

and so much more unworthy of her in every other point of view, Isabella was now to be united. On receiving the intelligence, she confined herself to her apartment, abstaining from all nourishment and sleep for a day and night, says a contemporary writer, and imploring Heaven, in the most piteous manner, to save her from this dishonor, by her own death or that of her enemy. As she was bewailing her hard fate to her faithful friend, Beatriz de Bobadilla, "God will not permit it," exclaimed the high-spirited lady, "neither will I;" then drawing forth a dagger from her bosom, which she kept there for the purpose, she solemnly vowed to plunge it in the heart of the master of Calatrava, as soon as he appeared!²⁶

Happily her loyalty was not put to so severe a test. No sooner had the grand master received the bull of dispensation from the pope, than, resigning his dignities in his military order, he set about such sumptuous preparations for his wedding, as were due to the rank of his intended bride. When these were completed, he began his journey from his residence at Almagro to Madrid, where the nuptial ceremony was to be performed, attended by a splendid retinue of friends and followers. But, on the very first evening after his de-

²⁶ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., cap. 73. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. p. 450. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom. ii. p. 532.

This lady, Doña Beatriz Fernandez de Bobadilla, the most intimate personal friend of Isabella, will appear often in the course of our narrative. Gonzalo de Oviedo,

who knew her well, describes her as "illustrating her generous lineage by her conduct, which was wise, virtuous, and valiant." (Quincuagenas, MS., dial. de Cabrera.) The last epithet, rather singular for a female character, was not unmerited.

PART
I.His sudden
death.

1466.

parture, he was attacked by an acute disorder while at Villarubia, a village not far from Ciudad Real, which terminated his life in four days. He died, says Palencia, with imprecations on his lips, because his life had not been spared some few weeks longer.²⁷ His death was attributed by many to poison, administered to him by some of the nobles, who were envious of his good fortune. But, notwithstanding the seasonableness of the event, and the familiarity of the crime in that age, no shadow of imputation was ever cast on the pure fame of Isabella.²⁸

Battle of Ol-
medo.

The death of the grand master dissipated, at a blow, all the fine schemes of the marquis of Villena, as well as every hope of reconciliation between the parties. The passions, which had been only smothered, now burst forth into open hostility; and it was resolved to refer the decision of the question to the issue of a battle. The two armies met on the plains of Olmedo, where, two and twenty years before, John, the father of Henry, had been in like manner

²⁷ Palencia imputes his death to an attack of the quinsy. *Corónica*, MS., cap. 73.

²⁸ Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, fol. 77.—Caro de Torres, *Historia de las Ordenes Militares de Santiago, Calatrava, y Alcántara*, (Madrid, 1629,) lib. 2, cap. 59.—Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 85.—Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., cap. 73.—Gaillard remarks on this event, "Chacun crut sur cette mort ce qu'il voulut." And again in a few pages after, speaking of Isabella, he says, "On remarqua que tous ceux qui pouvoient faire obstacle à la satisfaction ou à la fortune

d'Isabelle, mouroient toujours à propos pour elle." (*Rivalité*, tom. iii. pp. 280, 286.) This ingenious writer is fond of seasoning his style with those piquant sarcasms, in which oftentimes more is meant than meets the ear, and which Voltaire rendered fashionable in history. I doubt, however, if, amid all the heats of controversy and faction, there is a single Spanish writer of that age, or indeed of any subsequent one, who has ventured to impute to the contrivance of Isabella any one of the fortunate coincidences, to which the author alludes.

confronted by his insurgent subjects. The royal army was considerably the larger ; but the deficiency of numbers in the other was amply supplied by the intrepid spirit of its leaders. The archbishop of Toledo appeared at the head of its squadrons, conspicuous by a rich scarlet mantle, embroidered with a white cross, thrown over his armour. The young prince Alfonso, scarcely fourteen years of age, rode by his side, clad like him in complete mail. Before the action commenced, the archbishop sent a message to Beltran de la Cueva, then raised to the title of duke of Albuquerque, cautioning him not to venture in the field, as no less than forty cavaliers had sworn his death. The gallant nobleman, who, on this as on some other occasions, displayed a magnanimity, which in some degree excused the partiality of his master, returned by the envoy a particular description of the dress he intended to wear ; a chivalrous defiance, which wellnigh cost him his life. Henry did not care to expose his person in the engagement, and, on receiving erroneous intelligence of the discomfiture of his party, retreated precipitately with some thirty or forty horsemen to the shelter of a neighbouring village. The action lasted three hours, until the combatants were separated by the shades of evening, without either party having decidedly the advantage, although that of Henry retained possession of the field of battle. The archbishop of Toledo and Prince Alfonso were the last to retire ; and the former was seen repeatedly to rally his broken squadrons, notwith-

PART
I.

1467.

Civil anar-
chy.

standing his arm had been pierced through with a lance early in the engagement. The king and the prelate may be thought to have exchanged characters in this tragedy.²⁹

The battle was attended with no result, except that of inspiring appetites, which had tasted of blood, with a relish for more unlicensed carnage. The most frightful anarchy now prevailed throughout the kingdom, dismembered by factions, which the extreme youth of one monarch and the imbecility of the other made it impossible to control. In vain did the papal legate, who had received a commission to that effect from his master, interpose his mediation, and even fulminate sentence of excommunication against the confederates. The independent barons plainly told him, that "those, who advised the pope that he had a right to interfere in the temporal concerns of Castile, deceived him; and that they had a perfect right to depose their monarch on sufficient grounds, and should exercise it."⁵⁰

Every city, nay, almost every family, became now divided within itself. In Seville and in Cordova, the inhabitants of one street carried on open war against those in another. The churches, which were fortified, and occupied with bodies of armed men, were many of them sacked and burnt to the ground. In Toledo no less than four thousand dwellings were consumed in one general conflagration.

²⁹ Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum* Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 1, Decades, lib. 1, cap. 2. — Zurita, cap. 80.
Anales, lib. 18, cap. 10. — Castillo, ³⁰ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, Crónica, cap. 93, 97. — Alonso de MS., cap. 82.

gration. The ancient family feuds, as those between the great houses of Guzman and Ponce de Leon in Andalusia, being revived, carried new division into the cities, whose streets literally ran with blood.³¹ In the country, the nobles and gentry, issuing from their castles, captured the defenceless traveller, who was obliged to redeem his liberty, by the payment of a heavier ransom than was exacted even by the Mahometans. All communication on the high roads was suspended, and no man, says a contemporary, dared move abroad beyond the walls of his city, unless attended by an armed escort. The organization of one of those popular confederacies, known under the name of *Hermandad*, in 1465, which continued in operation during the remainder of this gloomy period, brought some mitigation to these evils, by the fearlessness, with which it exercised its functions, even against offenders of the highest rank, some of whose castles were razed to the ground by its orders. But this relief was only partial; and the successful opposition, which the *Hermandad* sometimes encountered on these occasions, served to aggravate the horrors of the scene. Meanwhile, fearful omens, the usual accompaniments of such troubled times, were witnessed; the heated imagination

³¹ Zuñiga, *Anales de Sevilla*, pp. 351, 352. — *Carta del Levantamiento de Toledo*, apud Castillo, *Crónica*, p. 109. — The historian of Seville has quoted an animated apostrophe addressed to the citizens by one of their number in this season of discord:

"Mezquina Sevilla en la sangre bañada
de los tus hijos, i tus cavalleros,
que fado enemigo te tiene minguada," &c.

The poem concludes with a summons to throw off the yoke of their oppressors:

"Despierta Sevilla e sacude el imperio,
que faze a tus nobles tanto vituperio."
See *Anales*, p. 359.

PART
I.

interpreted the ordinary operations of nature as signs of celestial wrath;³² and the minds of men were filled with dismal bodings of some inevitable evil, like that which overwhelmed the monarchy in the days of their Gothic ancestors.³³

Death and
character of
Alfonso.

1468.
July 5.

At this crisis, a circumstance occurred, which gave a new face to affairs, and totally disconcerted the operations of the confederates. This was the loss of their young leader, Alfonso; who was found dead in his bed, on the 5th of July, 1468, at the village of Cardeñosa, about two leagues from Avila, which had so recently been the theatre of his glory. His sudden death was imputed, in the usual suspicious temper of that corrupt age, to poison, supposed to have been conveyed to him in a trout, on which he dined the day preceding. Others attributed it to the plague, which had followed in the train of evils, that desolated this unhappy country. Thus at the age of fifteen, and after a brief reign, if reign it may be called, of three years, perished this young prince, who, under happier auspices and in maturer life, might have ruled over his country with a wisdom equal to that of any of its monarchs. Even in the disadvantageous position, in which he had been placed,

³² "Quod in pace fors, seu natura, tunc fatum et ira dei vocabatur;" says Tacitus, (*Historiæ*, lib. 4, cap. 26,) adverting to a similar state of excitement.

³³ Saez quotes a MS. letter of a contemporary, exhibiting a frightful picture of these disorders. (*Monedas de Enrique IV.*, p. 1,

not. — Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 83, 87, et passim. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. p. 451. — Marina, *Teoría*, tom. ii. p. 487. — Alonso de Palencia, *Crónica*, MS., part. 1, cap. 69.) The active force kept on duty by the Hermandad amounted to 3000 horse. *Ibid.*, cap. 89, 90.

he gave clear indications of future excellence. A short time before his death, he was heard to remark, on witnessing the oppressive acts of some of the nobles, "I must endure this patiently, until I am a little older." On another occasion, being solicited, by the citizens of Toledo, to approve of some act of extortion which they had committed, he replied, "God forbid I should countenance such injustice!" And on being told that the city, in that case, would probably transfer its allegiance to Henry, he added, "Much as I love power, I am not willing to purchase it at such a price." Noble sentiments, but not at all palatable to the grandees of his party, who saw with alarm that the young lion, when he had reached his strength, would be likely to burst the bonds, with which they had enthralled him.³⁴

It is not easy to consider the reign of Alfonso in any other light, than that of a usurpation; although some Spanish writers, and among the rest Marina, a competent critic when not blinded by prejudice, regard him as a rightful sovereign, and as such to be enrolled among the monarchs of Castile.³⁵ Marina, indeed, admits the ceremony at Avila to have been originally the work of a faction, and in itself informal and unconstitutional; but he considers it to have received a legitimate sanction from its subsequent recognition by the people. But I do not find, that the deposition of Henry the

His reign a
usurpation.

³⁴ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., cap. 87, 92. — Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 94. — Garibay, *Compendio*, lib. 17, cap. 20.

³⁵ Marina, *Teoria*, part. 2, cap. 38.

PART
I.

Fourth was ever confirmed by an act of cortes. He still continued to reign with the consent of a large portion, probably the majority, of his subjects; and it is evident that proceedings, so irregular as those at Avila, could have no pretence to constitutional validity, without a very general expression of approbation on the part of the nation.

The crown
offered to
Isabella.

The leaders of the confederates were thrown into consternation by an event, which threatened to dissolve their league, and to leave them exposed to the resentment of an offended sovereign. In this conjuncture, they naturally turned their eyes on Isabella, whose dignified and commanding character might counterbalance the disadvantages arising from the unsuitableness of her sex for so perilous a situation, and justify her election in the eyes of the people. She had continued in the family of Henry during the greater part of the civil war; until the occupation of Segovia by the insurgents, after the battle of Olmedo, enabled her to seek the protection of her younger brother Alfonso, to which she was the more inclined by her disgust with the license of a court, where the love of pleasure scorned even the veil of hypocrisy. On the death of her brother, she withdrew to a monastery at Avila, where she was visited by the archbishop of Toledo, who, in behalf of the confederates, requested her to occupy the station lately filled by Alfonso, and allow herself to be proclaimed queen of Castile.³⁶

³⁶ Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum* 1, cap. 92. — Florez, *Reynas Cathólicas*, tom. ii. p. 790. — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part.

CHAPTER
III.She declines
it.

Isabella discerned too clearly, however, the path of duty and probably of interest. She unhesitatingly refused the seductive proffer, and replied, that, "while her brother Henry lived, none other had a right to the crown; that the country had been divided long enough under the rule of two contending monarchs; and that the death of Alfonso might perhaps be interpreted into an indication from Heaven of its disapprobation of their cause." She expressed herself desirous of establishing a reconciliation between the parties, and offered heartily to coöperate with her brother in the reformation of existing abuses. Neither the eloquence nor entreaties of the primate could move her from her purpose; and, when a deputation from Seville announced to her that that city, in common with the rest of Andalusia, had unfurled its standards in her name and proclaimed her sovereign of Castile, she still persisted in the same wise and temperate policy.³⁷

The confederates were not prepared for this magnanimous act from one so young, and in opposition to the advice of her most venerated counselors. No alternative remained, however, but that of negotiating an accommodation on the best terms possible with Henry, whose facility of temper and love of repose naturally disposed him to an amicable adjustment of his differences. With these dispositions, a reconciliation was effected between

Treaty between Henry
and the confederates.

³⁷ Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum* — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, Decad., lib. 1, cap. 3. — Ferreras, part. 1, cap. 92. — part. 2, cap. 5. Hist. d'Espagne, tom. vii. p. 218.

PART
I.

the parties on the following conditions; namely, that a general amnesty should be granted by the king for all past offences; that the queen, whose dissolute conduct was admitted to be matter of notoriety, should be divorced from her husband, and sent back to Portugal; that Isabella should have the principality of the Asturias (the usual demesne of the heir apparent to the crown) settled on her, together with a specific provision suitable to her rank; that she should be immediately recognised heir to the crowns of Castile and Leon; that a cortes should be convoked within forty days for the purpose of bestowing a legal sanction on her title, as well as of reforming the various abuses of government; and finally, that Isabella should not be constrained to marry in opposition to her own wishes, nor should she do so without the consent of her brother.³⁸

Isabella
acknowledg-
ed heir to
the crown
at Toros de
Guisando.

1468.
Sept. 8.

In pursuance of these arrangements, an interview took place between Henry and Isabella, each attended by a brilliant *cortége* of cavaliers and nobles, at a place called Toros de Guisando, in New Castile.³⁹ The monarch embraced his sister with the tenderest marks of affection, and then proceeded solemnly to recognise her as his future and rightful heir. An oath of allegiance

³⁸ See a copy of the original compact cited at length by Marina, *Teoría*, Apend. no. 11. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, part. 1, cap. 2.

³⁹ So called from four bulls, sculptured in stone, discovered there, with Latin inscriptions thereon, indicating it to have been the site of one of Julius Cæsar's vic-

tories during the civil war. (*Es-trada, Poblacion General de España*, (Madrid, 1748,) tom. i. p. 306. — Galindez de Carbajal, a contemporary, fixes the date of this convention in August. *Anales del Rey Fernando el Católico*, MS., año 1468.