

powerful neighbour. The death of the king of France, which occurred not long after, fortunately relieved the sovereigns from apprehensions of any immediate annoyance on that quarter.¹⁴

Amid their manifold concerns, Ferdinand and Isabella kept their thoughts anxiously bent on their great enterprise, the conquest of Granada. At a congress general of the deputies of the hermandad, held at Pinto, at the commencement of the present year, 1483, with the view of reforming certain abuses in that institution, a liberal grant was made of eight thousand men, and sixteen thousand beasts of burden, for the purpose of conveying supplies to the garrison in Alhama. But the sovereigns experienced great embarrassment from the want of funds. There is probably no period in which the princes of Europe felt so sensibly their own penury; as at the close of the fifteenth century; when, the demesnes of the crown having been very generally wasted by the lavishness or imbecility of its proprietors, no substitute had as yet been found in that searching and well-arranged system of taxation, which prevails at the present day. The Spanish sovereigns, notwithstanding the economy which they had introduced into the finances, felt the pressure of these embarrassments, peculiarly, at the present juncture. The maintenance of the royal guard and of the vast national police of the

Resources of
the crown.

¹⁴ Aleson, *Annales de Navarre*, lib. 34, cap. 2; lib. 35, cap. 1. — *Histoire du Royaume de Navarre*, pp. 578. 579. — *La Clède*, Hist. de Portugal, tom. iii. pp. 438-441. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 199. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. p. 551.

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I

hermandad, the incessant military operations of the late campaign, together with the equipment of a navy, not merely for war, but for maritime discovery, were so many copious drains of the exchequer.¹⁵ Under these circumstances, they obtained from the pope a grant of one hundred thousand ducats, to be raised out of the ecclesiastical revenues in Castile and Aragon. A bull of crusade was also published by his Holiness, containing numerous indulgences for such as should bear arms against the infidel, as well as those who should prefer to commute their military service for the payment of a sum of money. In addition to these resources, the government was enabled on its own credit, justified by the punctuality with which it had redeemed its past engagements, to negotiate considerable loans with several wealthy individuals.¹⁶

With these funds the sovereigns entered into extensive arrangements for the ensuing campaign; causing cannon, after the rude construction of that age, to be fabricated at Huesca, and a large quantity of stone balls, then principally used, to be manufactured in the Sierra de Constantina; while the magazines were carefully provided with ammunition and military stores.

An event not unworthy of notice is recorded by

Justice of
the sove-
reigns.

¹⁵ Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum Decades*, ii. lib. 2, cap. 1.

Besides the armada in the Mediterranean, a fleet under Pedro de Vera was prosecuting a voyage of discovery and conquest to the Canaries, which will be the subject of more particular notice hereafter.

¹⁶ Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p.

199. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. p. 551.

Father Mariana seems to disapprove of this expedient of the church for raising money, which he speaks of as the device of "certain ingenious persons, who contrive to curry favor with princes by ministering to their necessities."

Pulgar, as happening about this time. A common soldier, named John de Corral, contrived under false pretences, to obtain from the king of Granada a number of Christian captives, together with a large sum of money, with which he escaped into Andalusia. The man was apprehended by the warden of the frontier of Jaen; and, the transaction being reported to the sovereigns, they compelled an entire restitution of the money, and consented to such a ransom for the liberated Christians as the king of Granada should demand. This act of justice, it should be remembered, occurred in an age when the church itself stood ready to sanction any breach of faith, however glaring, towards heretics and infidels.¹⁷

While the court was detained in the north, tidings were received of a reverse sustained by the Spanish arms, which plunged the nation in sorrow far deeper than that occasioned by the rout at Loja. Don Alonso de Cardenas, grand master of St. James, an old and confidential servant of the crown, had been intrusted with the defence of the

Expedition
to the Axar-
quia.

¹⁷ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 58. — Pulgar, Reyes Católicos, p. 202.

Juan de Corral imposed on the king of Granada by means of certain credentials, which he had obtained from the Spanish sovereigns without any privity on their part to his fraudulent intentions. The story is told in a very blind manner by Pulgar.

It may not be amiss to mention here a doughty feat performed by another Castilian envoy, of much

higher rank, Don Juan de Vera. This knight, while conversing with certain Moorish cavaliers in the Alhambra, was so much scandalized by the freedom with which one of them treated the immaculate conception, that he gave the circumcised dog the lie, and smote him a sharp blow on the head with his sword. Ferdinand, says Bernaldez, who tells the story, was much gratified with the exploit, and recompensed the good knight with many honors.

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frontier of Ecija. While on this station, he was strongly urged to make a descent on the environs of Malaga, by his *adalides* or scouts, men who, being for the most part Moorish deserters or renegadoes, were employed by the border chiefs to reconnoitre the enemy's country, or to guide them in their marauding expeditions.¹⁸ The district around Malaga was famous under the Saracens for its silk manufactures, of which it annually made large exports to other parts of Europe. It was to be approached by traversing a savage sierra, or chain of mountains, called the Axarquia, whose margin occasionally afforded good pasturage, and was sprinkled over with Moorish villages. After threading its defiles, it was proposed to return by an open road that turned the southern extremity of the sierra along the sea-shore. There was little to be apprehended, it was stated, from pursuit, since Malaga was almost wholly unprovided with cavalry.¹⁹

¹⁸ The *adalid* was a guide, or scout, whose business it was to make himself acquainted with the enemy's country, and to guide the invaders into it. Much dispute has arisen respecting the authority and functions of this officer. Some writers regard him as an independent leader, or commander; and the Dictionary of the Academy defines the term *adalid* by these very words. The *Siete Partidas*, however, explains at length the peculiar duties of this officer, conformably to the account I have given. (Ed. de la Real Acad. (Madrid, 1807,) part. 2, tit. 2, leyes 1-4.) Bernaldez, Pulgar, and the other chroniclers of the Granadine war, repeatedly notice him in this con-

nexion. When he is spoken of as a captain, or leader, as he sometimes is in these and other ancient records, his authority, I suspect, is intended to be limited to the persons, who aided him in the execution of his peculiar office. — It was common for the great chiefs, who lived on the borders, to maintain in their pay a number of these *adalides*, to inform them of the fitting time and place for making a foray. The post, as may well be believed, was one of great trust and personal hazard.

¹⁹ Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 203. — L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 173. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 320.

The grand master, falling in with the proposition, communicated it to the principal chiefs on the borders; among others, to Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Juan de Silva, count of Cifuentes, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the marquis of Cadiz. These noblemen, collecting their retainers repaired to Antequera, where the ranks were quickly swelled by recruits from Cordova, Seville, Xerez, and other cities of Andalusia, whose chivalry always readily answered the summons to an expedition over the border.²⁰

In the mean while, however, the marquis of Cadiz had received such intelligence from his own *adalides*, as led him to doubt the expediency of a march through intricate defiles, inhabited by a poor and hardy peasantry; and he strongly advised to direct the expedition against the neighbouring town of Almojia. But in this he was overruled by the grand master and the other partners of his enterprise; many of whom, with the rash confidence of youth, were excited rather than intimidated by the prospect of danger.

²⁰ Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 36.—Lebrija, *Rerum Gestarum Decades*, ii. lib. 2, cap. 2.

The title of *adelantado* implies in its etymology one preferred or placed before others. The office is of great antiquity; some have derived it from the reign of St. Ferdinand in the thirteenth century, but Mendoza proves its existence at a far earlier period. The adelantado was possessed of very extensive judicial authority in the

province or district in which he presided, and in war was invested with supreme military command. His functions, however, as well as the territories over which he ruled, have varied at different periods. An adelantado seems to have been generally established over a border province, as Andalusia for example. Marina discusses the civil authority of this officer, in his *Teoria*, tom. ii. cap. 23. See also Salazar de Mendoza, *Dignidades*, lib. 2, cap. 15.

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1483.

The military
array.

On Wednesday, the 19th of March, this gallant little army marched forth from the gates of Antequera. The van was intrusted to the adelantado Henriquez and Don Alonso de Aguilar. The centre divisions were led by the marquis of Cadiz and the count of Cifuentes, and the rear-guard, by the grand master of St. James. The number of foot, which is uncertain, appears to have been considerably less than that of the horse, which amounted to about three thousand, containing the flower of Andalusian knighthood, together with the array of St. James, the most opulent and powerful of the Spanish military orders. Never, says an Aragonese historian, had there been seen in these times a more splendid body of chivalry; and such was their confidence, he adds, that they deemed themselves invincible by any force which the Moslems could bring against them. The leaders took care not to cumber the movements of the army with artillery, camp equipage, or even much forage and provisions, for which they trusted to the invaded territory. A number of persons, however, followed in the train, who, influenced by desire rather of gain than of glory, had come provided with money, as well as commissions from their friends, for the purchase of rich spoil, whether of slaves, stuffs, or jewels, which they expected would be won by the good swords of their comrades, as in Alhama.²¹

²¹ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 60. — Rades y Andrada, Las Tres Ordenes, fol. 71. — Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 320. — Zuñiga, Annales de Sevilla, fol. 395.

— Lebrija, Rerum Gestarum Decades, ii. lib. 2, cap. 2. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 36.

After travelling with little intermission through the night, the army entered the winding defiles of the Axarquia; where their progress was necessarily so much impeded by the character of the ground, that most of the inhabitants of the villages, through which they passed, had opportunity to escape with the greater part of their effects to the inaccessible fastnesses of the mountains. The Spaniards, after plundering the deserted hamlets of whatever remained, as well as of the few stragglers, whether men or cattle, found still lingering about them, set them on fire. In this way they advanced, marking their line of march with the usual devastation that accompanied these ferocious forays, until the columns of smoke and fire, which rose above the hill-tops, announced to the people of Malaga the near approach of an enemy.

The old king Muley Abul Hacen, who lay at this time in the city, with a numerous and well-appointed body of horse, contrary to the reports of the adalides, would have rushed forth at once at their head, had he not been dissuaded from it by his younger brother Abdallah, who is better known in history by the name of El Zagal, or "the Valiant"; an Arabic epithet, given him by his countrymen to distinguish him from his nephew, the ruling king of Granada. To this prince Abul Hacen intrusted the command of the corps of picked cavalry, with instructions to penetrate at once into the lower level of the sierra, and encounter the Christians entangled in its passes; while another division, consisting chiefly of arque-

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tions.

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busiers and archers, should turn the enemy's flank by gaining the heights under which he was defiling. This last corps was placed under the direction of Reduan Benegas, a chief of Christian lineage, according to Bernaldez, and who may perhaps be identified with the Reduan, that, in the later Moorish ballads, seems to be shadowed forth ✓ as the personification of love and heroism.²²

Skirmish
among the
mountains.

The Castilian army in the mean time went forward with a buoyant and reckless confidence, and with very little subordination. The divisions occupying the advance and centre, disappointed in their expectations of booty, had quitted the line of march, and dispersed in small parties in search of plunder over the adjacent country; and some of the high-mettled young cavaliers had the audacity to ride up in defiance to the very walls of Malaga. The grand master of St. James was the only leader who kept his columns unbroken, and marched forward in order of battle. Things were in this state, when the Moorish cavalry under El Zagal, suddenly emerging from one of the mountain passes, appeared before the astonished rear-guard of the Christians. The Moors spurred on to the assault, but the well disciplined chivalry of St. James remained unshaken. In the fierce struggle which ensued, the Andalusians became embarrassed by the narrowness of the ground on which they were engaged, which afforded no scope for the

²² Conde, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom. iii. p. 217. — Car-
donne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Es-*
pagne, tom. iii. pp. 264-267. —
Bernaldez, *Reyes Catolicos*, MS.,
cap. 60.

manœuvres of cavalry; while the Moors, trained to the wild tactics of mountain warfare, went through their usual evolutions, retreating and returning to the charge, with a celerity, that sorely distressed their opponents and at length threw them into some disorder. The grand master in consequence, despatched a message to the marquis of Cadiz, requesting his support. The latter, putting himself at the head of such of his scattered forces as he could hastily muster, readily obeyed the summons. Discerning on his approach the real source of the grand master's embarrassment, he succeeded in changing the field of action by drawing off the Moors to an open reach of the valley, which allowed free play to the movements of the Andalusian horse, when the combined squadrons pressed so hard on the Moslems, that they were soon compelled to take refuge within the depths of their own mountains.²³

In the mean while, the scattered troops of the advance, alarmed by the report of the action, gradually assembled under their respective banners, and fell back upon the rear. A council of war was then called. All further progress seemed to be effectually intercepted. The country was everywhere in arms. The most that could now be hoped, was, that they might be suffered to retire unmolested with such plunder as they had already acquired. Two routes lay open for this purpose.

Retreat of
the Span-
iards.

²³ Conde, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom. iii. p. 217.—Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 204.—Rades y Andrada, *Las Tres Ordenes*, fol. 71, 72.

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The one winding along the sea-shore, wide and level, but circuitous, and swept through the whole range of its narrow entrance by the fortress of Malaga. This determined them unhappily to prefer the other route, being that by which they had penetrated the Axarquia, or rather a shorter cut, by which the adalides undertook to conduct them through its mazes.²⁴

Their disastrous situation.

The little army commenced its retrograde movement with undiminished spirit. But it was now embarrassed with the transportation of its plunder, and by the increasing difficulties of the sierra, which, as they ascended its sides, was matted over with impenetrable thickets, and broken up by formidable ravines or channels, cut deep into the soil by the mountain torrents. The Moors were now seen mustering in considerable numbers along the heights, and, as they were expert marksmen, being trained by early and assiduous practice, the shots from their arquebuses and cross-bows frequently found some assailable point in the harness of the Spanish men-at-arms. At length, the army, through the treachery or ignorance of the guides, was suddenly brought to a halt by arriving in a deep glen or enclosure, whose rocky sides rose with such boldness as to be scarcely practicable for infantry, much less for horse. To add to their distresses, daylight, without which they could scarcely hope to extricate themselves, was fast fading away.²⁵

²⁴ Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. pp. 552, 553. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 205. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 321.

²⁵ Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p. 205. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom. ii. p. 636.