Salamanca (signed in November, 1505) agreed that he, his wife, and father-in-law should "jointly govern and administer Castile," Ferdinand receiving one half of the public revenues.

The peace thus extorted by circumstances was never intended to be kept; and, from the moment that the new King and Queen of Castile put foot in their land, they did their uttermost to encourage the growing opposition to Aragonese interference. Ferdinand, thwarted and ignored by his son-in-law and deserted by the Castilians, at length departed in dudgeon to visit the kingdom that Gonsalvo de Cordova had won for him in Naples; but it was not destined that the work to which he and Isabel had given the greater part of their lives should come to nought. In the autumn of 1506 the Archduke Philip died at Burgos; and Joanna, sunk in one of her moods of morbid lethargy, referred those of her subjects, who would have persuaded her to rule for herself, to Ferdinand's authority.

From July, 1507, when Ferdinand returned to Spain, till his death in January, 1516, he governed Castile as regent; while the loss of the only child born to him of his union with Germaine de Foix preserved his dominions intact for "Joanna the Mad" and her eldest-born, the future Emperor Charles V. Naples, it is true, by the terms of his second marriage treaty should have been once more divided with the French Crown; but the Catholic King was to reap the reward of loyalty to the Holy See, and received a papal dispensation from the fulfilment of his inconvenient pledge.

Victories on the North African coast against Barbary pirates and the conquest of Southern Navarre closed his days in a halo of glory; and he passed to his final resting-place beside Isabel in the Royal Chapel at Granada regretted even by the Castilians and mourned by the Aragonese as their "last King." Henceforth Spain was to be one and undivided.

"No reproach attaches to him," says Guicciardini of Ferdinand, "save his lack of generosity and faithlessness to his word." Peter Martyr declares that "contrary to the belief of all men he died poor." Like Henry VII. of England he had been quick to lay hands on wealth, doling it out to others with the grudging reluctance of the miser; but the exhausted treasury he left showed that his main inspiration had been economy not avarice. His ambitions had been expensive, and Spain was to pay heavily both in money and the more precious coin of human life; but the fact that she could afford to enter the great national struggle with France at all marks the economic transformation that had taken place since the days of Henry IV. of Castile. She had passed from industrial infancy to prosperity and an assured commercial position; her population had increased; peace at home had given her financial security; while as the depôt for European trade with the New World vistas of profit opened before her.

The Catholic sovereigns were not blind to this great future, and the legislation of their reign dealt largely with measures for fostering national industries. If such protection was often misguided it was like the over-anxious care of a mother, that may be as dangerous to a child's welfare as the opposite vice of neglect. Each age has its theories of political economy and looks back with superior contempt on the failings of its predecessors. To twentieth-century eyes the economic outlook of the fifteenth is often exasperatingly foolish; yet in the days of Ferdinand and Isabel it appeared the height of wisdom, and efforts to put it into practice were eagerly demanded by the Cortes. Industry, it was felt, must be wrapped in the cotton-wool of a myriad restrictions; it must be artificially nourished and subjected to constant supervision and interference, or it would die of exposure to the rough-and-tumble of competition. That industrial death might be sometimes due to sheer weariness of life in intolerable fetters was a diagnosis of which no mediæval economist would ever have dreamt;

and Ferdinand and Isabel firmly believed that their paternal legislation must prove a panacea for every public ill.



GRANADA CATHEDRAL, ROYAL CHAPEL,  
TOMB OF FERDINAND AND ISABEL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE,  
MADRID

Low prices demanded a cheap labour-market, therefore the obvious step was to fix a maximum wage for the worker, that he might not hope to exceed however worthy of his hire. Cheap labour must live, therefore a maximum price must be placed on corn that the wage-earner might be enabled to buy bread. Were grain grown for neighbourly love not a profit, this solution of an almost universal difficulty might have succeeded; but agriculture was never popular in Castile, and such arbitrary dealings tended to depress it still further.

Farmers turned for their profit to the production of wine or oil, or with a still keener eye to business devoted their energies to sheep or cattle breeding. This was the staple industry of rural districts, so extensive and flourishing that in the fourteenth century it had

established a kind of trades-union, or *mesta* to look after its interests and secure its privileges. During the winter months the cattle fed at will on the wide tablelands of Castile; but with the coming of summer their owners drove them to pasture in mountain districts such as Leon and Galicia. It was on these journeys to and fro that agriculture and grazing came into conflict; for where the herds had passed they left a wilderness. Legislation indeed forbade the trampling down of vineyards and of meadows of corn or hay, but compensation for these damages was difficult to obtain from a corporation so powerful that it had won for itself a large measure of royal protection. Tolls paid on the migratory cattle formed a considerable part of the public revenue; and kings of Castile had thus been persuaded to foster a trade so lucrative to their own pockets, granting graziers not only immunity from certain imposts but also special rights with regard to wood-cutting and the freedom of the regular cattle-tracks from any enclosure or limitation. Ferdinand and Isabel renewed these privileges and in 1500 placed a member of the Royal Council at the head of the *mesta*, bringing that important body under their immediate control.

If the laws of the maximum and the protection of rival industries hit agriculture hard, so also did the *alcabala*, a tax of ten per cent. on the sale-price of all goods. Originally imposed as a temporary means of raising money, it had become one of the main sources of the sovereigns' revenues, and, while it burdened every commercial transaction, laid a triple charge on corn in the form first of grain and then of meal and bread.

The *alcabala* has been described by a modern historian as "one of the most successful means ever devised by a government for shackling the industry and enterprise of its subjects"; and Queen Isabel herself seems to have realized its blighting nature, for, in 1494, she agreed, on Ximenes's advice, to commute it in the case of certain towns for a fixed sum to be levied by the municipality. Even so, the question of its legality still troubled her conscience; but the request in her will that a special committee should collect evidence and decide the matter justly was, like her kindly thought for the Indians of the New World, afterwards disregarded.

Perhaps it may be asked how, under such adverse circumstances agriculture survived at all; yet at the beginning of the sixteenth

century Castile was not only growing sufficient corn for her own needs but even exporting it to the rest of the peninsula. The explanation lies in a comparison not with the gigantic production of modern times, but with the preceding age, when the scorching breath of anarchy had withered the fields. The government of Queen Isabel's reign, if it favoured the more popular cattle-trade, at least protected the farmer and labourer from pillage; while, by forbidding the tolls which, during Henry IV.'s misrule, territorial lords had levied at will at every river-ford and turn of the road, it gave a sudden freedom to the circulation of corn as well as of other merchandise. Even more effective was the abolition in 1480 of the export duty on grain, cattle, and goods passing from Castile to Aragon, whereby the cornfields of Murcia were enabled to compete with its grazing lands, until at length a series of bad harvests restored the old predominance of the live-stock industry.

The real decline of agriculture, like that of industry, was to set in at the close of the sixteenth century under Isabel's great-grandson. The reign of the Catholic sovereigns and the early years of Charles V. stand out as a golden age of commercial prosperity. The production of wool and silk increased almost tenfold; the fairs drew foreign merchants from every part of Europe; while Flemish and Italian artisans, attracted by an offer of ten years' freedom from taxation, settled in the large towns to pursue and teach their handicrafts.



BURGOS CATHEDRAL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE,  
MADRID

The numberless *pragmaticas*, or royal proclamations and ordinances, issued at this time show how vigilant was Ferdinand and Isabel's interest in all that concerned the welfare of their land. In 1486 the cloth-workers of Murcia complained that their trade was being killed by external competition; their looms stood idle, and whereas 50,000 sheep had been needed in old days to provide them with wool, now only some 8000 grazed in their meadows. The response to their petition was a command that for two years no woollen fabrics should enter Murcia; while the import of silk thread from Naples, that threatened the silk industry of Granada, was similarly forbidden. These are only two instances of measures that ranged from awarding bounties to owners of ships of six hundred tons and upwards by way of encouraging navigation to minute instructions as to shoes, hats, embroideries, and armour.

Much of this scheme of protection was well-considered and beneficial. Since merchant ships were liable to be impressed in time of war, the navy, once almost negligible, thrived rapidly on the royal preference shown to large vessels, and also owing to a law commanding that no goods should be shipped in a foreign craft while there was a Spanish boat in the harbour. The small merchantmen suffered of course; but the squadron that the sovereigns dispatched to Flanders with the Infanta Joanna in 1496 presented the proud array of one hundred and thirty vessels containing some two thousand souls.

Legislation usually has its dark side; and the sovereigns' efforts to establish the commercial progress of their land on a sound basis were vitiated by the theory which they shared with their age that precious metals are not merely a convenient medium of exchange but an object of value in themselves. The lust of gold had been the curse that Columbus carried with him to the New World to corrupt his earthly paradise, blinding the settlers to the true wealth of its soil. It was to be the curse also of Spain, where the glitter of bars and ingots was to draw men away from the humbler yet necessary occupation of a life in the fields to adventure their fortunes across the ocean, or to overcrowd the streets of Seville, the home market of the Western Continent.

“Gold” and “ever more gold” was the popular cry; and Ferdinand and Isabel, in their eagerness that their new discovery should not enrich other nations, passed stringent laws forbidding the export of precious metals. The Spanish merchant, at the home frontier or harbour, must state from what locality he came, where he was going, and for how long, and how much coin he had with him;—his answers being written down and signed in the presence of three witnesses, that any subterfuge might afterwards be confuted. The foreign merchant had not even this indulgence. In exchange for what he imported from his own country he must take back neither coin nor bullion, however small the quantity, but exports in the form of goods manufactured in Spain; and these by a proclamation of 1494 might not include brocades nor embroideries woven or worked with gold thread.

Thus by excessive care what might have been a lucrative industry was ruined; the more that sumptuary laws prohibited the wearing of

rich stuffs in Spain itself save by a limited part of the population. A desire for splendid clothing, like the love of beauty, is imprinted deep in human hearts, and “fine feathers” are the usual accompaniment of commercial prosperity; but Ferdinand and Isabel regarded with horror what they considered as the growing extravagance of the lower classes. The latter were intended to work, not to flaunt fine stuffs in the faces of the aristocracy; and the silk-trade, its growth watered by protection, was stunted by restrictions on its sales.

On the splendour of Isabel and her Court we have already remarked; but it is significant that, at Tordesillas in 1520, the Commons nevertheless looked back to the reign of the Catholic sovereigns as a time of economy, complaining to the young Emperor that the daily expenses of his household were ten times as great as those of his grandparents. Ferdinand and his Queen were gorgeous in their dress and ceremony; but it was the considered maintenance of their ideal of dignity not the careless extravagance of those who spend what others have earned, and therefore fail to realize its true value.

They did not let themselves be imprisoned behind the bars of pomp [wrote the Royal Council to Charles, soon after Ferdinand’s death] for it seemed to them that there was greater security in the good reputation of their government than in the magnificence of their household.

It has been urged as an instance of parsimony in contrast to their personal expenditure that the Catholic sovereigns, in spite of their professed love of learning, did not with the exception of the College at Avila found or endow any school or college; and had the education of their land depended solely on the support of the royal treasury such criticism would be just. It will be seen however that, given the momentum of royal encouragement, private enterprise, often almost as well endowed as sovereignty and with far less claims upon its purse, was quite capable of acting “Alma Mater” to the would-be scholars of Spain.

The civil wars of Henry IV.’s reign had, it is true, developed muscle and sword-play rather than the literary mind; but the blows suffered by culture at the hands of anarchy, though heavy, had not proved mortal. Men were still alive who recalled the artistic traditions of the

Court of John II., Isabel's father, and rejoiced to see their revival under his daughter. It was not only that Isabel herself, by her own studies and the careful education of her children, set an example which an obsequious Court must necessarily follow; but her whole attitude to life expressed her belief in the importance of this learning that the average young noble would otherwise have held in little esteem.

In 1474 the art of printing was introduced into Spain; and before the end of the century presses were set up in Valencia, Saragossa, Barcelona, Seville, Salamanca, Toledo, and all the large cities of the two kingdoms. The Queen, quick to realize the power this invention might become, granted freedom from taxation to German and Italian printers of repute; just as she had encouraged the advent of picked engineers and artisans that the best brains of Europe, whatever the line of their development, might be at her disposal. Spanish books, classics, and classical translations were published; while, in contrast to the heavy tariffs usually levied on imports, foreign books were allowed free entrance into the home markets.

Isabel's own library displayed a catholic taste in literature; the collection ranging from devotional works and treatises on philosophy, grammar, and medicine, to manuscript copies or translations of Latin, Greek, and Italian authors, such as Plutarch, Livy, Virgil, Aristotle, and Boccaccio; together with national chronicles, and collections of contemporary poems.

When she and Ferdinand built the Church of San Juan de los Reyes, as a thanksgiving for their victory over the Portuguese at Toro, they also endowed the Convent attached to it with a library; while they took a deep interest in the foundation of the University of Alcalá de Henares, of which Ximenes de Cisneros laid the foundation stone in 1500, the building being finally open to students eight years later. Queen Isabel was then dead; but the glory of Alcalá may be said to radiate from her reign, which had seen a man of Cisneros's intelligence appointed to the Archbishopric of Toledo, to use its wealthy revenues not like Alfonso Carrillo of old for violence or alchemy but for the furtherance of education and knowledge. Cisneros had been in Italy, and his scheme of endowment showed that for all his austerity he had not remained wholly uninfluenced by the spirit of the classical renaissance. Of the forty-two professorships

at Alcalá, six were devoted to the study of Latin grammar, four to ancient languages, and four to rhetoric and philosophy.



COINS, CATHOLIC KINGS

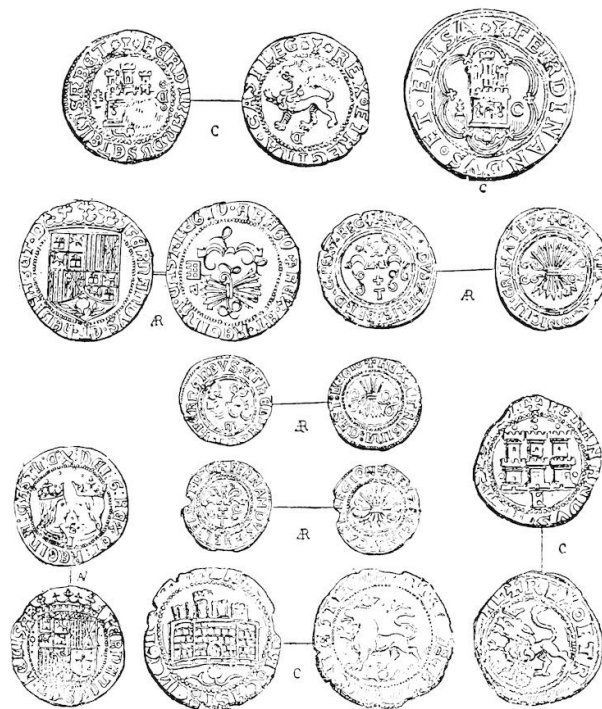
FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL  
DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.

The Archbishop had once denounced the idea of an Arabic version of the Scriptures to Fra Fernando de Talavera as “pearls cast before swine”; but though he condemned the languages of his own day as a medium for Holy Writ, maintaining that ordinary people would through ignorance misinterpret truths to their souls’ damnation, yet the crowning work of his life was to be an edition of the Bible in the principal languages of the ancient world. Under his criticism and supervision the first Polyglot Bible was printed in 1517 a few months before his death; the Old Testament being printed in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and Chaldean; the New Testament in Greek and the Vulgate of Saint Jerome. The errors of such a mighty work in that unscientific age were naturally many; but the mere fact of its production shows that the literary spirit was keenly alive. It was a triumph for Alcalá; and the name of the new university soon became famous in Europe.

Other educational institutions were also founded in this reign at Sigüenza, Valladolid, Toledo, Santiago, and Avila; mainly through

the enterprise of wealthy Churchmen; the College of Santa Cruz at Valladolid, like Alcalá de Henares, owing its origin to an Archbishop of Toledo, though to Ximenes's predecessor, Cardinal Mendoza. Well-endowed professorships and the report of the growing enthusiasm in Spain for classical knowledge drew scholars of repute from Italy, some by direct invitation to lecture and teach, others in the train of nobles anxious by their patronage to display their literary taste.

The Lombard, Peter Martyr of Anghiera, whose name we have so often mentioned, accompanied the Count of Tendilla on his return from an embassy at Rome, and was at once requested by the Queen to open a school for the young Castilian aristocracy, which was prone, in his own words, "to regard the pursuit of letters as a hindrance to the profession of arms that it alone thought worthy of consideration."



COINS, CATHOLIC KINGS

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.

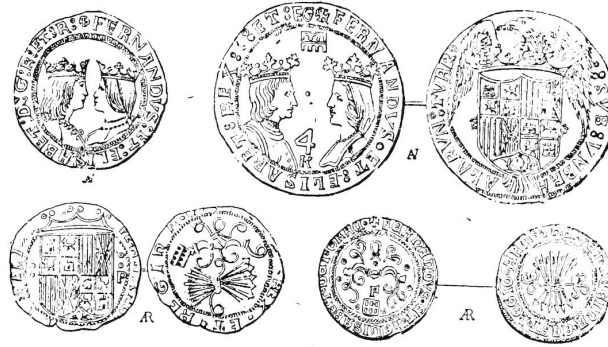
Martyr preferred to follow the fortunes of the Christian army in Granada to their conclusion, probably judging that until the Cross had triumphed he would receive little attention; but on the establishment of peace he began to lecture in Salamanca, the oldest university in Spain, "Mother of the Liberal Arts," as Lucio Marineo fondly called her. He also opened schools in Valladolid, Saragossa, and other important cities. The young Duke of Villahermosa, Ferdinand's nephew, and the Duke of Guimaraens, Isabel's cousin, set an example by their attendance to other youths of high birth, till Peter Martyr's house was thronged with students, convinced that classical and philosophical knowledge would enhance their military laurels rather than detract from them.

Martyr's own Latin style, as shown in his copious letters to illustrious contemporaries, and in his account of the New World, was for the most part crude; but what it lacked in elegance was counterbalanced by vigour and the accuracy and insight of his information. He is thus a valuable authority for Isabel's reign, like his fellow-countryman the Sicilian Lucio Marineo, whose encyclopedic work *De Memorabilibus Hispaniæ* throws considerable light on the Spanish history of his day. Marineo was introduced to the Castilian Court in 1484 by the Admiral, Don Fadrique Enriquez, and from that date till 1496 held the post of Professor of Latin Poetry and Eloquence in the University of Salamanca. So great was the enthusiasm inspired by his lectures that they were attended not only by the ordinary student but by archbishops and bishops, and many of the leading nobles and ladies of the Court.

Less remembered now, but famous then, was the Portuguese, Arias Barbosa, who founded the study of Greek in Salamanca. He had been educated in Italy, the reputation of whose universities was still to lure young Spaniards from the rival institutions of their own land. It was indeed a happy influence, for numbers of the most promising students returned home to widen the outlook of Castilian scholarship by the light of foreign methods and research.

Of these the greatest was undoubtedly Antonio de Lebrija, who has been called the "most cultivated and original of all the Spanish humanists of his time." An Andalusian by birth, he had been sent at nineteen to the University of Bologna, and, after ten years' study in Italy, settled down first in Seville, and then at Salamanca and Alcalá

to teach and publish what he had acquired. One of the editors of the *Polyglot Bible*, he left works not only on theology but on law, archæology, history, natural science, and geography. Perhaps those of most lasting value to his countrymen were his Latin dictionary published in 1492, and his Spanish and Latin grammars.



COINS, CATHOLIC KINGS

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.



COINS, CATHOLIC KINGS

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.

His daughter Francisca also maintained the literary reputation of the family as professor of rhetoric at Alcalá. In an age, when the love of letters had been inspired largely by a cultured Queen, it was

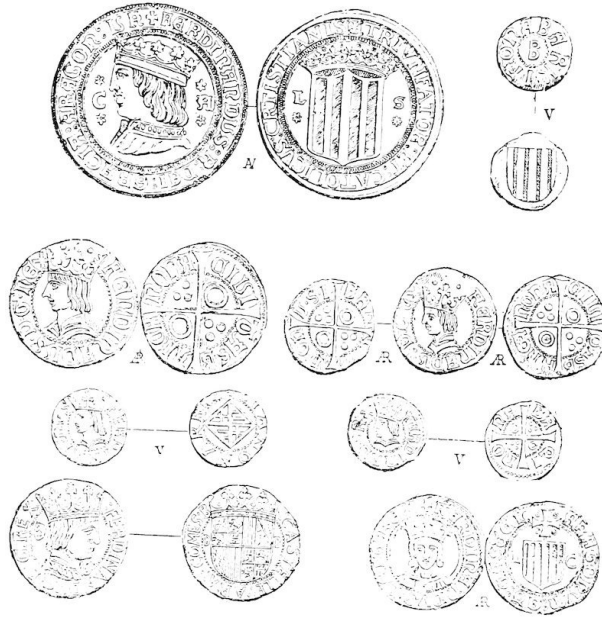
natural that the sexes should share their enthusiasm; and Isabel's tutor, Beatriz de Galindo "La Latina," and other ladies famous for their classical knowledge, lectured publicly at Salamanca and elsewhere to large audiences.

"Learning" had become a fashion, as in the time of John II.; and the literature of the day bore the stamp of the courtly atmosphere in which it had been bred. The old rough-hewn ballads with their popular appeal had yielded to polished lyrics, often purposely obscure in meaning, and filled with classical allusions and conceits; the epics of national heroes, such as "King Rodrigo" and "the Cid," to sober chronicles of contemporary events or to imaginative fiction, the more highly eulogized as it increased in extravagance.

In the pompous and long-winded speeches introduced into historical scenes after the manner of Livy, in the Dantesque allegory and amatory verses addressed by Spanish "Petrarchs" to their "Lauras," may be seen the outcome of the literary demand for translations of Latin authors, and the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. At the same time the union of the two kingdoms under Ferdinand and Isabel secured for the Castilian tongue its final triumph over those of Catalonia and Valencia; though the stately and vigorous conqueror acquired in the struggle something of the romantic spirit and spontaneous gaiety, with which Provençal troubadours had endowed its rivals.

Spanish literature [it has been said] takes its root in French and Italian soil ... yet it may be claimed for Spain ... that she used her models without compromising her originality, absorbing here, annexing there, and finally dominating her first masters.

Her era of literary fame was to dawn under the Emperor Charles V., and reach its zenith with his son; but tokens of the coming glory may be traced to a much earlier date when, amid the florid weeds of imitation or pedantry, there yet bloomed occasional flowers of genuine beauty and sweetness. Such are the *Coplas de Manrique*, stanzas written on the death of his father by the brilliant young soldier Jorge Manrique, a partisan of Queen Isabel in her early struggles. Longfellow has rendered them into English verse with a charm, that, if it does not attain to the imperishable grandeur of the original, yet in its quick sympathy bridges the centuries.



COINS, FERDINAND

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.



COINS, FERDINAND

FROM LAFUENTE'S "HISTORIA GENERAL DE ESPAÑA," VOL. VII.

Behold of what delusive worth  
 The bubbles we pursue on earth,  
     The shapes we chase;  
 Amid a world of treachery;  
 They vanish ere death shuts the eye,  
     And leave no trace.

Time steals them from us,—chances strange,  
Disastrous accidents, and change,  
    That come to all;  
Even in the most exalted state,  
Relentless sweeps the stroke of fate;  
    The strongest fall.

Who is the champion? Who the strong?  
Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?  
    On these shall fall  
As heavily the hand of Death,  
As when it stays the shepherd's breath  
    Beside his stall....

Tourney and joust, that charmed the eye,  
And scarf and gorgeous panoply,  
    And nodding plume,—  
What were they but a pageant scene?  
What but the garlands, gay and green,  
    That deck the tomb?...

His soul to Him, Who gave it, rose;  
God lead it to its long repose,  
    Its glories rest!  
And though the warrior's sun has set,  
Its light shall linger round us yet,  
    Bright, radiant, blest.

These are a few of the forty-two stanzas, in which with almost flawless simplicity of style Manrique mourns in his own personal loss the sorrow and regret of all the human race. He begins with the vanity of life; he ends with a plea for resignation; not an Omar Khayyam's bitter surrender to inevitable destiny but a confident trust in a God who is both Creator and Saviour.

Other verses of Manrique are to be found in the various *cancioneros*, or collections of Castilian poetry and song, that were gathered together in the course of the fifteenth century; but none deserve nor have reaped the same applause. In 1511, a *Cancionero General* was printed at Valencia, that may be taken as typical of Queen Isabel's reign and those of her father and brother. It declared its contents as "many and divers works of all, or of the most notable troubadours of Spain"; and it is indeed a varied collection of devotional hymns, moral discussions, love-songs, ballads, riddles, *villancicos* or poems supposed to be of rustic origin, and *invenciones* or rhymes concocted by the chivalry of Castile to explain the devices on their shields.

In all there are over eleven hundred pieces; but few, especially of those that represent the close of the century, have the note of distinction. The true spirit of song is sometimes there, rising with sudden power and conviction in scattered lines or stanzas; but for the most part imprisoned in a maze of forms and unrealities that leave our emotions and our imaginations cold. The butterfly is still enwrapped in the chrysalis.

Spanish prose, during the reign of the Catholic Sovereigns, was in the same transitional stage as poetry. The promise of good things was working to its fulfilment, but the harvest would be reaped in another age. In the national chronicles, the oldest form of prose literature, this change may be seen at work. The narratives of the reign of Henry IV., covering the earlier years of Isabel's life, are mere annals, sometimes more or less impartial as in the case of "Enriquez del Castillo," or else frankly partisan, like the pages that bear the name of Alonso de Palencia.<sup>[12]</sup> Their value lies either in their picturesque style, or in the descriptions of scenes, at which the authors themselves were present.

<sup>12</sup>. This chronicle is probably a rough extract of part of Mosen Diego de Valera's *Memorial de Hazanas*,—taken in its turn from Palencia's *Las Decadas de Las Cosas de mi Tiempo*, which was originally written in Latin.

The same may be said of Andres Bernaldez's *Historia de Los Reyes Católicos*, one of the most valuable authorities for the reign of Ferdinand and Isabel. Bernaldez, parish priest of Los Palacios near Seville, was no ambitious historian; and it is not his lack of bias nor his well-balanced judgment that has won him the thanks of posterity, but rather the simplicity with which he recounts events that he himself had witnessed or that had touched him nearly. We are grateful that he had the kindly thought of memorizing his impressions of the war in Granada, and of recalling the deeds of the hero Columbus, who once stopped in his house; but the work of sifting the grain of his information from the chaff is left to his readers.

In Hernando de Pulgar, author of the *Cronica de los Reyes Católicos*, on the other hand, we find what might be called the historical consciousness in embryo. The beginning of this work which relates to a period before 1482 when he became official historiographer and secretary to the Queen is often wildly inaccurate;

but the latter portion which is much more careful shows an attempt to produce a chronological summary that should give to each event its due importance. If the style is sometimes heavy, its very prolixity provides a wealth of circumstantial detail; and though his admiration for the sovereigns, and in especial for the Queen, have laid him open to the charge of flattery, the tone of his chronicle is in the main neither illiberal nor fulsome.

It is to a later reign and Zurita's *Anales de Aragon* that we must turn for the first piece of real historical work founded on a study of original documents and contemporary foreign sources; but in descriptive power Hernando de Pulgar remains infinitely Zurita's superior. Besides his *Cronica de Los Reyes Católicos*, he wrote also *Claros Varones*, a series of biographical sketches of illustrious people of his own day. They are carefully drawn portraits, by many critics considered his best work; but their realism is impaired by his tendency to blur the fine edges of appreciation with over-enthusiastic praise.

It is the courtier's temptation, which the trend of the Castilian literature of his time towards exaggeration would do little to mitigate. Fantasy not realism was the popular demand amongst the cultured in their leisure hours; and those, for whom the ballads were too rough and the chronicles too heavy, fed with delight on "Romances of Chivalry" as insipid in style as their adventures were far removed from real life. Cervantes, in the story of his mad Knight, Don Quixote, was to kill these monsters of imagination with his satire, but in condemning the whole brood as fit material for a bonfire he spared their original model, *Amadis de Gaula*. The latter is found by the Priest and the Barber, Master Nicholas, on the shelves of the old Knight's library.

This, as I have heard say [exclaimed the Priest], was the first book of chivalry printed in Spain, and all the rest have had their foundation and rise from it; therefore I think, as head of so pernicious a sect, we ought to condemn him to the fire without mercy.

Not so, Sir [answered the Barber], for I have heard also that it is the best of all books of this kind; and therefore as being singular in his art he ought to be spared.

With this judgment the Priest at once concurred.

The exact source from which *Amadis de Gaula* emerged is buried in mystery. It bears the stamp of French influence; but, in the form it appeared in Spain during the fifteenth century, was a translation by Ordoñez de Montalvo of the work of a Portuguese Knight who fought at the battle of Aljubarrota. Gaula, the kingdom of Amadis's birth is Wales;—the time—"not many years after the passion of Our Redeemer"; but neither geography nor chronology is of much importance to the romance that relates the wanderings of an imaginary Prince, his love for "Oriana, the true and peerless lady," daughter of an imaginary King of England, and his encounters with other Knights and various magicians and giants; until at length a happy marriage brings his trials to a temporary conclusion.

The immense popularity that this book enjoyed led to innumerable imitations; one of them, the story of "Esplandion" a supposed son of Amadis, by Montalvo himself; but all reproduced and exaggerated the faults of the earlier book, without achieving the charm of style that here and there illuminated its pages. The heroes of these romances are indeed a dreary company, differing only, as it has been said, "in the size of the giants they slay and in the degree of improbability of their colourless adventures and loves."

A variation of this type of literature were the "Visionary Romances," of which the *Carcel de Amor* or *Prison of Love* is perhaps the best example. This was the work of a fifteenth-century poet, Diego de San Pedro, who describes how in a vision he saw "savage Desire" lead an unhappy Knight in chains to torture him in the Castle of Love. This victim's release brings allegory to an end, and introduces a wearisome round of adventures much in the style of the ordinary romance. The *Carcel de Amor* was printed in 1492, and delighted the Court of Ferdinand and Isabel; but Cervantes's Priest and Barber, had they found it, would have undoubtedly pitched it through the library window to increase the bonfire in the courtyard below.

Very different was the *Celestina*, first printed in Burgos in 1499, and now generally believed to be the work of a lawyer, Fernando de Rojas. Here are no shadowy Knights condemned to struggle through endless pages with imaginary beasts; but men and women at war with sin and moved by passions that are as eternal as human life itself. The author describes it as a "Tragicomedia," since it begins in

comedy and ends in tragedy. It is the tale of a certain youth, Calisto, who, rejected by the heroine, Melibea, bribes an old woman, Celestina, to act as go-between; until at length through her evil persuasions virtue yields to his advances. The rest of the book works out the Nemesis; Calisto being surprised and slain at a secret meeting with his mistress, Celestina murdered for her ill-gotten money by her associates, while Melibea herself commits suicide. The whole is related in dialogue, often witty and even brilliant; but marred for the taste of a later age by gross and indecent passages.

The *Celestina* has been classed both as novel and play, and might indeed be claimed as the forerunner of both these more modern Spanish developments. It is cast in the form of acts; but their number (twenty-one) and the extreme length of many of the speeches make it improbable that it was ever acted. Nevertheless its popularity, besides raising a host of imitations more or less worthless, insured it a lasting influence on Castilian literature; and the seventeenth century witnessed its adaptation to the stage.

Other dialogues, with less plot but considerable dramatic spirit, are the *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, and the *Dialogue between Love and an Old Man* by Rodrigo Cota. The former of these represents a conversation between two shepherds, satirizing the reign of Henry IV.; the latter the disillusionment of an old man who, having allowed himself to be tricked by Love whom he believed he had cast out of his life for ever, finds that Love is mocking him and that he has lost the power to charm.

Whether these pieces were acted or no is not certain; but they bear enough resemblance to the *Representaciones* of Juan del Enzina, which certainly were produced, to make it probable that they were. Juan de Enzina was born about the year 1468, and under the patronage of the Duke of Alba appeared at Ferdinand and Isabel's Court, where he became famous as poet and musician. Amongst his works are twelve "Églogas," or pastoral poems, six secular in their tone and six religious, the latter being intended to celebrate the great church festivals.

The secular *Representaciones* deal with simple incidents and show no real sense of dramatic composition; but with the other six they may be looked on as a connecting link between the old religious "Mysteries" and "Miracle Plays" of the early Middle Ages and the

coming Spanish drama. Their author indeed stands out as “Father” of his art in Spain, for a learned authority of the reign of Philip IV. has placed it on record that “in 1492, companies began to represent publicly in Castile plays by Juan del Enzina.”

If the literature of Spain during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries may be described by the general term “transitional,” marking its development from crudity of ideas and false technique towards a slow unfolding of its true genius, painting at the same date was still in its infancy; while architecture and the lesser arts of sculpture, metal-work, and pottery had already reached their period of greatest glory.

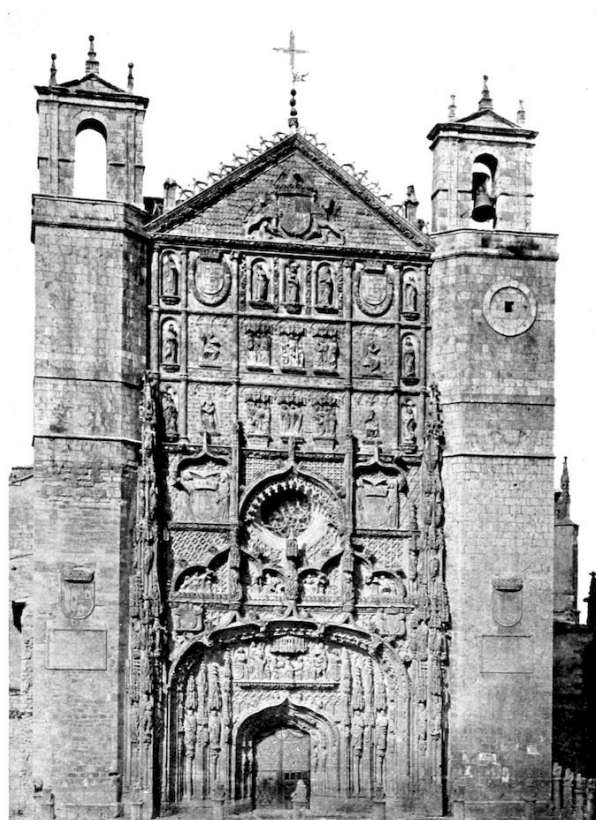
Schools of painting existed, it is true, at Toledo and in Andalusia; but the three chief artists of the Court of Isabel came from Flanders; and most of the pictures of the time exhibit a strong Flemish influence, which can be recognized in their rich and elaborate colouring, clearly defined outlines, and the tall gaunt figures so dear to northern taste. Of Spanish painters, the names of Fernando Gallegos “the Galician,” of Juan Sanchez de Castro a disciple of the “Escuela Flamenca,” and of Antonio Rincon and his son Fernando, stand out with some prominence; but it is doubtful if several of the pictures formerly attributed to Antonio, including a Madonna with Ferdinand and Isabel kneeling in the foreground, are really his work.

In architecture at this time the evidence of foreign influence is also strong. On the one hand are Gothic Churches like San Juan de Los Reyes at Toledo or amongst secular buildings, the massive castle of Medina del Campo; on the other, in contrast to these northern designs, Renaissance works with their classic-Italian stamp, such as the Hospital of Santa Cruz at Toledo or the College of the same name at Valladolid. Yet a third element is the Moresque, founded on Mahometan models, such as the horseshoe arch of the Puerta del Perdón of the old Mosque at Seville overlaid with the emblems of Christian worship. The characteristics of North, South, and East, are distinct; yet moulded, as during the previous centuries, by the race that borrowed them to express ideals peculiarly its own.

“Let us build such a vast and splendid temple,” said the founders of Seville Cathedral in 1401, “that succeeding generations of men will say that we were mad.”

It is the arrogant self-assertion of a people absolutely convinced, from king to peasant, of their divine mission to astonish and subdue the world in the name of the Catholic Faith and Holy Church. The triumphant close of their long crusade intensified this spiritual pride; and Spanish architecture and sculpture ran riot in a wealth of ornament and detail, that cannot but arrest though it often wearies the eye.

Such was the “plateresque” or “silversmith” method of elaborate decoration, seen at its best at Avila in the beautiful Renaissance tomb of Prince John, which though ornate is yet refined and pure, at its most florid in the façade of the Convent of San Pablo at Valladolid. Under its blighting spell the strong simplicity of an earlier age withered; and Gothic and Renaissance styles alike were to perish through the false standard of merit applied to them by a decadent school.



FAÇADE OF SAN PABLO AT VALLADOLID

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LACOSTE,  
MADRID

The first impression emerging from a survey of Queen Isabel's reign is the thought of the transformation those thirty years had wrought in the character of her land. It is not too much to say that in this time Spain had passed from mediævalism to take her place in a modern world. She had conquered not only her foes abroad but anarchy at home. She had evolved a working-system of government and discovered a New World. She had trampled out heresy; and thus provided a solution of the religious problem at a time when most of the other nations of Europe were only beginning to recognise its difficulties.

Not all these changes were for the best. On the heavy price paid in blood and terror for the realization of the ideal "One people, one Faith" we have already remarked. We can see it with clear eyes now; but at the time the sense of orthodoxy above their fellows, that arose from persecuting zeal, gave to the Spanish nation a special power; and Isabel "the Catholic" was the heroine of her own age above all for the bigotry that permitted the fires and tortures of the Inquisition.

A woman ... [says Martin Hume] whose saintly devotion to her Faith blinded her eyes to human things, and whose anxiety to please the God of Mercy made her merciless to those she thought His enemies.

With this verdict, a condemnation yet a plea for understanding, Isabel, "the persecutor" must pass before the modern judgment-bar. In her personal relations, both as wife and mother, and in her capacity as Queen on the other hand she deserves our unstinted admiration.

The reign of Ferdinand and Isabel [says Mariéjol] may be summarized in a few words. They had enjoyed great power and they had employed it to the utmost advantage both for themselves and the Spanish nation. Royal authority had been in their hands an instrument of prosperity. Influence abroad,—peace at home,—these were the first fruits of the absolute monarchy.

If criticism maintains that this benevolent government degenerated into despotism during the sixteenth century, while Spain became the tool and purse of imperial ambitions, it should be remembered that neither Castilian Queen nor Aragonese King could

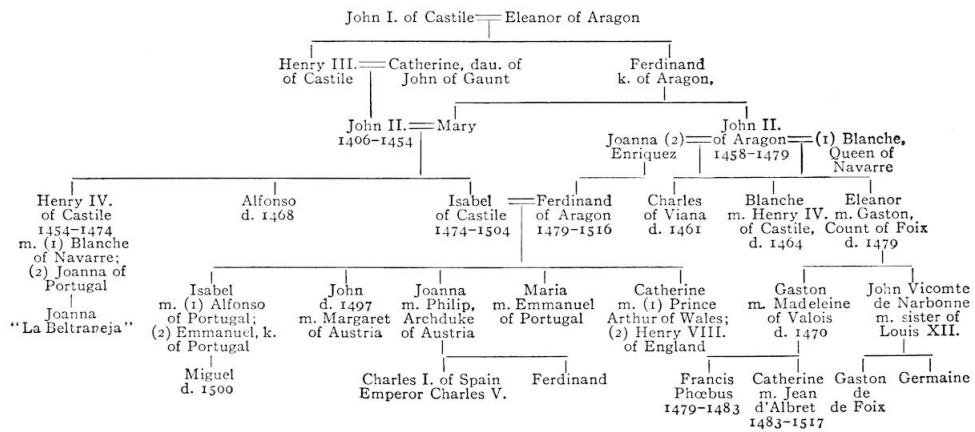
have fought the evils they found successfully with any other weapon than their own supremacy, nor is it fair to hold them responsible for the tyranny of their successors. Ferdinand indeed may be blamed for yielding to the lure of an Italian kingdom; but even his astuteness could not have foreseen the successive deaths that finally secured the Spanish Crown for a Hapsburg and an Emperor.

These were the tricks of Fortune, who according to Machiavelli is “the mistress of one-half our actions.” The other half is in human reckoning; and Isabel in her sincerity and strength shaped the destiny of Castile as far as in her lay with the instinct of a true ruler.

“It appeared the hand of God was with her,” says the historian, Florez, “because she was very fortunate in those things that she undertook.”

# APPENDIX I

## HOUSE OF TRASTAMARA IN CASTILE AND ARAGON



## APPENDIX II

### PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES FOR THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ISABEL OF CASTILE

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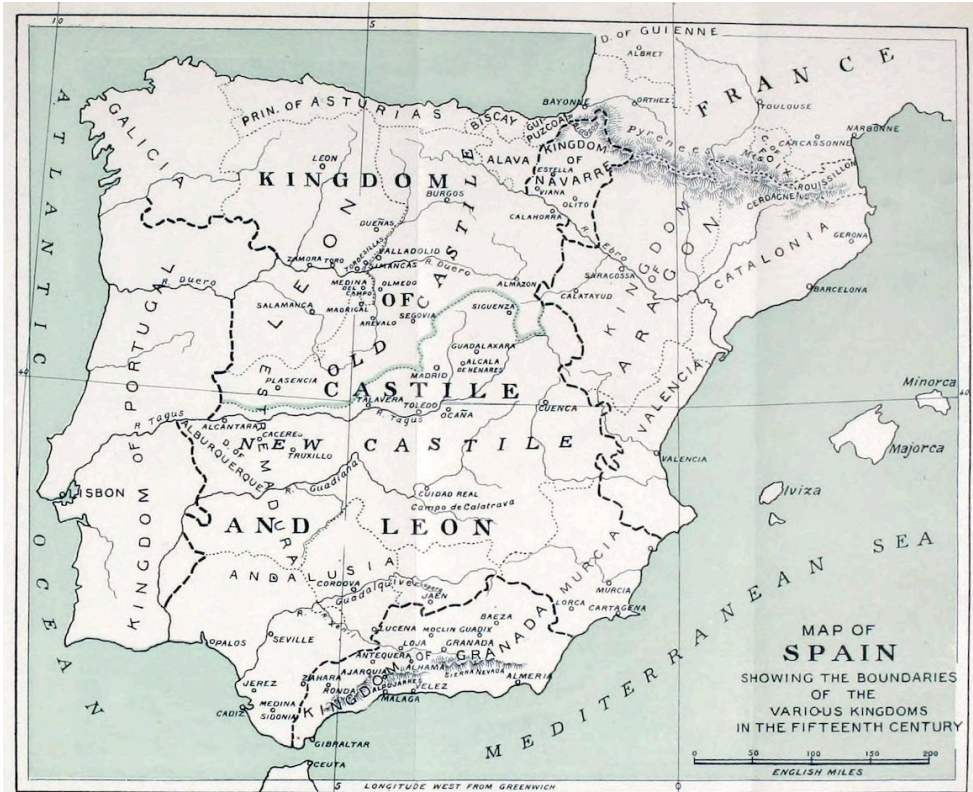
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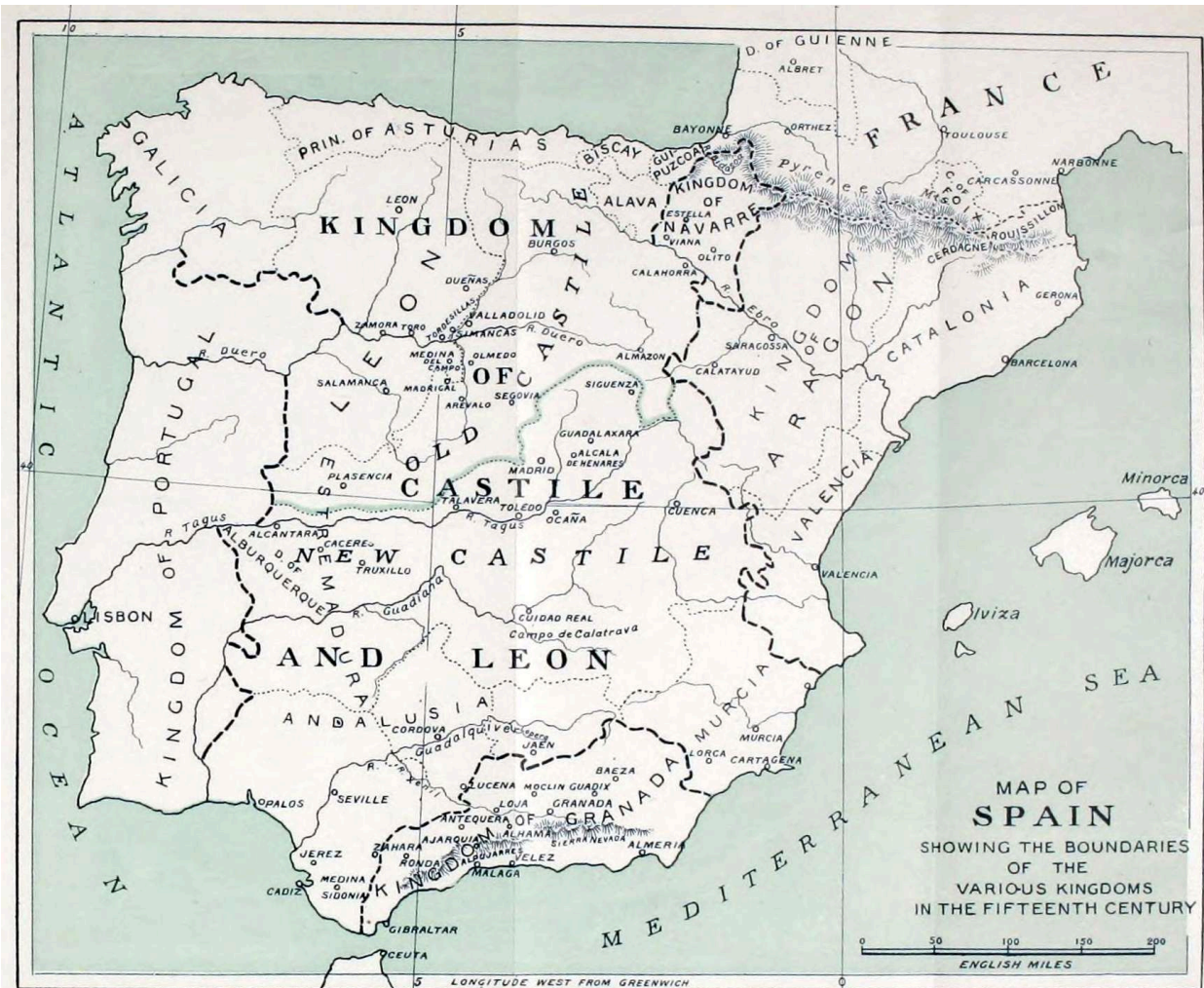
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