

be supposed to have been somewhat sharpened by the prospect of the rich temporal acquisitions, which the success of his arms was sure to secure to his fraternity. For the superstitious princes of those times, in addition to the wealth lavished so liberally on all monastic institutions, granted the military orders almost unlimited rights over the conquests achieved by their own valor. In the sixteenth century, we find the order of St. James, which had shot up to a preëminence above the rest, possessed of eighty-four commanderies, and two hundred inferior benefices. This same order could bring into the field, according to Garibay, four hundred belted knights, and one thousand lances, which, with the usual complement of a lance in that day, formed a very considerable force. The rents of the mastership of St. James amounted, in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, to sixty thousand ducats, those of Alcantara to forty-five thousand, and those of Calatrava to forty thousand. There was scarcely a district of the Peninsula which was not covered with their castles, towns, and convents. Their rich commanderies gradually became objects of cupidity to men of the highest rank, and more especially the grand-masterships, which, from their extensive patronage, and the authority they conferred over an organized militia pledged to implicit obedience, and knit together by the strong tie of common interest, raised their possessors almost to the level of royalty itself. Hence the elections to these important dignities came to be a fruitful source of intrigue, and fre-

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quently of violent collision. The monarchs, who had anciently reserved the right of testifying their approbation of an election, by presenting the standard of the order to the new dignitary, began personally to interfere in the deliberations of the chapter. While the pope, to whom a contested point was not unfrequently referred, assumed at length the prerogative of granting the masterships in administration on a vacancy, and even that of nomination itself, which, if disputed, he enforced by his spiritual thunders.⁴⁰

Owing to these circumstances, there was probably no one cause, among the many which occurred in Castile during the fifteenth century, more prolific of intestine discord, than the election to these posts, far too important to be intrusted to any subject, and the succession to which was sure to be contested by a host of competitors. Isabella seems to have settled in her mind the course of policy to be adopted in this matter, at a very early period of her reign. On occasion of a vacancy in the grand-mastership of St. James, by the death of the incumbent, in 1476, she made a rapid journey on horseback, her usual mode of travelling, from Valladolid to the town of Ucles, where a chapter of the order was deliberating on the election of a new principal. The queen, presenting herself be-

Grand-masterships annexed to the crown.

⁴⁰ Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, part. 1, fol. 12-15, 43, 54, 61, 64, 66, 67; part. 2, fol. 11, 51; part. 3, fol. 42, 49, 50. — Caro de Torres, *Ordenes Militares*, passim. — L. Marineo, *Costas Memorables*, fol. 33. — Garibay, *Compendio*, lib. 11, cap. 13. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. v. lib. 1, cap. 19. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 2, dial. 1.

fore this body, represented with so much energy the inconvenience of devolving powers of such magnitude on any private individual, and its utter incompatibility with public order, that she prevailed on them, smarting, as they were, under the evils of a disputed succession, to solicit the administration for the king, her husband. That monarch, indeed, consented to wave this privilege in favor of Alonso de Cardenas, one of the competitors for the office, and a loyal servant of the crown; but, at his decease in 1499, the sovereigns retained the possession of the vacant mastership, conformably to a papal decree, which granted them its administration for life, in the same manner as had been done with that of Calatrava in 1487, and of Alcantara, in 1494.⁴¹

The sovereigns were no sooner vested with the control of the military orders, than they began with their characteristic promptness to reform the various corruptions, which had impaired their ancient discipline. They erected a council for the general superintendence of affairs relating to the orders, and invested it with extensive powers both of civil and criminal jurisdiction. They supplied the vacant benefices with persons of acknowledged worth, exercising an impartiality, which could never be

Their re-
formation.

⁴¹ Caro de Torres, Ordenes Militares, fol. 46, 74, 83. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, part. 2, cap. 64. — Rades y Andrada, Las Tres Ordenes, part. 1, fol. 69, 70; part. 2, fol. 82, 83; part. 3, fol. 54. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 2, dial. 1. — The

sovereigns gave great offence to the jealous grandees who were competitors for the mastership of St. James, by conferring that dignity on Alonso de Cardenas, with their usual policy of making merit rather than birth the standard of preferment.

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maintained by any ⁶ private individual, necessarily exposed to the influence of personal interests and affections. By this harmonious distribution, the honors, which had before been held up to the highest bidder, or made the subject of a furious canvass, became the incentive and sure recompense of desert. ⁴²

In the following reign, the grand-masterships of these fraternities were annexed in perpetuity to the crown of Castile by a bull of Pope Adrian the Sixth; while their subordinate dignities, having survived the object of their original creation, the subjugation of the Moors, degenerated into the empty decorations, the stars and garters, of an order of nobility. ⁴³

IV. Vindication of ecclesiastical rights belonging to the crown from papal usurpation. In the earlier stages of the Castilian monarchy, the sovereigns appear to have held a supremacy in spiritual, very similar to that exercised by them in temporal matters. It was comparatively late that the nation submitted its neck to the papal yoke, so closely riveted at a subsequent period; and even the Romish ritual was not admitted into its churches till long after it had been adopted in the rest of Europe. ⁴⁴ But, when the code of the Partidas was

Usurpations
of the
church.

⁴² Caro de Torres, Ordenes Militares, fol. 84. — Riol has given a full account of the constitution of this council, Informe, apud Seminario Erudito, tom. iii. pp. 164 et seq.

⁴³ The reader will find a view of the condition and general resources of the military orders as

existing in the present century in Spain, in Laborde, Itinéraire Descriptif de l'Espagne, (2d edition, Paris, 1827-30,) tom. v. pp. 102-117.

⁴⁴ Most readers are acquainted with the curious story, related by Robertson, of the ordeal to which

promulgated in the thirteenth century, the maxims of the canon law came to be permanently established. The ecclesiastical encroached on the lay tribunals. Appeals were perpetually carried up to the Roman court; and the popes, pretending to regulate the minutest details of church economy, not only disposed of inferior benefices, but gradually converted the right of confirming elections to the episcopal and higher ecclesiastical dignities, into that of appointment.⁴⁵

These usurpations of the church had been repeatedly the subject of grave remonstrance in cortes. Several remedial enactments had passed that body, during the present reign, especially in relation to the papal provision of foreigners to benefices; an evil of much greater magnitude in Spain than in other countries of Europe, since the episcopal demesnes, frequently covering the Moorish frontier, became an important line of national defence, obviously improper to be intrusted to the keeping of foreigners and absentees. Notwithstanding the efforts of cortes, no effectual remedy was devised for this latter grievance, until it became the subject of actual collision between the

Resisted by
cortes.

the Romish and Muzarabic rituals were subjected, in the reign of Alfonso VI., and the ascendancy, which the combination of king-craft and priest-craft succeeded in securing to the former in opposition to the will of the nation. Cardinal Ximenes afterwards established a magnificent chapel in the cathedral church of Toledo for the performance of the Muzarabic ser-

vices, which have continued to be retained there to the present time. Fléchier, *Histoire du Cardinal Ximenes*, (Paris, 1693,) p. 142.— Bourgoanne, *Travels in Spain*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. chap. 1.

⁴⁵ Marina, *Ensayo Histórico-Crítico*, nos. 322, 334, 341.— Riol, *Informe*, apud *Semanario Erudito*, pp. 92 et seq.

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I.Difference
with the
pope.

crown and the pontiff, in reference to the see of Tاراçona, and afterwards of Cuença.⁴⁶

Sixtus the Fourth, had conferred the latter benefice, on its becoming vacant in 1482, on his nephew, Cardinal San Giorgio, a Genoese, in direct opposition to the wishes of the queen, who would have bestowed it on her chaplain, Alfonso de Burgos, in exchange for the bishopric of Cordova. An ambassador was accordingly despatched by the Castilian sovereigns to Rome, to remonstrate on the papal appointment; but without effect, as Sixtus replied, with a degree of presumption, which might better have become his predecessors of the twelfth century, that "he was head of the church, and, as such, possessed of unlimited power in the distribution of benefices, and that he was not bound to consult the inclination of any potentate on earth, any farther than might subserve the interests of religion."

The sovereigns, highly dissatisfied with this response, ordered their subjects ecclesiastical, as well as lay, to quit the papal dominions; an injunction, which the former, fearful of the sequestration of their temporalities in Castile, obeyed with as much promptness as the latter. At the same time, Ferdinand and Isabella proclaimed their intention of inviting the princes of Christendom to unite

⁴⁶ Marina, *Ensayo Histórico-Crítico*, nos. 335-337. — *Ordenanças Reales*, lib. 1, tit. 3, leyes 19, 20; lib. 2, tit. 7, ley 2; lib. 3, tit. 1, ley 6. — Riol, *Informe*, apud *Semanario Erudito*, loc. cit. — In the latter part of Henry IV.'s reign, a papal bull had been granted against the provision of foreigners to benefices. Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. vii. p. 196, ed. Valencia.

with them in convoking a general council for the reformation of the manifold abuses, which dishonored the church. No sound could have grated more unpleasantly on the pontifical ear, than the menace of a general council, particularly at this period, when ecclesiastical corruptions had reached a height which could but ill endure its scrutiny. The pope became convinced that he had ventured too far, and that Henry the Fourth was no longer monarch of Castile. He accordingly despatched a legate to Spain, fully empowered to arrange the matter on an amicable basis.

The legate, who was a layman, by name Domingo Centurion, no sooner arrived in Castile, than he caused the sovereigns to be informed of his presence there, and the purpose of his mission; but he received orders instantly to quit the kingdom, without attempting so much as to disclose the nature of his instructions, since they could not but be derogatory to the dignity of the crown. A safe-conduct was granted for himself and his suite; but, at the same time, great surprise was expressed that any one should venture to appear, as envoy from his Holiness, at the court of Castile, after it had been treated by him with such unmerited indignity.

Far from resenting this ungracious reception, the legate affected the deepest humility; professing himself willing to wave whatever immunities he might claim as papal ambassador, and to submit to the jurisdiction of the sovereigns as one of their own subjects, so that he might obtain an audience.

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Cardinal Mendoza, whose influence in the cabinet had gained him the title of "third king of Spain," apprehensive of the consequences of a protracted rupture with the church, interposed in behalf of the envoy, whose conciliatory deportment at length so far mitigated the resentment of the sovereigns, that they consented to open negotiations with the court of Rome. The result was the publication of a bull by Sixtus the Fourth, in which his Holiness engaged to provide such natives to the higher dignities of the church in Castile, as should be nominated by the monarchs of that kingdom; and Alfonso de Burgos was accordingly translated to the see of Cuença.⁴⁷ Isabella, on whom the duties of ecclesiastical preferment devolved, by the act of settlement, availed herself of the rights, thus wrested from the grasp of Rome, to exalt to the vacant sees persons of exemplary piety and learning, holding light, in comparison with the faithful discharge of this duty, every minor consideration of interest, and even the solicitations of her husband, as we shall see hereafter.⁴⁸ And the chronicler of her reign dwells with complacency on those good old times, when churchmen were to be found of such

⁴⁷ Riol, in his account of this celebrated concordat, refers to the original instrument, as existing in his time in the archives of Simancas, *Semanario Erudito*, tom. iii. p. 95.

⁴⁸ "Lo que es público hoy en España é notorio," says Gonzalo de Oviedo, "nunca los Reyes Cathólicos desearon ni procuraron sino que proveer é presentar para las

dignidades de la Iglesia hombres capaces é idoneos para la buena administracion del servicio del culto divino, é á la buena enseñanza é utilidad de los Christianos sus vasallos; y entre todos los varones de sus Reynos así por largo conocimiento como per larga é secreta informacion acordaron encojer é elegir," &c. *Quincuagenas*, MS., dial. de Talavera.

singular modesty, as to require to be urged to accept the dignities to which their merits entitled them.⁴⁹

CHAPTER
VI.

V. The regulation of trade. It will be readily conceived that trade, agriculture, and every branch of industry must have languished under the misrule of preceding reigns. For what purpose, indeed, strive to accumulate wealth, when it would only serve to sharpen the appetite of the spoiler? For what purpose cultivate the earth, when the fruits were sure to be swept away, even before harvest time, in some ruthless foray? The frequent famines and pestilences, which occurred in the latter part of Henry's reign and the commencement of his successor's, show too plainly the squalid condition of the people, and their utter destitution of all useful arts. We are assured by the Curate of Los Palacios, that the plague broke out in the southern districts of the kingdom, carrying off eight, or nine, or even fifteen thousand inhabitants from the various cities; while the prices of the ordinary aliments of life rose to a height, which put them above the reach of the poorer classes of the community. In addition to these physical evils, a fatal shock was given to commercial credit by the adulteration of the coin. Under Henry the Fourth, it is computed that there were no less than one hundred and fifty

Restoration
of trade.

⁴⁹ Salazar de Mendoza, Crón. del Gran Cardenal, lib. 1, cap. 52. — Idem, Dignidades de Castilla, p. 374. — Pulgar Reyes Católicos, part. 2, cap. 104. — See also the

similar independent conduct pursued by Ferdinand, three years previous, with reference to the see of Tarazona, related by Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 304.

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mints openly licensed by the crown, in addition to many others erected by individuals without any legal authority. The abuse came to such a height, that people at length refused to receive in payment of their debts the debased coin, whose value depreciated more and more every day; and the little trade, which remained in Castile, was carried on by barter, as in the primitive stages of society.⁵⁰

Salutary
enactments
of cortes.

The magnitude of the evil was such as to claim the earliest attention of the cortes under the new monarchs. Acts were passed fixing the standard and legal value of the different denominations of coin. A new coinage was subsequently made. Five royal mints were alone authorized, afterwards augmented to seven, and severe penalties denounced against the fabrication of money elsewhere. The reform of the currency gradually infused new life into commerce, as the return of the circulations, which have been interrupted for a while, quickens the animal body. This was furthered by salutary laws for the encouragement of domestic industry. Internal communication was facilitated by the construction of roads and bridges. Absurd restrictions on change of residence, as well as the onerous duties which had been imposed on commercial intercourse between Castile and Aragon, were repealed. Several judicious laws were enacted for the protection of foreign trade; and the flourishing condition

⁵⁰ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 44.— See a letter from one of Henry's subjects, cited by Saez, Monedas de Enrique IV., p.

3.— Also the coarse satire (composed in Henry's reign) of Mingo Revulgo, especially coplas 24-27.