

a more efficient footing. To accomplish this object, an additional supply of funds became necessary, since the treasure of King Henry, delivered into their hands by Andres de Cabrera, at Segovia, had been exhausted by the preceding operations.¹⁹ The old king of Aragon advised them to imitate their ancestor Henry the Second, of glorious memory, by making liberal grants and alienations in favor of their subjects, which they might, when more firmly seated on the throne, resume at pleasure. Isabella, however, chose rather to trust to the patriotism of her people, than have recourse to so unworthy a stratagem. She accordingly convened an assembly of the states, in the month of August, at Medina del Campo. As the nation had been too far impoverished under the late reign to admit of fresh exactions, a most extraordinary expedient was devised for meeting the stipulated requisitions. It was proposed to deliver into the royal treasury half the amount of plate belonging to the churches throughout the kingdom, to be redeemed in the term of three years, for the sum of thirty *cuentos*, or millions, of maravedies. The clergy, who were very generally attached to Isabella's interests, far from discouraging this startling proposal, endeavoured to vanquish the queen's repugnance to it, by

1475.

Appropriation of the church plate.

¹⁹ The royal coffers were found to contain about 10,000 marks of silver. (Pulgar, Reyes Catól. p. 54.) Isabella presented Cabrera with a golden goblet from her table, engaging that a similar present should be regularly made to him and his successors on the anniversary of his surrender of Se-

govia. She subsequently gave a more solid testimony of her gratitude, by raising him to the rank of marquis of Moya, with the grant of an estate suitable to his new dignity. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 23.

PART
I.

arguments and pertinent illustrations drawn from Scripture. This transaction certainly exhibits a degree of disinterestedness, on the part of this body, most unusual in that age and country, as well as a generous confidence in the good faith of Isabella, of which she proved herself worthy by the punctuality with which she redeemed it.²⁰

Reorganiza-
tion of the
army.

Thus provided with the necessary funds, the sovereigns set about enforcing new levies and bringing them under better discipline, as well as providing for their equipment in a manner more suitable to the exigencies of the service, than was done for the preceding army. The remainder of the summer and the ensuing autumn were consumed in these preparations, as well as in placing their fortified towns in a proper posture of defence, and in the reduction of such places as held out against them. The king of Portugal, all this while, lay with his diminished forces in Toro, making a sally on one occasion only, for the relief of his friends, which was frustrated by the sleepless vigilance of Isabella.

Early in December, Ferdinand passed from the siege of Burgos, in Old Castile, to Zamora, whose inhabitants expressed a desire to return to their

²⁰ The indignation of Dr. Salazar de Mendoza is roused by this misapplication of the church's money, which he avers "no necessity whatever could justify." This worthy canon flourished in the seventeenth century. (Crón. del Gran Cardenal, p. 147. — Pulgar, Reyes Catól. pp. 60,-62.— Faria y Sousa, Europa Portuguesa, tom.

ii. p. 400. — Rades y Andrada, Las Tres Ordenes, part. 1, fol. 67. — Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 243. — Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 18, 20.) Zuñiga gives some additional particulars respecting the grant of the cortes, which I do not find verified by any contemporary author. Annales de Sevilla, p. 372.

ancient allegiance ; and, with the coöperation of the citizens, supported by a large detachment from his main army, he prepared to invest its citadel. As the possession of this post would effectually intercept Alfonso's communications with his own country, he determined to relieve it at every hazard, and for this purpose despatched a messenger into Portugal requiring his son, Prince John, to reinforce him with such levies as he could speedily raise. All parties now looked forward with eagerness to a general battle, as to a termination of the evils of this long-protracted war.

The Portuguese prince, having with difficulty assembled a corps amounting to two thousand lances and eight thousand infantry, took a northerly circuit round Galicia, and effected a junction with his father in Toro, on the 14th of February, 1476. Alfonso, thus reinforced, transmitted a pompous circular to the pope, the king of France, his own dominions, and those well affected to him in Castile, proclaiming his immediate intention of taking the usurper, or of driving him from the kingdom. On the night of the 17th, having first provided for the security of the city by leaving in it a powerful reserve, Alfonso drew off the residue of his army, probably not much exceeding three thousand five hundred horse and five thousand foot, well provided with artillery and with arquebuses, which latter engine was still of so clumsy and unwieldy construction, as not to have entirely superseded the ancient weapons of European warfare. The Portuguese army, traversing the bridge of Toro, pur-

1476.

King of Portugal arrives before Zamora.

PART
I.

sued their march along the southern side of the Douro, and reached Zamora, distant only a few leagues, before the dawn.²¹

At break of day, the Castilians were surprised by the array of floating banners, and martial panoply glittering in the sun, from the opposite side of the river, while the discharges of artillery still more unequivocally announced the presence of the enemy. Ferdinand could scarcely believe that the Portuguese monarch, whose avowed object had been the relief of the castle of Zamora, should have selected a position so obviously unsuitable for this purpose. The intervention of the river, between him and the fortress situated at the northern extremity of the town, prevented him from relieving it, either by throwing succours into it, or by annoying the Castilian troops, who, intrenched in comparative security within the walls and houses of the city, were enabled by means of certain elevated positions, well garnished with artillery, to inflict much heavier injury on their opponents, than they could possibly receive from them. Still Ferdinand's men, exposed to the double fire of the fortress and the besiegers, would willingly have come to an engagement with the latter; but the river, swollen by winter torrents, was not fordable, and the bridge, the only direct avenue to the city,

Absurd position.

²¹ Carbajal, Anales, MS., años 75, 76. — Ruy de Pina, Chron. d' el Rey Alfonso V., cap. 187, 189. — Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 20, 22. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, pp. 63-78. — L. Marineo, Cosas Memorables, fol. 156. — Faria y Sousa, Europa Portuguesa, tom. ii. pp. 401, 404. — Several of the contemporary Castilian historians compute the Portuguese army at double the amount given in the text.

was enfladed by the enemy's cannon, so as to render a sally in that direction altogether impracticable. During this time, Isabella's squadrons of light cavalry, hovering on the skirts of the Portuguese camp, effectually cut off its supplies, and soon reduced it to great straits for subsistence. This circumstance, together with the tidings of the rapid advance of additional forces to the support of Ferdinand, determined Alfonso, contrary to all expectation, on an immediate retreat; and accordingly on the morning of the 1st of March, being little less than a fortnight from the time in which he commenced this empty gasconade, the Portuguese army quitted its position before Zamora, with the same silence and celerity with which it had occupied it.

He suddenly decamps.

Ferdinand's troops would instantly have pushed after the fugitives, but the latter had demolished the southern extremity of the bridge before their departure; so that, although some few effected an immediate passage in boats, the great body of the army was necessarily detained until the repairs were completed, which occupied more than three hours. With all the expedition they could use, therefore, and leaving their artillery behind them, they did not succeed in coming up with the enemy until nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, as the latter was defiling through a narrow pass formed by a crest of precipitous hills on the one side, and the Douro on the other, at the distance of about five miles from the city of Toro.²³

Overtaken by Ferdinand.

²³ Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, pp. fol. 252, 253. — Faria y Sousa, 62-85. — Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. Europa Portuguesa, tom. ii. pp.

PART
I.

A council of war was then called, to decide on the expediency of an immediate assault. It was objected, that the strong position of Toro would effectually cover the retreat of the Portuguese in case of their discomfiture; that they would speedily be reinforced by fresh recruits from that city, which would make them more than a match for Ferdinand's army, exhausted by a toilsome march, as well as by its long fast, which it had not broken since the morning; and that the celerity, with which it had moved, had compelled it, not only to abandon its artillery, but to leave a considerable portion of the heavy-armed infantry in the rear. Notwithstanding the weight of these objections, such were the high spirit of the troops and their eagerness to come to action, sharpened by the view of the quarry, which after a wearisome chase seemed ready to fall into their hands, that they were thought more than sufficient to counterbalance every physical disadvantage; and the question of battle was decided in the affirmative.

Battle of
Toro.

As the Castilian army emerged from the defile into a wide and open plain, they found that the enemy had halted, and was already forming in order of battle. The king of Portugal led the centre, with the archbishop of Toledo on his right wing, its extremity resting on the Douro; while the left, comprehending the arquebusiers and the strength of the cavalry, was placed under the command of his son, Prince John. The numerical force of the

404, 405. — Bernaldez, Reyes Ca- Pina, *Chrón. d'el Rey Alfonso V.*
tólicos, MS., cap. 23. — Ruy de cap. 190.

two armies, although in favor of the Portuguese, was nearly equal, amounting probably in each to less than ten thousand men, about one third being cavalry. Ferdinand took his station in the centre, opposite his rival, having the admiral and the duke of Alba on his left; while his right wing, distributed into six battles or divisions, under their several commanders, was supported by a detachment of men-at-arms from the provinces of Leon and Galicia.

The action commenced in this quarter. The Castilians, raising the war-cry of "St. James and St. Lazarus," advanced on the enemy's left under Prince John, but were saluted with such a brisk and well-directed fire from his arquebusiers, that their ranks were disconcerted. The Portuguese men-at-arms, charging them at the same time, augmented their confusion, and compelled them to fall back precipitately on the narrow pass in their rear, where, being supported by some fresh detachments from the reserve, they were with difficulty rallied by their officers, and again brought into the field. In the mean while, Ferdinand closed with the enemy's centre, and the action soon became general along the whole line. The battle raged with redoubled fierceness in the quarter where the presence of the two monarchs infused new ardor into their soldiers, who fought as if conscious that this struggle was to decide the fate of their masters. The lances were shivered at the first encounter, and, as the ranks of the two armies mingled with each other, the men

PART
I.

fought hand to hand with their swords, with a fury sharpened by the ancient rivalry of the two nations, making the whole a contest of physical strength rather than skill.²³

The royal standard of Portugal was torn to shreds in the attempt to seize it on the one side and to preserve it on the other, while its gallant bearer, Edward de Almeyda, after losing first his right arm, and then his left, in its defence, held it firmly with his teeth until he was cut down by the assailants. The armour of this knight was to be seen as late as Mariana's time, in the cathedral church of Toledo, where it was preserved as a trophy of this desperate act of heroism, which brings to mind a similar feat recorded in Grecian story.

The old archbishop of Toledo, and the cardinal Mendoza, who, like his reverend rival, had exchanged the crosier for the corslet, were to be seen on that day in the thickest of the *mêlée*. The holy wars with the infidel perpetuated the unbecoming spectacle of militant ecclesiastics among the Spaniards, to a still later period, and long after it had disappeared from the rest of civilized Europe.

The Portuguese routed.

At length, after an obstinate struggle of more than three hours, the valor of the Castilian troops prevailed, and the Portuguese were seen to give

²³ Carbajal, Anales, MS., año 76. — L. Marineo, Cosas Memorable, fol. 158. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, pp. 85-89. — Faria y Sousa, Europa Portuguesa, tom ii. pp. 404, 405. — Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 23. — La Clède, Hist. de Portugal, tom. iii. pp. 378-383. — Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 252-255.

way in all directions. The duke of Alva, by succeeding in turning their flank, while they were thus vigorously pressed in front, completed their disorder, and soon converted their retreat into a rout. Some, attempting to cross the Douro, were drowned, and many, who endeavoured to effect an entrance into Toro, were entangled in the narrow defile of the bridge, and fell by the sword of their pursuers, or miserably perished in the river, which, bearing along their mutilated corpses, brought tidings of the fatal victory to Zamora. Such were the heat and fury of the pursuit, that the intervening night, rendered darker than usual by a driving rain storm, alone saved the scattered remains of the army from destruction. Several Portuguese companies, under favor of this obscurity, contrived to elude their foes by shouting the Castilian battle-cry. Prince John, retiring with a fragment of his broken squadrons to a neighbouring eminence, succeeded, by lighting fires and sounding his trumpets, in rallying round him a number of fugitives; and, as the position he occupied was too strong to be readily forced, and the Castilian troops were too weary, and well satisfied with their victory, to attempt it, he retained possession of it till morning, when he made good his retreat into Toro. The king of Portugal, who was missing, was supposed to have perished in the battle, until, by advices received from him late on the following day, it was ascertained that he had escaped without personal injury, and with three or four attendants only, to the fortified castle of Castro Nuño, some leagues distant

PART
I.

from the field of action. Numbers of his troops, attempting to escape across the neighbouring frontiers into their own country, were maimed or massacred by the Spanish peasants, in retaliation of the excesses wantonly committed by them in their invasion of Castile. Ferdinand, shocked at this barbarity, issued orders for the protection of their persons, and freely gave safe-conducts to such as desired to return into Portugal. He even, with a degree of humanity more honorable, as well as more rare, than military success, distributed clothes and money to several prisoners brought into Zamora in a state of utter destitution, and enabled them to return in safety to their own country.²⁴

The Castilian monarch remained on the field of battle till after midnight, when he returned to Zamora, being followed in the morning by the cardinal of Spain and the admiral Henriquez, at the head of the victorious legions. Eight standards with the greater part of the baggage were taken in the engagement, and more than two thousand of the enemy slain or made prisoners. Queen Isabella, on receiving tidings of the event at Tordesillas, where she then was, ordered a procession

Isabella's
thanksgiving
for the vic-
tory.

²⁴ Faria y Sousa claims the honors of the victory for the Portuguese, because Prince John kept the field till morning. Even M. La Clède, with all his deference to the Portuguese historian, cannot swallow this. Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii. pp. 405-410. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 8. — Salazar de Mendoza, *Crón. del Gran Cardenal*, lib. 1, cap. 46. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, pp. 85-90. — L. Marino, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 158. — Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 76. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 23. — Ruy de Pina, *Crón. d' el Rey Alfonso V.*, cap. 191. — Ferdinand, in allusion to Prince John, wrote to his wife, that "if it had not been for the chicken, the old cock would have been taken." Garibay, *Compendio*, lib. 18, cap. 8.