

It is impossible to peruse the story of Columbus without assigning to him almost exclusively the glory of his great discovery; for, from the first moment of its conception to that of its final execution, he was encountered by every species of mortification and embarrassment, with scarcely a heart to cheer, or a hand to help him.²⁶ Those more enlightened persons, whom, during his long residence in Spain, he succeeded in interesting in his expedition, looked to it probably as the means of solving a dubious problem, with the same sort of vague and skeptical curiosity as to its successful result, with which we contemplate, in our day, an attempt to arrive at the Northwest passage. How feeble was the interest excited, even among those, who from their science and situation would seem to have their attention most naturally drawn towards it, may be inferred from the infrequency of allusion to

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XVI.Indifference
to his enter-
prise.

the previous discoveries of the Northmen, which were made in so much higher latitudes. Humboldt has well shown the probability, *a priori*, of such discoveries, made in a narrow part of the Atlantic, where the Orcades, the Feroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland afforded the voyager so many intermediate stations, at moderate distances from each other. (*Géographie du Nouveau Continent*, tom. ii. pp. 183 et seq.) The publication of the original Scandinavian MSS., (of which imperfect notices and selections, only, have hitherto found their way into the world,) by the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, at Copenhagen, is a matter of the deepest interest; and it is fortunate, that it is to be conducted under auspices, which must insure its execution in the most

faithful and able manner. It may be doubted, however, whether the declaration of the Prospectus, that "it was the knowledge of the Scandinavian voyages, in all probability, which prompted the expedition of Columbus," can ever be established. His personal history furnishes strong internal evidence to the contrary.

²⁶ How strikingly are the forlorn condition and indomitable energy of Columbus depicted in the following noble verses of Chiabrera;

"Certo da cor, ch' alto destin non scelse,
Son l' imprese magnanime neglette;
Ma le bell' alme alle bell' opre elette
Sanno gioir nelle fatiche celsee;
Nè biammo popolar, frate catena,
Spirto d' onore, il suo cammin reffrena.
Così lunga stagion per modi indegni
Europa disprezzo l' inclita speme,
Schernendo il vulgo, e seco i Regi insieme,
Nudo nocchier, promettitor di Regni."
Rime, parte 1, canzone 12.

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it in the correspondence and other writings of that time, previous to the actual discovery. Peter Martyr, one of the most accomplished scholars of the period, whose residence at the Castilian court must have fully instructed him in the designs of Columbus, and whose inquisitive mind led him subsequently to take the deepest interest in the results of his discoveries, does not, so far as I am aware, allude to him in any part of his voluminous correspondence with the learned men of his time, previous to the first expedition. The common people regarded, not merely with apathy, but with terror, the prospect of a voyage, that was to take the mariner from the safe and pleasant seas which he was accustomed to navigate, and send him roving on the boundless wilderness of waters, which tradition and superstitious fancy had peopled with innumerable forms of horror.

It is true that Columbus experienced a most honorable reception at the Castilian court; such as naturally flowed from the benevolent spirit of Isabella, and her just appreciation of his pure and elevated character. But the queen was too little of a proficient in science to be able to estimate the merits of his hypothesis; and, as many of those, on whose judgment she leaned, deemed it chimerical, it is probable that she never entertained a deep conviction of its truth; at least not enough to warrant the liberal expenditure, which she never refused to schemes of real importance. This is certainly inferred by the paltry amount actually expended on the armament, far inferior to that

appropriated to the equipment of two several fleets in the course of the late war for a foreign expedition, as well as to that, with which in the ensuing year she followed up Columbus's discoveries.

But while, on a review of the circumstances, we are led more and more to admire the constancy and unconquerable spirit, which carried Columbus victorious through all the difficulties of his undertaking, we must remember, in justice to Isabella, that, although tardily, she did in fact furnish the resources essential to its execution; that she undertook the enterprise when it had been explicitly declined by other powers, and when probably none other of that age would have been found to countenance it; and that, after once plighting her faith to Columbus, she became his steady friend, shielding him against the calumnies of his enemies, reposing in him the most generous confidence, and serving him in the most acceptable manner, by supplying ample resources for the prosecution of his glorious discoveries.²⁷

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Acknowledgments
due to Isabella.

²⁷ Columbus, in a letter written on his third voyage, pays an honest, heartfelt tribute to the effectual patronage which he experienced from the queen. "In the midst of the general incredulity," says he, "the Almighty infused into the queen, my lady, the spirit of intelligence and energy; and, whilst every one

else, in his ignorance, was expatiating only on the inconvenience and cost, her Highness approved it, on the contrary, and gave it all the support in her power." See Carta al Ama del Principe D. Juan, apud Navarrete, Coleccion de Viages, tom. i. p. 266.

It is now more than thirty years since the Spanish government intrusted Don Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, one of the most eminent

scholars of the country, with the care of exploring the public archives, for the purpose of collecting information relative to the voyages

Navarrete.

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and discoveries of the early Spanish navigators. In 1825, Señor Navarrete gave to the world the first fruits of his indefatigable researches, in two volumes, the commencement of a series, comprehending letters, private journals, royal ordinances, and other original documents, illustrative of the discovery of America. These two volumes are devoted exclusively to the adventures and personal history of Columbus, and must be regarded as the only authentic basis, on which any notice of the great navigator can hereafter rest. Fortunately, Mr. Irving's visit to Spain, at this period, enabled the world to derive the full benefit of Señor Navarrete's researches, by presenting their results in connexion with whatever had been before

known of Columbus, in the lucid and attractive form, which engages the interest of every reader. It would seem highly proper, that the fortunes of the discoverer of America should engage the pen of an inhabitant of her most favored and enlightened region; and it is unnecessary to add, that the task has been executed in a manner which must secure to the historian a share in the imperishable renown of his subject. The adventures of Columbus, which form so splendid an episode to the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, cannot properly come within the scope of its historian, except so far as relates to his personal intercourse with the government, or to their results on the fortunes of the Spanish monarchy.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y General
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XVII.

EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM SPAIN.

1492.

Excitement against the Jews.—Edict of Expulsion.—Dreadful Sufferings of the Emigrants.—Whole number of Exiles.—Disastrous Results.—True Motives of the Edict.—Contemporary Judgments.

WHILE the Spanish sovereigns were detained before Granada, they published their memorable and most disastrous edict against the Jews; inscribing it, as it were, with the same pen which drew up the glorious capitulation of Granada and the treaty with Columbus. The reader has been made acquainted in a preceding chapter with the prosperous condition of the Jews in the Peninsula, and the preëminent consideration, which they attained there beyond any other part of Christendom. The envy raised by their prosperity, combined with the high religious excitement kindled in the long war with the infidel, directed the terrible arm of the Inquisition, as has been already stated, against this unfortunate people; but the result showed the failure of the experiment, since comparatively few conversions, and those frequently of a suspicious character, were effected, while the great mass still

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Excitement
against the
Jews.

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by the
clergy.

maintained a pertinacious attachment to ancient errors.¹

Under these circumstances, the popular odium, inflamed by the discontent of the clergy at the resistance which they encountered in the work of proselytism, gradually grew stronger and stronger against the unhappy Israelites. Old traditions, as old indeed as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were revived, and charged on the present generation, with all the details of place and action. Christian children were said to be kidnapped, in order to be crucified in derision of the Saviour; the host, it was rumored, was exposed to the grossest indignities; and physicians and apothecaries, whose science was particularly cultivated by the Jews in the middle ages, were accused of poisoning their Christian patients. No rumor was too absurd for the easy credulity of the people. The Israelites were charged with the more probable offence of attempting to convert to their own faith the *ancient Christians*, as well as to reclaim such of their own race as had recently embraced Christianity. A great scandal was occasioned also by the intermarriages, which still occasionally took place between Jews and Christians; the latter condescending to repair their dilapidated fortunes by these wealthy

¹ It is a proof of the high consideration in which such Israelites as were willing to embrace Christianity were held, that three of that number, Alvarez, Avila, and Pulgar were private secretaries of the queen. (Mem. de la Acad. de Hist., tom. vi. Ilust. 18.)

An incidental expression of Mar-

tyr's, among many similar ones by contemporaries, affords the true key to the popular odium against the Jews. "Cum namque viderent, Judæorum tabido commercio, qui hac horâ sunt in Hispaniâ innumeri Christianis ditiores, plurimorum animos corrumpi ac seduci," etc. Opus Epist., epist. 92.

alliances, though at the expense of their vaunted purity of blood.²

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These various offences were urged against the Jews with great pertinacity by their enemies, and the sovereigns were importuned to adopt a more rigorous policy. The inquisitors, in particular, to whom the work of conversion had been specially intrusted, represented the incompetence of all lenient measures to the end proposed. They asserted, that the only mode left for the extirpation of the Jewish heresy, was to eradicate the seed; and they boldly demanded the immediate and total banishment of every unbaptized Israelite from the land.³

The Jews, who had obtained an intimation of these proceedings, resorted to their usual crafty policy for propitiating the sovereigns. They commissioned one of their body to tender a donative of thirty thousand ducats towards defraying the expenses of the Moorish war. The negotiation however was suddenly interrupted by the inquisitor general, Torquemada, who burst into the apartment of the palace, where the sovereigns were giving audience to the Jewish deputy, and, drawing forth a crucifix from beneath his mantle, held it up, exclaiming, "Judas Iscariot sold his master for thirty

Violent conduct of Torquemada.

² Paramo, De Origine Inquisitionis, p. 164. — Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquisition, tom. i. cap. 7, sec. 3. — Peter Martyr, Opus Epist., epist. 94. — Ferreras, Hist. d'Espagne, tom. viii. p. 128.

³ Paramo, De Origine Inquisitionis, p. 163. Salazar de Mendoza refers the

sovereign's consent to the banishment of the Jews, in a great measure, to the urgent remonstrances of the cardinal of Spain. The bigotry of the biographer makes him claim the credit of every fanatical act for his illustrious hero. See Crón. del Gran Cardenal, p. 250.

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pieces of silver. Your Highnesses would sell him anew for thirty thousand; here he is, take him, and barter him away." So saying, the frantic priest threw the crucifix on the table, and left the apartment. The sovereigns, instead of chastising this presumption, or despising it as a mere freak of insanity, were overawed by it. Neither Ferdinand nor Isabella, had they been left to the unbiassed dictates of their own reason, could have sanctioned for a moment so impolitic a measure, which involved the loss of the most industrious and skilful portion of their subjects. Its extreme injustice and cruelty rendered it especially repugnant to the naturally humane disposition of the queen.⁴ But she had been early schooled to distrust her own reason, and indeed the natural suggestions of humanity, in cases of conscience. Among the reverend counsellors, on whom she most relied in these matters, was the Dominican Torquemada. The situation which this man enjoyed as the queen's confessor, during the tender years of her youth, gave him an ascendancy over her mind, which must have been denied to a person of his savage, fanatical temper, even with the advantages of this spiritual connexion, had it been formed at a riper period of her life. Without opposing further resistance to the representations, so emphatically expressed,

⁴ Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquisition, tom. i. chap. 7, sect. 5.

Pulgar, in a letter to the cardinal of Spain, animadverting with much severity on the tenor of certain municipal ordinances against

the Jews in Guipuscoa and Toledo, in 1482, plainly intimates, that they were not at all to the taste of the queen. See Letras, (Amstelodami, 1670,) let. 31.

of the holy persons in whom she most confided, Isabella, at length, silenced her own scruples, and consented to the fatal measure of proscription.

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The edict for the expulsion of the Jews was signed by the Spanish sovereigns at Granada, March 30th, 1492. The preamble alleges, in vindication of the measure, the danger of allowing further intercourse between the Jews and their Christian subjects, in consequence of the incorrigible obstinacy, with which the former persisted in their attempts to make converts of the latter to their own faith, and to instruct them in their heretical rites, in open defiance of every legal prohibition and penalty. When a college or corporation of any kind, — the instrument goes on to state, — is convicted of any great or detestable crime, it is right that it should be disfranchised, the less suffering with the greater, the innocent with the guilty.

Edict of expulsion.

If this be the case in temporal concerns, it is much more so in those, which affect the eternal welfare of the soul. It finally decrees, that all unbaptized Jews, of whatever sex, age, or condition, should depart from the realm by the end of July next ensuing; prohibiting them from revisiting it, on any pretext whatever, under penalty of death and confiscation of property. It was, moreover, interdicted to every subject, to harbour, succour, or minister to the necessities of any Jew, after the expiration of the term limited for his departure. The persons and property of the Jews, in the mean time, were taken under the royal protection. They were allowed to dispose of their effects of every kind on

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I.Its severe
operation.

their own account, and to carry the proceeds along with them, in bills of exchange, or merchandise not prohibited, but neither in gold nor silver.⁵

The doom of exile fell like a thunderbolt on the heads of the Israelites. A large proportion of them had hitherto succeeded in shielding themselves from the searching eye of the Inquisition, by an affectation of reverence for the forms of Catholic worship, and a discreet forbearance of whatever might offend the prejudices of their Christian brethren. They had even hoped, that their steady loyalty, and a quiet and orderly discharge of their social duties, would in time secure them higher immunities. Many had risen to a degree of opulence, by means of the thrift and dexterity peculiar to the race, which gave them a still deeper interest in the land of their residence.⁶ Their families were reared in all the elegant refinements of life; and their wealth and education often disposed them to turn their attention to liberal pursuits, which ennobled the character, indeed, but rendered them personally more sensible to physical annoyance, and less fitted to encounter the perils and privations of their dreary pilgrimage. Even the mass of the common people, possessed a dexterity in various handicrafts, which afforded a comfortable livelihood,

⁵ Carbajal, Anales, MS., año 1492.—Recop. de las Leyes, lib. 8, tit. 2, ley 2.—Pragmáticas del Reyno, ed. 1520, fol. 3.

⁶ The Curate of Los Palacios speaks of several Israelites worth one or two millions of maravedies, and another even as having amass-

ed ten. He mentions one, in particular, by the name of Abraham, as renting the *greater part of Castile!* It will hardly do to take the good Curate's statement *à la lettre*. See Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 112.

raising them far above similar classes in most other nations, who might readily be detached from the soil on which they happened to be cast, with comparatively little sacrifice of local interests.⁷ These ties were now severed at a blow. They were to go forth as exiles from the land of their birth; the land where all, whom they ever loved, had lived or died; the land, not so much of their adoption, as of inheritance; which had been the home of their ancestors for centuries, and with whose prosperity and glory they were of course as intimately associated, as was any ancient Spaniard. They were to be cast out helpless and defenceless, with a brand of infamy set on them, among nations who had always held them in derision and hatred.

Those provisions of the edict, which affected a show of kindness to the Jews, were contrived so artfully, as to be nearly nugatory. As they were excluded from the use of gold and silver, the only medium for representing their property was bills of exchange. But commerce was too limited and imperfect to allow of these being promptly obtained to any very considerable, much less to the enormous amount required in the present instance. It was impossible, moreover, to negotiate a sale of their effects under existing circumstances, since the market was soon glutted with commodities; and few would be found willing to give any thing like an equivalent for what, if not disposed of within the prescribed term, the proprietors must relinquish at

⁷ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, ubi supra.

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any rate. So deplorable, indeed, was the sacrifice of property, that a chronicler of the day mentions, that he had seen a house exchanged for an ass, and a vineyard for a suit of clothes! In Aragon, matters were still worse. The government there discovered, that the Jews were largely indebted to individuals and to certain corporations. It accordingly caused their property to be sequestrated for the benefit of their creditors, until their debts should be liquidated. Strange indeed, that the balance should be found against a people, who have been everywhere conspicuous for their commercial sagacity and resources, and who, as factors of the great nobility and farmers of the revenue, enjoyed at least equal advantages in Spain with those possessed in other countries, for the accumulation of wealth.⁸

While the gloomy aspect of their fortunes pressed heavily on the hearts of the Israelites, the Spanish clergy were indefatigable in the work of conversion. They lectured in the synagogues and public squares, expounding the doctrines of Christianity, and thundering forth both argument and invective against the Hebrew heresy. But their laudable endeavours were in a great measure counteracted by the more authoritative rhetoric of the Jewish Rabbins, who compared the persecutions of their brethren, to those which their ancestors had suffered under Pharaoh. They encouraged them to

⁸ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 10. — Zurita, Anales, tom. v. fol. 9.

Capmany notices the number of synagogues existing in Aragon, in

1428, as amounting to nineteen. In Galicia at the same time there were but three, and in Catalonia but one. See Mem. de Barcelona, tom. iv. Apend. num. 11.

persevere, representing that the present afflictions were intended as a trial of their faith by the Almighty, who designed in this way to guide them to the promised land, by opening a path through the waters, as he had done to their fathers of old. The more wealthy Israelites enforced their exhortations by liberal contributions for the relief of their indigent brethren. Thus strengthened, there were found but very few, when the day of departure arrived, who were not prepared to abandon their country rather than their religion. This extraordinary act of self-devotion by a whole people for conscience' sake may be thought, in the nineteenth century, to merit other epithets than those of "perfidy, incredulity, and stiff-necked obstinacy," with which the worthy Curate of Los Palacios, in the charitable feeling of that day, has seen fit to stigmatize it.⁹

When the period of departure arrived, all the principal routes through the country might be seen swarming with emigrants, old and young, the sick and the helpless, men, women, and children, mingled promiscuously together, some mounted on horses or mules, but far the greater part undertaking their painful pilgrimage on foot. The sight of so much misery touched even the Spaniards with pity, though none might succour them; for the grand inquisitor, Torquemada, enforced the ordinance to that effect, by denouncing heavy ecclesiastical cen-

Routes of
the emi-
grants.

⁹ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 10. 113. — Ferreras, Hist. d' Espagne, tom. viii. p. 131.

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sures on all who should presume to violate it. The fugitives were distributed along various routes, being determined in their destination by accidental circumstances, much more than any knowledge of the respective countries to which they were bound. Much the largest division, amounting according to some estimates to eighty thousand souls, passed into Portugal; whose monarch, John the Second, dispensed with his scruples of conscience so far, as to give them a free passage through his dominions on their way to Africa, in consideration of a tax of a *cruzado* a head. He is even said to have silenced his scruples so far, as to allow certain ingenious artisans to establish themselves permanently in the kingdom.¹⁰

A considerable number found their way to the ports of Santa Maria and Cadiz, where, after lingering some time in the vain hope of seeing the waters open for their egress, according to the promises of the Rabbins, they embarked on board a Spanish fleet for the Barbary coast. Having crossed over to Ercilla, a Christian settlement in Africa, whence they proceeded by land towards Fez, where a considerable body of their countrymen resided, they were assaulted on their route by the roving tribes of the desert, in quest of plunder. Notwithstanding the interdict, the Jews had contrived to secrete small sums of money, sewed up in their

Their sufferings in Africa.

¹⁰ Zurita, Anales, tom. v. fol. 9. — Ferreras, Hist. d'Espagne, tom. viii. p. 133. — Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, ubi supra. — La Clède, Hist. de Portugal, tom. iv. p. 95. — Mariana, Hist. de España, tom. ii. p. 602.

garments or the linings of their saddles. These did not escape the avaricious eyes of their spoilers, who are even said to have ripped open the bodies of their victims, in search of gold, which they were supposed to have swallowed. The lawless barbarians, mingling lust with avarice, abandoned themselves to still more frightful excesses, violating the wives and daughters of the unresisting Jews, or massacring in cold blood such as offered resistance. But without pursuing these loathsome details further, it need only be added, that the miserable exiles endured such extremity of famine, that they were glad to force a nourishment from the grass which grew scantily among the sands of the desert; until at length great numbers of them, wasted by disease, and broken in spirit, retraced their steps to Ercilla, and consented to be baptized, in the hope of being permitted to revisit their native land. The number, indeed, was so considerable, that the priest who officiated was obliged to make use of the mop, or hyssop, with which the Roman catholic missionaries were wont to scatter the holy drops, whose mystic virtue could cleanse the soul in a moment from the foulest stains of infidelity. "Thus," says a Castilian historian, "the calamities of these poor blind creatures proved in the end an excellent remedy, that God made use of to unseal their eyes, which they now opened to the vain promises of the Rabbins; so that, renouncing their ancient heresies, they became faithful followers of the Cross!"¹¹

¹¹ Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. viii. p. 133. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 113.

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I.In other
countries.

Many of the emigrants took the direction of Italy. Those who landed at Naples brought with them an infectious disorder, contracted by long confinement in small, crowded, and ill-provided vessels. The disorder was so malignant, and spread with such frightful celerity, as to sweep off more than twenty thousand inhabitants of the city, in the course of the year, whence it extended its devastation over the whole Italian peninsula.

A graphic picture of these horrors is thus given by a Genoese historian, an eyewitness of the scenes he describes. "No one," he says, "could behold the sufferings of the Jewish exiles unmoved. A great many perished of hunger, especially those of tender years. Mothers, with scarcely strength to support themselves, carried their famished infants in their arms, and died with them. Many fell victims to the cold, others to intense thirst, while the unaccustomed distresses incident to a sea voyage aggravated their maladies. I will not enlarge on the cruelty and the avarice which they frequently experienced from the masters of the ships, which transported them from Spain. Some were murdered to gratify their cupidity, others forced to sell their children for the expenses of the passage. They arrived in Genoa in crowds, but were not suffered to tarry there long, by reason of the ancient law which interdicted the Jewish traveller from a longer residence than three days. They were allowed, however, to refit their vessels, and to recruit themselves for some days from the fatigues of their voyage. One might have taken them for

spectres, so emaciated were they, so cadaverous in their aspect, and with eyes so sunken; they differed in nothing from the dead, except in the power of motion, which indeed they scarcely retained. Many fainted and expired on the mole, which being completely surrounded by the sea, was the only quarter vouchsafed to the wretched emigrants. The infection bred by such a swarm of dead and dying persons was not at once perceived; but, when the winter broke up, ulcers began to make their appearance, and the malady, which lurked for a long time in the city, broke out into the plague in the following year." ¹²

Many of the exiles passed into Turkey, and to different parts of the Levant, where their descendants continued to speak the Castilian language far into the following century. Others found their way to France, and even England. Part of their religious services is recited to this day in Spanish, in one or more of the London synagogues; and the modern Jew still reverts with fond partiality to Spain, as the cherished land of his fathers, illustrated by the most glorious recollections in their eventful history. ¹³

¹² Senarega, apud Muratori, *Re-rum Ital. Script.*, tom. xxiv. pp. 531, 532.

¹³ See a sensible notice of Hebrew literature in Spain, in the *Retrospective Review*, vol. iii. p. 209. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. lib. 26, cap. 1. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. v. fol. 9.

Not a few of the learned exiles attained to eminence in those countries of Europe where they

transferred their residence. One is mentioned by Castro as a leading practitioner of medicine in Genoa; another, as filling the posts of astronomer and chronicler, under king Emanuel of Portugal. Many of them published works in various departments of science, which were translated into the Spanish and other European languages. *Biblioteca Española*, tom. i. pp. 359-372.

PART
I.Whole number
of exiles.

The whole number of Jews expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, is variously computed from one hundred and sixty thousand to eight hundred thousand souls; a discrepancy sufficiently indicating the paucity of authentic data. Most modern writers, with the usual predilection for startling results, have assumed the latter estimate; and Llorente has made it the basis of some important calculations, in his *History of the Inquisition*. A view of all the circumstances will lead us without much hesitation to adopt the more moderate computation.¹⁴ This, moreover, is placed beyond reasonable doubt by the direct testimony of the Curate of Los Palacios. He reports, that a Jewish Rabbin, one of the exiles, subsequently returned to Spain, where he was baptized by him. This person, whom Bernaldez commends for his intelligence, estimated the whole number of his unbaptized countrymen in the dominions of Ferdinand

¹⁴ From a curious document in the *Archives of Simancas*, consisting of a report made to the Spanish sovereigns by their accountant general, Quintanilla, in 1492, it would appear, that the population of the kingdom of Castile, exclusive of Granada, was then estimated at 1,500,000 *vecinos*, or householders. (See *Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, Apend. no. 12.) This, allowing four and a half to a family, would make the whole population 6,750,000. It appears from the statement of Bernaldez, that the kingdom of Castile contained five sixths of the whole amount of Jews in the Spanish monarchy. This proportion, if 800,000 be received as the total, would amount in round numbers

to 670,000 or ten per cent. of the whole population of the kingdom. Now it is manifestly improbable, that so large a portion of the whole nation, conspicuous moreover for wealth and intelligence, could have been held so light in a political aspect, as the Jews certainly were, or have tamely submitted for so many years to the most wanton indignities without resistance; or finally, that the Spanish government would have ventured on so bold a measure as the banishment of so numerous and powerful a class, and that too with as few precautions apparently, as would be required for driving out of the country a roving gang of gipsies.

and Isabella, at the publication of the edict, at thirty-six thousand families. Another Jewish authority, quoted by the Curate, reckoned them at thirty-five thousand. This, assuming an average of four and a half to a family, gives the sum total of about one hundred and sixty thousand individuals, agreeably to the computation of Bernaldez. There is little reason for supposing, that the actual amount would suffer diminution in the hands of either the Jewish or Castilian authority; since the one might naturally be led to exaggerate, in order to heighten sympathy with the calamities of his nation, and the other, to magnify as far as possible the glorious triumphs of the Cross.¹⁵

The detriment incurred by the state, however, is not founded so much on any numerical estimate, as on the subtraction of the mechanical skill, intelligence, and general resources of an orderly, industrious population. In this view, the mischief was incalculably greater than that inferred by the mere number of the exiled; and, although even this might have been gradually repaired in a country allowed the free and healthful developement of its energies, yet in Spain this was so effectually counteracted by the Inquisition, and other causes in the following century, that the loss may be deemed irretrievable.

The expulsion of so numerous a class of subjects by an independent act of the sovereign, might well

Disastrous
results.

¹⁵ Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, sect. 7. — Mariana, Hist. de España, tom. ii. lib. 26. — Zurita, de l'Inquisition, tom. i. chap. 7, Anales, tom. v. fol. 9.

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be regarded as an enormous stretch of prerogative, altogether incompatible with any thing like a free government. But to judge the matter rightly, we must take into view the actual position of the Jews at that time. Far from forming an integral part of the commonwealth, they were regarded as alien to it, as a mere excrescence, which, so far from contributing to the healthful action of the body politic, was nourished by its vicious humors, and might be lopped off at any time, when the health of the system demanded it. Far from being protected by the laws, the only aim of the laws, in reference to them, was to define more precisely their civil incapacities, and to draw the line of division more broadly between them and the Christians. Even this humiliation by no means satisfied the national prejudices, as is evinced by the great number of tumults and massacres of which they were the victims. In these circumstances, it seemed to be no great assumption of authority, to pronounce sentence of exile against those, whom public opinion had so long proscribed as enemies to the state. It was only carrying into effect that opinion, expressed as it had been in a great variety of ways; and, as far as the rights of the nation were concerned, the banishment of a single Spaniard would have been held a grosser violation of them, than that of the whole race of Israelites.

True motives of the edict.

It has been common with modern historians to detect a principal motive for the expulsion of the Jews, in the avarice of the government. It is only necessary, however, to transport ourselves back to

those times, to find it in perfect accordance with their spirit, at least in Spain. It is indeed incredible, that persons possessing the political sagacity of Ferdinand and Isabella could indulge a temporary cupidity, at the sacrifice of the most important and permanent interests, converting their wealthiest districts into a wilderness, and dispeopling them of a class of citizens, who contributed beyond all others, not only to the general resources, but the direct revenues of the crown; a measure so manifestly unsound, as to lead even a barbarian monarch of that day to exclaim, "Do they call this Ferdinand a politic prince, who can thus impoverish his own kingdom and enrich ours!"¹⁶ It would seem, indeed, when the measure had been determined on, that the Aragonese monarch was willing, by his expedient of sequestration, to control its operation in such a manner as to secure to his own subjects the full pecuniary benefit of it.¹⁷ No imputation of this kind attaches to Castile. The clause of the ordinance, which might imply such a design, by interdicting the exportation of gold and silver, was only enforcing a law, which had been already twice enacted by cortes in the present reign, and which was deemed of such moment, that the offence was made capital.¹⁸

We need look no further for the principle of

Contemporary judgments.

¹⁶ Bajazet. See Abarca, Reyes de Aragon, tom. ii. p. 310. — Páramo, De Origine Inquisitionis, p. 168.

¹⁷ "In truth," father Abarca somewhat innocently remarks, "King Ferdinand was a politic

Christian, making the interests of church and state mutually subservient to each other"! Reyes de Aragon, tom. ii. fol. 310.

¹⁸ Once at Toledo, 1480, and at Murcia, 1488. See Recop. de las Leyes, lib. 6, tit. 18, ley 1.

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action, in this case, than the spirit of religious bigotry, which led to a similar expulsion of the Jews from England, France, and other parts of Europe, as well as from Portugal, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, a few years later.¹⁹ Indeed, the spirit of persecution did not expire with the fifteenth century, but extended far into the more luminous periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth; and that, too, under a ruler of the enlarged capacity of Frederic the Great, whose intolerance could not plead in excuse the blindness of fanaticism.²⁰ How far the banishment of the Jews was conformable to the opinions of the most enlightened contemporaries, may be gathered from the encomiums lavished on its authors from more than one quarter. Spanish writers, without exception, celebrate it as a sublime sacrifice of all temporal interests to religious principle. The best instructed foreigners, in like manner, however they may condemn the details of its execution, or commiserate the sufferings of the Jews, commend the

¹⁹ The Portuguese government caused all children of fourteen years of age, or under, to be taken from their parents and retained in the country, as fit subjects for a Christian education. The distress occasioned by this cruel provision may be well imagined. Many of the unhappy parents murdered their children to defeat the ordinance; and many laid violent hands on themselves. Faria y Sousa coolly remarks, that "It was a great mistake in King Emanuel to think of converting any Jew to Christianity, old enough to pronounce the name of Moses!" He fixes three years of age as the utmost limit. (Eu-

ropa Portuguesa, tom. ii. p. 496.)

Mr. Turner has condensed, with his usual industry, the most essential chronological facts relative to modern Jewish history, into a note contained in the second volume of his History of England, pp. 114-120.

²⁰ They were also ejected from Vienna, in 1669. The illiberal, and indeed most cruel legislation of Frederic II., in reference to his Jewish subjects, transports us back to the darkest periods of the Visigothic monarchy. The reader will find a summary of these enactments in the third volume of Milman's agreeable History of the Jews.

act, as evincing the most lively and laudable zeal for the true faith.²¹

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It cannot be denied, that Spain at this period surpassed most of the nations of Christendom in religious enthusiasm, or, to speak more correctly, in bigotry. This is doubtless imputable to the long war with the Moslems, and its recent glorious issue, which swelled every heart with exultation, disposing it to consummate the triumphs of the Cross, by purging the land from a heresy, which, strange as it may seem, was scarcely less detested than that of Mahomet. Both the sovereigns partook largely of these feelings. With regard to Isabella, moreover, it must be borne constantly in mind, as has been repeatedly remarked in the course of this History, that she had been used to surrender her own judgment, in matters of conscience, to those spiritual guardians, who were supposed in that age to be its rightful depositaries, and the only casuists who could safely determine the doubtful line of duty. Isabella's pious disposition, and her trembling solicitude to discharge her duty, at whatever cost of personal inclination, greatly enforced the precepts of education. In this way, her very virtues

Mistaken
piety of the
queen.

²¹ The accomplished and amiable Florentine, Pico di Mirandola, in his treatise on Judicial Astrology, remarks that, "the sufferings of the Jews, in which the glory of divine justice delighted, were so extreme as to fill us Christians with commiseration." The Genoese historian, Senarega, indeed admits, that the measure savoured of some slight degree of cruelty. "Res hæc

primo conspectu laudabilis visa est, quia decus nostræ Religionis respiceret, sed aliquantulum in se crudelitatis continere, si eos non belluas, sed homines a Deo creatos, consideravimus." De Rebus Genuensibus, apud Muratori, Rerum Ital. Script., tom. xxiv. — Illescas, Hist. Pontif., apud Paramo, De Origine Inquisitionis, p. 167.

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became the source of her errors. Unfortunately, she lived in an age and station, which attached to these errors the most momentous consequences.²²— But we gladly turn from these dark prospects to a brighter page of her history.

²² Llorente sums up his account of the expulsion, by assigning the following motives to the principal agents in the business. "The measure," he says, "may be referred to the fanaticism of Torquemada, to the avarice and superstition of Ferdinand, to the false ideas and inconsiderate zeal with which they had inspired Isabella, to whom history cannot refuse the praise of great sweetness of disposition, and an enlightened mind." *Hist. de l'Inquisition*, tom. i. ch. 7, sec. 10.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y General
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XVIII.

ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF FERDINAND.—RETURN AND SECOND VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS.

1492 — 1493.

Attempt on Ferdinand's Life. — Consternation and Loyalty of the People. — Return of Columbus. — His Progress to Barcelona. — Interviews with the Sovereigns. — Sensations caused by the Discovery. — Regulations of Trade. — Conversion of the Natives. — Famous Bulls of Alexander VI. — Jealousy of Portugal. — Second Voyage of Columbus. — Treaty of Tordesillas.

TOWARDS the latter end of May, 1492, the Spanish sovereigns quitted Granada, between which and Santa Fe they had divided their time since the surrender of the Moorish metropolis. They were occupied during the two following months with the affairs of Castile. In August they visited Aragon, proposing to establish their winter residence there in order to provide for its internal administration, and conclude the negotiations for the final surrender of Roussillon and Cerdagne by France, to which these provinces had been mortgaged by Ferdinand's father, John the Second; proving ever since a fruitful source of diplomacy, which threatened more than once to terminate in open rupture.

Ferdinand and Isabella arrived in Aragon on the 8th of August, accompanied by Prince John and the

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The sovereigns visit Aragon.

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infantas, and a brilliant train of Castilian nobles. In their progress through the country they were everywhere received with the most lively enthusiasm. The whole nation seemed to abandon itself to jubilee, at the approach of its illustrious sovereigns, whose heroic constancy had rescued Spain from the detested empire of the Saracens. After devoting some months to the internal police of the kingdom, the court transferred its residence to Catalonia, whose capital it reached about the middle of October. During its detention in this place, Ferdinand's career was wellnigh brought to an untimely close.¹

Attempt on
Ferdinand's
life.

It was a good old custom of Catalonia, long since fallen into desuetude, for the monarch to preside in the tribunals of justice, at least once a week, for the purpose of determining the suits of the poorer classes especially, who could not afford the more expensive forms of litigation. King Ferdinand, in conformity with this usage, held a court in the house of deputation, on the 7th of December, being the vigil of the conception of the Virgin. At noon, as he was preparing to quit the palace, after the conclusion of business, he lingered in the rear of his retinue, conversing with some of the officers of the court. As the party was issuing from a little chapel contiguous to the royal saloon, and just as the king was descending a flight of stairs, a ruffian darted from an obscure recess in which he had

¹ Zurita, Anales, tom. v. fol. 13. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 28.

concealed himself early in the morning, and aimed a blow with a short sword, or knife, at the back of Ferdinand's neck. Fortunately the edge of the weapon was turned by a gold chain or collar which he was in the habit of wearing. It inflicted, however, a deep wound between the shoulders. Ferdinand instantly cried out, "St. Mary preserve us! treason, treason!" and his attendants, rushing on the assassin, stabbed him in three places with their poniards, and would have despatched him on the spot, had not the king, with his usual presence of mind, commanded them to desist, and take the man alive, that they might ascertain the real authors of the conspiracy. This was done accordingly, and Ferdinand, fainting with loss of blood, was carefully removed to his apartments in the royal palace.²

The report of the catastrophe spread like wildfire through the city. All classes were thrown into consternation by so foul an act, which seemed to cast a stain on the honor and good faith of the Catalans. Some suspected it to be the work of a vindictive Moor, others of a disappointed courtier. The queen, who had swooned on first receiving intelligence of the event, suspected the ancient enmity of the Catalans, who had shown such determined opposition to her husband in his early youth. She gave instant orders to hold in readiness one of

² Zurita, Anales, tom. v. fol. 15.—Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 116.—Garibay, Compendio, tom. ii. pp. 678, 679.—Abarca, Reyes de Aragon, tom. ii. fol. 315.—Carbajal, Anales, MS., año 1492.—Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 4, dial. 9.

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the galleys lying in the port, in order to transport her children from the place, as she feared the conspiracy might be designed to embrace other victims.³

Loyalty of
the people.

The populace, in the mean while, assembled in great numbers round the palace where the king lay. All feelings of hostility had long since given way to devoted loyalty towards a government, which had uniformly respected the liberties of its subjects, and whose paternal sway had secured similar blessings to Barcelona with the rest of the empire. They thronged round the building, crying out that the king was slain, and demanding that his murderers should be delivered up to them. Ferdinand, exhausted as he was, would have presented himself at the window of his apartment, but was prevented from making the effort by his physicians. It was with great difficulty, that the people were at length satisfied that he was still living, and that they finally consented to disperse, on the assurance, that the assassin should be brought to condign punishment.

Slow recovery of the
king.

The king's wound, which did not appear dangerous at first, gradually exhibited more alarming symptoms. One of the bones was found to be fractured, and a part of it was removed by the surgeons. On the seventh day his situation was con-

³ Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, epist. 125. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap. 116. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, ubi supra.

The great bell of Velilla, whose miraculous tolling always announced some disaster to the monarchy, was heard to strike at the time of this assault on Ferdinand, being

the fifth time since the subversion of the kingdom by the Moors. The fourth was on the assassination of the inquisitor Arbues. All which is established by a score of good orthodox witnesses, as reported by Dr. Diego Dormer, in his *Discursos Varios*, pp. 206, 207.

sidered extremely critical. During this time, the queen was constantly by his side, watching with him day and night, and administering all his medicines with her own hand. At length, the unfavorable symptoms yielded; and his excellent constitution enabled him so far to recover, that in less than three weeks he was able to show himself to the eyes of his anxious subjects, who gave themselves up to a delirium of joy, offering thanksgivings and grateful oblations in the churches; while many a pilgrimage, which had been vowed for his restoration to health, was performed by the good people of Barcelona, with naked feet, and even on their knees, among the wild sierras that surround the city.

The author of the crime proved to be a peasant, about sixty years of age, of that humble class, *de remenza*, as it was termed, which Ferdinand had been so instrumental some few years since in releasing from the baser and more grinding pains of servitude. The man appeared to be insane; alleging in vindication of his conduct, that he was the rightful proprietor of the crown, which he expected to obtain by Ferdinand's death. He declared himself willing, however, to give up his pretensions, on condition of being set at liberty. The king, convinced of his alienation of mind, would have discharged him; but the Catalans, indignant at the reproach which such a crime seemed to attach to their own honor, and perhaps distrusting the plea of insanity, thought it necessary to expiate it by the blood of the offender, and condemned the

Punishment
of the assassin.

Generalife

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I.Return of
Columbus.

unhappy wretch to the dreadful doom of a traitor, the preliminary barbarities of the sentence, however, were remitted, at the intercession of the queen.⁴

In the spring of 1493, while the court was still at Barcelona, letters were received from Christopher Columbus, announcing his return to Spain, and the successful achievement of his great enterprise, by the discovery of land beyond the western ocean. The delight and astonishment, raised by this intelligence, were proportioned to the skepticism, with which his project had been originally viewed. The sovereigns were now filled with a natural impatience to ascertain the extent and other particulars of the important discovery; and they transmitted instant instructions to the admiral to repair to Barcelona, as soon as he should have made the preliminary arrangements for the further prosecution of his enterprise.⁵

⁴ L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 186. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, epist. 125, 127, 131. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. v. fol. 16. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., loc. cit. — Garibay, after harrowing the reader's feelings with half a column of inhuman cruelties inflicted on the miserable man, concludes with the comfortable assurance, "Pero ahogaronle primero por clemencia y misericordia de la Reyna." (*Compendio*, tom. ii. lib. 19, cap. 1.)

A letter written by Isabella to her confessor, Fernando de Talavera, during her husband's illness, shows the deep anxiety of her own mind, as well as that of the citizens of Barcelona, at his critical situation, furnishing abundant evidence,

if it were needed, of her tenderness of heart, and the warmth of her conjugal attachment. See *Correspondencia Epistolar*, apud *Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, tom. vi. *Ilust.* 13.

⁵ Herrera, *Indias Occidentales*, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 3. — Muñoz, *Hist. del Nuevo-Mundo*, lib. 4, sect. 13, 14.

Columbus concludes a letter addressed, on his arrival at Lisbon, to the treasurer Sanchez, in the following glowing terms; "Let processions be made, festivals held, temples be filled with branches and flowers, for Christ rejoices on earth as in Heaven, seeing the future redemption of souls. Let us rejoice, also, for the temporal benefit likely to result, not merely to Spain, but