

cartel of defiance, until the point at issue should be settled by the regular course of justice.³⁰

CHAPTER
VI.

1474.

It is true the haughty nobility of Castile winced more than once at finding themselves so tightly curbed by their new masters. On one occasion, a number of the principal grandees, with the duke of Infantado at their head, addressed a letter of remonstrance to the king and queen, requiring them to abolish the hermandad, as an institution burdensome on the nation, deprecating the slight degree of confidence which their highnesses reposed in their order, and requesting that four of their number might be selected to form a council for the general direction of affairs of state, by whose advice the king and queen should be governed in all matters of importance, as in the time of Henry the Fourth.

Ferdinand and Isabella received this unseasonable remonstrance with great indignation, and returned an answer couched in the haughtiest terms. "The hermandad," they said, "is an institution most salutary to the nation, and is approved by it as such. It is our province to determine who are best entitled to preferment, and to make merit the standard of it. You may follow the court, or retire

³⁰ Ordenanças Reales, lib. 2, tit. 1, ley 2; lib. 4, tit. 9, ley 11. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, part. 2, cap. 96, 101. — Recop. de las Leyes, lib. 8, tit. 8, ley 10 et al. — These affairs were conducted in the true spirit of knight-errantry. Oviedo mentions one, in which two young men of the noble houses of Velasco and Ponce de

Leon, agreed to fight on horseback, with sharp spears (*puntas de diamantes*), in doublet and hose, without defensive armour of any kind. The place appointed for the combat was a narrow bridge across the Xarama, three leagues from Madrid. Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 23.

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to your estates, as you think best ; but, so long as Heaven permits us to retain the rank with which we have been intrusted, we shall take care not to imitate the example of Henry the Fourth, in becoming a tool in the hands of our nobility." The discontented lords, who had carried so high a hand under the preceding imbecile reign, feeling the weight of an authority which rested on the affections of the people, were so disconcerted by the rebuke, that they made no attempt to rally, but condescended to make their peace separately as they could, by the most ample acknowledgments.³¹

The queen's
spirited
conduct to
the nobility.

An example of the impartiality as well as spirit, with which Isabella asserted the dignity of the crown, is worth recording. During her husband's absence in Aragon in the spring of 1481, a quarrel occurred, in the ante-chamber of the palace at Valladolid, between two young noblemen, Ramiro Nuñez de Guzman, lord of Toral, and Frederic Henriquez, son of the admiral of Castile, king Ferdinand's uncle. The queen, on receiving intelligence of it, granted a safe-conduct to the lord of Toral, as the weaker party, until the affair should be adjusted between them. Don Frederic, however, disregarding this protection, caused his enemy to be waylaid by three of his followers, armed with bludgeons, and sorely beaten one evening in the streets of Valladolid.

Isabella was no sooner informed of this outrage on one whom she had taken under the royal pro-

³¹ Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. vii. pp. 487, 488.

tection, than, burning with indignation, she immediately mounted her horse, though in the midst of a heavy storm of rain, and proceeded alone towards the castle of Simancas, then in possession of the admiral, the father of the offender, where she supposed him to have taken refuge, travelling all the while with such rapidity, that she was not overtaken by the officers of her guard, until she had gained the fortress. She instantly summoned the admiral to deliver up his son to justice; and, on his replying that "Don Frederic was not there, and that he was ignorant where he was," she commanded him to surrender the keys of the castle, and, after a fruitless search, again returned to Valladolid. The next day Isabella was confined to her bed by an illness occasioned as much by chagrin, as by the excessive fatigue which she had undergone. "My body is lame," said she, "with the blows given by Don Frederic in contempt of my safe-conduct."

The admiral, perceiving how deeply he and his family had incurred the displeasure of the queen, took counsel with his friends, who were led by their knowledge of Isabella's character to believe that he would have more to hope from the surrender of his son, than from further attempts at concealment. The young man was accordingly conducted to the palace by his uncle, the constable de Haro, who deprecated the queen's resentment by representing the age of his nephew, scarcely amounting to twenty years. Isabella, however, thought proper to punish the youthful delinquent, by ordering him to be publicly conducted as a

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prisoner, by one of the *alcaldes* of her court, through the great square of Valladolid to the fortress of Arevalo, where he was detained in strict confinement, all privilege of access being denied to him; and, when at length, moved by the consideration of his consanguinity with the king, she consented to his release, she banished him to Sicily, until he should receive the royal permission to return to his own country.³²

Notwithstanding the strict impartiality as well as vigor of the administration, it could never have maintained itself by its own resources alone, in its offensive operations against the high-spirited aristocracy of Castile. Its most direct approaches, however, were made, as we have seen, under cover of the cortes. The sovereigns, showed great deference, especially in this early period of their reign, to the popular branch of this body; and, so far from pursuing the odious policy of preceding princes in diminishing the amount of represented cities, they never failed to direct their writs to all those, which, at their accession, retained the right of representation, and subsequently enlarged the number by the conquest of Granada; while they exercised the anomalous privilege, noticed in the Introduction to this History, of omitting altogether, or issuing only a partial summons to the nobility.³³

³² Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 80. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, part. 2, cap. 100.

³³ For example, at the great cortes of Toledo, in 1480, it does not appear that any of the nobility

were summoned, except those in immediate attendance on the court, until the measure for the resumption of the grants, which so nearly affected that body, was brought before the legislature.

By making merit the standard of preferment, they opened the path of honor to every class of the community. They uniformly manifested the greatest tenderness for the rights of the commons in reference to taxation; and, as their patriotic policy was obviously directed to secure the personal rights and general prosperity of the people, it insured the cooperation of an ally, whose weight, combined with that of the crown, enabled them eventually to restore the equilibrium which had been disturbed by the undue preponderance of the aristocracy.

It may be well to state here the policy pursued by Ferdinand and Isabella in reference to the Military Orders of Castile, since, although not fully developed until a much later period, it was first conceived, and indeed partly executed, in that now under discussion.

Military orders of Castile.

The uninterrupted warfare, which the Spaniards were compelled to maintain for the recovery of their native land from the infidel, nourished in their bosoms a flame of enthusiasm, similar to that kindled by the crusades for the recovery of Palestine, partaking in an almost equal degree of a religious and a military character. This similarity of sentiment gave birth also to similar institutions of chivalry. Whether the military orders of Castile were suggested by those of Palestine, or whether they go back to a remoter period, as is contended by their chroniclers, or whether, in fine, as Conde intimates, they were imitated from corresponding associations, known to have existed among the

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Spanish Arabs,³⁴ there can be no doubt that the forms, under which they were permanently organized, were derived, in the latter part of the twelfth century, from the monastic orders established for the protection of the Holy Land. The Hospitallers, and especially the Templars, obtained more extensive acquisitions in Spain, than in any, perhaps every, other country in Christendom; and it was partly from the ruins of their empire, that were constructed the magnificent fortunes of the Spanish orders.³⁵

Order of St.
Jago.

The most eminent of these was the order of St. Jago, or St. James, of Compostella. The miraculous revelation of the body of the Apostle, after the lapse of eight centuries from the date of his interment, and his frequent apparition in the ranks of the Christian armies, in their desperate struggles with the infidel, had given so wide a celebrity to

³⁴ Conde gives the following account of these chivalric associations among the Spanish Arabs, which, as far as I know, has hitherto escaped the notice of European historians. "The Moslem *fronteros* professed great austerity in their lives, which they consecrated to perpetual war, and bound themselves by a solemn vow to defend the frontier against the incursions of the Christians. They were choice cavaliers, possessed of consummate patience, and enduring fatigue, and always prepared to die rather than desert their posts. It appears highly probable that the Moorish fraternities suggested the idea of those military orders so renowned for their valor in Spain and in Palestine, which rendered such essential

services to Christendom; for both the institutions were established on similar principles." Conde, *Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabes en España*, (Madrid, 1820,) tom. i. p. 619, not.

³⁵ See the details, given by Mariana, of the overgrown possessions of the Templars in Castile at the period of their extinction, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. (*Hist. de España*, lib. 15, cap. 10.) The knights of the Temple and the Hospitallers seem to have acquired still greater power in Aragon, where one of the monarchs was so infatuated as to bequeath them his whole dominions, — a bequest, which it may well be believed was set aside by his high-spirited subjects. Zurita, *Anales*, lib. 1, cap. 52.

the obscure town of Compostella in Galicia, which contained the sainted relics,³⁶ that it became the resort of pilgrims from every part of Christendom, during the middle ages; and the escalop shell, the device of St. James, was adopted as the universal badge of the palmer. Inns for the refreshment and security of the pious itinerants were scattered along the whole line of the route from France; but, as they were exposed to perpetual annoyance from the predatory incursions of the Arabs, a number of knights and gentlemen associated themselves, for their protection, with the monks of St. Lojo, or Eloy, adopting the rule of St. Augustine, and thus laid the foundation of the chivalric order of St. James, about the middle of the twelfth century. The cavaliers of the fraternity, which received its papal bull of approbation five years later, in 1175, were distinguished by a white mantle embroidered with a red cross, in fashion of a sword, with the escalop shell below the guard, in imitation of the

³⁶ The apparition of certain preternatural lights in a forest, discovered to a Galician peasant, in the beginning of the ninth century, the spot, in which was deposited a marble sepulchre containing the ashes of St. James. The miracle is reported with sufficient circumstantiality by Florez, (*Historia Compostellana*, lib. 1, cap. 2, apud *España Sagrada*, tom. xx.) and Ambrosio de Morales, (*Corónica, General de España*, (Obras, Madrid, 1791-3,) lib. 9, cap. 7,) who establishes, to his own satisfaction, the advent of St. James into Spain. Mariana, with more skepticism than his brethren, doubts the gen-

uineness of the body, as well as the visit of the Apostle, but like a good Jesuit concludes, "It is not expedient to disturb with such disputes the devotion of the people, so firmly settled as it is." (Lib. 7, cap. 10.) The tutelar saint of Spain continued to support his people by taking part with them in battle against the infidel down to a very late period. Caro de Torres mentions two engagements in which he cheered on the squadrons of Cortes and Pizarro, "with his sword flashing lightning in the eyes of the Indians." *Ordenes Militares*, fol. 5.

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device which glittered on the banner of their tutelary saint, when he condescended to take part in their engagements with the Moors. The red color denoted, according to an ancient commentator, "that it was stained with the blood of the infidel." The rules of the new order imposed on its members the usual obligations of obedience, community of property, and of conjugal chastity, instead of celibacy. They were, moreover, required to relieve the poor, defend the traveller, and maintain perpetual war upon the Mussulman.³⁷

Order of Calatrava.

The institution of the Knights of Calatrava was somewhat more romantic in its origin. That town, from its situation on the frontiers of the Moorish territory of Andalusia, where it commanded the passes into Castile, became of vital importance to the latter kingdom. Its defence had accordingly been intrusted to the valiant order of the Templars, who, unable to keep their ground against the pertinacious assaults of the Moslems, abandoned it, at the expiration of eight years, as untenable. This occurred about the middle of the twelfth century; and the Castilian monarch, Sancho the Beloved, as the last resort, offered it to whatever good knights would undertake its defence.

The emprise was eagerly sought by a monk of a distant convent in Navarre, who had once been a soldier, and whose military ardor seems to have been exalted, instead of being extinguished, in the

³⁷ Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, fol. 3-15. — Caro de Torres, *Ordenes Militares*, fol. 2-8. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom. ii. pp. 116-118.

solitude of the cloister. The monk, supported by his conventual brethren, and a throng of cavaliers and more humble followers, who sought redemption under the banner of the church, was enabled to make good his word. From the confederation of these knights and ecclesiastics, sprung the military fraternity of Calatrava, which received the confirmation of the pontiff, Alexander the Third, in 1164. The rules which it adopted were those of St. Benedict, and its discipline was in the highest degree austere.

The cavaliers were sworn to perpetual celibacy, from which they were not released till so late as the sixteenth century. Their diet was of the plainest kind. They were allowed meat only thrice a week, and then only one dish. They were to maintain unbroken silence at the table, in the chapel, and the dormitory; and they were enjoined both to sleep and to worship with the sword girt on their side, in token of readiness for action. In the earlier days of the institution, the spiritual, as well as the military brethren, were allowed to make part of the martial array against the infidel, until this was prohibited, as indecorous, by the Holy See. From this order, branched off that of Montesa, in Valencia, which was instituted at the commencement of the fourteenth century, and continued dependent on the parent stock.³⁸

The third great order of religious chivalry in

Order of Alcantara.

³⁸ Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, part. 2, fol. 3-9, 49. — Caro de Torres, *Ordenes Militares*, fol. 49, 50. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom. ii. pp. 100 - 104.

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Castile was that of Alcantara, which also received its confirmation from Pope Alexander the Third, in 1177. It was long held in nominal subordination to the knights of Calatrava, from which it was relieved by Julius the Second, and eventually rose to an importance little inferior to that of its rival.³⁹

The internal economy of these three fraternities was regulated by the same general principles. The direction of affairs was intrusted to a council, consisting of the grand master and a number of the commanders (*comendadores*), among whom the extensive territories of the order were distributed. This council, conjointly with the grand master, or the latter exclusively, as in the fraternity of Calatrava, supplied the vacancies. The master himself was elected by a general chapter of these military functionaries alone, or combined with the conventual clergy, as in the order of Calatrava, which seems to have recognised the supremacy of the military over the spiritual division of the community, more unreservedly than that of St. James.

These institutions appear to have completely answered the objects of their creation. In the earlier history of the Peninsula, we find the Christian chivalry always ready to bear the brunt of battle against the Moors. Set apart for this peculiar duty, their services in the sanctuary only tended to prepare them for their sterner duties in the field of battle, where the zeal of the Christian soldier may

³⁹ Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, part. 3, fol. 1-6. — The knights of Alcantara wore a white mantle, embroidered with a green cross.