

## CHAPTER 7

### SIEGE AND SURRENDER OF THE CITY OF GRANADA (1490–92)

- The Infanta Isabella affianced to the Prince of Portugal.*  
— *Isabella deposes Judges at Valladolid.* — *Encampment before Granada.*  
— *The Queen surveys the City.* — *Muslim and Christian Chivalry.*  
— *Conflagration of the Christian Camp.* — *Erection of Santa Fé.* — *Capitulation of Granada.* — *Results of the War.* — *Its Moral Influence.* — *Its Military Influence.*  
— *Fate of the Spanish Muslims.* — *Death and Character of the Marquis of Cádiz.*

In the spring of 1490, ambassadors arrived from Lisbon for the purpose of carrying into effect the treaty of marriage, which had been arranged between Affonso, heir of the Portuguese monarchy, and Isabella, Infanta of Castile. An alliance with this kingdom, which from its contiguity possessed such ready means of annoyance to Castile, and which had shown such willingness to employ them in enforcing the pretensions of Juana 'Beltraneja', was an object of importance to Ferdinand and Isabella. No inferior consideration could have reconciled the Queen to a separation from this beloved daughter, her eldest child, whose gentle and uncommonly amiable disposition seems to have endeared her beyond their other children to her parents.

The ceremony of the affiancing took place at Sevilla, in the month of April, Don Fernando de Silveira appearing as the representative of the Prince of Portugal; and it was followed by a succession of splendid *fêtes* and tourneys. Lists were enclosed, at some distance from the city on the shores of the Guadalquivir, and surrounded with galleries hung with silk and cloth of gold, and protected from the noontide heat by canopies or awnings, richly embroidered with the armorial bearings of the ancient houses of Castile. The spectacle was graced by all the rank and beauty of the court, with the Infanta Isabella in the midst, attended by seventy noble ladies, and a hundred pages of the royal household. The cavaliers of Spain, young and old, thronged to the tournament, as eager to win laurels on the mimic theatre of war, in the presence of so brilliant an assemblage, as they had shown themselves in the sterner contests with the Spanish Muslims. King Ferdinand, who broke several lances on the occasion, was among the most distinguished of the combatants for personal dexterity and horsemanship. The martial exercises of the day were relieved by the more effeminate recreations of dancing and music in the evening; and every one seemed willing to welcome the season of hilarity, after the long-protracted fatigues of war.<sup>1</sup>

In the following autumn, the Infanta was escorted into Portugal by the Cardinal of Spain, the Grand Master of Santiago, and a numerous and magnificent retinue. Her dowry exceeded that usually assigned to the infantas of Castile, by five hundred marks of gold and a thousand of silver; and her wardrobe was estimated at one hundred and twenty thousand gold florins. The contemporary chroniclers dwell with much complacency on these evidences of the stateliness and splendour of the Castilian court. Unfortunately, these fair auspices were destined to be clouded too soon by the death of the prince, her husband.<sup>2</sup>

No sooner had the Campaign of the preceding year been brought to a close, than Ferdinand and Isabella sent an embassy to the King of Granada, requiring a surrender of his capital, conformably to his stipulations at Loja, which guaranteed this, on the capitulation of Baza, Almería, and Guadix. That time had now arrived; King Boabdil, however, excused himself from obeying the summons of the Spanish sovereigns, replying that he was no longer his own master, and that, although he had all the inclination to keep his engagements, he was prevented by the inhabitants of the city, now swollen much beyond its natural population, who resolutely insisted on its defence.<sup>3</sup>

It is not probable that the Nasrid king did any great violence to his feelings, in this evasion of a promise extorted from him in captivity. At least, it would seem so from the hostile movements which

immediately succeeded. The people of Granada resumed all at once their ancient activity, foraying into the Christian territories, surprising Alhendin and some other places of less importance, and stirring up the spirit of revolt in Guadix and other conquered cities. Granada, which had slept through the heat of the struggle, seemed to revive at the very moment when exertion became hopeless.

Ferdinand was not slow in retaliating these acts of aggression. In the spring of 1490, he marched with a strong force into the cultivated plain of Granada, sweeping off, as usual, the crops and cattle, and rolling the tide of devastation up to the very walls of the city. In this campaign he conferred the honour of knighthood on his son, Prince Juan, then only twelve years of age, whom he had brought with him, after the ancient usage of the Castilian nobles, of training up their children from very tender years in the Moorish wars. The ceremony was performed on the banks of the grand canal under the battlements almost of the beleaguered city. The dukes of Cádiz and Medina Sidonia were Prince Juan's sponsors; and, after the completion of the ceremony, the new knight conferred the honours of chivalry in like manner on several of his young companions in arms.<sup>4</sup>

In the following autumn, Ferdinand repeated his ravages in the vega, and, at the same time appearing before the disaffected city of Guadix with a force large enough to awe it into submission, proposed an immediate investigation of the conspiracy. He promised to inflict summary justice on all who had been in any degree concerned in it; at the same time offering permission to the inhabitants, in the abundance of his clemency, to depart with all their personal effects wherever they would, provided they should prefer this to a judicial investigation of their conduct. This politic proffer had its effect. There were few, if any, of the citizens, who had not been either directly concerned in the conspiracy, or privy to it. With one accord, therefore, they preferred exile to trusting to the tender mercies of their judges. In this way, says the Curate of Los Palacios, by the mystery of our Lord, was the ancient city of Guadix brought again within the Christian fold; the mosques converted into Christian temples, filled with the harmonies of Catholic worship, and the pleasant places, which for nearly eight centuries had been trampled under the foot of the infidel, were once more restored to the followers of the Cross.

A similar policy produced similar results in the cities of Almería and Baza, whose inhabitants, evacuating their ancient homes, transported themselves, with such personal effects as they could carry, to the city of Granada, or the coast of Africa. The space thus opened by the fugitive population was quickly filled by the rushing tide of Christian Spaniards.<sup>5</sup>

It is impossible at this day, to contemplate these events with the triumphant swell of exultation, with which they are recorded by contemporary chroniclers. That the Granadans were guilty (though not so generally as pretended) of the alleged conspiracy, is not in itself improbable, and is corroborated indeed by some Muslim documents. But the punishment was altogether disproportionate to the offence. Justice might surely have been satisfied by a selection of the authors and principal agents of the meditated insurrection, — for no overt act appears to have occurred. But avarice was too strong for justice; and this act, which is in perfect conformity to the policy systematically pursued by the Spanish crown for more than a century afterward, may be considered as one of the first links in the long chain of persecution, which terminated in the expulsion of the Moriscoes.

During the following year, 1491, a circumstance occurred illustrative of the policy of the present government in reference to ecclesiastical matters. The chancery of Valladolid having appealed to the Pope in a case coming within its own exclusive jurisdiction, the Queen commanded Alonso de Valdivieso, Bishop of León, the president of the court, together with all the auditors to be removed from their respective offices, which she delivered to a new board, having the Bishop of Oviedo at its head. This is one among many examples of the constancy with which Isabella, notwithstanding her reverence for religion, and respect for its ministers, refused to compromise the national independence by recognizing in any degree the usurpations of Rome. From this dignified attitude,

so often abandoned by her successors, she never swerved for a moment during the course of her long reign.<sup>6</sup>

The winter of 1490 was busily occupied with preparations for the closing campaign against Granada. Ferdinand took command of the army in the month of April, 1491, with the purpose of sitting down before the Nasrid capital, not to rise until its final surrender. The troops, which mustered in the Val de Velillos, are computed by most historians at fifty thousand horse and foot, although Martyr, who served as a volunteer, swells the number to eighty thousand. They were drawn from the different cities, chiefly, as usual, from Andalusia, which had been stimulated to truly gigantic efforts throughout this protracted war,<sup>7</sup> and from the nobility of every quarter, many of whom, wearied out with the contest, contented themselves with sending their quotas, while many others, as the marquises of Cádiz, Villena, the counts of Tendilla, Cabra, Ureña, and Alonso de Aguilar, appeared in person, eager, as they had borne the brunt of so many hard campaigns, to share in the closing scene of triumph.

On the 26th of the month, the army encamped near the fountain of Ojos de Huéscar, in the vega, about two leagues distant from Granada. Ferdinand's first movement was to detach a considerable force, under the Marquis of Villena, which he subsequently supported in person with the remainder of the army, for the purpose of scouring the fruitful regions of the Alpujarras, which served as the granary of the capital. This service was performed with such unsparing rigour, that no less than twenty-four towns and hamlets in the mountains were ransacked, and razed to the ground. After this, Ferdinand returned loaded with spoil to his former position on the banks of the Genil, in full view of the Granadan metropolis, which seemed to stand alone, like some sturdy oak, the last of the forest, bidding defiance to the storm which had prostrated all its brethren.

Notwithstanding the failure of all external resources, Granada was still formidable from its local position and its defences. On the east it was fenced in by a wild mountain barrier, the *Sierra Nevada*, whose snow-clad summits diffused a grateful coolness over the city through the sultry heats of summer. The side toward the vega, facing the Christian encampment, was encircled by walls and towers of massive strength and solidity. The population, swelled to two hundred thousand by the immigration from the surrounding country, was likely, indeed, to be a burden in a protracted siege; but among them were twenty thousand, the flower of the Muslim chivalry, who had escaped the edge of the Christian sword. In front of the city, for an extent of nearly ten leagues, lay unrolled, the magnificent vega,

*'Fresca y regalada vega,  
Dulce recreacion de damas  
Y de hombres gloria inmensa'*

whose prolific beauties could scarcely be exaggerated in the most florid strains of the Moorish minstrel, and which still bloomed luxuriant, notwithstanding the repeated ravages of the preceding season.<sup>8</sup>

The inhabitants of Granada were filled with indignation at the sight of their enemy, thus encamped under the shadow, as it were, of their battlements. They sallied forth in small bodies, or singly, challenging the Castilians to equal encounter. Numerous were the combats which took place between the high-mettled cavaliers on both sides, who met on the level arena, as on a tilting-ground, where they might display their prowess in the presence of the assembled beauty and chivalry of their respective nations; for the Spanish camp was graced, as usual, by the presence of Queen Isabella and the infantas with the courtly train of ladies, who had accompanied their royal mistress from Alcalá la Real. The Spanish ballads glow with picturesque details of these knightly tourneys, forming the most attractive portion of this romantic minstrelsy, which, celebrating the prowess of Muslim, as well as Christian warriors, sheds a dying glory round the last hours of Granada.<sup>9</sup>

The festivity, which reigned throughout the camp on the arrival of Isabella, did not divert her attention from the stern business of war. She superintended the military preparations, and personally inspected every part of the encampment. She appeared on the field superbly mounted, and dressed in complete armour; and, as she visited the different quarters and reviewed her troops, she administered words of commendation or sympathy, suited to the condition of the soldier.<sup>10</sup>

On one occasion, she expressed a desire to take a nearer survey of the city. For this purpose, a house was selected, affording the best point of view, in the little village of Zubia, at no great distance from Granada. The King and Queen stationed themselves before a window, which commanded an unbroken prospect of the Alhambra, and the most beautiful quarter of the town. In the meanwhile, a considerable force, under the Marquis Duke of Cádiz, had been ordered, for the protection of the royal persons, to take up a position between the village and the city of Granada, with strict injunctions on no account to engage the enemy, as Isabella was unwilling to stain the pleasures of the day with unnecessary effusion of blood.

The people of Granada, however, were too impatient long to endure the presence, and as they deemed it, the bravado of their enemy. They burst forth from the gates of the capital, dragging along with them several pieces of ordnance, and commenced a brisk assault on the Spanish lines. The latter sustained the shock with firmness, till the Marquis of Cádiz, seeing them thrown into some disorder, found it necessary to assume the offensive, and, mustering his followers around him, made one of those desperate charges, which had so often broken the enemy. The Granadan cavalry faltered; but might have disputed the ground, had it not been for the infantry, which, composed of the rabble population of the city, was easily thrown into confusion, and hurried the horse along with it. The rout now became general. The Castilian cavaliers, whose blood was up, pursued to the very gates of Granada, 'and not a lance,' says Bernaldez, 'that day, but was dyed in the blood of the infidel'. Two thousand of the enemy were slain and taken in the engagement, which lasted only a short time; and the slaughter was stopped only by the escape of the fugitives within the walls of the city.<sup>11</sup>

About the middle of July, an accident occurred in the camp, which had like to have been attended with fatal consequences. The Queen was lodged in a superb pavilion, belonging to the Marquis of Cádiz, and always used by him in the Granadan war. By the carelessness of one of her attendants, a lamp was placed in such a situation, that during the night, perhaps owing to a gust of wind, it set fire to the drapery or loose hangings of the pavilion, which was instantly in a blaze. The flame communicated with fearful rapidity to the neighbouring tents, made of light, combustible materials, and the camp was menaced with general conflagration. This occurred at the dead of night, when all but the sentinels were buried in sleep. The Queen, and her children, whose apartments were near hers, were in great peril, and escaped with difficulty, though fortunately without injury. The alarm soon spread. The trumpets sounded to arms, for it was supposed to be some night attack of the enemy. Ferdinand snatching up his arms hastily, put himself at the head of his troops; but, soon ascertaining the nature of the disaster, contented himself with posting the Marquis of Cádiz, with a strong body of horse, over against the city, in order to repel any sally from that quarter. None, however, was attempted, and the fire was at length extinguished without personal injury, though not without loss of much valuable property, in jewels, plate, brocade, and other costly decorations of the tents of the nobility.<sup>12</sup>

In order to guard against a similar disaster, as well as to provide comfortable winter quarters for the army, should the siege be so long protracted as to require it, it was resolved to build a town of substantial edifices on the place of the present encampment. The plan was immediately put in execution. The work was distributed in due proportions among the troops of the several cities and of the great nobility; the soldier was on a sudden converted into an artisan, and, instead of war, the camp echoed with the sounds of peaceful labour.

In less than three months, this stupendous task was accomplished. The spot so recently occupied by light, fluttering pavilions, was thickly covered with solid structures of stone and mortar,

comprehending, besides dwelling houses, stables for a thousand horses. The town was thrown into a quadrangular form, traversed by two spacious avenues, intersecting each other at right angles in the centre, in the form of a cross, with stately portals at each of the four extremities. Inscriptions on blocks of marble in the various quarters, recorded the respective shares of the several cities in the execution of the work. When it was completed, the whole army was desirous that the new city should bear the name of their illustrious Queen; but Isabella modestly declined this tribute, and bestowed on the place the title of *Santa Fé*, in token of the unshaken trust, manifested by her people throughout this war, in Divine Providence. With this name it still stands as it was erected in 1491, a monument of the constancy and enduring patience of the Christian Spaniards 'the only city in Spain,' in the words of a Castilian writer, 'that has never been contaminated by the Muslim heresy'.<sup>13</sup>

The erection of Sante Fé by the Christians struck a greater damp into the people of Granada, than the most successful military achievement could have done. They beheld the enemy setting foot on their soil, with a resolution never more to resign it. They already began to suffer from the rigorous blockade, which effectually excluded supplies from their own territories, while all communication with Africa was jealously intercepted. Symptoms of insubordination had begun to show themselves among the overgrown population of the city, as it felt more and more the pressure of famine. In this crisis, the unfortunate Boabdil and his principal counsellors became convinced, that the place could not be maintained much longer; and at length, in the month of October, propositions were made through the Vizier Abul Cazim Abdelmalic, to open a negotiation for the surrender of the place. The affair was to be conducted with the utmost caution; since the people of Granada, notwithstanding their precarious condition, and their disquietude, were buoyed up by indefinite expectations of relief from Africa, or some other quarter.

The Spanish sovereigns intrusted the negotiation to their secretary Fernando de Zafra, and to Gonzalo de Córdoba, the latter of whom was selected for this delicate business, from his uncommon address, and his familiarity with the Moorish habits and language. Thus the capitulation of Granada was referred to the man, who acquired in her long wars the military science, which enabled him, at a later period, to foil the most distinguished generals of Europe.

The conferences were conducted by night with the utmost secrecy, sometimes within the walls of Granada, and at others; in the little hamlet of Churriana, about a league distant from it. At length, after large discussion on both sides, the terms of capitulation were definitively settled, and ratified by the respective monarchs on the 25th of November, 1491.<sup>14</sup>

The conditions were of similar, though somewhat more liberal import, than those granted to Baza. The inhabitants of Granada were to retain possession of their mosques, with the free exercise of their religion, with all its peculiar rites and ceremonies; they were to be judged by their own laws, under their own *cadis* or magistrates, subject to the general control of the Castilian governor; they were to be unmolested in their ancient usages, manners, language, and dress; to be protected in the full enjoyment of their property, with the right of disposing of it on their own account, and of migrating when and where they would; and to be furnished with vessels for the conveyance of such as chose within three years to pass into Africa. No heavier taxes were to be imposed than those customarily paid to their Muslim sovereigns, and none whatever before the expiration of three years. King Boabdil was to reign over a specified territory in the Alpujarras, for which he was to do homage to the Castilian crown. The artillery and the fortifications were to be delivered into the hands of the Christians, and the city was to be surrendered in sixty days from the date of the capitulation. Such were the principal terms of the surrender of Granada as authenticated by the most accredited Castilian and Muslim authorities; which I have stated the more precisely, as affording the best data for estimating the extent of Spanish perfidy in later times.<sup>15</sup>

The conferences could not be conducted so secretly, but that some report of them got air among the populace of the city, who now regarded Boabdil with an evil eye for his connection with the Christians. When the fact of the capitulation became known, the agitation speedily mounted into an

open insurrection, which menaced the safety of the city, as well as of Boabdil's person. In this alarming state of things, it was thought best by that monarch's counsellors, to anticipate the appointed day of surrender; and the 2nd of January, 1492, was accordingly fixed on for that purpose.

Every preparation was made by the Christians for performing this last act of the drama with suitable pomp and effect. The mourning which the court had put on for the death of Prince Affonso of Portugal, occasioned by a fall from his horse a few months after his marriage with the Infanta Isabella, was exchanged for gay and magnificent apparel. On the morning of the 2nd, the whole Christian camp exhibited a scene of the most animating bustle. The Grand Cardinal Mendoza was sent forward at the head of a large detachment, comprehending his household troops, and the veteran infantry grown grey in the Granadan wars, to occupy the Alhambra preparatory to the entrance of the sovereigns.<sup>16</sup> Ferdinand stationed himself at some distance in the rear, near a Muslim mosque, since consecrated as the hermitage of St. Sebastian. He was surrounded by his courtiers, with their stately retinues, glittering in gorgeous panoply, and proudly displaying the armorial bearings of their ancient houses. The Queen halted still farther in the rear, at the village of Armilla.<sup>17</sup>

As the column under the Grand Cardinal advanced up the Hill of Martyrs, over which a road had been constructed for the passage of the artillery, he was met by the Nasrid King Boabdil, attended by fifty cavaliers, who descending the hill, rode up to the position occupied by Ferdinand on the banks of the Genil. As the Nasrid approached the Castilian King; he would have thrown himself from his horse, and saluted his hand in token of homage, but Ferdinand hastily prevented him, embracing him with every mark of sympathy and regard. Boabdil then delivered up the keys of the Alhambra to his conqueror saying, 'They are thine, O king, since Allah so decrees it; use thy success with clemency and moderation.' Ferdinand would have uttered some words of consolation to the unfortunate prince, but he moved forward with dejected air to the spot occupied by Isabella, and, after similar acts of obeisance, passed on to join his family, who had preceded him with his most valuable effects on the route to the Alpujarras.<sup>18</sup>

The sovereigns during this time waited with impatience the signal of the occupation of the city by the cardinal's troops, which, winding slowly along the outer circuit of the walls, as previously arranged, in order to spare the feelings of the citizens as far as possible, entered by what is now called the Gate of Los Molinos. In a short time, the large silver cross, borne by Ferdinand throughout the crusade, was seen sparkling in the sunbeams, while the standards of Castile and Santiago waved triumphantly from the red towers of the Alhambra. At this glorious spectacle, the choir of the royal chapel broke forth into the solemn anthem of *Te Deum*, and the whole army, penetrated with deep emotion, prostrated themselves on their knees in adoration of the Lord of Hosts, who had at length granted the consummation of their wishes, in this last and glorious triumph of the Cross.<sup>19</sup> The grandees who surrounded Ferdinand then advanced toward the Queen, and kneeling down saluted her hand in token of homage to her as sovereign of Granada. The procession took up its march toward the City, 'the King and Queen moving in the midst,' says an historian, 'emblazoned with royal magnificence; and, as they were in the prime of life, and had now achieved the completion of this glorious conquest, they seemed to represent even more than their wonted majesty. Equal with each other, they were raised far above the rest of the world. They appeared, indeed, more than mortal, and as if sent by Heaven for the salvation of Spain.'<sup>20</sup>

In the meanwhile the Nasrid King, traversing the route of the Alpujarras, reached a rocky eminence which commanded a last view of Granada. He checked his horse, and, as his eye for the last time wandered over the scenes of his departed greatness, his heart swelled, and he burst into tears. 'You do well,' said his more masculine mother, 'to weep like a woman, for what you could not defend like a man!' 'Alas,' exclaimed the unhappy exile, 'when were woes ever equal to mine!' The scene of this event is still pointed out to the traveller by the people of the district; and the rocky height, from which the Nasrid chief took his sad farewell of the princely abodes of his youth, is commemorated by the poetical title of *El Ultimo Suspiro del Moro*, 'The Last Sigh of the Moor'.

The sequel of Boabdil's history is soon told. Like his uncle, al-Zagal, he pined away in his barren domain of the Alpujarras, under the shadow, as it were, of his ancient palaces. In the following year, he passed over to Fez with his family, having commuted his petty sovereignty for a considerable sum of money paid him by Ferdinand and Isabella, and soon after fell in battle in the service of an African prince, his kinsman. 'Wretched man,' exclaims a caustic chronicler of his nation, 'who could lose his life in another's cause, though he did not dare to die in his own. Such,' continues the Muslim chronicler, with characteristic resignation, 'was the immutable decree of destiny. Blessed be Allah, who exalteth and debaseth the kings of the earth, according to his divine will, in whose fulfilment consists that eternal justice, which regulates all human affairs.' The portal, through which King Boabdil for the last time issued from his capital, was at his request walled up, that none other might again pass through it. In this condition it remains to this day, a memorial of the sad destiny of the last of the kings of Granada.<sup>21</sup>

The fall of Granada excited general sensation throughout Christendom, where it was received as counterbalancing, in a manner, the loss of Constantinople, nearly half a century before. At Rome, the event was commemorated by a solemn procession of the Pope and cardinals to St. Peter's, where high mass was celebrated, and the public rejoicing continued for several days.<sup>22</sup> The intelligence was welcomed with no less satisfaction in England, where Henry VII was seated on the throne. The circumstances attending it, as related by Lord Bacon, will not be devoid of interest for the reader.<sup>23</sup>

Thus ended the War of Granada, which is often compared by the Castilian chroniclers to that of Troy in its duration, and which certainly fully equalled the latter in variety of picturesque and romantic incidents, and in circumstances of poetical interest. With the surrender of its capital, terminated the Islamic empire in the Peninsula, after an existence of seven hundred and forty-one years from the date of the original conquest. The consequences of this closing war were of the highest moment to Spain. The most obvious, was the recovery of an extensive territory, hitherto held by a people, whose difference of religion, language, and general habits, made them not only incapable of assimilating with their Christian neighbours, but almost their natural enemies; while their local position was a matter of just concern, as interposed between the great divisions of the Spanish monarchy, and opening an obvious avenue to invasion from Africa. By the new conquest, moreover, the Spaniards gained a large extent of country, possessing the highest capacities for production, in its natural fruitfulness of soil, temperature of climate, and in the state of cultivation to which it had been brought by its ancient occupants; while its shores were lined with commodious havens, that afforded every facility for commerce. The scattered fragments of the ancient Visigothic empire were now again, with the exception of the little state of Navarra, combined into one great monarchy, as originally destined by nature; and Christian Spain gradually rose by means of her new acquisitions from a subordinate situation, to the level of a first-rate European power.

The moral influence of the Granadan war, its influence on the Spanish character, was highly important. The inhabitants of the great divisions of the country, as in most countries during the feudal ages, had been brought too frequently into collision with each other to allow the existence of a pervading national feeling. This was particularly the case in Spain, where independent states insensibly grew out of the detached fragments of territory recovered at different times from the Nasrid monarchy. The War of Granada subjected all the various sections of the country to one common action, under the influence of common motives of the most exciting interest; while it brought them in conflict with a race, the extreme repugnance of whose institutions and character to their own, served greatly to nourish the nationality of sentiment. In this way, the spark of patriotism was kindled throughout the whole nation, and the most distant provinces of the Peninsula were knit together by a bond of union, which has remained indissoluble.

The consequences of these wars in a military aspect are also worthy of notice. Up to this period, war had been carried on by irregular levies, extremely limited in numerical amount and in period of service; under little subordination, except to their own immediate chiefs, and wholly unprovided with

the apparatus required for extended operations. The Spaniards were even lower than most of the European nations in military science, as is apparent from the infinite pains of Isabella to avail herself of all foreign resources for their improvement. In the war of Granada, masses of men were brought together, far greater than had hitherto been known in modern warfare. They were kept in the field not only through long campaigns, but far into the winter; a thing altogether unprecedented. They were made to act in concert, and the numerous petty chiefs brought in complete subject to one common head, whose personal character enforced the authority of station. Lastly, they were provided with all the requisite munitions, through the providence of Isabella, who introduced into the service the most skilful engineers from other countries, and kept in pay bodies of mercenaries, as the Swiss for example, reputed the best disciplined troops of that day. In this admirable school, the Spanish soldier was gradually trained to patient endurance, fortitude, and thorough subordination; and those celebrated captains were formed, with that invincible infantry, which in the beginning of the sixteenth century spread the military fame of their country over all Christendom.

But, with all our sympathy with the conquerors, it is impossible, without a deep feeling of regret, to contemplate the decay and final extinction of a race, who had made such high advances in civilization as the Spanish Muslims; to see them driven from the stately palaces reared by their own hands, wandering as exiles over the lands, which still blossomed with the fruits of their industry, and wasting away under persecution, until their very name as a nation was blotted out from the map of history.<sup>24</sup> It must be admitted, however, that they had long since reached their utmost limit of advancement as a people. The light shed over their history shines from distant ages; for, during the later period of their existence, they appear to have reposed in a state of torpid, luxurious indulgence, which would seem to argue, that, when causes of external excitement were withdrawn, the inherent vices of their social institutions had incapacitated them for the further production of excellence. In this impotent condition, it was wisely ordered, that their territory should be occupied by a people, whose religion and more liberal form of government, however frequently misunderstood or perverted, qualified them for advancing still higher the interests of humanity.

It will not be amiss to terminate the narrative of the War of Granada, with some notice of the fate of Rodrigo Ponce de León, Marquis Duke of Cádiz; for he may be regarded in a peculiar manner as the hero of it, having struck the first stroke by the surprise of Alhama, and witnessed every campaign till the surrender of Granada. A circumstantial account of his last moments is afforded by the pen of his worthy countryman, the Andalusian Curate of Los Palacios. The gallant marquis survived the close of the war only a short time, terminating his days at his mansion in Sevilla, on the 28th of August, 1492, with a disorder brought on by fatigue and incessant exposure. He had reached the forty-ninth year of his age, and, although twice married, left no legitimate issue. In his person, he was of about the middle stature, of a compact, symmetrical frame, a fair complexion, with light hair inclining to red. He was an excellent horseman, and well skilled indeed in most of the exercises of chivalry. He had the rare merit of combining sagacity with intrepidity in action. Though somewhat impatient, and slow to forgive, he was frank and generous, a warm friend, and a kind master to his vassals.<sup>25</sup>

He was strict in his observance of the Catholic worship, punctilious in keeping all the church festivals and in enforcing their observance throughout his domains; and, in war, he was a most devout champion of the Virgin. He was ambitious of acquisitions, but lavish of expenditure, especially in the embellishment and fortification of his towns and castles; spending on Alcalá de Guadaira, Jerez, and Alanis, the enormous sum of seventeen million maravedies. To the ladies he was courteous as became a true knight. At his death, the King and Queen with the whole court went into mourning; 'for he was a much loved cavalier,' says the Curate, 'and was esteemed, like the Cid, both by friend and foe; and no Moor durst abide in that quarter of the field where his banner was displayed'.



His body, after lying in state for several days in his palace at Sevilla, with his trusty sword by his side, with which he had fought all his battles, was borne in solemn procession by night through the streets of the city, which was everywhere filled with the deepest lamentation; and was finally deposited in the great chapel of the Augustine church, in the tomb of his ancestors. Ten Muslim banners, which he had taken in battle with the infidel, before the war of Granada, were borne along at his funeral, 'and still wave over his sepulchre,' says Bernaldez, "keeping alive the memory of his exploits, as undying as his soul'. The banners have long since mouldered into dust; the very tomb which contained his ashes has been sacrilegiously demolished; but the fame of the hero will survive as long as anything like respect for valour, courtesy, unblemished honour, or any other attribute of chivalry, shall be found in Spain.<sup>26</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

### AUTHOR'S CHAPTER COMMENTS

One of the chief authorities on which the account of the Granadan War rests, is Andres Bernaldez, Curate of Los Palacios. He was a native of Fuente in León, and appears to have received his early education under the care of his grandfather, a notary of that place, whose commendations of a juvenile essay in historical writing led him later in life according to his own account, to record the events of his time in the extended and regular form of a chronicle. After admission to orders, he was made chaplain to Deza, Archbishop of Sevilla, and Curate of Los Palacios, an Andalusian town not far from Sevilla, where he discharged his ecclesiastical functions with credit, from 1488 to 1513, at which time, as we find no later mention of him, he probably closed his life with his labours.

Bernaldez had ample opportunities for accurate information relative to the Granadan War, since he lived, as it were, in the theatre of action, and was personally intimate with the most considerable men of Andalusia, especially the Marquis of Cádiz, whom he has made the Achilles of his epic, assigning him a much more important part in the principal transactions, than is always warranted by other authorities. His *Chronicle* is just such as might have been anticipated from a person of lively imagination, and competent scholarship for the time, deeply dyed with the bigotry and superstition of the Spanish clergy in that century. There is no great discrimination apparent in the work of the worthy curate, who dwells with goggle-eyed credulity on the most absurd marvels, and expends more pages on an empty court show, than on the most important schemes of policy. But if he is no philosopher, he has, perhaps for that very reason, succeeded in making us completely master of the popular feelings and prejudices of the time; while he gives a most vivid portraiture of the principal scenes and actors in this stirring war, with all their chivalrous exploit, and rich theatrical accompaniment. His credulity and fanaticism, moreover, are well compensated by a simplicity and loyalty of purpose, which secure much more credit to his narrative than attaches to those of more ambitious writers, whose judgment is perpetually swayed by personal or party interests. The chronicle descends as late as 1513, although, as might be expected from the author's character, it is entitled to much less confidence in the discussion of events which fell without the scope of his personal observation. Notwithstanding its historical value is fully recognized by the Castilian critics, it has never been admitted to the press, but still remains, ingulfed in the ocean of manuscripts, with which the Spanish libraries are deluged.

It is remarkable that the War of Granada, which is so admirably suited in all its circumstances to poetical purposes, should not have been more frequently commemorated by the epic muse. The only successful attempt in this way, with which I am acquainted, is the '*Conquisto di Granata*', by the Florentine Girolamo Gratiani, Modena, 1650. The author has taken the licence, independently of his machinery, of deviating very freely from the historic track; among other things, introducing Columbus and the Great Captain as principal actors in the drama, in which they played at most but

a very subordinate part. The poem, which swells into twenty-six cantos, is in such repute with the Italian critics, that Quadrio does not hesitate to rank it 'among the best epical productions of the age'. A translation of this work has recently appeared at Nuremberg, from the pen of C.M. Winterling, which is much commended by the German critics.

Mr. Irving's late publication, the *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, has superseded all further necessity for poetry, and unfortunately for me, for history. He has fully availed himself of all the picturesque and animating movements of this romantic era; and the reader, who will take the trouble to compare his Chronicle with the present more prosaic and literal narrative, will see how little he has been seduced from historic accuracy by the poetical aspect of his subject. The fictitious and romantic dress of his work has enabled him to make it the medium for reflecting more vividly the floating opinions and chimerical fancies of the age, while he has illuminated the picture with the dramatic brilliancy of colouring denied to sober history.

---

### NOTES

1. Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 1490. Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.95. — Zuñiga, *Annales de Sevilla*, pp.404, 405. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, part. 3, cap.127. — La Clède, *Hist. de Portugal*, tom.iv. p.19. — Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom.ii, p.452.
2. Faria y Sousa, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom.ii, p.452–6. — Florez, *Reynas Cathólicas*, p.845. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, cap.129. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat.1, quinc.2, dial.3.
3. Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.41. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.90.  
Neither the Muslim nor Castilian authorities impeach the justice of its summons made by the Spanish sovereigns. I do not, however, find any other foundation for the obligation imputed to Boabdil in them, than that the monarch's agreement during his captivity at Loja, in 1486, to surrender his capital in exchange for Guadix, provided the later should be conquered within six months. Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, p.275. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom.iv, p.418.
4. L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol.176. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, cap.130. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.iv, cap.85. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom.iii, p.309.
5. Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, cap.131, 132. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.97. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.41 — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.3, epist.84. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom.iv, p.424. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom.iii, pp.309, 310.
6. Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 1491.
7. According to Zuñiga, the quota furnished by Sevilla this season amounted to 6,000 foot and 500 horse, who were recruited by fresh reinforcements no less than five times during the campaign. *Annales de Sevilla*, p.406. — See also *Col. de Cédulas*, tom.iii. no.3. [Today, Ladero Quesada's *Castilla y La Conquista del Reino de Granada* (1967) is probably the best authority on the size of various forces raised during the War of Granada. —Ed]
8. Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.42. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.100. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.3, epist.89. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.18. — L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol.177.  
Martyr remarks, that the Genoese merchants, 'voyagers to every clime, declare this to be the largest fortified city in the world'. Casiri had collected a body of interesting particulars respecting the wealth, population, and social habits of Granada, from various Arabic authorities. *Bibliotheca Escorialensis*, tom.ii, pp.247–60.  
The French work of Laborde, *Voyage Pittoresque* (Paris, 1807), and the English one of Murphy, *Engravings of Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (London, 1816), do ample justice in their finished designs to the general topography and architectural magnificence of Granada. [Twentieth-century pictorial books on Granada and Muslim Spain abound, an ever futile quest to capture the un-reproducible visual experience of a personal visit. Miraculously, much remains.—Ed]
9. On one occasion, a Christian knight having discomfited with a handful of men a much superior body of Muslim chivalry, King Boabdil testified his admiration of his prowess by sending him on the following day a magnificent present, together with his own sword superbly mounted. (*Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, tom.vi, p.178).

The Moorish ballad beginning '*Al Rey Chico de Granada*,' describes the panic occasioned in the city by the Christian encampment on the Xenil:

'Por ese fresco Genil  
un campo viene marchando,  
todo de lucida gente,  
las armas van relumbrando.  
    'Las vanderas traen tendidas,  
y un estandarte dorado;  
el General de esta gente,  
es el invicto Fernando,  
la qua anima a qualquier soldado.'

10. Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.101.
11. Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.101. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.42. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.4, epist.90. — Pulgar, *Reyes Católicos*, cap.133. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.iv, cap.88. Isabella afterwards caused a Franciscan monastery to be built in commemoration of this event at Zubia, where, according to Mr. Irving, the house from which she witnessed the action is to be seen today. See *Conquest of Granada*, chap.90, note.
12. Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.4, epist.91. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.101. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom.ii, p.673. — Bleda, *Corónica*, p.619. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.18.
13. Estrada, *Poblacion de España*, tom.ii, pp.344. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.4, epist.91. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.18.  
Hyta, who embellishes his florid prose with occasional extracts from the beautiful ballad poetry of Spain, gives one commemorating the erection of Santa Fé.

'Cercada esta Santa Fe  
con muxho lienzo encerado  
al rededor muchas tiendas  
de seda, oro, y brocado.  
    'Donde estan Duques, y Condes,  
Señores de gran estado,' etc.  
—*Guerras de Granada*, p.515.

14. Pedraza, *Antiguedad de Granada*, fol.74. — Giovio, *De Vitâ Gonsalvi, apud Vitæ Illust. Virorum*, pp.211, 212. — Salazar de Mendoza, *Crón. del Gran Cardenal*, p.236. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom.iii, pp.316, 317. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.42. — L. Marineo, *Cosas Memorables*, fol.178. — Marmol, however, assigns the date in the text to a separate capitulation respecting Boabdil, dating that made in behalf of the city three days later, (*Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.19). This author had given the articles of the treaty greater fullness and precision than any other Spanish historian. [Antonio de la Torre's *Los Reyes Católicos y Granada*, (1946), Part II covers considerable detail on the 1483–89 agreements between Boabdil and the Spanish Sovereigns. —Ed]
15. Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.19. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.42. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.ii, cap.90. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom.iii, pp.317, 318. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat.1, quine.1, dial.28.  
Martyr adds that the principal Moorish nobility were to be removed from the city (*Opus Epist.*, lib. 4, epist. 92). Pedraza, who had devoted a volume to the history of Granada, does not seem to think the capitulation worth specifying. Most modern Castilians pass very lightly over them. They furnish so bitter a comment on the conduct of subsequent Spanish monarchs. Marmol and the judicious Zurita agree in every substantial particular with Condé, and this coincidence may be considered as establishing the actual terms of the treaty.
16. Oviedo, whose narrative exhibits many discrepancies with those of other contemporaries, assigns this part to the Count Tendilla, the first Captain-General of Granada (*Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 1, dial. 28). But, as this writer, though an eyewitness, was but thirteen or fourteen years of age at the time of the capture, and wrote some sixty years later from his early recollections, his authority cannot be considered of equal weight with that of persons, who like Martyr, described events as they were passing before them.

17. Pedraza, *Antigüedad de Granada*, fol.75. — Salazar de Mendoza, *Crón. del Gran Cardenal*, p.238. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.iv, cap.90. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, lib.4, epist.92. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom.ii, fol.309. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.20.

18. Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos, ubi supra*. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.43. — Pedraza, *Antigüedad de Granada*, fol.76. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.102. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.iv, cap.90. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat.1, quinc.1, dial.28.

19. Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., *ubi supra*. — One is reminded of Tasso's description of the somewhat similar feelings exhibited by the crusaders on their entrance into Jerusalem.

*'Ecco apparir Gerusalem si vede,  
Ecco additar Gerusalem si scorge;  
Ecco da mille voci unitamente  
Gerusalemme salutar si sente.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*'Al gran piacer che quella prima vista  
Dolcemente spiro nell' altrui petto,  
Alta contrizion successe, mista  
Di timoroso e riverente affetto.  
Osano appena d'innalzar la vista  
Ver la città.'*

— *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Cant.iii, st.3, 5.

20. Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom.ii, p.397. — Pedraza, *Antigüedad de Granada*, fol.76. — Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 1492. — Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.43. — Bleda, *Corónica*, pp.621, 622. — Zurita, *Anales*, tom.iv, cap.90. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.20. — L. Marineo, and indeed most of the Spanish authorities, represent the sovereigns as having postponed their entrance into the city until the 5th or 6th of January. A letter transcribed by Pedraza, addressed by the Queen to the Prior of Guadalupe, one of her council, dated from the city of Granada in the 2nd of January, 1492, shows the inaccuracy of this statement. See folio 76.

In Mr. Lockhart's picturesque version of the Moorish ballads, the reader may find an animated description of the triumphant entry of the Christian army into Granada.

*'There was crying in Granada  
when the sun was going down,  
Some calling on the Trinity, some calling  
on Mahoun;  
Here passed away the Koran, there in  
the cross was borne,  
And here was heard the Christian bell,  
and there the Moorish horn;  
Te Deum laudamus was up the Alcalá  
sung,  
Down from the Alhambra's minarets  
were all the crescents flung;  
The arms thereon of Aragon and Castile  
they display;  
One king comes in triumph, one  
weeping goes away.'*

21. Condé, *Dominacion de los Arabes*, tom.iii, cap.90. — Cardonne, *Hist. d'Afrique et d'Espagne*, tom.iii, pp.319,320. — Garibay, *Compendio*, tom.iv, lib.40, cap.42. — Marmol, *Rebellion de Moriscos*, lib.1, cap.20.

Mr. Irving, in his beautiful Spanish Sketch book, *The Alhambra*, devotes a chapter to mementos of Boabdil, in which he traces minutely the route of the deposed monarch after quitting the gates of his capital. The same author, in the Appendix to his *Chronicle of Granada*, concludes a notice of Boabdil's fate with the following description of his person. 'A portrait of Boabdil el Chico is to be seen in the picture gallery of the Generalife. He is represented with a mild, handsome face, a fair complexion, and yellow hair. His dress is of yellow brocade, relieved with black velvet; and he has a black velvet cap, surmounted with a crown. In the armory of Madrid are two suits of armor said to have belonged to him, one of solid steel, with very little ornament; the morion closed. From the proportions of these suits of armor, he must have been of full stature and vigorous form.'

[The sealed portal through which Boabdil departed the city of Granada was in the tower of the *Siete Suelos* (Seven Floors), and was destroyed during the Peninsular War (1809–14). It has been rebuilt in recent

restoration of the Alhambra. See Enríque Sordo, *Moorish Spain*, (New York, 1963) p.124. —ED]

22. Senarega, *Commentaril de Rebus Genuensibus, apud Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, (Mediolani, 1723–51,) tom.xxiv, p.531. — It formed the subject of a theatrical representation before the court of Naples, in the same year. This drama, or *Farsa*, as it is called by its distinguished author, Sannazaro, is an allegorical medley, in which Faith, Joy, and the false prophet Muhammad play principal parts. The difficulty of a precise classification of this piece, has given rise to warmer discussion among Italian critics than the subject may be thought to warrant. See Signorelli, *Vicende della Coltura nelle due Sicilie* (Napoli, 1810), tom.iii, pp.543 *et seq.*
23. ‘Somewhat about this time, came letters from Ferdinando and Isabella, king and queen of Spain; signifying the final conquest of Granada from the Moors; which action, in itself so worthy, King Ferdinando, whose manner was never to lose any virtue for the showing, had expressed and displayed in his letters, at large, with all the particularities and religious punctos and ceremonies, that were observed in the reception of that city and kingdom; showing amongst other things, that the king would not by any means in person enter the city until he had first seen the Cross set up upon the greater tower of Granada, whereby it became Christian ground. That likewise, before he would enter, he did homage to God, pronouncing by an herald from the height of that tower, that he did acknowledge to have recovered that kingdom by the help of God Almighty, and the glorious Virgin, and the virtuous apostle St. James, and the holy father Innocent VIII, together with the aids and services of his prelates, nobles, and commons. That yet he stirred not from his camp, till he had seen a little army of martyrs to the number of seven hundred and more Christians that had lived in bonds and servitude, as slaves to the Moors, pass before his eyes, singing a psalm for their redemption; and that he had given tribute unto God, by alms and relief extended to them all, for his admission into the city. These things were in the letters, with many more ceremonies of a kind of holy ostentation.
- ‘The king, ever willing to put himself into the consort or quire of all religious actions, and naturally affecting much the king of Spain, as far as one king can affect another, partly for his virtues, and partly for a counterpoise to France; upon the receipt of these letters, sent all his nobles and prelates that were about the court, together with the mayor and aldermen of London, in great solemnity to the church of Paul; there to hear a declaration from the lord chancellor, now cardinal. When they were assembled, the cardinal, standing upon the upper most step, or halfpace, before the quire and all the nobles, prelates, and governors of the city at the foot of the stairs, made a speech to them; letting them know that they were assembled in that consecrated place to sing unto God a new song. For that, said he, these many years the Christians have not gained new ground or territory upon the infidels, nor enlarged and set farther the bounds of the Christian world. But this is now done by the prowess and devotion of Ferdinando and Isabella, kings of Spain; who have, to their immortal honour, recovered the great and rich kingdom of Granada, and the populous and mighty city of the same name from the Moors, having been in possession thereof by the space of seven hundred years, and more; for which this assembly and all Christians are to render laud and thanks to God, and to celebrate this noble act of the king of Spain; who in this is not only victorious but apostolical, in the gaining of new provinces to the Christian faith. And the rather for that this victory and conquest is obtained without much effusion of blood. Whereby it is to be hoped, that there shall be gained not only new territory, but infinite souls to the Church of Christ, whom the Almighty, as it seems, would have lived to be converted. Herewithal he did relate some of the most memorable particulars of the war and victory. And after his speech ended, the whole assembly went solemnly in procession, and Te Deum was sung.’ Lord Bacon, *History of the Reign of King Henry VII, in his Works* (ed. London, 1819), vol. v, pp.85, 86.— See also Hall, *Chronicle*, p.453.
24. The African descendants of the Spanish Muslims, unable wholly to relinquish the hope of restoration of the delicious abodes of their ancestors, continued for many generations, and perhaps still continue, to put up a petition to that effect in their mosques every Friday. Pedraza, *Antigüedad de Granada*, fol.7.
25. Carbajal, *Anales*, MS., año 1492. Don Enríque de Guzmán, Duke of Medina Sidonia, the ancient enemy, and since the commencement of the Granadan War, the firm friend of the Marquis of Cádiz, died the 28th of August, on the same day with the latter.
26. Zuñiga, *Annales de Sevilla*, p.411. — Bernaldez, *Reyes Católicos*, MS., cap.104.
- The Marquis left three illegitimate daughters by a noble Spanish lady, who all formed high connections. He was succeeded in his titles and estates, by the permission of Ferdinand and Isabella, by Don Rodrigo Ponce de León, the son of his eldest daughter, who had married with one of her kinsmen. Cádiz was subsequently annexed by the Spanish Sovereigns to the crown, from which it had been detached in Enríque IV's time, and considerable estates were given as an equivalent, together with the title of Duke of Arcos, to the family of Ponce de León.



**“The Capitulation of Granada”**

Depiction of Muhammad XII (Boabdil) surrendering the keys to the fortress city of Granada to the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492.

Executed, c. 1882, by Francisco Pradilla y Ortiz (1848–1921)