

the monastery of Varatojo, on a bleak eminence near the Atlantic ocean, when he suddenly fell ill, at Cintra, of a disorder which terminated his existence, on the 28th of August, 1481. Alfonso's fiery character, in which all the elements of love, chivalry, and religion were blended together, resembled that of some paladin of romance; as the chimerical enterprises, in which he was perpetually engaged, seem rather to belong to the age of knight-errantry, than to the fifteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

In the beginning of the same year in which the pacification with Portugal secured to the sovereigns the undisputed possession of Castile, another crown devolved on Ferdinand by the death of his father, the king of Aragon, who expired at Barcelona, on the 20th of January, 1479, in the eighty-third year of his age.<sup>38</sup> Such was his admirable constitution, that he retained not only his intellectual, but his bodily vigor, unimpaired to the last. His long life was consumed in civil faction or foreign wars; and his restless spirit seemed to take delight in these tumultuous scenes, as best fitted to develop its various energies. He combined, however, with this intrepid and even ferocious temper, an address in the management of affairs, which led him to rely, for the accomplishment of his purposes, much more on negotiation than on positive force. He may be said to have been one of the first monarchs,

Death of  
the king of  
Aragon.

<sup>37</sup> Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii. p. 423. — Ruy de Pina, *Chrón. d' el Rey Alfonso V.*, cap. 212.

<sup>38</sup> Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año

79. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 42. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, (ed. Valencia,) tom. viii. p. 204, not. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom. ii. fol. 295.

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I.

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who brought into vogue that refined science of the cabinet, which was so profoundly studied by statesmen at the close of the fifteenth century, and on which his own son Ferdinand furnished the most practical commentary.

The crown of Navarre, which he had so shamelessly usurped, devolved, on his decease, on his guilty daughter Leonora, countess of Foix, who, as we have before noticed, survived to enjoy it only three short weeks. Aragon, with its extensive dependencies, descended to Ferdinand. Thus the two crowns of Aragon and Castile, after a separation of more than four centuries, became indissolubly united, and the foundations were laid of the magnificent empire, which was destined to overshadow every other European monarchy.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalif  
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## CHAPTER VI.

### INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF CASTILE.

1475 — 1482.

Schemes of Reform. — Holy Brotherhood. — Tumult at Segovia. — The Queen's Presence of Mind. — Severe Execution of Justice. — Royal Progress through Andalusia. — Reorganization of the Tribunals. — Castilian Jurisprudence. — Plans for reducing the Nobles. — Revocation of Grants. — Military Orders of Castile. — Masterships annexed to the Crown. — Ecclesiastical Usurpations resisted. — Restoration of Trade. — Prosperity of the Kingdom.

I HAVE deferred to the present chapter a consideration of the important changes introduced into the interior administration of Castile, since the accession of Isabella, in order to present a connected and comprehensive view of them to the reader, without interrupting the progress of the military narrative. The subject may afford an agreeable relief to the dreary details of blood and battle, with which we have been so long occupied, and which were rapidly converting the garden of Europe into a wilderness. Such details indeed seem to have the deepest interest for contemporary writers; but the eye of posterity, unclouded by personal interest or passion, turns with satisfaction from them to those cultivated arts, which can make the wilderness blossom as the rose.

CHAPTER  
VI.



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I.

If there be any being on earth, that may be permitted to remind us of the Deity himself, it is the ruler of a mighty empire, who employs the high powers intrusted to him exclusively for the benefit of his people; who, endowed with intellectual gifts corresponding with his station, in an age of comparative barbarism, endeavours to impart to his land the light of civilization which illumines his own bosom, and to create from the elements of discord the beautiful fabric of social order. Such was Isabella; and such the age in which she lived. And fortunate was it for Spain that her sceptre, at this crisis, was swayed by a sovereign possessed of sufficient wisdom to devise, and energy to execute, the most salutary schemes of reform, and thus to infuse a new principle of vitality into a government, fast sinking into premature decrepitude.

Scheme of  
reform for  
the govern-  
ment of Cas-  
tile.

The whole plan of reform introduced into the government by Ferdinand and Isabella, or more properly by the latter, to whom the internal administration of Castile was principally referred, was not fully unfolded until the completion of her reign. But the most important modifications were adopted previously to the war of Granada in 1482. These may be embraced under the following heads. I. The efficient administration of justice. II. The codification of the laws. III. The depression of the nobles. IV. The vindication of ecclesiastical rights belonging to the crown from the usurpation of the papal see. V. The regulation of trade. VI. The preëminence of royal authority.

Administra-  
tion of jus-  
tice.

I. The administration of justice. In the dismal



anarchy, which prevailed in Henry the Fourth's reign, the authority of the monarch and of the royal judges had fallen into such contempt, that the law was entirely without force. The cities afforded no better protection than the open country. Every man's hand seemed to be lifted against his neighbour. Property was plundered; persons were violated; the most holy sanctuaries profaned; and the numerous fortresses scattered throughout the country, instead of sheltering the weak, converted into dens of robbers.<sup>1</sup> Isabella saw no better way of checking this unbounded license, than to direct against it that popular engine, the *Santa Hermandad*, or Holy Brotherhood, which had more than once shaken the Castilian monarchs on their throne.

Establishment of the Hermandad.

The project for the reorganization of this institution was introduced into the cortes held, the year after Isabella's accession at Madrigal, in 1476. It was carried into effect by the *junta* of deputies from the different cities of the kingdom, convened at Dueñas in the same year. The new institution differed essentially from the ancient *hermandades*, since, instead of being partial in its extent, it was designed to embrace the whole kingdom; and, instead of being directed, as had often been the case,

<sup>1</sup> Among other examples, Pulgar mentions that of the alcaide of Castro-Nuño, Pedro de Mendana, who from the strong-holds in his possession, committed such grievous devastations throughout the country, that the cities of Burgos, Avila, Salamanca, Segovia, Valladolid, Medina, and others in that quarter, were fain to pay him a tribute, (black mail,) to protect their territories from his rapacity. His successful example was imitated by many other knightly freebooters of the period. (Reyes Católicos, part. 2, cap. 66.) — See also extracts cited by Saez from manuscript notices by contemporaries of Henry IV. Monedas de Enrique IV., pp. 1, 2.

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against the crown itself, it was set in motion at the suggestion of the latter, and limited in its operation to the maintenance of public order. The crimes, reserved for its jurisdiction, were all violence or theft committed on the highways or in the open country, and in cities by such offenders as escaped into the country; house-breaking; rape; and resistance of justice. The specification of these crimes shows their frequency; and the reason for designating the open country, as the particular theatre for the operations of the hermandad, was the facility which criminals possessed there for eluding the pursuit of justice, especially under shelter of the strong-holds or fortresses, with which it was plentifully studded.

An annual contribution of eighteen thousand maravedies was assessed on every hundred *vecinos* or householders, for the equipment and maintenance of a horseman, whose duty it was to arrest offenders, and enforce the sentence of the law. On the escape of a criminal, the tocsins of the villages, through which he was supposed to have passed, were sounded, and the *quadrilleros* or officers of the brotherhood, stationed on the different points, took up the pursuit with such promptness as left little chance of escape. A court of two *alcaldes* was established in every town containing thirty families, for the trial of all crimes within the jurisdiction of the hermandad; and an appeal lay from them in specified cases to a supreme council. A general junta, composed of deputies from the cities throughout the kingdom, was annually con-

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VI.Code of the  
Hermandad.

vened for the regulation of affairs, and their instructions were transmitted to provincial juntas, who superintended the execution of them. The laws, enacted at different times in these assemblies, were compiled into a code under the sanction of the junta general at Pordelaguna, in 1485.<sup>2</sup> The penalties for theft, which are literally written in blood, are specified in this code with singular precision. The most petty larceny was punished with stripes; the loss of a member, or of life itself; and the law was administered with an unsparing rigor, which nothing but the extreme necessity of the case could justify. Capital executions were conducted by shooting the criminal with arrows. The enactment, relating to this, provides, that "the convict shall receive the sacrament like a Catholic Christian, and after that be executed as speedily as possible, in order that his soul may pass the more securely."<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding the popular constitution of the hermandad, and the obvious advantages attending its introduction at this juncture, it experienced so decided an opposition from the nobility, who dis-

Ineffectual  
opposition  
of the no-  
bility.

<sup>2</sup> The *Quaderno* of the laws of the Hermandad has now become very rare. That in my possession was printed at Burgos, in 1527. It has since been incorporated with considerable extension into the *Recopilacion* of Philip II.

<sup>3</sup> *Quaderno de las Leyes Nuevas de la Hermandad*, (Burgos, 1527,) leyes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 16, 20, 36, 37. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, part. 2, cap. 51. — L. Marinero, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 160,

ed. 1539. — *Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, tom. vi., *Ilust.* 4. — Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 76. — Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum Decades*, fol. 36. — By one of the laws, the inhabitants of such seignorial towns as refused to pay the contributions of the Hermandad were excluded from its benefits, as well as from traffic with, and even the power of recovering their debts from other natives of the kingdom. Ley 33.



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cerned the check it was likely to impose on their authority, that it required all the queen's address and perseverance to effect its general adoption. The constable de Haro, however, a nobleman of great weight from his personal character, and the most extensive landed proprietor in the north, was at length prevailed on to introduce it among his vassals. His example was gradually followed by others of the same rank; and, when the city of Seville, and the great lords of Andalusia, had consented to receive it, it speedily became established throughout the kingdom. Thus a standing body of troops, two thousand in number, thoroughly equipped and mounted, was placed at the disposal of the crown, to enforce the law, and suppress domestic insurrection. The supreme junta, which regulated the counsels of the hermandad, constituted moreover a sort of inferior cortes, relieving the exigencies of government, as we shall see hereafter, on more than one occasion, by important supplies of men and money. By the activity of this new military police, the country was, in the course of a few years, cleared of its swarms of banditti, as well as of the robber chieftains, whose strength had enabled them to defy the law. The ministers of justice found a sure protection in the independent discharge of their duties; and the blessings of personal security and social order, so long estranged from the nation, were again restored to it.

The important benefits, resulting from the institution of the hermandad, secured its confirmation by successive cortes, for the period of twenty-

two years, in spite of the repeated opposition of the aristocracy. At length, in 1498, the objects for which it was established having been completely obtained, it was deemed advisable to relieve the nation from the heavy charges which its maintenance imposed. The great salaried officers were dismissed; a few subordinate functionaries were retained for the administration of justice, over whom the regular courts of criminal law possessed appellate jurisdiction; and the magnificent apparatus of the *Santa Hermandad*, stripped of all but the terrors of its name, dwindled into an ordinary police, such as it has existed, with various modifications of form, down to the present century.<sup>4</sup>

Isabella was so intent on the prosecution of her schemes of reform, that, even in the minuter details, she frequently superintended the execution of them herself. For this she was admirably fitted by her personal address, and presence of mind in danger, and by the influence which a conviction of her integrity gave her over the minds of the people. A remarkable exemplification of this occurred, the year but one after her coronation, at Segovia. The inhabitants, secretly instigated by the bishop of that place, and some of the principal citizens, rose against Cabrera, marquis of Moya, to whom the government of the city had been intrusted, and

Tumult at  
Segovia.

<sup>4</sup> Recopilacion de las Leyes, — Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum De-*  
(Madrid, 1640,) lib. 8, tit. 13, ley cad., fol. 37, 38. — Las Pragmá-  
44. — Zuñiga, *Annales de Sevilla, cónicas del Reyno*, (Sevilla, 1520,)  
p. 379. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, fol. 85. — L. Marineo, *Cosas*  
part. 2, cap. 51. — Mem. de la *Memorables*, fol. 160. *Journal*  
Acad. de Hist., tom. vi. *Ilust.* 6.

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I.Isabella's  
presence of  
mind.

who had made himself generally unpopular by his strict discipline. They even proceeded so far as to obtain possession of the outworks of the citadel, and to compel the deputy of the *alcayde*, who was himself absent, to take shelter, together with the princess Isabella, then the only daughter of the sovereigns, in the interior defences, where they were rigorously blockaded.

The queen, on receiving tidings of the event at Tordesillas, mounted her horse and proceeded with all possible despatch towards Segovia, attended by Cardinal Mendoza, the count of Benavente, and a few others of her court. At some distance from the city, she was met by a deputation of the inhabitants, requesting her to leave behind the count of Benavente and the marchioness of Moya, (the former of whom as the intimate friend, and the latter as the wife of the *alcayde*, were peculiarly obnoxious to the citizens,) or they could not answer for the consequences. Isabella haughtily replied, that "she was queen of Castile; that the city was hers, moreover, by right of inheritance; and that she was not used to receive conditions from rebellious subjects." Then pressing forward with her little retinue, through one of the gates, which remained in the hands of her friends, she effected her entrance into the citadel.

The populace, in the mean while, assembling in greater numbers than before, continued to show the most hostile dispositions, calling out, "Death to the *alcayde*! Attack the castle!" Isabella's attend-