

was repeated by the attendant nobles, who concluded the ceremony by kissing the hand of the princess in token of their homage. In due time the representatives of the nation, convened in cortes at Ocaña, unanimously concurred in their approbation of these preliminary proceedings, and thus Isabella was announced to the world as the lawful successor to the crowns of Castile and Leon.⁴⁰

It can hardly be believed, that Henry was sincere in subscribing conditions so humiliating; nor can his easy and lethargic temper account for his so readily relinquishing the pretensions of the Princess Joanna, whom, notwithstanding the popular imputations on her birth, he seems always to have cherished as his own offspring. He was accused, even while actually signing the treaty, of a secret collusion with the marquis of Villena for the purpose of evading it; an accusation, which derives a plausible coloring from subsequent events.

The new and legitimate basis, on which the pretensions of Isabella to the throne now rested, drew the attention of neighbouring princes, who contended with each other for the honor of her hand.

Suitors to
Isabella.

⁴⁰ Alonso de Palencia, *Crónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 4.—Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 118.—Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. pp. 461, 462.—Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, part. 1, cap. 2.—Castillo affirms that Henry, incensed by his sister's refusal of the king of Portugal, dissolved the cortes at Ocaña, before it had taken the oath of allegiance to her. (*Crónica*, cap. 127.) This assertion, however, is counterbal-

anced by the opposite one of Pulgar, a contemporary writer, like himself. (*Reyes Católicos*, cap. 5.) And as Ferdinand and Isabella, in a letter addressed, after their marriage, to Henry IV., transcribed also by Castillo, allude incidentally to such a recognition as to a well-known fact, the balance of testimony must be admitted to be in favor of it. See Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 114.

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Among these suitors, was a brother of Edward the Fourth, of England, not improbably Richard, duke of Gloucester, since Clarence was then engaged in his intrigues with the earl of Warwick, which led a few months later to his marriage with the daughter of that nobleman. Had she listened to his proposals, the duke would in all likelihood have exchanged his residence in England for Castile, where his ambition, satisfied with the certain reversion of a crown, might have been spared the commission of the catalogue of crimes, which blacken his memory.⁴¹

✦ Another suitor was the duke of Guienne, the unfortunate brother of Louis the Eleventh, and at that time the presumptive heir of the French monarchy. Although the ancient intimacy, which subsisted between the royal families of France and Castile, in some measure favored his pretensions, the disadvantages resulting from such a union were too obvious to escape attention. The two countries were too remote from each other,⁴² and their

⁴¹ Isabella, who in a letter to Henry IV., dated Oct. 12th, 1469, adverts to these proposals of the English prince, as being under consideration at the time of the convention of Toros de Guisando, does not specify which of the brothers of Edward IV. was intended. (Castillo, Crónica, cap. 136.)

Mr. Turner, in his History of England during the Middle Ages, (London, 1825,) quotes part of the address delivered by the Spanish envoy to Richard III., in 1483, in which the orator speaks of "the unkindness, which his queen Isabella had conceived for Edward IV., for his refusal of her, and his taking

instead to wife a widow of England." (Vol. iii. p. 274.) The old chronicler Hall, on the other hand, mentions, that it was currently reported, although he does not appear to credit it, that the earl of Warwick had been despatched into Spain in order to request the hand of the princess Isabella for his master Edward IV., in 1463. (See his Chronicle of England, (London, 1809,) pp. 263, 264.) — I find nothing in the Spanish accounts of that period, which throws any light on these obvious contradictions.

⁴² The territories of France and Castile touched, indeed, on one

inhabitants too dissimilar in character and institutions, to permit the idea of their ever cordially coalescing as one people under a common sovereign. Should the duke of Guienne fail in the inheritance of the crown, it was argued, he would be every way an unequal match for the heiress of Castile; should he succeed to it, it might be feared, that, in case of a union, the smaller kingdom would be considered only as an appendage, and sacrificed to the interests of the larger.⁴³

The person, on whom Isabella turned the most favorable eye, was her kinsman Ferdinand of Aragon. The superior advantages of a connexion, which should be the means of uniting the people of Aragon and Castile into one nation, were indeed manifest. They were the descendants of one common stock, speaking one language, and living under the influence of similar institutions, which had moulded them into a common resemblance of character and manners. From their geographical position, too, they seemed destined by nature to be one nation; and, while separately they were condemned to the rank of petty and subordinate states, they might hope, when consolidated into one monarchy, to rise at once to the first class of European powers. While arguments of this public nature pressed on the mind of Isabella, she was not insensible to those which most powerfully affect the

Ferdinand of
Aragon.

point (Guipuscoa), but were separated along the whole remaining line of frontier by the kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre.

⁴³ Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, cap. 8.—Alonso de Palencia, Corónica, MS., part. 2, cap. 10.

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female heart. Ferdinand was then in the bloom of life, and distinguished for the comeliness of his person. In the busy scenes, in which he had been engaged from his boyhood, he had displayed a chivalrous valor, combined with maturity of judgment far above his years. Indeed, he was decidedly superior to his rivals in personal merit and attractions.⁴⁴ But, while private inclinations thus happily coincided with considerations of expediency for inclining her to prefer the Aragonese match, a scheme was devised in another quarter for the express purpose of defeating it.

Support of
Joanna Bel-
traneja.

A fraction of the royal party, with the family of Mendoza at their head, had retired in disgust with the convention of Toros de Guisando, and openly espoused the cause of the princess Joanna. They even instructed her to institute an appeal before the tribunal of the supreme pontiff, and caused a placard, exhibiting a protest against the validity of the late proceedings, to be nailed secretly in the night to the gate of Isabella's mansion.⁴⁵ Thus were sown the seeds of new dissensions, before the old

⁴⁴ Isabella, in order to acquaint herself more intimately with the personal qualities of her respective suitors, had privately despatched her confidential chaplain, Alonso de Coca, to the courts of France and of Aragon, and his report on his return was altogether favorable to Ferdinand. The duke of Guienne he represented as "a feeble, effeminate prince, with limbs so emaciated as to be almost deformed, and with eyes so weak and watery as to incapacitate him for the ordinary exercises of chivalry. While

Ferdinand, on the other hand, was possessed of a comely, symmetrical figure, a graceful demeanor, and a spirit that was up to any thing;" *muy dispuesto para toda cosa que hacer quisiese*. It is not improbable that the queen of Aragon condescended to practise some of those agreeable arts on the worthy chaplain, which made so sensible an impression on the marquis of Villena.

⁴⁵ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 5.

were completely eradicated. With this disaffected party the marquis of Villena, who, since his reconciliation, had resumed his ancient ascendancy over Henry, now associated himself. Nothing, in the opinion of this nobleman, could be more repugnant to his interests, than the projected union between the houses of Castile and Aragon; to the latter of which, as already noticed,⁴⁶ once belonged the ample domains of his own marquisate, which he imagined would be held by a very precarious tenure should any of this family obtain a footing in Castile.

In the hope of counteracting this project, he endeavoured to revive the obsolete pretensions of Alfonso, king of Portugal; and, the more effectually to secure the coöperation of Henry, he connected with his scheme a proposition for marrying his daughter Joanna with the son and heir of the Portuguese monarch; and thus this unfortunate princess might be enabled to assume at once a station suitable to her birth, and at some future opportunity assert with success her claim to the Castilian crown. In furtherance of this complicated intrigue, Alfonso was invited to renew his addresses to Isabella in a more public manner than he had hitherto done; and a pompous embassy, with the archbishop of Lisbon at its head, appeared at Ocaña, where Isabella was then residing, bearing the proposals of their master. The princess returned, as before, a decided though temperate refusal.⁴⁷

Proposal of
the king of
Portugal re-
jected by Is-
abella.

1469.

⁴⁶ See ante, note 10.

⁴⁷ Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii. p. 391. — Cas-tillo, *Crónica*, cap. 121, 127. —

Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 7. — Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum Decad.*, lib. 1, cap. 7.

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Henry, or rather the marquis of Villena, piqued at this opposition to his wishes, resolved to intimidate her into compliance; and menaced her with imprisonment in the royal fortress at Madrid. Neither her tears nor entreaties would have availed against this tyrannical proceeding; and the marquis was only deterred from putting it in execution by his fear of the inhabitants of Ocaña, who openly espoused the cause of Isabella. Indeed, the common people of Castile very generally supported her in her preference of the Aragonese match. Boys paraded the streets, bearing banners emblazoned with the arms of Aragon, and singing verses prophetic of the glories of the auspicious union. They even assembled round the palace gates, and insulted the ears of Henry and his minister by the repetition of satirical stanzas, which contrasted Alfonso's years with the youthful graces of Ferdinand.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding this popular expression of opinion, however, the constancy of Isabella might at length have yielded to the importunity of her persecutors, had she not been encouraged by her friend, the archbishop of Toledo, who had warmly entered into the interests of Aragon, and who promised, should matters come to extremity, to march in person to her relief at the head of a sufficient force to insure it.

She accepts
Ferdinand.

Isabella, indignant at the oppressive treatment, which she experienced from her brother, as well as at his notorious infraction of almost every article in

⁴⁸ Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 7. — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 7.

the treaty of Toros de Guisando, felt herself released from her corresponding engagements, and determined to conclude the negotiations relative to her marriage, without any further deference to his opinion. Before taking any decisive step, however, she was desirous of obtaining the concurrence of the leading nobles of her party. This was effected without difficulty, through the intervention of the archbishop of Toledo, and of Don Frederic Henriquez, admiral of Castile, and the maternal grandfather of Ferdinand; a person of high consideration, both from his rank and character, and connected by blood with the principal families in the kingdom.⁴⁹ Fortified by their approbation, Isabella dismissed the Aragonese envoy with a favorable answer to his master's suit.⁵⁰

Her reply was received with almost as much satisfaction by the old king of Aragon, John the Second, as by his son. This monarch, who was one of the shrewdest princes of his time, had always been deeply sensible of the importance of consolidating the scattered monarchies of Spain under one head. He had solicited the hand of Isabella for his son, when she possessed only a contingent reversion of the crown. But, when her succession had been settled on a more secure basis, he lost no time in effecting this favorite object of his policy. With the consent of the states, he had transferred to his son the title of king of Sicily, and associated

⁴⁹ Pulgar, Claros Varones, tit. 2. Palencia, Corónica, MS., part. 2,
⁵⁰ L. Marineo, Cosas Memorables, fol. 154. — Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 162. — Alonso de
cos, cap. 9.

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him with himself in the government at home, in order to give him greater consequence in the eyes of his mistress. He then despatched a confidential agent into Castile, with instructions to gain over to his interests all who exercised any influence on the mind of the princess; furnishing him for this purpose with *cartes blanches*, signed by himself and Ferdinand, which he was empowered to fill at his discretion.⁵¹

Articles of
marriage.

1469.

Between parties thus favorably disposed, there was no unnecessary delay. The marriage articles were signed, and sworn to by Ferdinand at Cervera, on the 7th of January. He promised faithfully to respect the laws and usages of Castile; to fix his residence in that kingdom, and not to quit it without the consent of Isabella; to alienate no property belonging to the crown; to prefer no foreigners to municipal offices, and indeed to make no appointments of a civil or military nature, without her consent and approbation; and to resign to her exclusively the right of nomination to ecclesiastical benefices. All ordinances of a public nature were to be subscribed equally by both. Ferdinand engaged, moreover, to prosecute the war against the Moors; to respect King Henry; to suffer every noble to remain unmolested in the possession of his dignities, and not to demand restitution of the domains formerly owned by his father in Castile. The treaty concluded with a specification of a magnificent dower to be settled on Isabella, far

⁵¹ Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 157, 163.

more ample than that usually assigned to the queens of Aragon.⁵² The circumspection of the framers of this instrument is apparent from the various provisions introduced into it solely to calm the apprehensions and to conciliate the good will of the party disaffected to the marriage; while the national partialities of the Castilians in general were gratified by the jealous restrictions imposed on Ferdinand, and the relinquishment of all the essential rights of sovereignty to his consort.

While these affairs were in progress, Isabella's situation was becoming extremely critical. She had availed herself of the absence of her brother and the marquis of Villena in the south, whither they had gone for the purpose of suppressing the still lingering spark of insurrection, to transfer her residence from Ocaña to Madrigal, where, under the protection of her mother, she intended to abide the issue of the pending negotiations with Aragon. Far, however, from escaping the vigilant eye of the marquis of Villena by this movement, she laid herself more open to it. She found the bishop of Burgos, the nephew of the marquis, stationed at Madrigal, who now served as an effectual spy upon her actions. Her most confidential servants were corrupted, and conveyed intelligence of her proceedings to her enemy. Alarmed at the actual progress made in the negotiations for her marriage,

Critical situation of Isabella.

⁵² See the copy of the original marriage contract, as it exists in the archives of Simancas, extracted in tom. vi. of *Memorias de la Acad. de Hist.*, Apend. no. 1. — Zurita, *Anales*, lib. 18, cap. 21. — Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. vii. p. 236.

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the marquis was now convinced that he could only hope to defeat them by resorting to the coercive system, which he had before abandoned. He accordingly instructed the archbishop of Seville to march at once to Madrigal with a sufficient force to secure Isabella's person; and letters were at the same time addressed by Henry to the citizens of that place, menacing them with his resentment, if they should presume to interpose in her behalf. The timid inhabitants disclosed the purport of the mandate to Isabella, and besought her to provide for her own safety. This was perhaps the most critical period in her life. Betrayed by her own domestics, deserted even by those friends of her own sex, who might have afforded her sympathy and counsel, but who fled affrighted from the scene of danger, and on the eve of falling into the snares of her enemies, she beheld the sudden extinction of those hopes, which she had so long and so fondly cherished.⁵³

In this exigency, she contrived to convey a knowledge of her situation to Admiral Henriquez, and the archbishop of Toledo. The active prelate, on receiving the summons, collected a body of horse, and reinforced by the admiral's troops, advanced with such expedition to Madrigal, that he succeeded in anticipating the arrival of the enemy. Isabella received her friends with unfeigned satis-

⁵³ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 12. — Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 128, 131, 136. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 162. —

Beatrice de Bobadilla and Mencia de la Torre, the two ladies most in her confidence, had escaped to the neighbouring town of Coca.