

spark of latent affection for his ancient favorite lurked within his breast. John, yet fearing the overgrown power of the constable too much to encounter him openly, condescended to adopt the dastardly policy of Tiberius on a similar occasion, by caressing the man whom he designed to ruin; and he eventually obtained possession of his person, only by a violation of the royal safe-conduct. The constable's trial was referred to a commission of jurists and privy counsellors, who, after a summary and informal investigation, pronounced on him the sentence of death on a specification of charges either general and indeterminate, or of the most trivial import. "If the king," says Garibay, "had dispensed similar justice to all his nobles, who equally deserved it in those turbulent times, he would have had but few to reign over."³⁸

The constable had supported his disgrace, from the first, with an equanimity not to have been expected from his elation in prosperity; and he now received the tidings of his fate with a similar fortitude. As he rode along the streets to the place of execution, clad in the sable livery of an ordinary criminal, and deserted by those who had been reared by his bounty, the populace, who before called so loudly for his disgrace, struck with this astonishing reverse of his brilliant fortunes, were melted into tears.³⁹ They called to mind the

His death.

³⁸ Crónica de Alvaro de Luna, tit. 128. — Crónica de Juan II., pp. 457, 460, 572. — Abarca, Reyes de Aragon, tom. ii. fol. 227, 228. — Garibay, Compendio Historial de

las Crónicas de España, (Barcelona, 1628,) tom. ii. p. 493.

³⁹ Crónica de Alvaro de Luna, tit. 128. — What a contrast to all this is afforded by the vivid por-

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numerous instances of his magnanimity. They reflected, that the ambitious schemes of his rivals had been not a whit less selfish, though less successful, than his own; and that, if his cupidity appeared insatiable, he had dispensed the fruits of it in acts of princely munificence. He himself maintained a serene and even cheerful aspect. Meeting one of the domestics of Prince Henry, he bade him request the prince "to reward the attachment of his servants with a different guerdon from what his master had assigned to him." As he ascended the scaffold, he surveyed the apparatus of death with composure, and calmly submitted himself to the stroke of the executioner, who, in the savage style of the executions of that day, plunged his knife into the throat of his victim, and deliberately severed his head from his body. A basin, for the reception of alms to defray the expenses of his interment, was placed at one extremity of the scaffold; and his mutilated remains, after having been exposed for several days to the gaze of the populace, were removed, by the brethren of a charitable order, to a place called the hermitage of St. Andrew, appropriated as the cemetery for malefactors.⁴⁰

1453.

Such was the tragical end of Alvaro de Luna; a man, who, for more than thirty years, controlled

trait, sketched by John de Mena, of the constable in the noontide of his glory.

"Este caualga sobre la fortuna
y doma su cuello con asperas riendas
y aunque del tenga tan muchas de prendas
ella non le osa tocar de ninguna," &c.
Laberinto, coplas 235 et seq.

⁴⁰ Cibdareal, Centon Epistolario, ep. 103. — Crónica de Juan II., p. 564. — Crónica de Alvaro de Luna, tit. 128, and Apend. p. 458.

the counsels of the sovereign, or, to speak more properly, was himself the sovereign of Castile. His fate furnishes one of the most memorable lessons in history. It was not lost on his contemporaries; and the marquis of Santillana has made use of it to point the moral of perhaps the most pleasing of his didactic compositions.⁴¹ John did not long survive his favorite's death, which he was seen afterwards to lament even with tears. Indeed during the whole of the trial he had exhibited the most pitiable agitation, having twice issued and recalled his orders countermanding the constable's execution; and, had it not been for the superior constancy, or vindictive temper of the queen, he would probably have yielded to these impulses of returning affection.⁴²

Lamented
by John.

So far from deriving a wholesome warning from experience, John confided the entire direction of his kingdom to individuals not less interested, but possessed of far less enlarged capacities, than the former minister. Penetrated with remorse at the retrospect of his unprofitable life, and filled with

⁴¹ Entitled "Doctrinal de Privados." See the Cancionero General, fol. 37 et seq. — In the following stanza, the constable is made to moralize with good effect on the instability of worldly grandeur.

"Que se hizo la moneda
que guarde para mis daños
tantos tiempos tantos años
plata joyas oro y seda
y de todo no me queda
sino este cadahalso;
mundo malo mundo falso
no ay quien contigo pueda."

Manrique has the same sentiments in his exquisite "Coplas."

I give Longfellow's version, as spirited as it is literal.

"Spain's haughty Constable, — the great
And gallant Master, — cruel fate
Stripped him of all.
Breathe not a whisper of his pride,
He on the gloomy scaffold died,
Ignoble fall!
The countless treasures of his care,
Hamlets and villas green and fair,
His mighty power, —
What were they all but grief and shame,
Tears and a broken heart, — when came
The parting hour!"

Stanza 21.

⁴² Cibdareal, Centon Epistolario, ep. 103. — Crónica de Alvaro de Luna, tit. 128.

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John II.

melancholy presages of the future, the unhappy prince lamented to his faithful attendant Cibdareal, on his deathbed, that "he had not been born the son of a mechanic, instead of king of Castile." He died July 21st, 1454, after a reign of eight and forty years, if reign it may be called, which was more properly one protracted minority. John left one child by his first wife, Henry, who succeeded him on the throne; and by his second wife two others, Alfonso, then an infant, and Isabella, afterwards queen of Castile, the subject of the present narrative. She had scarcely reached her fourth year at the time of her father's decease, having been born on the 22d of April, 1451, at Madrigal. The king recommended his younger children to the especial care and protection of their brother Henry, and assigned the town of Cuellar, with its territory and a considerable sum of money, for the maintenance of the Infanta Isabella."⁴³

Birth of Isa-
bella.

⁴³ Crónica de Juan II., p. 576. — Cibdareal, Centon Epistolario, epist. 105.

There has been considerable discrepancy, even among cotemporary writers, both as to the place and the epoch of Isabella's birth, amounting, as regards the latter, to nearly two years. I have adopted the conclusion of Señor Clemencin, formed from a careful collation

of the various authorities, in the sixth volume of the *Memorias de la Real Academia de Historia*, (Madrid, 1821,) *Ilust.* 1, pp. 56-60. Isabella was descended both on the father's and mother's side from the famous John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. See Florez, *Memorias de las Reynas Cathólicas*, (2d ed. Madrid, 1770,) tom. ii. pp. 743, 787.

CHAPTER II.

CONDITION OF ARAGON DURING THE MINORITY OF FERDINAND.—REIGN OF JOHN II., OF ARAGON.

1452 — 1472.

John of Aragon.—Difficulties with his Son Carlos.—Birth of Ferdinand.—Insurrection of Catalonia.—Death of Carlos.—His Character.—Tragical Story of Blanche.—Young Ferdinand besieged by the Catalans.—Treaty between France and Aragon.—Distress and Embarrassments of John.—Siege and Surrender of Barcelona.

WE must now transport the reader to Aragon, in order to take a view of the extraordinary circumstances, which opened the way for Ferdinand's succession in that kingdom. The throne, which had become vacant by the death of Martin, in 1410, was awarded by the committee of judges to whom the nation had referred the great question of the succession, to Ferdinand, regent of Castile during the minority of his nephew, John the Second; and thus the sceptre, after having for more than two centuries descended in the family of Barcelona, was transferred to the same bastard branch of Trastamara, that ruled over the Castilian monarchy.¹ Ferdinand the First was succeeded after a

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¹ The reader who may be curious in this matter will find the pedigree exhibiting the titles of the several competitors to the

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brief reign by his son Alfonso the Fifth, whose personal history belongs less to Aragon than to Naples, which kingdom he acquired by his own prowess, and where he established his residence, attracted, no doubt, by the superior amenity of the climate and the higher intellectual culture, as well as the pliant temper of the people, far more grateful to the monarch than the sturdy independence of his own countrymen.

John of Aragon.

During his long absence, the government of his hereditary domains devolved on his brother John, as his lieutenant-general in Aragon.² This prince had married Blanche, widow of Martin, king of Sicily, and daughter of Charles the Third, of Navarre. By her he had three children; Carlos, prince of Viana;³ Blanche, married to and afterwards repudiated by Henry the Fourth, of Castile;⁴ and Eleanor, who espoused a French noble, Gaston, count of Foix. On the demise of the elder Blanche, the crown of Navarre rightfully belonged to her son, the prince of Viana, conformably to a stipulation in her marriage contract, that, on the

Title of his son Carlos to Navarre.
1442.

crown given by Mr. Hallam. (State of Europe during the Middle Ages, (2d ed. London, 1819,) vol. ii. p. 60, note.) The claims of Ferdinand were certainly not derived from the usual laws of descent.

² The reader of Spanish history often experiences embarrassment from the identity of names in the various princes of the Peninsula. Thus the John, mentioned in the text, afterwards John II., might be easily confounded with his namesake and contemporary, John

II., of Castile. The genealogical table, at the beginning of this History, will show their relationship to each other.

³ His grandfather, Charles III., created this title in favor of Carlos, appropriating it as the designation henceforth of the heir apparent. — Aleson, *Anales del Reyno de Navarra*, contin. de Moret, (Pamplona, 1766,) tom. iv. p. 398. — Salazar de Mendoza, *Monarquía*, tom. ii. p. 331.

⁴ See Part I. Chap. 3, Note 4, of this History.

event of her death, the eldest heir male, and, in default of sons, female, should inherit the kingdom to the exclusion of her husband.⁵ This provision, which had been confirmed by her father, Charles the Third, in his testament, was also recognised in her own, accompanied however with a request, that her son Carlos, then twenty-one years of age, would, before assuming the sovereignty, solicit "the good will and approbation of his father."⁶

Whether this approbation was withheld, or whether it was ever solicited, does not appear. It seems probable, however, that Carlos, perceiving no disposition in his father to relinquish the rank and nominal title of king of Navarre, was willing he should retain them, so long as he himself should be allowed to exercise the actual rights of sovereignty; which indeed he did, as lieutenant-general or governor of the kingdom, at the time of his mother's decease, and for some years after.⁷

In 1447, John of Aragon contracted a second alliance with Joan Henriquez, of the blood royal of Castile, and daughter of Don Frederic Henriquez, admiral of that kingdom;⁸ a woman considerably younger than himself, of consummate address, intrepid spirit, and unprincipled ambition.

⁵ This fact, vaguely and variously reported by Spanish writers, is fully established by Aleson, who cites the original instrument, contained in the archives of the counts of Lerin. *Anales de Navarra*, tom. iv. pp. 354, 365.

⁶ See the reference to the original document in Aleson. (Tom. iv.

pp. 365, 366.) This industrious writer has established the title of Prince Carlos to Navarre, so frequently misunderstood or misrepresented by the national historians, on an incontestable basis.

⁷ *Ibid.*, tom. iv. p. 467.

⁸ See Part I. Chap. 3, of this work.

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Some years after this union, John sent his wife into Navarre, with authority to divide with his son Carlos the administration of the government there. This encroachment on his rights, for such Carlos reasonably deemed it, was not mitigated by the deportment of the young queen, who displayed all the insolence of sudden elevation, and who from the first seems to have regarded the prince with the malevolent eye of a step-mother.

He takes
arms against
his father.

Navarre was at that time divided by two potent factions, styled, from their ancient leaders, Beaumonts and Agramonts; whose hostility, originating in a personal feud, had continued long after its original cause had become extinct.⁹ The prince of Viana was intimately connected with some of the principal partisans of the Beaumont faction, who heightened by their suggestions the indignation to which his naturally gentle temper had been roused by the usurpation of Joan, and who even called on him to assume openly, and in defiance of his father, the sovereignty which of right belonged to him. The emissaries of Castile, too, eagerly seized this occasion of retaliating on John his interference in the domestic concerns of that monarchy, by fanning the spark of discord into a flame. The Agramonts, on the other hand, induced rather by hostility to their political adversaries than to the prince of Viana, vehemently espoused the cause of the

⁹ Gaillard errs in referring the origin of these factions to this epoch. (*Histoire de la Rivalité de France et de l'Espagne*, (Paris, 1801,) tom. iii. p. 227.) Aleson quotes a proclamation of John in relation to them in the lifetime of Queen Blanche. *Annales de Navarre*, tom. iv. p. 494.

queen. In this revival of half-buried animosities, fresh causes of disgust were multiplied, and matters soon came to the worst extremity. The queen, who had retired to Estella, was besieged there by the forces of the prince. The king, her husband, on receiving intelligence of this, instantly marched to her relief; and the father and son confronted each other at the head of their respective armies near the town of Aybar.¹⁰

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The unnatural position, in which they thus found themselves, seems to have sobered their minds, and to have opened the way to an accommodation, the terms of which were actually arranged, when the long-smothered rancor of the ancient factions of Navarre thus brought in martial array against each other, refusing all control, precipitated them into an engagement. The royal forces were inferior in number, but superior in discipline, to those of the prince, who, after a well-contested action, saw his own party entirely discomfited, and himself a prisoner.¹¹

Is defeated.

1452.

Some months before this event, Queen Joan had been delivered of a son, afterwards so famous as Ferdinand the Catholic; whose humble prospects, at the time of his birth, as a younger brother, afforded a striking contrast with the splendid destiny

Birth of Ferdinand.

¹⁰ Zurita, Anales, tom. iii. fol. 278. — Lucio Marineo Siculo, Cronista de sus Magestades, Las Cosas Memorables de España, (Alcalá de Henares, 1539,) fol. 104. — Aleson, Anales de Navarra, tom. iv. pp. 494 — 498.

¹¹ Abarca, Reyes de Aragon, tom. ii. fol. 223. — Aleson, Anales de Navarra, tom. iv. pp. 501 — 503. — L. Marineo, Cosas Memorables, fol. 105.

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which eventually awaited him. This auspicious event occurred in the little town of Sos, in Aragon, on the 10th of March, 1452; and, as it was nearly contemporary with the capture of Constantinople, is regarded by Garibay to have been providentially assigned to this period, as affording, in a religious view, an ample counterpoise to the loss of the capital of Christendom.¹²

The demonstrations of satisfaction, exhibited by John and his court on this occasion, contrasted strangely with the stern severity with which he continued to visit the offences of his elder offspring. It was not till after many months of captivity that the king, in deference to public opinion rather than the movements of his own heart, was induced to release his son, on conditions, however, so illiberal (his indisputable claim to Navarre not being even touched upon) as to afford no reasonable basis of reconciliation. The young prince accordingly, on his return to Navarre, became again involved in the

¹² Compendio, tom. iii. p. 419.— L. Marineo describes the heavens as uncommonly serene at the moment of Ferdinand's birth. "The sun, which had been obscured with clouds during the whole day, suddenly broke forth with unwonted splendor. A crown was also beheld in the sky, composed of various brilliant colors like those of a rainbow. All which appearances were interpreted by the spectators as an omen, that the child then born would be the most illustrious among men." (Cosas Memorables, fol. 153.) Garibay postpones the nativity of Ferdinand to the year 1453, and L. Marineo, who

ascertains with curious precision even the date of his conception, fixes his birth in 1450. (fol. 153.) But Alonso de Palencia in his History, (Verdadera Corónica de Don Enrique IV., Rei de Castilla y Leon, y del Rei Don Alonso su Hermano, MS.) and Andrés Bernaldez, Cura de Los Palacios, (Historia de los Reyes Católicos, MS., c. 8,) both of them contemporaries, refer this event to the period assigned in the text; and, as the same epoch is adopted by the accurate Zurita, (Anales, tom. iv. fol. 9,) I have given it the preference.