

Guienne, the destined spouse of her rival Joanna, had died in France; but not until he had testified his contempt of his engagements with the Castilian princess by openly soliciting the hand of the heiress of Burgundy.¹⁷ Subsequent negotiations for her marriage with two other princes had entirely failed. The doubts which hung over her birth, and which the public protestations of Henry and his queen, far from dispelling, served only to augment, by the necessity which they implied for such an extraordinary proceeding, were sufficient to deter any one from a connexion, which must involve the party in all the disasters of a civil war.¹⁸

Isabella's own character, moreover, contributed essentially to strengthen her cause. Her sedate conduct, and the decorum maintained in her court, formed a strong contrast with the frivolity and license which disgraced that of Henry and his consort. Thinking men were led to conclude that the sagacious administration of Isabella must eventually secure to her the ascendancy over her rival; while all, who sincerely loved their country, could not but prognosticate for it, under her beneficent sway, a degree of prosperity, which it could never

¹⁷ Louis XI. is supposed with much probability to have assassinated this brother. M. de Barante sums up his examination of the evidence with this remark. "Le roi Louis XI. ne fit peut-être pas mourir son frère, mais personne ne pensa qu'il en fut incapable." *Hist. des Ducs de Bourgogne*, tom. ix. p. 433.

¹⁸ The two princes alluded to were the duke of Segorbe, a

cousin of Ferdinand, and the king of Portugal. The former, on his entrance into Castile, assumed such sovereign state, (giving his hand, for instance, to the *grandees* to kiss,) as disgusted these haughty nobles, and was eventually the occasion of breaking off his match. Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 62. — Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii. p. 392.

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reach under the rapacious and profligate ministers who directed the councils of Henry, and most probably would continue to direct those of his daughter.

Among the persons whose opinions experienced a decided revolution from these considerations, was Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, archbishop of Seville and cardinal of Spain; a prelate, whose lofty station in the church was supported by talents of the highest order; and whose restless ambition led him, like many of the churchmen of the time, to take an active interest in politics, for which he was admirably adapted by his knowledge of affairs and discernment of character. Without deserting his former master, he privately entered into a correspondence with Isabella; and a service, which Ferdinand, on his return from Aragon, had an opportunity of rendering the duke of Infantado, the head of the Mendozas,¹⁹ secured the attachment of the other members of this powerful family.²⁰

Interview
between
Henry IV.
and Isabella
at Segovia.

A circumstance occurred at this time, which seemed to promise an accommodation between the adverse factions, or at least between Henry and his sister. The government of Segovia, whose impregnable citadel had been made the depository of the

¹⁹ Oviedo assigns another reason for this change; the disgust occasioned by Henry IV.'s transferring the custody of his daughter from the family of Mendoza to the Pachecos. *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 8.

²⁰ Salazar de Mendoza, *Crón. del Gran Cardenal*, p. 133.—Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 46, 92.—Castillo, *Crónica*,

cap. 163. — The influence of these new allies, especially of the cardinal, over Isabella's councils, was an additional ground of umbrage to the archbishop of Toledo, who, in a communication with the king of Aragon, declared himself, though friendly to their cause, to be released from all further obligations to serve it. See Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. lib. 46, cap. 19.

royal treasure, was intrusted to Andres de Cabrera, an officer of the king's household. This cavalier, influenced in part by personal pique to the grand master of St. James, and still more perhaps by the importunities of his wife, Beatriz de Bobadilla, the early friend and companion of Isabella, entered into a correspondence with the princess, and sought to open the way for her permanent reconciliation with her brother. He accordingly invited her to Segovia, where Henry occasionally resided, and, to dispel any suspicions which she might entertain of his sincerity, despatched his wife secretly by night, disguised in the garb of a peasant, to Aranda, where Isabella then held her court. The latter confirmed by the assurances of her friend, did not hesitate to comply with the invitation, and, accompanied by the archbishop of Toledo, proceeded to Segovia, where an interview took place between her and Henry the Fourth, in which she vindicated her past conduct, and endeavoured to obtain her brother's sanction to her union with Ferdinand. Henry, who was naturally of a placable temper, received her communication with complacency, and, in order to give public demonstration of the good understanding now subsisting between him and his sister, condescended to walk by her side, holding the bridle of her palfrey, as she rode along the streets of the city. Ferdinand, on his return into Castile, hastened to Segovia, where he was welcomed by the monarch with every appearance of satisfaction. A succession of *fêtes* and splendid entertainments, at which both parties assisted, seemed to announce an

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entire oblivion of all past animosities, and the nation welcomed with satisfaction these symptoms of repose after the vexatious struggle by which it had been so long agitated.²¹

The repose, however, was of no great duration. The slavish mind of Henry gradually relapsed under its ancient bondage; and the grand master of St. James succeeded, in consequence of an illness with which the monarch was suddenly seized after an entertainment given by Cabrera, in infusing into his mind suspicions of an attempt at assassination. Henry was so far incensed or alarmed by the suggestion, that he concerted a scheme for privately seizing the person of his sister, which was defeated by her own prudence and the vigilance of her friends.²² — But, if the visit to Segovia failed in its destined purpose of a reconciliation with Henry, it was attended with the important consequence of securing to Isabella a faithful partisan in Cabrera, who, from the control which his situation gave him over the royal coffers, proved a most seasonable ally in her subsequent struggle with Joanna.

Not long after this event, Ferdinand received another summons from his father to attend him in Aragon, where the storm of war, which had been

²¹ Carbajal, Anales, MS., años 73, 74. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, p. 27. — Castillo, Crónica, cap. 164. — Alonso, de Palencia, Corónica, MS., part. 2, cap. 75. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 23. — Oviedo has given a full account of this cavalier, who was allied to an ancient

Catalan family, but who raised himself to such preëminence by his own deserts, says that writer, that he may well be considered the founder of his house. loc. cit.
²² Mendoza, Crón. del Gran Cardenal, pp. 141, 142. — Castillo, Crónica, cap. 164.

for some time gathering in the distance, now burst with pitiless fury. In the beginning of February, 1474, an embassy consisting of two of his principal nobles, accompanied by a brilliant train of cavaliers and attendants, had been deputed by John to the court of Louis XI., for the ostensible purpose of settling the preliminaries of the marriage, previously agreed on, between the dauphin and the infanta Isabella, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, then little more than three years of age.²³ The real object of the mission was to effect some definitive adjustment or compromise of the differences relating to the contested territories of Roussillon and Cerdagne. The king of France, who, notwithstanding his late convention with John, was making active preparations for the forcible occupation of these provinces, determined to gain time by amusing the ambassadors with a show of negotiation, and interposing every obstacle which his ingenuity could devise to their progress through his dominions. He succeeded so well in this latter part of his scheme, that the embassy did not reach Paris until the close of Lent. Louis, who seldom resided in his capital, took good care to be absent at this season. The ambassadors in the interim were entertained with balls, *fêtes*, military reviews, and whatever else might divert them from the real objects of their mission. All communication was cut

²³ Carbajal, Anales, MS., año Oct. 1st, 1470; afterwards queen 70. — This was the eldest child of Portugal.

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off with their own government, as their couriers were stopped and their despatches intercepted, so that John knew as little of his envoys or their proceedings, as if they had been in Siberia or Japan. In the mean time, formidable preparations were making in the south of France for a descent on Roussillon; and when the ambassadors, after a fruitless attempt at negotiation, which evaporated in mutual crimination and recrimination, set out on their return to Aragon, they were twice detained, at Lyons and Montpellier, from an extreme sollicitude, as the French government expressed it, to ascertain the safest route through a country intersected by hostile armies; and all this, notwithstanding their repeated protestations against this obliging disposition, which held them prisoners, in opposition to their own will and the law of nations. The prince who descended to such petty trickery passed for the wisest of his time.²⁴

Second
French in-
vasion of
Roussillon.

1474.
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In the mean while, the Seigneur du Lude had invaded Roussillon at the head of nine hundred French lances and ten thousand infantry, supported by a powerful train of artillery, while a fleet of Genoese transports, laden with supplies, accompanied the army along the coast. Elna surrendered after a sturdy resistance; the governor and some of the principal prisoners were shamefully beheaded as traitors; and the French then proceeded to invest Perpignan. The king of Aragon was so much impover-

²⁴ Gaillard, *Rivalité*, tom. iii. — *Chronique Scandaleuse*, ed. Petitot, tom. xiii. pp. 443, 444.
pp. 267 — 276. — Duclos, *Hist. de Louis XI.*, tom. ii. pp. 113, 115.

ished by the incessant wars in which he had been engaged, that he was not only unable to recruit his army, but was even obliged to pawn the robe of costly fur, which he wore to defend his person against the inclemencies of the season, in order to defray the expense of transporting his baggage. In this extremity, finding himself disappointed in the coöperation, on which he had reckoned, of his ancient allies the dukes of Burgundy and Brittany, he again summoned Ferdinand to his assistance, who, after a brief interview with his father in Barcelona, proceeded to Saragossa, to solicit aid from the estates of Aragon.

An incident occurred on this visit of the prince worth noticing, as strongly characteristic of the lawless habits of the age. A citizen of Saragossa, named Ximenes Gordo, of noble family, but who had relinquished the privileges of his rank in order to qualify himself for municipal office, had acquired such ascendancy over his townsmen, as to engross the most considerable posts in the city for himself and his creatures. This authority he abused in a shameless manner, making use of it not only for the perversion of justice, but for the perpetration of the most flagrant crimes. Although these facts were notorious, yet such were his power and popularity with the lower classes, that Ferdinand, despairing of bringing him to justice in the ordinary way, determined on a more summary process. As Gordo occasionally visited the palace to pay his respects to the prince, the latter affected to regard him with more than usual favor, showing him such

Ferdinand's
summary
execution
of justice.

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courtesy as might dissipate any distrust he had conceived of him. Gordo, thus assured, was invited at one of those interviews to withdraw into a retired apartment, where the prince wished to confer with him on business of moment. On entering the chamber he was surprised by the sight of the public executioner, the hangman of the city; whose presence together with that of a priest, and the apparatus of death with which the apartment was garnished, revealed at once the dreadful nature of his destiny.

He was then charged with the manifold crimes of which he had been guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced on him. In vain did he appeal to Ferdinand, pleading the services which he had rendered on more than one occasion to his father. Ferdinand assured him, that these should be gratefully remembered in the protection of his children, and then, bidding him unburden his conscience to his confessor, consigned him to the hand of the executioner. His body was exposed that very day in the market-place of the city, to the dismay of his friends and adherents, most of whom paid the penalty of their crimes in the ordinary course of justice. This extraordinary proceeding is highly characteristic of the unsettled times in which it occurred; when acts of violence often superseded the regular operation of the law, even in those countries, whose forms of government approached the nearest to a determinate constitution. It will doubtless remind the reader of the similar proceeding imputed to Louis the Eleventh, in the admira-

ble sketch given us of that monarch in "Quentin Durward."²⁵

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The supplies furnished by the Aragonese cortes were inadequate to king John's necessities, and he was compelled, while hovering with his little force on the confines of Roussillon, to witness the gradual reduction of its capital, without being able to strike a blow in its defence. The inhabitants, indeed, who fought with a resolution worthy of ancient Numantia or Saguntum, were reduced to the last extremity of famine, supporting life by feeding on the most loathsome offal, on cats, dogs, the corpses of their enemies, and even on such of their own dead as had fallen in battle! And when at length an honorable capitulation was granted them on the 14th of March, 1475, the garrison who evacuated the city, reduced to the number of four hundred, were obliged to march on foot to Barcelona, as they had consumed their horses during the siege.²⁶

Siege and reduction of
Perpignan.

The terms of capitulation, which permitted every inhabitant to evacuate, or reside unmolested in the city, at his option, were too liberal to satisfy the vindictive temper of the king of France. He instantly wrote to his generals, instructing them to depart from their engagements, to keep the city so short of supplies as to compel an emigration of its original inhabitants, and to confiscate for their own

Perfidy of
Louis XI.

²⁵ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 83. — Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. vii. p. 400. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. lib. 19, cap. 12.

²⁶ L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 150. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. lib. 19, cap. 13. — *Chronique Scandaleuse*, ed. Petitot, tom. xiii. p. 456. — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 91.

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use the estates of the principal nobility; and after delineating in detail the perfidious policy which they were to pursue, he concluded with the assurance, "that, by the blessing of God and our Lady, and Monsieur St. Martin, he would be with them before the winter, in order to aid them in its execution."²⁷ Such was the miserable medley of hypocrisy and superstition, which characterized the politics of the European courts in this corrupt age, and which dimmed the lustre of names, most conspicuous on the page of history.

Illness of
Henry IV., of
Castile.

The occupation of Roussillon was followed by a truce of six months between the belligerent parties. The regular course of the narrative has been somewhat anticipated, in order to conclude that portion of it relating to the war with France, before again reverting to the affairs of Castile, where Henry the Fourth, pining under an incurable malady, was gradually approaching the termination of his disastrous reign.

His death.

This event, which, from the momentous consequences it involved, was contemplated with the deepest solicitude, not only by those who had an immediate and personal interest at stake, but by the whole nation, took place on the night of the 11th of December, 1474.²⁸ It was precipitated by the death of the grand master of St. James, on whom

²⁷ See copies of the original letters, as given by M. Barante, in his *History of the Dukes of Burgundy*, in which the author has so happily seized the tone and picturesque coloring of the ancient

chronicle; tom. x. pp. 289, 298.
²⁸ Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 10. — Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 74. — Castillo, *Crónica*, cap. 148.