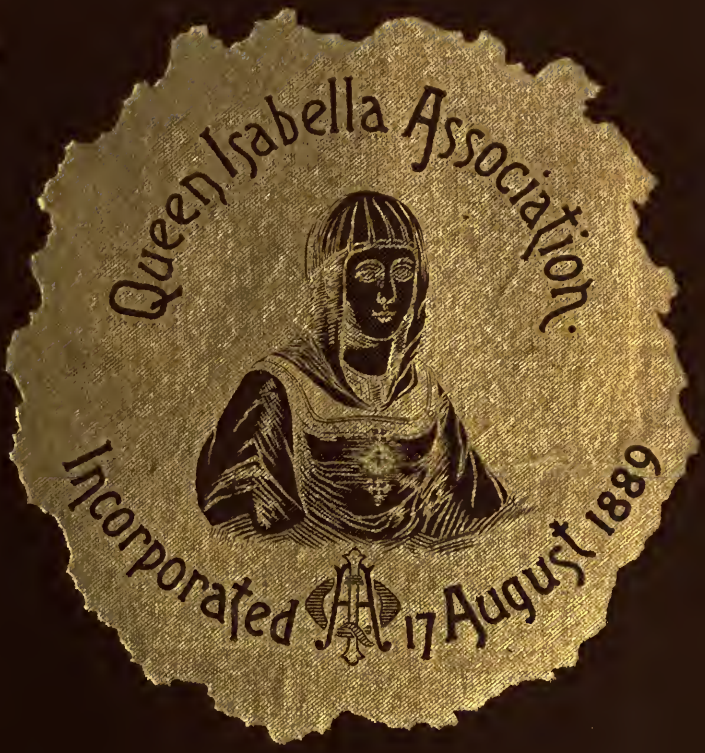

Annie Putnam,

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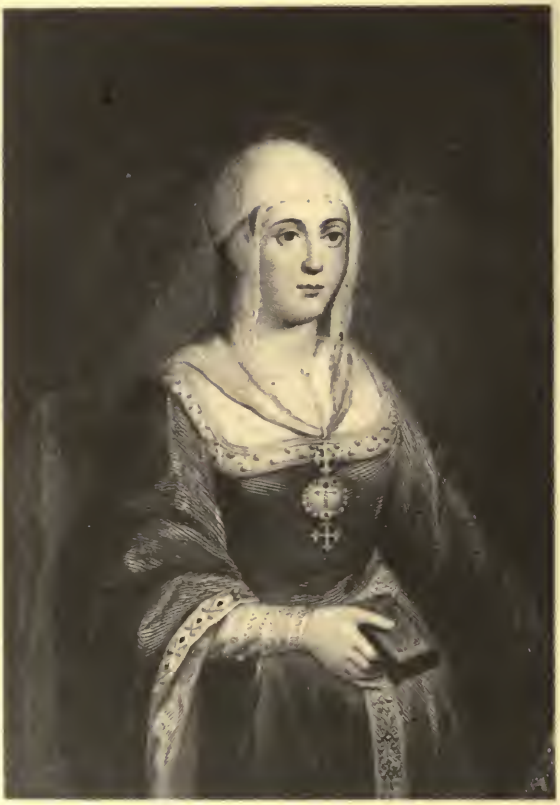
Chicago.

March 1890.

Isabella of Castile.



ISABELLA OF CASTILE.

ISABELLA OF CASTILE,

1492—1892.

BY

ELIZA ALLEN STARR.

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TO THE LADIES

OF

THE QUEEN ISABELLA ASSOCIATION,

who, by a two-fold inspiration of patriotic and womanly honor, have championed the claims of

ISABECCA OF CASTICE

as

CO-DISCOVERER OF THE NEW WORLD,

These pages, prepared under their patronage, are cordially dedicated by the Author.

PREFACE.

In the following narrative no attempt is made to give the history of the times in which it is laid; but rather to set before the mind, as distinctly as a picture or statue could set before the eyes, the noble personality of Isabella of Spain.

Two notable examples of the honor to be paid to a woman by writing her story detached from all the events of her period, excepting those directly connected with her, are given in the Holy Scriptures. One of the Books of the Old Testament recites with the enthusiasm born of poesy and patriotism, the glorious acts of Judith, whose valor and chastity brought to naught the devices of Holofernes.

Another Book recounts the holy conquest of the beautiful Esther over the heart of the king, Ahasuerus, not only

by the charms of her unrivaled loveliness, but the might of her self-abnegation in behalf of her people.

Art, which wrought marvels on the floor of the Cathedral of Siena, has represented there, in one of its most exquisite compositions, the whole story of Judith of Bethulia; in the Loggia dei Lanzi of Florence, Donatello has left his triumphant Judith; and in the same city of Etruria, Botticelli's brush has given a Judith which surpasses criticism in the eyes of Ruskin; while on one of the corners of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Michael Angelo gives scenes from the story of Esther; proving how suggestively attractive these narratives have been to the masters of both plastic and pictorial ideals.

Nor can we forget, or in any way omit to remind others, how the homilies of a Gregory of Rome, a Jerome of Bethlehem, an Ambrose of Milan, an Augustine of Hippo, a Chrysostom of

Constantinople, a Bernard of Clairvaux, teem with praises bestowed upon the valor of holy women.

No apology, then, can be called for by the historian, when he sees Isabella detached from his exhaustive volumes of contemporaneous history, and standing forth in her marvelous beauty to the eyes of the unlettered as well as the learned; to hold her place in the heart of the world like a Judith or an Esther; supplying to the artist an ideal of such nobleness and benignity as to captivate the imagination, aggrandize the touch of the sculptor and painter, and bequeathing to the youthful enthusiast a heroine graced with the dignity of the ancient Cornelia or Christian Paula of Rome, with that added charm of a personal association with our very existence as a nation.

In order, however, to supply any lack which may be felt of certain surroundings that link Isabella to the

century which she glorified, we have given, in our *Addendum*, copious notes, which, we trust, will give such details, and introduce such personages as a youthful reader might need for historic memoranda, without breaking in upon the harmonious outlines we have so studiously kept intact, of the personality of Queen Isabella.

Isabella of Castile.

Chivalry, being a quality of the soul, can be claimed by no age, can be determined by no circumstance; to be prophesied of, indeed, in some moment of high inspiration, but never to be counted upon by human wisdom.

Amid the night of barbarous ages, in the midst of an enervating, luxurious civilization, in peace as in war, in the huts of peasants as in kings' houses, among mountain peaks or the level of broad plains,

this mysterious germ, planted in the human soul, puts forth its blossom to be the marvel, the admiration, the glory of a day, or of an epoch, then passes into the annals of history, into the traditions of races, thus to let fall its seed into the bosom of future generations.

In the very heart and core of the fifteenth century, the 22d of April, 1451, this root of chivalry, running like a fiber of indestructible life among the nations, disclosed the bud of this marvelous flower at Madrigal, in old Castile, Spain. Castile, on its plateau from twenty-five to thirty thousand feet above the sea, with the wild Cantabrian moun-

tains for its northern horizon, beyond which dwelt the Basque people, with their never to be translated language, themselves never to be transplanted; Castile, with a language so noble, so fiery, that it could chant the story of the dauntless Cid, yet so melodious as to need no music for its verse; Castile, with its lords of such goodly metal that they have passed into proverbs, and warriors whose prowess was equaled by their generosity to the vanquished; Castile, with so stanch a mind running through its ranks of spurred and cuirassed knights, its tonsured ecclesiastics, the representatives of its States,

all holding themselves with so fearless a face towards their sovereign, that, how direct soever his descent, he could reign only by their will, giving their oath of allegiance, through their Cortes, in such words as these, ringing like purest steel:

"We, who are each of us as good as you, and, altogether more powerful than you, promise obedience to your government, if you maintain our rights and liberties, not otherwise:" and, moreover, what they swore they fulfilled to the letter, for both issues.

It was of this Castile that was born, as surely as of John the Second, its king, and Isabella of Portu-

gal, its queen, on the 22d of April, 1451, that peerless Christian sovereign, with "all the royal makings of a Queen," as of a woman,

ISABELLA OF CASTILE;

the events of whose life, like some rugged mountain range on a day of October, stand sheathed in the charmed atmosphere of her own heroic excellence, of her own exquisite womanly goodness; for she was the flower of chivalry, even in old Castile, Spain.

John the Second died regretting that he had not been born a carpenter instead of a king; and Henry, his son by his first queen, Maria of Aragon, having received the al-

legiance of the Cortez, the widowed queen, Isabella of Portugal, retired immediately from the court to the little town of Arevalo, with her young son, Alphonso, and the infant Isabella, then only four years old.

Under the maternal eye of one who would have redeemed her husband's reign from disgrace had it been possible, the royal children were reared in a seclusion which preserved them from the flattery which is the curse of princes, and from all the pernicious influences of a court. Were instructed, too, in that code of chivalrous honor, that morality which searches to the mar-

row of the bone and the intention of the hidden thought, and that love, as well as deference, for religion, which Isabella of Portugal knew could alone secure them from the evil of their times; and which proved sources of inexhaustible strength to the beloved daughter in whom Providence had willed should be bound up, as in a bundle of precious spices, the best interests of her time as well as of her kingdom.

The natural graces of mind and heart of the young Isabella sent out their tender shoots in this garden, all enclosed, with a vigorous beauty and freshness which defied

every deteriorating influence of her subsequent life. At the age of thirteen, she was recalled to the palace by her brother, Henry the Fourth, only to make conspicuous the blameless purity of her life and the exalted motives by which it was uniformly actuated.

When she found herself, at the age of sixteen, constantly in danger of becoming a victim to the selfish policy of the king, by the proposing of alliances utterly distasteful to her and even unsuitable, if not by rank at least by disparity of years, with the discretion characteristic of her even at this early age, she rested her refusal on

the ground that "the infantas of Castile could not be disposed of in marriage, without the consent of the nobles of the realm."

When Henry had proved himself so unworthy of the fealty of his subjects that he was deposed in effigy, and her brother Alphonso being dead, she was proffered and even entreated to accept the throne; was informed, moreover, that Seville, in common with the other cities of Andalusia, had unfurled its standard in her name, she replied: "While my brother Henry lives, none other has a right to the crown." At the same time she offered to assist her brother in re-

forming abuses and thus to reconcile all parties.

The result of her magnanimity was an amnesty, restoring the king to his throne, her own succession to the crown and the settlement usual to the heir apparent, being constitutionally secured to her by the unanimous voice of the Cortez; which, among other privileges, declared that she should not be constrained to marry in opposition to her own wishes. Her preference was given to her kinsman, Ferdinand of Aragon, whom his father, John the Second, in order to make him more acceptable as her suitor, had named king of Sicily.

Isabella's choice vindicated not only her judgment but her taste. In the bloom of life and distinguished for the comeliness of his person, Ferdinand had displayed in the important scenes in which he had borne a part from his boyhood, a chivalrous valor combined with maturity of judgment far above his years. Themselves descendants of the same venerated ancestors, speaking the same noble language, molded by similar traditions to a similarity of manners and even characteristics, while their kingdoms, by their geographical position, might be regarded as natural allies, the union of two such mon-

archies might well strike the far-reaching mind of Isabella, as of all others to be desired for Castile. With her habitual prudence, however, she fortified her action in this matter by the approbation of the archbishop of Toledo, and also of the admiral of Castile, a nobleman who could answer for the mind of all the grandees of the kingdom.

It was under such protection and advice that her romantic marriage to Ferdinand was accomplished, notwithstanding Henry's opposition and even threats of imprisonment, on the morning of the 19th of October, 1469, in the palace temporarily occupied by Isabella, at Valladolid;

in the presence, too, of the nobility with those of inferior rank numbering, all together, not less than two thousand.

At this time, Ferdinand was in the eighteenth year of his age. His complexion was fair, although somewhat bronzed by constant exposure to the sun; his eye quick and cheerful; his forehead ample, and approaching to baldness; his muscular, well-proportioned frame invigorated by the toils of war and by the chivalrous exercises in which he delighted. He was one of the best horsemen in his court and excelled in field sports of every kind. His voice was somewhat sharp, but

he was fluent in his eloquence and when he had a point to carry, was courteous and even insinuating. His health was insured by extreme temperance in his diet, and such were his habits of activity, that he seemed to find rest in business.

Isabella was a year older than Ferdinand. In stature she was somewhat above the middle size. Her complexion was fair, her hair of a bright chestnut color, inclining to red, and her mild blue eye beamed with sensibility and intelligence. She was, in fact, exceedingly beautiful; "the handsomest lady," said one of her household, "whom I ever beheld, and

the most gracious in her manners."

The portrait still existing of her in the royal palace, charms one irresistibly by the open symmetry of features, indicating a natural serenity of temper, and also that rare harmony of intellectual, moral and womanly qualities, which formed a character seldom to be portrayed in history. Her demeanor was dignified, while her modesty bore upon reserve. The Castilian language was spoken by her with even more than usual elegance; in which we see the trace of her royal father's love of literature, which had fostered a golden age of poesy at the court of Castile. Yet with

all these satisfactory endowments of mind and person, it is to be acknowledged, such was the poverty of these royal personages, that money was borrowed for the expenses of the wedding.

But the heart of Isabella was not one to rest easy while one element of discord remained in hand to dispel. Henry was her brother. A meeting was arranged for them at Segovia, and Henry, who, with all his faults, possessed a natural amiability which could not resist the explanations of one as candid as Isabella, whom he must have loved in his heart, gave public expression to the good understanding existing

between them, by walking at her side and holding the bridle of her palfrey, as she rode along the streets of the city. Ferdinand was then in Aragon, but on his return to Castile, hastened to Segovia and was welcomed by Henry with every appearance of satisfaction. Nor was this too soon for his sister's peace of mind, for Henry the Fourth died on the 11th of December, 1474.

Immediately upon the death of Henry, Isabella was proclaimed queen, with the usual solemnities, on the great square of Segovia, from which the royal procession moved to the Cathedral; where, after the Te Deum had been chanted, she

prostrated herself before the high altar, returning solemn thanks to Almighty God who had thus preserved her for his service, and imploring the light of heavenly wisdom for the proper discharge of her high duties.

As a proof that her prayer for wisdom had been heard, may be given, not only the clear-sightedness which kept in her own hand all the essential rights of sovereignty in her dominion of Castile, but the candor of the arguments by which she reconciled Ferdinand to a distribution of power; which, she assured him, was more nominal than real between themselves, for

their interests could not be divided in the present or the future; while the prerogatives of the crown would be irrevocably and peacefully preserved to their successor, even if this proved to be a daughter. Nor were these the merely plausible pretexts of a woman of tact. From first to last, Ferdinand found himself not only associated with her, but his own plans filled out by her wisdom and energy.

"I well remember," writes one of her court, "to have seen the queen with the king, her husband, sitting in judgment in the alcazar of Madrid, every Friday as was the law in Castile, dispensing justice to

great or small who came to ask for it;" and it might be remarked of other countries as it has been of Castile, that it is not so infrequent to have good laws as to have rulers who observe them.

But Isabella did not wait for the attendance of her royal consort to enforce justice or quell insurrection. She was at Tordesillas when tidings came that the people of Segovia had risen up against Cabrera, to whom the government of the city had been entrusted, and compelled him to retire to the citadel. Mounting her horse and attended by Cardinal Mendoza and other dignities of her court, she pushed

on to Segovia, entered the citadel and then descended alone to the court yard, ordering the gates to be flung wide open that the people might enter. As the excited crowd poured in, she said, with a perfectly calm voice and manner:

"Tell me your grievances and I will do all in my power to redress them. I am sure what is for your interest must be also for mine and for that of the whole city." All they desired was the removal of Cabrera. "He is deposed already," said the queen, "and you have my authority to turn out such of his officers as are still in the castle, which I shall intrust to my own

servants on whom I can rely." The reply to this was a shout: "Long live the Queen!" and order was immediately restored. Having thus turned the edge of popular fury, she took up her residence in the city long enough to secure a thorough investigation of facts, when the official, whose only offense had been the strict administration of law, was peaceably restored to his office. The highest encomium passed upon him is, that he retained the full confidence of this just sovereign to the end of her life.

During her husband's absence in Aragon in the spring of 1481, a

quarrel took place in the antechamber of her palace at Valladolid, between two young noblemen, one of whom was a son of her old friend, the admiral of Castile and a kinsman of Ferdinand. Having taken the weaker party, the young lord of Toral, under her protection by granting him a safe conduct until the affair was adjusted, she was filled with indignation on learning that the kinsman of Ferdinand and son too of the admiral, had violated the peace by cudgeling his foe at evening in the streets of the city. She mounted her horse immediately, though in the midst of a heavy rain storm, and rode

so rapidly towards the castle, then in possession of the admiral, where she supposed the offender had taken refuge, that the officers in attendance could not overtake her until she had reached the fortress, where she demanded of the admiral his son. He replied that he was not there. Whereupon she demanded the keys and searched for herself; to return, disappointed, to Valladolid.

The next day the queen was ill in bed as much from chagrin as exposure. "My body is lame," she said, "with the blows given by Don Frederic in contempt of my safe conduct." Don Frederic, however, was given up afterward by his fa-

ther who pleaded his youth; but not so much to the satisfaction of the sovereigns as to have him escape imprisonment.

A nobleman had been convicted of an aggravated capital offense. To obtain some commutation of his sentence, he offered a payment to the queen of a sum exceeding the annual rents of the crown. This was refused, but his estates, legally confiscated, were allowed to descend to his heirs while he suffered the full penalty of his crime.

Castile was now one with its queen. The consideration that she had won for it by her very marriage contract with the king of

Aragon, the renewal of this consideration at the time of her actual succession to the throne, notwithstanding the danger of a rupture with a husband she had chosen and to whom she was devotedly attached, had gained, from the first, the confidence and love of the nobles and the people of her realm. No one interest of theirs had been overlooked nor had one honorable custom been disturbed. To name Isabella was to name Castile.

When, therefore, Zahara, a small fortified town on the frontier of Andalusia, crowning a lofty eminence, its foot laved by the Guadalete, was surprised by the Moors,

its guard, inhabitants, men, women and children, put to the sword or hurried into Moslem slavery, the pulse of Isabella was the pulse of her people, of her nobles, of the ecclesiastics of her realm. Feuds were forgotten and Zahara was avenged by the surprise of Alhama. But those who had won it doubted if it would be possible to retain their prize and proposed to destroy it. When Isabella with Ferdinand reached the captured town, she exclaimed: "Let us hear no more of the destruction of Alhama. The first fruit of our victorious arms, let its walls be sacred, as a stronghold granted to us by Heaven in

the midst of a hostile land." The city was formally taken possession of with the most magnificent ceremonies, and its three principal mosques consecrated as Christian churches by Cardinal Mendoza.

Bells, crosses, a sumptuous supply of altar vessels, were furnished by the queen, and the principal church, Saint Mary of the Incarnation, long exhibited a covering for the high altar, richly embroidered by her own hands.

The key-note to the conquest of Granada had been struck by Isabella. It was not a war for destruction, not a war for treasures; but the love of that faith whose

martyrs the Spanish poet, Prudentius, had sung so sweetly in the fourth century, and which had been nourished in her innocent soul during her childhood and first girlhood in the seclusion of Arevalo, was now bearing its fruit, by turning the perishing glories of mortal conquest into one which assured the civilization of her dominions under the only banner, which, as a Christian, she could recognize.

From this time there was no swerving from the path, however arduous, which, under such inspirations, must lead to victory. She was the soul of the war; for while Ferdinand with his gallant leaders,

spurred on to every encounter, there was never the long siege, the more than ordinary danger, at which the queen did not appear in person, giving new courage by her own enthusiasm, consoling the sufferings of the sick and wounded. It was during this memorable war, and during one of its most protracted sieges, that Isabella raised spacious tents, supplied with every possible comfort for the sufferers, attended by her own physicians and which were called "the queen's hospitals;" the first instance on record of such an alleviation of the horrors of war. Nor was it alone when in the camp and on the actu-

al ground of battle, that her arm was the strong arm upon which all leaned.

During the siege of Cordova, where the amount of forces gathered was at one time eighty thousand, and beasts of burden the only means for transportation, it was Isabella who directed their supplies as well as of the conquered cities; moving along the frontier, stationing herself at points nearest the scene of action, where, by means of posts regularly established, she received hourly intelligence of the war; transmitting supplies of munition and provisions along the mountain ways with convoys pro-

portioned to the dangers of surprise.

Another care was to assemble new levies of troops, and the alacrity with which all ranks of men from every quarter of the kingdom, answered her summons, is still one of the marvels of this war. Roads were constructed for artillery across mountain passes by leveling their summits, filling up valleys with rocks or cork trees that grew to an enormous size in the wilderness, and by throwing bridges over torrents.

But her chief solicitude was to raise the sums necessary to meet this enormous expenditure; to do

which she had recourse to loans from individuals and religious corporations, obtained without difficulty from the universal confidence in her good faith. As time went on, these loans were secured by mortgages on the royal domains; and at last, the queen pawned the crown jewels and her own personal ornaments, to the merchants of Barcelona and Valencia, for such sums as they were willing to advance on them.

The empire of Isabella was not bounded by Castile and Leon, nor by her authority as sovereign; for it was true of her as of hardly any sovereign in any age, that her em-

pire was in the hearts of her people. She had endeared herself to them by her womanly sympathy, by the tears shed over their misfortunes; but when they saw her directing the national counsels, sharing fatigues, dangers, and all this with a broad intellectual power of comprehension usually denied to her sex, the devotion to her was more than loyalty; was mingled with a chivalrous veneration which woman alone can inspire; and woman, too, in an age and country which honors her who was called "Blessed among women," as the ideal type of all succeeding generations.

Into the presence of this woman, whose royal endowments of heart, of mind, and of soul, had been reinforced by a life of unselfishly heroic action, now advances one whose fame is to be henceforth associated with hers as the crowning glory of Isabella, queen of Castile. He bears with him no trappings of knighthood, and yet he stands forth from that background of grand Christian knights, of valorous leaders and conquerors, as if he, alone, could have worthily filled that page of Spain's glorious history. He brings with him no credentials from other powers, although he has visited courts, has

laid his cause before princes. His only endorsement that of a humble Franciscan friar, guardian of the convent of La Rabida, close to the little sea-port town of Palos in Andalusia.

To Fra Juan Perez de Marchena he had become known, by asking hospitality at the convent gate for himself and his young son, Diego. But the brother who reported their guest to the father guardian, had spoken of him as a man of singular nobleness of bearing, and when Fra Perez joined him he found him already deep in conversation with his friend, Doctor Garcia Hernandez. His angel had surely guided

the stranger to La Rabida and to Fra Perez; for not only was the soul of the pious Franciscan accustomed in the hour of meditation to soar "where the King of kings sits upon his starry throne," but from his observatory on the convent roof he watched, hour after hour, the course of the celestial worlds, and night after night had gone to his hard couch to wonder if they did not shine upon other continents on this earth than the one on which he dwelt, and if the salt sea waves that licked his shore, did not break upon others beyond the ken of their present voyagers. No sooner then had his guest, the Genoese,

Christopher Columbus, disclosed the dream of his life to Fra Perez, than he saw his own dreams realized.

The Franciscan, humbly as he bore himself, had been the confessor of queen Isabella, and like every one who had once been near her, his confidence in her wisdom, as well as in her goodness, was unbounded. He would write a letter, not directly to her majesty, but in a way to secure to Columbus a friend at court; no other than his own friend, Fra Fernando de Talavera, prior of our Lady of Prado at Valladolid. But Talavera was more learned in theology and morals than in geography, and he

only wondered at the credulity of Fra Perez, resolving not to disturb their majesties with any such wild schemes.

There was a keener eye than that of Talavera, however, which was at last directed towards Columbus; that of Cardinal Mendoza, an elegant scholar, lofty and venerable in his deportment, and who continued, during his life, to be the chief advisor of the queen. The extraordinary merit of this Genoese must be made known to the queen, and he felt it his duty to obtain an audience for him.

The motives which Columbus had put before the merchants of Ven-

ice and Genoa, before King John of Portugal, by an inspiration, it would seem, an instinctive appreciation of the motives which controlled Isabella, were laid aside in her presence. He spoke to her as he had spoken so often to Fra Perez under the stars at La Rabida, of the absolute certainty of continents on the other side of this round world; continents peopled by races to whom the true God was not known, to whom the Gospel of the Nazarene had not been preached; nations sitting in the shades of death. The intellect of Isabella seized, instantly, the geographical problem and her woman's heart

and her lofty faith appropriated the future destiny of those races for time and eternity as in her hand. Her cheeks glowed, her blue eyes kindled, the delicate nostrils dilated, as Columbus grew eloquent under the thrill of her sympathy. The Cardinal was satisfied.

Columbus, his genius, his exalted motives, had been appreciated by the queen as they deserved. There was still another ecclesiastic whose white habit and cowl covered a soul large enough to take in the views of Columbus; this was Deza, archbishop of Seville, a Dominican. When the freezing policy of Ferdinand had placed Talavera over a

council which was to judge of the merits of this idea of discovery, the council was held in the Dominican convent of Saint Stephen at Salamanca, where the court of the sovereigns then was. The council decided against Columbus and his new world; but the Dominicans, at whose own expense he was then lodged, were favorable in their judgment, and their first professor of theology, Diego de Deza, our archbishop of Seville, was completely convinced by the reasoning of Columbus, and finally gained the leading men of the University of Salamanca to his side.

The winter passed away before

the council at Salamanca came to any decision, and early in the spring of 1487, Ferdinand took the field with twenty thousand cavalry and fifty thousand foot, while the queen remained at Cordova to preside over the affairs of government, to provide for the necessities of the vast army. How could Columbus expect Isabella in the face of such immediate exigencies, to give her attention to a project, which, however momentous, could be delayed without positive danger or utter ruin; which could not be said of the war against Granada? When he reminded the sovereigns that their answer was still pending,

Talavera was instructed to give the decision of the council, but to add this mollifying clause, that as soon as the war was over there should be a fresh investigation of his claims.

From this time Columbus might be considered as in some manner attached to the court; and Isabella, so mindful of all claims upon her, did not neglect to furnish him with the means of maintaining this undefined position. Still, the war seemed no nearer its end than years before, and his heart must have been sorely wounded at the altogether secondary importance of his cause.

The siege of Baza had come to a glorious close, and the festivities in 1490 for the marriage of the beloved daughter of the sovereigns, the infanta Isabella, to Don Alphonso, the prince of Portugal, had been conducted in a manner suited to the virtues of this amiable princess and the attachment felt for her; above all by her mother, to whom she had been, from her earliest years and in seasons of danger, an unspeakably dear companion. But the utter desolation of soul which, with all these scenes before him, gradually overcame the confidence of Columbus in the patronage of the Spanish sovereigns, de-

termined him to leave Spain; yet he could not go without making one more effort. If the king and queen were too engrossed with the campaign, there were other Spaniards, of almost regal wealth, who could fit out his little armament.

He applied to the duke of Medina Sidonia, but his mind, also, was wholly upon Granada. He then turned to the duke of Medina Celi, who consented to furnish him with the really small sum needed; but, at the last moment, bethought himself that an enterprise of such importance belonged to the crown, rather than to a subject, and he wrote to the queen to give it her

sanction. Her answer was gracious, begging him to leave the honor of the expedition to the sovereigns, while at the same time she summoned Columbus to her presence, assuring him that at the end of the war he should receive full satisfaction.

This indefiniteness no longer consoled him and his mind was turned towards the king of France, who had written him an encouraging letter. But he could not leave Spain without visiting, perhaps bidding farewell to his faithful friend, Fra Perez at La Rabida. The heart of the good Franciscan ached, as he listened to the story of hope de-

ferred from the lips of Columbus. It could not be that he had been mistaken in the project itself; and calling in his friend, Don Garcia Hernandez, they put Columbus through his proofs, with the objections and solutions, as severely as another council of Salamanca could do. Both were convinced, and the friar of La Rabida saw no time was to be lost if Spain and his royal mistress were to bear off the honors of the expedition, secure the spiritual graces of such a harvest of souls.

As the former confessor of the queen, he was certain that she would listen to him, and this time

there should be no intervention. He wrote with his own hand a letter to Isabella, which should be placed without delay in hers. The messenger was an experienced sailor and a trusty envoy, Sebastian Rodriguez. It found the queen at Santa Fé, still in the midst of ever increasing exigencies. In two weeks, however, Rodriguez returned with an invitation to the Franciscan friar to visit the queen, and a message of encouragement to Columbus. The friar had no mule of his own, but one was borrowed. He found the ear of his royal penitent still open to him; for she heard the same unworldly voice calling

her to scale the heights, and his call was irresistible.

The next summons was to Columbus himself, but the last struggle with Granada was under the eyes of the world, and the world's ear was listening for "the last sigh of the Moor." All things must wait a few days to watch the death agony of a war that had lasted eight hundred years. On the 2d of January, 1492, the Moorish king delivered to Ferdinand the keys of Alhambra; the standards of Castile and Saint James waved from the red towers of the capital of Granada, and the silver cross borne by the king through the whole crusade

sparkled in the sunbeams. At this sight the choir of the royal chapel broke forth in the solemn anthem of the Te Deum, and the whole army, penetrated with the same emotions of gratitude as their sovereign lady and her consort, prostrated themselves on their knees in adoration of the Lord of Hosts, who had granted this triumph of the Cross.

In the midst of these solemn rejoicings, the queen kept her promise and sent for Columbus. She had full faith in him, she accepted his project; but there were terms to be arranged, and unfortunately it seemed proper that Fra Talavera,

now bishop of Granada, should arrange them. Years of waiting had not changed the mind of Columbus concerning the peaceful conquest of a new world for the crown of Castile and Leon, and this was too exalted a view to take of the enterprise to the mind of Talavera. Against her better judgment, Isabella was persuaded to say this and Columbus took his departure. Spain would not pay the price and the price would not be altered.

Columbus mounted his mule and rode from Santa Fé towards Cordova. This was the end of eighteen years of waiting upon the powers of this world! They must have

seemed small indeed to the eyes of Columbus in this hour of bitterest disappointment. Even Isabella, so far exalted above the other sovereigns of the world, had disputed with him the small boon he had named as his price for what would be the noblest and the most precious gem in her crown! What more was there to hope for? Whither should he turn? But there was One in whom Columbus trusted with a faith, a habitual, practical confidence, of which only sublime natures are capable. He had never lost faith in his cause, for it was, to him, manifestly the cause of God, and at that

moment his confidence in God himself, was at high tide. After all, what was this price which had been deemed too exorbitant for him to demand? Not treasures of gold unless gold was found; nothing, in fact unless the enterprise were successful. He had, indeed, stipulated for himself and his heirs the title and the authority of Admiral and Viceroy, but only over the lands discovered by him, with one tenth of the profits; was this too much even for an adventurer to ask?

But while these thoughts were coursing so bitterly through his mind, a tide, counter to that of

Talavera, had set towards Isabella. Luis de Saint Angel, receiver of ecclesiastical revenues, Alonzo de Quintanilla, comptroller general of finance, at whose house Columbus had been staying, were overwhelmed with shame and grief. Saint Angel went immediately to the queen and remonstrated with her on her refusal of such terms, which, if they seemed high, were contingent upon success when they would be, most certainly, deserved. He ventured even to remind her that this refusal did not accord with the magnanimity she had shown in every great enterprise, above all, those involving the interests of

Christendom. So far from resenting his plain speech, it was in accordance with her own inmost convictions, and their support from such a quarter was like giving her her freedom, while Quintanilla urged upon her the same considerations.

But where was he who shared the exalted confidence of Columbus in One who "holds" not only "the waters," but what must have seemed, at that moment, more fickle still, the hearts of princes "in the hollow of his hand?" From the moment Columbus turned the head of his mule from Santa Fé, Fra Juan Perez had betaken him-

self to the Queen's own chapel; before the altar, before the hidden Guest of its tabernacle, praying that the spirit of wisdom and counsel might come to her soul, inspire her decision. While Saint Angel pleaded and Quintanilla urged, the sighs of the Franciscan monk opened the heaven of heavens from which descended that Spirit which comes not at the call of human eloquence, and Isabella's irrevocable decision triumphed over the indifference of Ferdinand, over the short-sightedness of Talavera, over the very emptiness of her exhausted treasury.

With all the warmth and en-

thusiasm of her chivalrous soul, she exclaimed: "I will assume the undertaking for my own crown of Castile and am ready to pawn my jewels to meet the expenses of the expedition, if the funds of the royal treasury do not suffice." It was solely as Isabella of Castile, that she pledged her support to Christopher Columbus, and as Isabella of Castile, she would be the co-discoverer of the New World.

A courier was dispatched to overtake and bring back Columbus to the royal presence. She could not delay the assurance that his long years of waiting were over. She longed to give him her royal hand,

to pour into his proud and deeply injured spirit the wine of joy and the oil of a supreme consolation. There was a reparation to be made by her, Isabella of Castile, to the man who had waited so long at her gates, pleaded so long at the posts of her doors, and no one should say that it had not been made right royally, as became Isabella of old Castile, Spain. There was no duke or marquis in all her train, upon whom she had bestowed the largess of her peerless approbation, who should not honor this Columbus, and envy him the conquest sure to be won by his genius, by his unflinching perseverance and the

exaltation of his motives, which made his enterprise sacred in his eyes as it was, from that hour, in the eyes of Isabella.

The courier reached Columbus at the bridge of Pinos, two or three leagues from Granada. For a moment he hesitated; but when convinced that the messenger was from the queen and bore her pledge and promise, he confided in her royal word, turned his mule at once and retraced his steps to Santa Fé, chanting, in the silence of his great and deeply tried soul, IN TE, DOMINE, SPERAVI; "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped."

There was no delay now that Isa-

bella's hand had been put forth. Three caravels were manned, provisioned, ready to sail in three months. Moreover, in addition to the winning graciousness of her manner to him personally, and to the unconditional grants for whatever was necessary, she conferred, what must have been a balm to a sensitive and wounded spirit, the appointment of his son, Don Diego, as one of the pages of honor to prince Juan, a distinction coveted by the highest grandees of Spain; while the same distinction was extended by her, a few days after, to Diego's half brother, Don Fernando.

The little sea-port town of Palos, overlooked by La Rabida and its prior, Fra Perez, was the port from which Columbus was to sail, as if the good Franciscan, with all his other godly service, were to bring him fair winds. On Friday, the 3d of August, 1492, the Santa Maria, Pinta and Nina, unfurled their sails in the name of Jesus. The Santa Maria, the Admiral's ship, carried the royal ensign of the fleet, bearing the image of Jesus crucified.

Every evening as they ploughed through that waste of waters, on which no sail had ever before been spread, the anthem of the season,

Salve Regina, to which Saint Bernard of Clairvaux had already added his ejaculation:

O clemens, O pia,
O dulcis Virgo Maria!

"O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!" was intoned on the admiral's ship, to be caught up by the crews of the Pinta and Nina. Every evening, Isabella of Castile, as she closed her Book of Hours, recited the same; and as the constellations came out one by one, must have added that sweet Hymn: Ave Maris Stella, "Hail, Star of the Sea," as did those mariners, moving forward in a double darkness of night and of knowledge.

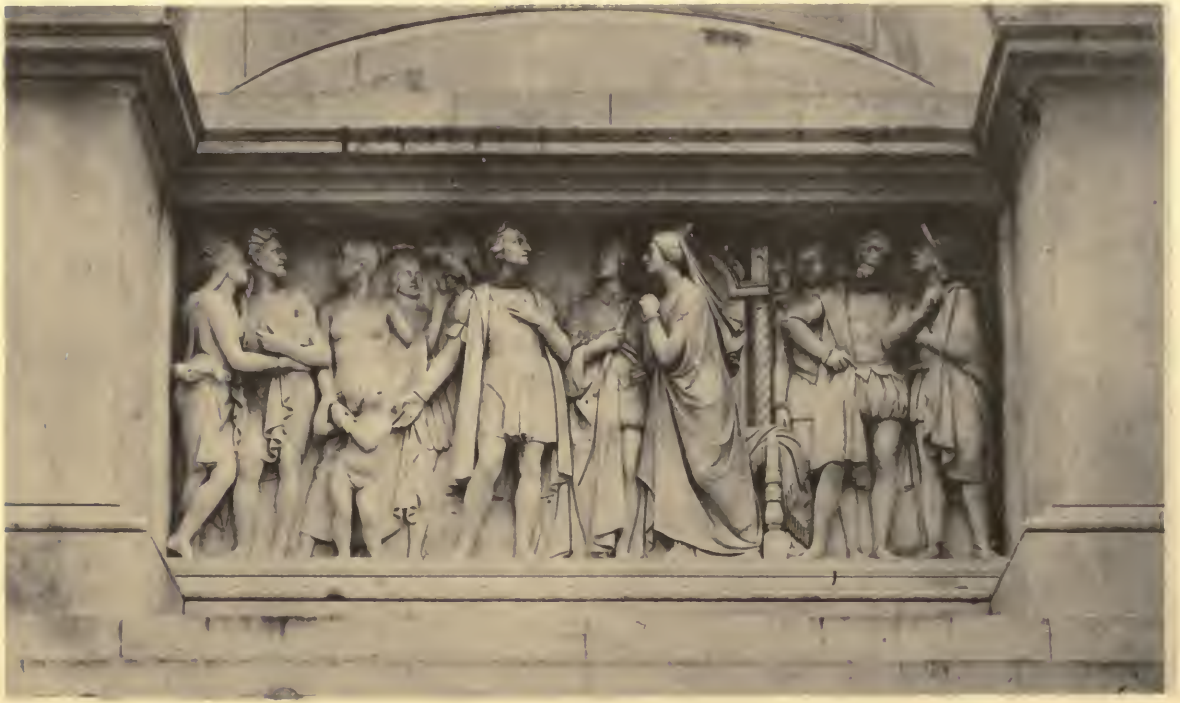
There were months of silence, absolute, unbroken; but on the 15th of March, 1493, the caravel with the admiral's flag at the mast head, sailed into the harbor of Palos, and to Fra Perez came the joy of saying the Mass of Thanksgiving. Columbus went forward to Seville, dispatching from thence the announcement of his return to the sovereigns. The summons to appear before their majesties was addressed thus: "To Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of the islands discovered in the Indies," and he was to come forthwith to Barcelona. His faithful sailors had been

called by Columbus to join in his triumph.

The whole country was alive with curiosity and a reception, in the grandest style of Spanish ceremonial, was prepared for him. As he approached the town, he was met by an escort of noble young cavaliers and a surging throng of citizens. Himself on horseback, he was fit, by his stately bearing and commanding presence, to be the central figure of this almost Roman triumph. A seat, splendidly adorned, was placed close in front of the two royal thrones, which that day surpassed their usual magnificence, where the sovereigns

were already seated to receive Columbus, while the doors of the great audience hall were thrown wide open.

Both sovereigns rose to greet him as he approached. In vain he tried to kneel, to kiss their hands; nor, till he had taken his seat would they resume their own, requesting him to narrate the events of his voyage. With a modesty and self-possession which charmed every one, above all, Isabella, he told them of the new dominions which God had put into their hands, and when his narrative was concluded, the king and the queen, with the vast multitude present, fell on their



COLUMBUS· BEFORE ISABELLA.

knees, thanking God for the mighty deeds of Christopher Columbus.

The new hero of Spain remained in Barcelona until the 28th of May, receiving continual proofs of the confidence of the sovereigns; their instructions being, really, his own suggestions adopted without an amendment or addition, and ratified by the royal authority. The royal seal was committed to him to use at his discretion and the first articles as agreed upon at Santa Fé, solemnly confirmed. The queen showed the greatest regard for his personal comfort, provided liberally for his expenses and required implicit deference to his

wishes. The equipment of the fleet for a second voyage, under the active management of Isabella, was conceived in a most generous spirit and vigorously carried out.

Fra Perez de Marchena was appointed to accompany Columbus, "because," as the queen said, "he is a good astronomer and has always seemed to me in complete accord with you." Was not that courtier right, who said: "She is the most gracious lady I ever beheld?" for her approbation was irradiated by a charm altogether her own. During the interval between his setting sail on the 25th of September, 1493, and his arrival in

Cadiz on the 11th of June, 1496, enemies had been silenced by a letter from Isabella addressed not only to her viceroy of the Indies, but to the colonists, bidding them obey him as herself, and no misrepresentations prevented her receiving him with all the cordiality of her ingenuous nature; while soon after, an unofficial letter written to him by Isabella, and still extant, bears witness to her undiminished approbation for the discoverer, and even her veneration.

On his third expedition, still more virulent enmity was excited against Columbus, and in his absence, his accusers were so far suc-

cessful as to induce Isabella to consent to the writing of a letter running thus: "Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean sea, we have charged the commander, Francis de Bobadilla, bearer of these presents, to make known to you, in our name, certain matters with which he is intrusted. We pray you to yield to him faith and credit, and to act accordingly."

Great was the indignation, untold was the grief of Isabella, when she learned from a letter written by Columbus himself to the intimate friend of the queen, Dona de la Torre, that the royal missive had resulted in his being utterly de-

prived of his command and sent home as a prisoner, actually in chains, and as it would seem, at her royal command! This letter was read to her at Granada.

A courier was dispatched in hot haste to Cadiz, peremptorily ordering the magistrate to strike off his chains. Moreover, a letter was sent to Columbus, signed by herself and Ferdinand, deploring this shameful misconstruction of the royal orders and inviting him to court at once. His enemies, in their blind malice, had outraged the hearts of all honest men; but the third voyage of Columbus from the New World, remains one of the lessons of history.

Ferdinand himself was alarmed. The name of Columbus was known and honored in every land, and he knew that, as sovereigns, the king and queen of Spain would be called to answer before the Europe of that day and at the bar of history, for what, without an instant and most public disavowal of their complicity, would certainly be taken as an instance of ingratitude almost without parallel. Columbus and his brothers were received at court with every mark of respect and in a solemn audience the sovereigns strove to make public reparation.

But it was in the private audience given to him by Isabella a

few days later that the wound in the great soul of Columbus was consoled if not healed. At her summons he came richly dressed and with all the marks of rank and distinction. But Isabella could not forget the chains which had manacled and fettered the majestic presence before her, and burst into a flood of womanly tears so overpowering that she could only extend her hand to him. Columbus, who had borne with so sublime a patience the insults and injuries heaped upon him by his enemies, the apparent withdrawal even of the approbation of his sovereign lady, his most faithful friend, no

sooner beheld her emotion than he lost all control of his own. He threw himself at her feet unable to utter a word for his tears and sobbings; but the tears of an Isabella of Castile were like balm to the sorrows of a soul as magnanimous as that of Christopher Columbus.

It was under her individual patronage that he sailed on his fourth voyage of discovery in 1502. Isabella did not see him on his return from this disastrous voyage more than ever under the malignant interference of his enemies. When Columbus reached Spain on the 7th of November, 1504, Isabella of Cas-

tile was dying. It was not the hardships of war, not the care of a vast realm that had undermined the citadel of her strength.

Under the panoply of an energy so persistent, so fearless as to entitle her to the name of a valiant woman, and under that sense of justice so keen as to allow no kinship, no apparent danger to her personal happiness to warp her decisions, there beat a heart as tender as that of the merest peasant woman in all her dominions, living only for the little ones around her humble board. The queen, who, with the bearing of a Semiramis, mounted on her war-horse, her slen-

der limbs cased in knightly mail, rode through the drooping ranks of dispirited soldiers during a cruel siege, breathing new courage into their hearts by her own intrepid bearing, would return to her tent to caress the youngest of her little ones with the cooing tenderness of the dove brooding her nestlings. For in this woman was the fortitude spun of finest steel and purest gold, their delicate threads wrought into a fibre never to be broken; yet the very fineness of their texture exacting a sensibility to impressions in proportion to their strength.

The career of Isabella, emerging

from the seclusion of Arevalo to the publicity of a court, through years of steadfast adhesion to the noblest ideals until she sat rightfully on the throne of Castile in the fullness of her prerogatives; the war of ten years for the deliverance of her country from the yoke of Islamism, which, with all its exquisite garniture of learning and the arts, was Islamism still, with its degrading conditions and certainty of degrading issues; the patronage which had given a new world to the old as well as to Castile; all had been a series of successes, of brilliant achievements, which will glow, to the end of time, not only on the

page of history, in the memory of the scholar, in the wisdom of the statesman and the valor of the military leader, but in the imagination of the young, with an enthusiasm similar to that felt for her by her own leal subjects, the beloved children of her realm.

Isabella had indeed learned of her royal mother in her girlhood at Arevalo, of the fallacy of earthly hopes; but when had an expectation of Isabella's been disappointed? When kneeling before her confessor, as a queen, she had been told to hold herself prepared for the sorrows which inevitably overtake even the just man; if not as punish-

ments, as trials of the soul's fealty as with holy Job, and to humble herself continually under the hand of God. But all this had been prospective. Perhaps, in all time, there has not been so happy a queen, so happy a woman while a queen, as Isabella. There had been no softness in her life, no ease, no leisure; but the happiness had been that of a life prolific in great and good deeds. What was there needed to ripen this precious fruit before dropping into the treasury of heaven?

In 1496, her mother, Isabella of Portugal, queen-dowager of Castile, died in the arms of her devoted

daughter. History does not give us, in so many words, the counsels of this wise mother, who removed her at so early an age from the mischiefs of a court, but we can see what those counsels must have been during the early part of Isabella's career; and her devotion to this mother was so tender that the first sorrow of Isabella coming with her death, she seems never to have recovered from the shock. Then followed the death of her son, prince Juan, five months after his marriage with the beautiful and accomplished Margaret of Austria; and to this succeeded what was the death-knell to Isabella's happiness, the death of her

own Isabella, queen of Portugal, and also of her infant son, in whom centered the succession to Castile, Aragon, Granada, Portugal, Navarre, Naples, Sicily and the opening glories of the eastern and western world, as if the infant had pined under the weight of too great destinies.

But this did not fill the appointed measure of Isabella's sorrow. To her daughter Joanna, wife of Philip of Flanders, had been born a son, who, had Isabella foreseen his magnificent career, might have consoled somewhat her fears for her beloved Castile and for the royal house. But the infancy of Charles

the Fifth, gave no sign of his mighty powers, while the domestic discords between Philip and Joanna added the sting of grievous mortification to the hearts of both Ferdinand and Isabella.

It was these accumulated sorrows which undermined the citadel of Isabella's life, which confirmed the truth of lessons she had received as a child and into early womanhood. Three weeks after the arrival of Columbus from his fourth voyage, the heart of the most gracious and beloved of sovereigns was cold in death, and no more affectionate homage could be penned than that of Columbus in the moment when

he knew that his earthly hopes were buried in her grave.

"A memorial for thee, my dear son, Diego, of what is at present to be done. The principal thing is to commend affectionately and with great devotion, the soul of the Queen our sovereign to God. Her life was always Catholic and prompt to all things in his holy service; for this reason we may rest assured that she is received into his glory and beyond the cares of this rough and weary world."

On the 12th of October, she executed that celebrated testament, which has been said to reflect so clearly the peculiar qualities of her

mind and heart. Her remains were to be deposited in the Franciscan convent of Santa Isabella in the Alhambra; unless the king might wish to be laid elsewhere, when she was to be removed to his side, that the union they had enjoyed in this world, and which, by the mercy of God, they hoped for their souls in heaven, might be represented by their bodies in the earth. Her jewels, or such as he might select, were given with the most touching expressions of tenderness to the king, her lord, to remind him of the singular love she had always borne to him, and that she was waiting for him in a better world, there-

by to encourage him to live more holily in this.

She enjoined upon her successors, in the most earnest manner, to quicken the good work of Christianizing and civilizing her subjects in the New World; to treat them with the greatest gentleness and redress any wrongs they had suffered in person or property; to look well that no revenues came to the crown unjustly or without the consent of the people—"all measures depending for their validity on the pleasure of the subjects of the realm." To Joanna and Philip she recommended the same conjugal harmony which had ever existed

between her and her husband, and besought them to show to him all the deference and filial affection "due to him beyond any other parent for his eminent virtues." No friend was forgotten, no attendant. At length, having received all the sacraments and performed all the offices of a sincere and devout Christian, with that sensitive delicacy and decorum which had distinguished her through life, she gently expired, a little before noon on Wednesday, November 26, 1504, in the fifty-fourth year of her age and thirtieth of her reign.

But what has Isabella of Castile, beautiful and noble and even chiv-

alrous, if you will, done for America, that we should claim for her the veneration of an entire continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Behring Strait to Terra del Fuego? The furnishing of three miserable little ships, hardly seaworthy, and one eighth of their expense borne by the discoverer himself, constituting the wonderful share which she had in the discovery of the New World.

These three small ships, be it remembered, were all that Columbus asked for. But the expense of these, small as it was, must be met, not by the people of her realm, but from the royal treasury, de-

pleted by the exhausting war of ten years, just ended. To meet the deficiency, the queen, who had begged one of the most opulent of her nobles to leave the honor of the expedition to the crown, would be compelled to raise money in her own name; not as in the case of the war when all Spain was ready to lay its treasures at her feet, but for an enterprise which had been declared a mere venture by a council of the learned men of the nation. The exceptions, like cardinal Mendoza and archbishop Deza, might be supposed chimerical even quixotic in their views, and it is quite certain that Ferdinand was

freezingly indifferent. He would not oppose the wife, whose voice had more than once decided him amid divided counselors; but she should have no encouragement from him in what seemed a vagary of a navigator's imagination.

Even religious enthusiasm, in the prospect of bringing whole nations into the light of Christianity, was damped by the confessor whose counsels had upheld her during the war on Granada, by motives the most powerful to a nature like hers; when, suddenly, the instinctive conviction which had been in her mind from her first interview with Columbus, re-asserted itself.

There was no balancing of counsels, there was no call to be made upon her own Castile, none upon Ferdinand, her husband. The jewels which she could command as personal, and which many a woman has shrunk from sacrificing to save even a husband's honor, should meet the demand that the enterprise would make upon her. Not only, too, will she pawn her jewels, but she will meet the chilling incredulity of her sovereign consort, of the whole nation, of Europe itself.

It was not the money which Isabella put into this scheme, even at a mortifying sacrifice, which se-

cured its success; but her confidence in Columbus personally, and what we must call a wonderful enlightenment of mind and soul, by which she took in at a glance all the favoring possibilities until they became probabilities, and these once grasped, all the chivalry of an exalted nature was pledged to their fulfillment. There was no withdrawing of confidence when once given. The sounding line of her womanly instinct, guided by the experiences of an extraordinary reign, had fathomed the sublime resources of Columbus and his motives, and no dastardly maligner could uncrown him for Isabella.

The provisions for the first voyage may seem meagre, but the three succeeding ones were furnished with a royal generosity leaving nothing to ask. Her patronage had, in fact, that undefinable quality which defies analysis; like some deed of heroism, unpremeditated, but suddenly disclosing a noble soul transfigured.

It was not during the war on Granada, noble as that war was in its motive and conduct, but when a woman and the sovereign of a mighty nation, rose above the learning of the worldly wise, above the caution of the wordly prudent, that the mysterious root, running, as we

have said, like a fibre of indestructible life among the nations, suddenly unfolded that flower of chivalry in old Spain, honored to-day, in America, as a glory to our Christian womanhood and the co-discoverer of the New World,

ISABELLA OF CASTILE.

ADDENDA.

'That doughty warrior and noble knight, Rodrigo diaz de Bivar, was the son of Diego Laynez, one of the two judges chosen for Castile by the people, when left without a chief, by his wife Doña Teresa Rodriguez, daughter of Don Rodrigo Alvarez, count and governor of Asturias.

He was born in 1066 in the city of Burgos, in the street of Saint Martin, hard by the palace of the counts of Castile, and in Saint Martin's church he was baptized. To this church he was most affectionate, and built the belfry tower thereof.

His first act of prowess, was to avenge

the insult given to his father Diego, now old and unable to defend himself, by the count Don Gomez. This count was a mighty man in war, who gave his voice first in the Cortez, and so powerful that he had a thousand friends among the mountains. Our Rodrigo was but a youth, but he thought not of the mightiness of the count, only of the insult done to his father, the insult and the blow; and his father, seeing him of such good heart, gave him his sword and his blessing. The sword had belonged of old to Mudarra, and when our Rodrigo held its cross in his hand, his arm felt as strong as Mudarra's had ever been. So he went forth, defied count Don Gomez and slew him in fair combat. Returning to his father, he said: "The tongue which insulted you is no longer a tongue, and the hand

which wronged you is no longer a hand."

When the Moors entered Castile in great power, with them came five kings. They passed beyond Burgos, and crossed the mountains, plundering castles, hamlets, carrying off, as captives, men and women and flocks of all sorts. But as this victorious horde were returning with all speed, Rodrigo of Bivar raised the country, fell upon them in the mountains, won back all their booty and took the five kings prisoners. All this he brought duly to the feet of his mother; but he would not keep the kings prisoners, choosing, rather, to send them to their own countries, blessing him for their deliverance, gladly sending him tribute and declaring themselves his willing vassals. For this reason, that five kings in one

battle acknowledged him as conqueror, he was called their *Seid*—or Cid—which means lord; and as he was campeador or champion of his countrymen against the Moors, he was styled the Lord Champion—*El Cid Campeador*.

He died before the year eleven hundred, and the story of his brave acts in the "Poem of the Cid," was written before the year twelve hundred. The Cid is the foremost hero of the Spanish ballads. In the "Chronicle of the Cid," by the English poet, Robert Southey, we have the story, the poem, and everything given in the Spanish annals to illustrate the romantic narrative.

1. P. 13, l. 8.

[2]The first instance on record of the meeting of the Cortez, was that at Bur-

gos in Castile, the city of the Cid, in the year 1169. But in those days, there was more promptness in the performance of great deeds, than in the recording of them. We know that the Cortez held sway in Castile more than a hundred years before this date.

The members of the Cortez were sent, first by the householders or great landholders, afterward by the cities. But it was always, more or less, a representation of the people. These delegates assembled in the same chamber as the nobility and higher order of clergy; but when questions of moment came before them, retired to deliberate among themselves, inasmuch as they were the most powerful. For, while the nobility and clergy could attend in Cortez, their sanction was not necessary to the validity of legislative acts, this validi-

ty, in reality, being vested solely in the representatives of the people; a fact which explains many, otherwise, astonishing proceedings in the history of the Spanish monarchy.

2. P. 14, l. 6.

[3]The indisposition, if not utter incapacity for business of John the Second of Castile, inclined him to leave the government of his kingdom in the hands of his favorites. Conspicuous among them, was Alvaro de Luna. Descended, although irregularly, from a noble house of Aragon, he was early introduced as a page into the royal household of which Maria of Aragon was queen. Here he soon distinguished himself by his amiable manners and personal accomplishments. He could ride, fence, dance, sing, better than any

other cavalier of the court, while his proficiency in music and poetry completely won the heart of John, who was devoted to both. Moreover, he was indefatigable in his application to business, to which John had a positive aversion; so that he was allowed to take the reins of government with its drudgery. So acceptably did he serve his royal master, that he was made grand-master of St. James and constable of Castile, in which offices he became the channel of all promotions. His cupidity, however, was as insatiable as his ambition, and he abused the unwise confidence reposed in him, by keeping all the important posts for himself and his kindred.

At his death, he is said to have left a larger amount of treasure than was possessed by the whole nobility of the

kingdom. With all this, he presumed upon a royal splendor in his retinue, to which, instead of the king's, the sons of the grandees aspired, so that his sovereign's court was comparatively deserted. All this roused the fiercest opposition, and for thirty years the blind partiality of John for his favorite, was the key to the dissensions of the kingdom; the address of Alvero, however, giving him, in the end, the ascendency over all his enemies, even when obliged to retire for a while from the court. So unaccountable was his influence over the king that he was accused of witchcraft, but it was only the power of a strong and active mind over an indolent one.

On the death of Maria of Aragon, Alvero had the audacity to arrange a marriage for the king which was really

contrary to the wishes of his majesty, but from which he saw no way of escape. This was with the princess Isabella, grand-daughter of John the First of Portugal. But although she owed her elevation to Alvero, she was not one to come under his control. Disgusted with the supremacy he had acquired over the king, she set her own influence against his and prevailed. His overthrow was complete, and to her strong mind and unswerving will, Castile owed its deliverance from a bondage as odious as it was disgraceful; preserving, as far as it could then be preserved, the dignity of the crown as well as the rights of the people.

3. P. 16, l. 11.

'Henry the Fourth seems to have inherited from his father a certain

weakness of nature which often passes for amiability. While committing the most fragrant injustices, violating every code of honor, he shrank from the infliction of bodily pain or the shedding of blood. When urged by his old preceptor to proceed boldly against the revolutionary measures set on foot, he utterly refused to inaugurate violent or even vigorous resistance. The preceptor replied with warmth: "Since you are not true to your own honor at a time like this, I shall live to see you the most degraded monarch in Spain; when you will repent, but too late, this unseasonable pusillanimity." The prediction was fulfilled, for the confederates, disgusted with his breach of faith whenever he promised any concession, decided on the execution of a bold measure, for the justification of which

we must turn to the oath of allegiance given by the Cortez to their sovereigns.

"In an open plain, not far from the city of Avila, they caused a scaffold to be erected, of sufficient elevation to be easily seen from the surrounding country. A chair of state was placed on it, and in this was seated an effigy of King Henry, clad in sable robes and adorned with all the insignia of royalty; a sword at its side, a sceptre in its hand and a crown upon its head.

"A manifesto was then read, exhibiting in glowing colors the tyrannical conduct of the king and the consequent determination to depose him; and vindicating the proceeding by several precedents drawn from the history of the monarchy. The archbishop of Toledo, then ascending the platform, tore the diadem from the head of the

statue; the marquis of Villena removed the sceptre, the count of Placencia the sword, the grand master of Alcantara and the counts of Benavente and Paredes the rest of the royal insignia; when the image, thus despoiled of its honors, was rolled in the dust, amid the mingled groans and clamors of the spectators." *Prescott.*

4. P. 19, l. 8.

[5]Immediately upon the deposition of Henry the Fourth, his half-brother, the young Alphonso, then only eleven years of age, but to whom Henry had solemnly promised to resign his royal birth-right, was proclaimed king. This young prince who, under better auspices and at a more mature age, might have ruled over his country with a wisdom equal to any of its monarchs, died

after a reign of three years. But even in this brief time and under such disadvantages, he gave promise of superior excellence.

Isabella of Portugal was his mother, and from her he had taken a delicate conscience and vigorous mind. Once when solicited by the citizens of Toledo to sanction some act of extortion which they had committed, he replied: "God forbid that I should countenance such injustice." And on being told that the city, unless sustained in its action, would, in all probability, transfer its allegiance to Henry, he added: "Much as I love power, I am not willing to purchase it at such a price." His selfish nobles and turbulent people saw, with alarm, that nothing of the yielding to dictation of John the Second, would be found in this young lion, who,

with all his inexperience, could not be entangled in the meshes they might spread for him.

5. P. 19, l. 9.

[6]The principality of Asturias was the usual demesne of the heir apparent to the crown; that Asturias, which still comes in to the story of the Cid and his noble ancestry.

6. P. 20, l. 7.

[7]Isabella of Portugal may have reminded her daughter, that as the young Infanta, when only six years of age, her hand had been sought by John the Second of Aragon, for this same son. We may feel certain that the queen-dowager's influence was altogether on the side of Ferdinand, whose superiority to his rivals, in merit as well as per-

sonal attractions, might well re-enforce her natural partiality for the alliance.

7. P. 20, l. 15.

[8]There can be no doubt that the King of Aragon, John the Second, from the first proposal made by him for the hand of the infant Isabella in behalf of his son, had understood the peculiar advantage of the union of the two monarchies. He was accounted one of the shrewdest princes of his time; and what had seemed to him desirable when there was a possibility, only, of Isabella's succession to the throne, was tenfold more so, when the succession was secured to her by every constitutional safeguard. With the consent of his States, he lost no time in giving to Ferdinand the title of King of Sicily, and furthermore, sent a confidential

agent to Castile, with instructions to gain over to his interest all who had any influence with the princess Isabella.

Her favorable reply to the Aragonese embassy, was received by the old king with the keenest satisfaction, and no delay was allowed in the signing of the marriage articles. In these, Ferdinand promised faithfully to respect the laws and usages of Castile; to fix his residence in Castile and not to quit it without the consent of Isabella; to alienate no property belonging to the crown; to prefer no foreigners to municipal offices, and to make no appointments, civil or military, without her approbation and to leave ecclesiastical nominations altogether to her. There was a promise concerning the Moors, and the respect to be paid invariably to

King Henry. The treaty, which allowed no past claims by Aragon upon Castile, settled a dowry upon Isabella more generous than that usually assigned to the queens of Aragon. This contract gave the liveliest satisfaction to the Castilian nobility, as it imposed important restrictions on Ferdinand and the relinquishment of all the essential rights of sovereignty to Isabella.

8. P. 20, l. 18.

"The story of the dangers as well as difficulties which beset Isabella at this juncture, is too novel in the course of royal weddings to be omitted. The negotiations for the marriage had been conducted with the greatest secrecy, as it was understood that Henry had quite different plans for his sister. With the intention to be under the protection

of her mother, Isabella had gone to Madrigal. But the quick ears of those on the side of Henry had caught echoes of the royal negotiations. Instructions were given to secure the person of Isabella, and letters sent to the citizens of Madrigal threatening them with the royal displeasure should they interfere with this command. The intimidation of citizens and even personal friends was complete, but the royal ladies were not daunted. A message sent to Admiral Henriquez and the archbishop of Toledo, brought a body of horse and troops to her rescue, which bore her off in triumph to the friendly city of Valladolid, where she was received by a burst of genuine enthusiasm.

But it was necessary to quicken the steps of Ferdinand under such circumstances. The envoys, concealing with

rare tact the object of their mission, reached Saragossa where they found Ferdinand. They could not have arrived at a more unfortunate time. The old king of Aragon was in the heat of a war against, hitherto, victorious insurgents, and the royal treasury was almost empty. The funds or the forces necessary to cover his son's entrance into Castile, now a hostile country, were utterly lacking, and his long cherished project was seemingly to be defeated, when the younger heads announced a plan which suited the emergency. The prince and his attendants were to pass themselves off as common travelers, the prince being the servant of the party, feeding the mules, serving his companions at table, while the journey was continued by night as far as possible.

They arrived, on the 9th of October, cold and hungry, the prince certainly so, for he had taken no repose, at the outpost of Isabella's dominions in the kingdom of Leon, where he was met by the Castilian nobles as became his rank. On the 15th of October, he passed privately from Duenas, accompanied only by four attendants, to Valladolid, where he was received by the archbishop of Toledo and conducted to the apartments of Isabella. The interview lasted more than two hours; and all the preliminaries of the marriage adjusted, Ferdinand returned to his quarters at Duenas as quietly as he left them.

9. P. 22, l. 15.

[10]While Aragon had its poetic courts that vied with each other in chivalrous

verse, Castile had disdained these occupations as unworthy of the profession of arms, which held the first rank in in the eyes of its nobles. To John the Second, with all his faults as a king, must be given the praise of rousing the poesy latent in the court of Castile. He was fond of books, wrote and spoke Latin with elegance, composed verses and even corrected those submitted to him by his courtiers. Poetry thus received the stamp of royalty as well as the smile of its patronage. Henry, marquis of Villena, descended from the royal houses of Castile and Aragon, consecrated his whole life to letters during the reign of John. He translated Dante's Commedia into prose and is said to have been the first to give a translation of Virgil's Æneid, into a modern language.

Another celebrated wit as well as scholar of this reign, was Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, marquis of Santillana. While he made his house an academy for the martial exercises of the young cavaliers, he drew around him men eminent for genius and learning, which he generously encouraged by his purse as well as by his example.

But the most conspicuous for his poetical talent, of all the brilliant circle which surrounded John the Second, was John de Mena, a native of "fair Cordova, the flower of science and of chivalry," as he calls her in his song. He was born of the middle class with only humble expectations, but was "smitten with the love of letters." He is declared to have given a new aspect to Castilian poetry, and King John was so fond of his poems, that he "had

Mena's verses on his table as constantly as his prayer-book."

10. P. 25, l. 18.

"'On the morning of the 13th of December, 1474, a numerous assembly, consisting of the nobles, clergy and public magistrates in their robes of office, waited on Isabella at the alcazar, or castle, and, receiving her under a canopy of rich brocade, escorted her in solemn procession to the principal square of the city, where a broad platform had been erected for the performance of the ceremony. Isabella, royally attired, rode on a Spanish jennet whose bridle was held by two of the civil functionaries, while an officer of her court preceded her on horseback, bearing a naked sword, the symbol of sovereignty. On arriving at the square, she

alighted from her palfrey, and, ascending the platform, seated herself on a throne which had been prepared for her. A herald with a loud voice proclaimed: 'Castile, Castile for the king Don Ferdinand and his consort Doña Isabella, queen proprieter of these kingdoms.'

"The royal standards were then unfurled, while the peal of bells and the discharge of ordnance from the castle, publicly announced the accession of the new sovereign. Isabella, after receiving the homage of her subjects and swearing to maintain inviolate the liberties of the realm, descended from the platform." "Such," says Prescott, "were the simple forms, that attended the coronation of the monarchs of Castile, previous to the sixteenth century."

11. P. 27, l. 15.

[12]Perhaps this was the most decisive crisis in the career of Isabella. Her honor as a ruler, her happiness as a wife were to be reconciled. Ferdinand was in Aragon at the time of Henry's death and the coronation of Isabella. "A disagreeable discussion" is said to have taken place on his return, concerning the respective authority to be enjoyed by the husband and wife in the administration of the government. The relatives of Ferdinand contended for his right to the crown of Castile as exclusive sovereign; but Isabella's friends, with all the precedents of the kingdom in mind, stood up for her rights as sole sovereign.

The result of an arbitration, however, referred to the archbishop of Toledo and the cardinal of Spain, established, by undoubted precedent, that females

were not excluded from the succession of Castile and Leon as in Aragon; that Isabella was sole heir of the kingdom, and that whatever authority Ferdinand might possess, could be derived only through her. A settlement was then made on the original marriage contract, which Ferdinand, under the influence of the moment, and also under the wise foresight of shrewd King John, had so willingly signed.

All this seems to have been forgotten by Ferdinand, so loyal had Isabella been to him as her husband. When the question came up after the coronation, he was so dissatisfied as to threaten to return to Aragon. But the candor of Isabella prevailed, and their images stamped on the public coin, and the united arms of Castile and Aragon emblazoned on a common seal, were

true exponents and symbols of their united sovereignty.

12. P. 29, l. 12.

[13]Isabella actually held in her arms, pressed to her heart so sensible to all womanly tendernesses, this worthy successor to her throne. As the eldest child of Joanna, heir to the kingdom of Castile, Charles the Fifth was crowned immediately upon the death of Ferdinand in 1517.

13. P. 92, l. 1.

[14]These domestic discords must be acknowledged as the result of Philip's levity. Joanna's love for her husband was as sincere and devoted as that of Isabella for Ferdinand. Unfortunately, Joanna had not the wonderfully balanced mind of her mother; yet even

her physical infirmity, called by some imbecility, by others insanity, did not take from her the strong sense, generous pride and high feeling, inherited from Isabella; which should have made the derangement of her faculties appeal still more affectingly to a generous mind. That she gave Charles the Fifth to the German empire, to Castile and to the world, must forever shield her from contempt.

14. P. 92, l. 3.

[15]"The day following the Queen's death, her body, unembalmed, in strict conformity to her orders, began its last journey to Granada, escorted by a numerous *cortege* of cavaliers and ecclesiastics. A violent tempest set in which continued with little interruption during the whole mournful journey, and

dangerous floods interrupted their progress, while neither sun nor stars were seen for all those days and nights." At length, on the 18th of December, the way-worn cavalcade reached its destination, and amid the wild strife of the elements, the peaceful remains of Isabella were laid, with simple solemnities, in the Franciscan monastery of the Alhambra. Here, under the shadow of these venerable Moslem towers, and in the heart of the capital, which her noble constancy had recovered for her country, they continued to repose till after the death of Ferdinand, when they were removed to be laid by his side, in the stately mausoleum of the Cathedral church of Granada."

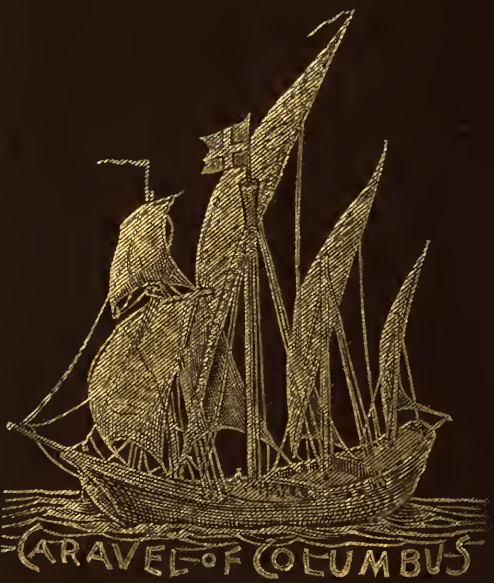
Prescott.

The traveler still lingers, however, in the shadow of the Franciscan con-

vent, where Isabella was laid at her own request.

15. P. 96, l. 16.

The photo-gravure in this volume, representing the reception of Columbus by Ferdinand and Isabella, is from the *bas relievi* on the monument erected to Columbus at Genoa. Among the offerings brought by Columbus to the Queen on his return from his first voyage, was the first gold sent by the New World to the Old. The American who stands under the gilded ceiling of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, beholds this virgin gold, which was presented by Isabella to the reigning pontiff, and devoted by him to give a golden canopy to one of the loveliest of Christian temples. It was as if he had been inspired by a Columbus and an Isabella.


CARAVEL OF COLUMBUS