

CHAPTER
II.

gaged, it must surely elevate his character in the estimation of an enlightened posterity.

The tragedy did not terminate with the death of Carlos. His sister Blanche, notwithstanding the inoffensive gentleness of her demeanor, had long been involved, by her adhesion to her unfortunate brother, in a similar proscription with him. The succession to Navarre having now devolved on her, she became tenfold an object of jealousy both to her father, the present possessor of that kingdom, and to her sister Eleanor, countess of Foix, to whom the reversion of it had been promised by John, on his own decease. The son of this lady, Gaston de Foix, had lately married a sister of Louis the Eleventh, of France; and, in a treaty subsequently contracted between that monarch and the king of Aragon, it was stipulated that Blanche should be delivered into the custody of the countess of Foix, as surety for the succession of the latter, and of her posterity, to the crown of Navarre.²⁹

Conformably to this provision, John endeavoured to persuade the princess Blanche to accompany him into France, under the pretext of forming an alliance for her with Louis's brother, the duke of Berri. The unfortunate lady, comprehending too well her father's real purpose, besought him with the most piteous entreaties not to deliver her into the hands of her enemies; but, closing his heart against all natural affection, he caused her to be

Tragical
story of
Blanche.

²⁹ This treaty was signed at Olit in Navarre, April 12th, 1462: — p. 235. — Gaillard confounds it with the subsequent one made in the month of May, near the town of Salvatierra in Bearn.

Zurita, Anales, lib. 17, cap. 38, 39. — Gaillard, Rivalité, tom. iii.

PART
I.

torn from her residence at Olit, in the heart of her own dominions, and forcibly transported across the mountains into those of the count of Foix. On arriving at St. Jean Pied de Port, a little town on the French side of the Pyrenees, being convinced that she had nothing further to hope from human succour, she made a formal renunciation of her right to Navarre in favor of her cousin and former husband, Henry the Fourth, of Castile, who had uniformly supported the cause of her brother Carlos. Henry, though debased by sensual indulgence, was naturally of a gentle disposition, and had never treated her personally with unkindness. In a letter, which she now addressed to him, and which, says a Spanish historian, cannot be read, after the lapse of so many years, without affecting the most insensible heart,³⁰ she reminded him of the dawn of happiness which she had enjoyed under his protection, of his early engagements to her, and of her subsequent calamities; and, anticipating the gloomy destiny which awaited her, she settled on him her inheritance of Navarre, to the entire exclusion of her intended assassins, the count and countess of Foix.³¹

1462. On the same day, the last of April, she was delivered over to one of their emissaries, who conducted her to the castle of Ortes in Bearne, where, after languishing in dreadful suspense for nearly

³⁰ Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. vii. p. 110. varra, tom. iv. pp. 590-593. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom. ii.

³¹ *Hist. du Royaume de Navarre*, fol. 258, 259. — Zurita, *Anales*, p. 496. — Aleson, *Anales de Navarre*, lib. 17, cap. 38.

two years, she was poisoned by the command of her sister.³² The retribution of Providence not unfrequently overtakes the guilty even in this world. The countess survived her father to reign in Navarre only three short weeks; while the crown was ravished from her posterity for ever by that very Ferdinand, whose elevation had been the object to his parents of so much solicitude and so many crimes.

Within a fortnight after the decease of Carlos, the customary oaths of allegiance, so pertinaciously withheld from that unfortunate prince, were tendered by the Aragonese deputation, at Calatayud, to his brother Ferdinand, then only ten years of age, as heir apparent of the monarchy; after which he was conducted by his mother into Catalonia, in order to receive the more doubtful homage of that province. The extremities of Catalonia at this time seemed to be in perfect repose, but the capital was still agitated by secret discontent. The ghost of Carlos was seen stalking by night through the streets of Barcelona, bewailing in piteous accents his untimely end, and invoking vengeance on his unnatural murderers. The manifold miracles wrought at his tomb soon gained him the reputa-

Ferdinand
sworn heir
to the
crown.

1461.
October 6.

³² Lebrija, *De Bello Navariensi*, (Granatæ, 1545,) lib. 1, cap. 1, fol. 74. — Aleson, *Anales de Navarra*, ubi supra. — Zurita, *Anales*, lib. 17, cap. 38. — The Spanish historians are not agreed as to the time or even mode of Blanche's death. All concur, however, in attributing it to assassination, and most of them, with the learned Antonio

Lebrija, a contemporary, (loc. cit.) in imputing it to poison. The fact of her death, which Aleson, on I know not what authority, refers to the 2d of December, 1464, was not publicly disclosed till some months after its occurrence, when disclosure became necessary in consequence of the proposed interposition of the Navarrese cortes.

PART
I.

tion of a saint, and his image received the devotional honors reserved for such as have been duly canonized by the church.³³

The revolutionary spirit of the Barcelonians, kept alive by the recollection of past injury, as well as by the apprehensions of future vengeance, should John succeed in reëstablishing his authority over them, soon became so alarming, that the queen, whose consummate address, however, had first accomplished the object of her visit, found it advisable to withdraw from the capital; and she sought refuge, with her son and such few adherents as still remained faithful to them, in the fortified city of Gerona, about fifty miles north of Barcelona.

Hither, however, she was speedily pursued by the Catalan militia, embodied under the command of their ancient leader Roger, count of Pallas, and eager to regain the prize which they had so inadvertently lost. The city was quickly entered, but the queen, with her handful of followers, had retreated to a tower belonging to the principal church in the place, which, as was very frequent in Spain, in those wild times, was so strongly fortified as to be capable of maintaining a formidable resistance.

³³ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 51. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 98. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom. ii. fol. 256. — Aleson, *Anales de Navarra*, tom. iv. pp. 563 et seq. — L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 114. — According to Lanuza, who wrote nearly two centuries after the death of Carlos, the flesh upon his right arm, which had been amputated for the purpose of a more conven-

ient application to the diseased members of the pilgrims who visited his shrine, remained in his day in a perfectly sound and healthful state! (*Historias Ecclesiásticas y Seculares de Aragon*, (Zaragoza, 1622,) tom. i. p. 553.) Aleson wonders that any should doubt the truth of miracles, attested by the monks of the very monastery in which Carlos was interred.

Besieged by
the Catalans
in Gerona.

To oppose this, a wooden fortress of the same height was constructed by the assailants, and planted with lombards and other pieces of artillery then in use, which kept up an unintermitting discharge of stone bullets on the little garrison.³⁴ The Catalans also succeeded in running a mine beneath the fortress, through which a considerable body of troops penetrated into it, when, their premature cries of exultation having discovered them to the besieged, they were repulsed, after a desperate struggle, with great slaughter. The queen displayed the most intrepid spirit in the midst of these alarming scenes; unappalled by the sense of her own danger and that of her child, and by the dismal lamentations of the females by whom she was surrounded, she visited every part of the works in person, cheering her defenders by her presence and dauntless resolution. Such were the stormy and disastrous scenes in which the youthful Ferdinand commenced a career, whose subsequent prosperity was destined to be checkered by scarcely a reverse of fortune.³⁵

³⁴ L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 116. — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 51. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 113.

The Spaniards, deriving the knowledge of artillery from the Arabs, had become familiar with it before the other nations of Christendom. The affirmation of Zurita, however, that 5000 balls were fired from the battery of the besiegers at Gerona in one day, is perfectly absurd. So little was the science of gunnery advanced in other parts of Europe at this pe-

riod, and indeed later, that it was usual for a field-piece not to be discharged more than twice in the course of an action, if we may credit Machiavelli, who, indeed, recommends dispensing with the use of artillery altogether. *Arte della Guerra*, lib. 3. (Opere, Genova, 1798.)

³⁵ Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, c. 51. — L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol. 116. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 113. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom. ii. fol. 259.

PART

I

Treaty be-
tween
France and
Aragon.

In the mean while, John, having in vain attempted to penetrate through Catalonia to the relief of his wife, effected this by the coöperation of his French ally, Louis the Eleventh. That monarch, with his usual insidious policy, had covertly despatched an envoy to Barcelona on the death of Carlos, assuring the Catalans of his protection, should they still continue averse to a reconciliation with their own sovereign. These offers were but coldly received; and Louis found it more for his interest to accept the propositions made to him by the king of Aragon himself, which subsequently led to most important consequences. By three several treaties, of the 3d, 21st, and 23d of May, 1462, it was stipulated, that Louis should furnish his ally with seven hundred lances and a proportionate number of archers and artillery during the war with Barcelona, to be indemnified by the payment of two hundred thousand gold crowns within one year after the reduction of that city; as security for which the counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne were pledged by John, with the cession of their revenues to the French king, until such time as the original debt should be redeemed. In this transaction both monarchs manifested their usual policy; Louis believing that this temporary mortgage would become a permanent alienation, from John's inability to discharge it; while the latter anticipated, as the event showed, with more justice, that the aversion of the inhabitants to the dismemberment of their country from the Aragonese monarchy

CHAPTER
II.General re-
volt in Cata-
lonia.

would baffle every attempt on the part of the French to occupy it permanently.³⁶

In pursuance of these arrangements, seven hundred French lances with a considerable body of archers and artillery³⁷ crossed the mountains, and, rapidly advancing on Gerona, compelled the insurgent army to raise the siege, and to decamp with such precipitation as to leave their cannon in the hands of the royalists. The Catalans now threw aside the thin veil, with which they had hitherto covered their proceedings. The authorities of the principality, established in Barcelona, publicly renounced their allegiance to King John and his son Ferdinand, and proclaimed them enemies of the *republic*. Writings at the same time were circulated, denouncing from Scriptural authority, as well as natural reason, the doctrine of legitimacy in the broadest terms, and insisting that the Aragonese monarchs, far from being absolute, might be lawfully deposed for an infringement of the liberties of the nation. "The good of the commonwealth," it was said, "must always be considered paramount

³⁶ Zurita, Anales, tom. iv. fol. 111. — Another 100,000 crowns were to be paid in case further assistance should be required from the French monarch after the reduction of Barcelona. This treaty has been incorrectly reported by most of the French and all the Spanish historians whom I have consulted, save the accurate Zurita. An abstract from the original documents, compiled by the Abbé Legrand, has been given by M. Petitot in his recent edition of the *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à*

l'Histoire de France, (Paris, 1836,) tom. xi. Introd. p. 245.

³⁷ A French lance, or man at arms, of that day, according to L. Marineo, was accompanied by two horsemen; so that the whole contingent of cavalry to be furnished on this occasion amounted to 2100. (*Cosas Memorables*, fol. 117.) Nothing could be more indeterminate than the complement of a lance in the Middle Ages. It is not unusual to find it reckoned at five or six horsemen.

PART
I.

to that of the prince." Extraordinary doctrines these for the age in which they were promulged, affording a still more extraordinary contrast with those which have been since familiar in that unhappy country!³⁸

The government then enforced levies of all such as were above the age of fourteen, and, distrusting the sufficiency of its own resources, offered the sovereignty of the principality to Henry the Fourth, of Castile. The court of Aragon, however, had so successfully insinuated its influence into the council of this imbecile monarch, that he was not permitted to afford the Catalans any effectual support; and, as he abandoned their cause altogether before the expiration of the year,³⁹ the crown was offered to Don Pedro, constable of Portugal, a descendant of the ancient house of Barcelona. In the mean while, the old king of Aragon, attended by his youthful son, had made himself master, with his characteristic activity, of considerable acquisitions in the revolted territory, successively reducing Lerida,⁴⁰ Cervera, Amposta,⁴¹ Tortosa, and the most

Successes of
John.

1464.
Jan.

³⁸ Zurita, *Anales*, tom. iv. fol. 113-115. — Alonso de Palencia, *Corónica*, MS., part. 2, cap. 1.

³⁹ In conformity with the famous verdict given by Louis XI. at Bayonne, April 23d, 1463, previously to the interview between him and Henry IV. on the shores of the Bidassoa. See Part I. Chap. 3. of this History.

⁴⁰ This was the battle-ground of Julius Cæsar in his wars with Pompey. See his ingenious military manœuvre as simply narrated in his own *Commentaries*, (*De Bello Civili*, tom. i. p. 54.) and by

Lucan, (*Pharsalia*, lib. 4.) with his usual swell of hyperbole.

⁴¹ The cold was so intense at the siege of Amposta, that serpents of an enormous magnitude are reported by L. Marineo to have descended from the mountains, and taken refuge in the camp of the besiegers. Portentous and supernatural voices were frequently heard during the nights. Indeed the superstition of the soldiers appears to have been so lively as to have prepared them for seeing and hearing any thing.

important places in the south of Catalonia. Many of these places were strongly fortified, and most of them defended with a resolution which cost the conqueror a prodigious sacrifice of time and money. John, like Philip of Macedon, made use of gold even more than arms, for the reduction of his enemies; and, though he indulged in occasional acts of resentment, his general treatment of those who submitted was as liberal as it was politic. His competitor, Don Pedro, had brought little foreign aid to the support of his enterprise; he had failed altogether in conciliating the attachment of his new subjects; and, as the operations of the war had been conducted on his part in the most languid manner, the whole of the principality seemed destined soon to relapse under the dominion of its ancient master. At this juncture the Portuguese prince fell ill of a fever, of which he died on the 29th of June, 1466. This event, which seemed likely to lead to a termination of the war, proved ultimately the cause of its protraction.⁴²

It appeared, however, to present a favorable opportunity to John for opening a negotiation with the insurgents. But, so resolute were they in maintaining their independence, that the council of Barcelona condemned two of the principal citizens,

⁴² Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii. p. 390. — Alonso de Palencia, *MS.*, part. 2, cap. 60, 61. — Castillo, *Crónica*, pp. 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 54. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom. ii. fol. 116, 124, 127, 128, 130, 137, 147. — M. La Clède states, that “Don

Pedro no sooner arrived in Catalonia, than he was poisoned.” (*Histoire Générale de Portugal*, (Paris, 1735,) tom. iii. p. 245.) It must have been a very slow poison. He arrived January 21st, 1464, and died June 29th, 1466.

PART
I.

Crown of
Catalonia
offered to
René of An-
jou.

suspected of defection from the cause, to be publicly executed; it refused moreover to admit an envoy from the Aragonese cortes within the city, and caused the despatches, with which he was intrusted by that body, to be torn in pieces before his face.

The Catalans then proceeded to elect René le Bon, as he was styled, of Anjou, to the vacant throne, brother of one of the original competitors for the crown of Aragon on the demise of Martin; whose cognomen of "Good" is indicative of a sway far more salutary to his subjects than the more coveted and imposing title of Great.⁴³ This titular sovereign of half a dozen empires, in which he did not actually possess a rood of land, was too far advanced in years to assume this perilous enterprise himself; and he accordingly intrusted it to his son John, duke of Calabria and Lorraine, who, in his romantic expeditions in southern Italy, had acquired a reputation for courtesy and knightly prowess, inferior to none other of his time.⁴⁴

⁴³ Sir Walter Scott, in his "Anne of Geierstein," has brought into full relief the ridiculous side of René's character. The good king's fondness for poetry and the arts, however, although showing itself occasionally in puerile eccentricities, may compare advantageously with the coarse appetites and mischievous activity of most of the contemporary princes. After all, the best tribute to his worth was the earnest attachment of his people. His biography has been well and diligently compiled by the viscount of Villeneuve Bargemont, (Histoire de René d'Anjou, Paris, 1825,) who has, however, indulged

in greater detail than was perhaps to have been desired by René, or his readers.

⁴⁴ Comines says of him, "A tous alarmes c'estoit le premier homme armé, et de toutes pièces, et son cheval tousjours bardé. Il portoit un habillement que ces conducteurs portent en Italie, et sembloit bien prince et chef de guerre; et y avoit d'obéissance autant que monseigneur de Charolois, et luy obéissoit tout l'ost de meilleur cœur, car à la vérité il estoit digne d'estre honoré." Philippe de Comines, Mémoires, apud Petitot; (Paris, 1826,) liv. 1, chap. 11.