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To Lalla Dickson
with the Author's kind regards

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WILEY AND SONS

JOHN CRANE

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE

OF THE MIDDLE AGES

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

BY

BATH

1884

PREFACE.

TO MY MOTHER

WITH FEELINGS OF GRATITUDE

AND AS A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

BY HER LOVING SON.

TO MY MOTHER

WITH KINDNESS OF REMEMBRANCE

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

BY HER LOVING SON

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH the treasure-house of foreign literature ought not to be lightly ransacked by alien hands, yet a certain duty devolves upon such as have had the privilege of entering it, to communicate to those outside a portion of their experience.

It is probable, that to the million, the idea of Spanish literature is embodied in the undying fiction of Cervantes, and there would therefore seem to be room for an attempt to unfold, through the medium of a translation, the knowledge that Spain has besides, a literature which deals in a most attractive form with the romance of history.

Is it not much to be regretted, that increased knowledge of what must be more than interesting, is not imparted to the world in general, for who, knowing what he already does of the history of an engaging and, for the last few years, unfortunately an inconstantly governed nation, would not wish to see this people emerging from the smouldering fires of various governments, like a Phoenix, with wings unscorched, to bear the errand of commercial and social successes, aiming to obtain that position, which she, as a country, held in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella: and any opportunity should be grasped to bring forward those biographical facts, which taken together, go so far to accomplish this end.

It may not be by means of literature exclusively, that the interesting country of Spain can be elevated to a position of pre-eminence, but it must be confessed, that the development and the advance of literature, aided by other forces, will do much to raise her.

What need is there then, for any compunction in launching this upon the already vast sea of biographical literature ?

Nay, ought it not rather to be the outcome of the will of those who desire to advance the interests of the country, to set in motion the machinery of literature which they are in a position to command.

I have therefore attempted to bring under the notice of English readers, the following translation, from one of the biographies included in the work by Pilar Sinués, entitled *Reinas Mártires*, and written in the form of an historical romance.

I feel that it is necessary for me to acknowledge how much I am indebted to Lafuente for the magnificent *History of Spain*, completed by Valera, as it is from that source that I have gleaned several passages, throwing greater light on that obscure epoch of the middle ages.

Beyond giving a more accurate account of the wives of Alonso VI., I have adhered to the

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text as closely as possible, the last two chapters excepted. I must make my apologies to Madame Sinués del Marco, for any alterations I have made, and I hope she will pardon my mention of Teresa, Countess of Portugal, playing as she did, so conspicuous a part in the life of Uraca, the descendants of both being now seated on the thrones of the Iberian Peninsula : ——— but this may not seem out of place at a time, when British hearts have been attracted by interest in that frail life, so lately trembling in the balance, on which the hopes of a mighty nation are centred.

REGINALD HUTH.

1, Marlborough Buildings, Bath,
22nd February, 1890.

DOÑA URACA.

DOÑA URACA,

QUEEN OF LEON AND CASTILE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM one of the most beautiful and virtuous princesses in the world, and of the glorious and prudent King Alonso VI., was born the unfortunate, persecuted, and martyred queen, whose history I am about to relate to my gentle readers.

The figure of Uraca rises throughout ages, blood-stained, outraged, and revengeful, but not guilty as some historians, and especially the most ancient suppose her to have been. Her mother was a good and happy woman, and Uraca notwithstanding her misfortunes was also virtuous, on several occasions showing great magnanimity of character, yet she was one of the most ill-fated women in the world.

Constance of Burgundy, daughter of duke Robert, and of the placid and gracious Hermengarde de Semur was married at the early age of twelve to Hugh II., count of Chalons, who was himself but fourteen. Constance, like her mother, was good, but much handsomer. Her pure type of beauty involuntarily reminded one of the virgins of ancient Gaul. Beneath a noble and gracious brow, white and spotless as ivory, shone eyes gentle and chaste; her face rather long than oval was sweet and of a perfect type; her fair hair fell in thick tresses over her shoulders; her demeanour was pensive and silent, but affectionate and gentle withal; any passing grief was quickly dispelled; at once simple and dignified, pious and indulgent, the boy Hugh loved her to distraction, and devoted to her to the last, died four years after their marriage.

A malignant fever brought the count of Chalons to his grave at the age of eighteen. Constance was a widow and with child at the age of sixteen. The previous year she had already given birth to a son stillborn; the grief of her early widowhood was so great, that it also caused the death of the second at its birth.

Robert and Hermengarde endeavored to console their daughter. They removed her from her solitary palace, and carried her away to live with them. There she might have resided peacefully, if not happily, but for the importunities of her father, who continually told her that she ought to marry again. "I am now old," he said, "and were I sure of outliving your youth, I should not attempt to influence you, but, my daughter, by marrying again, you will procure for yourself, and your mother, a zealous and lawful protector." As for Hermengarde she did not require the support with which the count of Burgundy was so anxious to furnish her, for she died before him a year after her daughter became a widow. Left motherless, the latter stood in still greater need of a protector, and her father, his first grief having subsided, determined to persuade her to accept another spouse.

About this time it was rumoured that the king of Leon, Castile, and Galicia, now a widower, in accordance to the advice of the grandees of his kingdoms had resolved to re-marry, and the count of Burgundy thinking that this would be a most suitable match for his daughter, sent a faith-

ful agent of his to Alonso VI. This mode of acting answered to the sending of portraits of more modern times, for in those remote ages, the divine art of painting was almost unknown. The emissary, however, praised the beauty of Constance in every way, and these praises soon reached the ears of the king. They were repeated so incessantly that Alonso was at last desirous of marrying the lovely widow, and sent the abbot from the monastery of Tours, accompanied by a few noblemen of his court, to solicit the hand of the countess. The astute Robert received the envoys from the king with the greatest show of courtesy, and told them that such honours being foreign to his mind, he desired to consult his daughter, but hoped to give them a favourable reply within three days.

Constance was not surprised at an honour, which would have dazzled any other woman. Merely wishing to please her father, she told him she was quite ready to marry the king of Leon, and shortly afterwards set out accompanied by Robert and the envoys to the court of Alonso. The count of Burgundy lavished large sums of money on the displays at his daughter's nuptials.

It was like a dream to him to behold her as queen, and Constance was happy in contemplating the joy of her father. Her heart free from love, only wished to see him happy, and she was not afraid to cast her lot with that of a monarch, the fame of whose exploits filled the world.

Alonso informed of the approach of his bride, went out a great distance to meet her, accompanied by the most select and high-spirited of his court. On beholding the countess he was unable to repress his surprise, being unprepared for so much beauty. She rode a white palfrey, over whose side her dress of deep crimson velvet hung in graceful folds. Her bosom was covered with diamonds, and strings of pearls. Under her hood of snow-white lawn appeared a rich mass of golden hair; her downcast eyes made her resemble an image of modesty; her pale complexion was slightly flushed, whilst a long white veil covering her like a cloud, gave greater lustre to her charms.

Alonso was then in his thirty-sixth year; tall, robust, and strong. He excelled in two qualities, prudence and valour, though possessed of other fine traits, such as affability, generosity, and general nobility of character. The contrast that

he formed with Constance was so complete as to ensure the duration of their love. She was the young palm, elegant and flexible, he the stout oak to preserve her from the tempest, and to protect her under his leafy shade from the burning sun.

They soon arrived at Leon, where on the following day their nuptials were celebrated with a pomp and magnificence hitherto unknown.

Alonso was married six times. His wives were Agnes, daughter of Guy William, duke of Aquitaine; Ximena, by whom he had two daughters, Elvira and Teresa, this marriage being afterwards annulled, and the children illegitimized. Then Constance of Burgundy; Bertha, also of the house of Burgundy; Isabel, previously Zaïda daughter of the Moorish King of Seville, by whom he had an only son Sancho killed at the battle of Uclés; and Beatrice, of foreign parentage. Of all these she whom he loved best was the daughter of Robert. The others he married in the hope of having male issue, which however he did not obtain.

CHAPTER II.

A year after her marriage in 1080, Constance gave birth to an infanta, who was christened Urraca after her husband's sister. Although Alonso desired a son, he received his daughter with the greatest joy, and the first years of her childhood having passed away, agreeably with the consent of the queen, she was placed under the sage tutelage of Count Don Pedro Ansurez. This nobleman had two brothers, and all three in the kingdoms of Leon and Castile were held to be models of courage, prudence, and judgment.

In order that the reader may more clearly comprehend the state of those kingdoms, it were well to digress a little in our narrative, to explain the troubled reign of Doña Urraca.

Fernando I., the Great, left a daughter, and three sons: Urraca, Sancho, Alonso, and García: to prove that he loved them equally, he divided his states, giving Castile to Sancho, the kingdom of Leon to Alonso VI., and Galicia to García; as for Urraca his first born, he recommended her to the care of Alonso, as he considered their interests to

be identical, and indeed they loved one another tenderly. Urraca had educated her brother, displaying in him all the graces of her talent, which was truly marvellous. The infanta besides was possessed of such rare beauty, that historians agree in calling her "The Fair Maid of Spain." She had no inclination for matrimony, refusing the brilliant offers that were made to her on all sides.

Alonso was hardly seated on the throne, than he named her Lady Sovereign of Zamora, and advised her to retire, and dwell in that city. "Wherefore would you separate me from you?" asked the infanta of her brother. "Because I foresee a terrible war before long," replied Alonso. "My brothers will soon attack me, and fill these kingdoms with all the horrors of civil discord." So it happened: Urraca followed the advice of her brother by retiring to Zamora: Sancho who was the most ambitious, and eager to take possession of his father's states, declared war on his brother Alonso: bloody battles ensued, and finally Alonso was taken prisoner.

Urraca, anxious to liberate him, left no means untried, and at last managed to do so, but under very hard terms: the barbarous Sancho extorted

from Alonso an oath to renounce in his favour the kingdom of Leon, that he should go over to the land of the Moors, and not return without his express command. Alonso indignantly refused to comply with these conditions, but his sister seeing that his life was menaced by the cruel conqueror, persuaded him to accept them at once in order to save himself. Alonso therefore set out for Toledo, then in the hands of the Moors, and Urraca always full of foresight and prudence, sent three noblemen, who possessed his entire confidence, from Zamora to accompany him. These were the brothers Ansurez.

Sancho however, did not profit much by his conquest and the harsh treatment to which he had subjected his brother; weak in the extreme, he was already a sort of vassal of the latter. The nobility of Leon and Zamora denied his supremacy and refused to do him homage, declaring they knew of no other master and mistress than Alonso and Urraca, and to them alone would they be subject. Sancho furious at this reply, endeavored to make Urraca submit to his authority; she had entrenched herself in the fortified citadel of Zamora: he besieged her in person at the head of a numerous army, but perished through treason by the hands

of a common soldier, Vellido Dolfos, who discharged a javelin into his shoulder.

Without loss of time, and before the news could reach the Moors, Urraca sent a secret message to her brother Alonso, who by means of the courageous and faithful assistance of the brothers Ansurez, set out from Toledo, reduced to obedience all the kingdoms of his father, and was crowned king of Castile, Galicia, and Leon. He immediately declared his sister queen that she might govern in partnership with himself the kingdoms that he owed to her prudence and affection, and being separated from his second wife by order of the Pope on account of their consanguinity, was influenced by Urraca to marry the fair Constance of Burgundy, and in remembrance of his sister, gave her name to his first born in lawful wedlock.

When the infanta was six years of age, she was placed as we have seen under the tutelage of Don Pedro Ansurez, the eldest of the three brothers, to whom they owed so much. Urraca, like her mother Constance, was a pretty delicate creature, slender and tall for her age, with large blue eyes full of expression; her forehead was admirable from the purity of its outline, announcing a docile rather

than an arrogant nature; her hair was of a dark chesnut that promised to become black; her mouth was small and very pretty, and her smile sweet.

Uraca was only ten when one day she was in the presence of her mother and her teacher Don Pedro Ansurez.

Alonso was fighting against the ever encroaching Moors, being helped by the great lords of his kingdoms; in those turbulent times no one could remain for long peaceably in their castles or manors, and the nobles put themselves at the head of their vassals to assist the king in the war against the infidels.

Constance was in her chamber, reclining on a large wooden arm-chair rudely made with enormous arms, luxury being then unknown. She had been suffering from consumption for some time past, and was pale and silent with her head thrown back.

The infanta was standing at the side of the window, that lighted up the apartment, and when neither the count nor her mother were looking, gazed out eagerly, but when she fancied their attention was fixed upon her, cast her eyes upon the ground.

"Madam," said the count, severely, "I really do not know when you will heed my advice, but I assure you I feel much annoyed to see you so little inclined to lend your ear to reason."

"Wherefore, good count?" said the queen.

"Because, madam, the infanta has not forgotten that Diego Lainez, whom God confound. Would to heaven that the war would drive him out of these kingdoms. A boy of eleven and a girl of ten! By my life these are strange loves indeed."

The queen smiled as she listened to the tirade of the old count.

The infanta hung down her head to hide her face, crimson with shame.

"Let them be, Ansurez," said Constance, "what harm do the poor children do by looking at each other."

"Besides, I wasn't looking at Diego," observed Uraca, encouraged by what her mother had said.

"You were not?" replied her teacher angrily.

"No."

"Well, who were you looking at through the window?"

"At the soldiers walking in the yard."

"Amongst whom no doubt is Diego Lainez."

"I did not see him."

"Do not oblige her to lie, good count," interposed the queen. "Do you not see how she blushes?"

"And well she may, madam."

"Soon," said the queen, raising her beautiful and aching head, "soon the poor child will lose her liberty; her father will marry her to some warrior prince, able to help him in his enterprises, but harsh and ferocious, and incapable of inspiring the heart of my Uraca with love. Alas! Count, Count! in this land of Spain kings are fierce, and the burning torch of discord is never extinguished!"

"That is because these kingdoms are of great value, and each one wants them for himself," replied Ansurez, with brutal frankness. "As for the infanta" . . .

"She will lose her liberty before long!" repeated Constance, "yes, before long! as her mother will not be alive to protect her."

"What say you, my lady mother?" exclaimed Uraca, coming away from the window: "are you worse to-day?"

"Yes," replied the queen, "worse every day. Heaven's will be done that calls me away."

“God forbid, mother, that you should be so soon taken away from me,” cried the infanta. “Dearest mother, I will pray the Lord to spare you to me.”

Constance kissed her daughter’s brow, and said to her, “Go now, my daughter ; I have to speak to the count.”

Uracá obeyed, not without turning several times to look at her mother.

“Good count,” said the queen, as soon as her daughter had left the room, “I entreat you to look upon my Uracá, not as a father but as a mother, which is asking you rather more ; I shall soon die, and the poor child requires a tender heart in which to confide ; her character is weak, and she will thereby suffer great sorrows. . . . Never leave her Ansurez, and spare her what troubles you can.”

The queen then stopped short, as her emotion appeared to have exhausted the little strength that was left her.

“Calm yourself, madam,” said the count. “I do but reprove the infanta for her fondness for that fellow Diego Lainez, who is not her equal ; and he is more to blame for daring to look so high. I shall soon put an end to all this by having him imprisoned !”

"It were better," said the queen, "that her father should allow her to marry Diego Lainez."

"How is it possible, madam, that you can contemplate such a disgrace! Doña Uraca marry that page!"

"Count, I recollect how happy I was with Hugh, my first husband. We were two children who lived only for love and play."

"But, Doña Uraca will some day be queen."

"So was I also! True, it is one thing to be the wife of a king, and another to rule the destinies of a nation, as my daughter will have to do; but what has this to do with the felicity of the heart?"

"Have you not been happy, then, with Don Alonso, madam?"

"Yes, very happy! I love him, and have been beloved by him; nevertheless I was happier with Hugh, because he was nearer my own age. Alonso I respect; Hugh I loved with all my soul! Count, promise me, that you will use your influence with the king that he may give Uraca a young and amiable husband, one whom she can love."

"I promise it, madam."

"Now go," murmured the queen languidly; "I am tired, and would rest."

The count retired, and her maids entered to convey her to her couch.

Two days later Constance peacefully expired.

She was twenty-nine years of age, twelve of which she had been married to Alonso.

CHAPTER III.

Her death left Uraca sad and solitary, for her father's palace, full of warriors, was not a pleasant abode for a young girl. Count Ansurez taking pity upon her, wrote to the king to say that he ought not only to return at once, but also to choose a spouse for the infanta. Alonso was not long in replying. The end of his letter was as follows:—

“With regard to the infanta, let your mind be at rest. I am about to return with a husband for her, one all that is desirable. He is Don Ramon, son of William, Count of Burgundy, nephew of my poor wife Constance, and therefore first cousin of Uraca. He is in every way suitable, being young and of a graceful figure; besides, he is brother to Henry, the husband of my daughter Teresa, whom I created count of Portugal. You will see I could not have made a better choice. They shall be betrothed as soon as I arrive, and when my daughter has completed her twelfth year they shall be united. In this way I shall reward Don Ramon for his

valorous exploits, exploits that have never been equalled in christendom :—To Uraca I shall leave the succession of my kingdoms, and if I die without male issue, she shall reign in my stead.”

This letter somewhat calmed the uneasiness of the count, over-zealous in guarding the infanta, and in defending her from the assiduities of Diego Lainez, who lost no opportunity of declaring his love.

The king himself arrived shortly afterwards, accompanied by a splendid retinue of cavaliers, and bringing much spoil from the war. Amongst that brilliant court, Ramon of Burgundy shone like a star. In age he might have been about twenty-five; his appearance almost royal imposed respect, whilst his beauty inspired love. His fair hair fell in ringlets over his back and shoulders. His steel armour displayed to perfection the splendid proportions of his figure. In stature he was tall, with a martial and courteous bearing; his eyes had a gentle expression, and shone with grave and quiet majesty.

Uraca at once gave him her heart, for she had seen none more perfect than he; she was never weary of gazing on him and poor Diego Lainez

was completely forgotten for the brilliant Ramon of Burgundy, the bravest and most illustrious warrior of the hosts that fought under the banners of Alonso VI.

"Is this lady, sir, your daughter, the infanta, whose beauty is celebrated throughout your kingdoms?" asked Don Ramon, pointing to the young girl, who inclined her head, blushing.

"It is," replied Don Alonso.

"Up to now, then, report far from exaggerating has been backward in her praises."

"Do you think so?" said the king, smiling.

"By my troth, as a christian, and a cavalier."

"Then, Don Ramon, consider her well, and see whether you think she will suit you as a wife, for in that event, I shall give to you both the government of Galicia."

The nobles looked at one another amazed at the great favour the king was about to confer upon the young warrior.

"I find no other way of rewarding you for your services to me," pursued Don Alonso. "I have only one daughter, and her I shall declare my successor. During my lifetime you shall both have the government of Galicia, as I have already said."

The count knelt, and kissed the hand of the monarch with profound gratitude.

"Madam," he then said, turning to the infanta, I wish to owe nothing to your obedience. I wish to owe everything to your heart. Are you content with what your father has disposed of?"

"Yes, surely," said the infanta, blushing.

"Think it well over," persisted the count, "and give me your reply, which will be to me a sentence of life or death."

After this conversation the king dismissed them that they might retire to rest. Uraca also withdrew, and in haste, with a radiant countenance, passed through a corridor of her father's palace, that communicated with one of the wings of the edifice. At last, arriving at a large door, the infanta knocked, and a voice from within demanded gruffly—

"Who goes there?"

"It is me, open the door," replied Uraca, as if nothing more was required to make herself known. In effect, nothing more was necessary. The door opened, and the rough head of a man-at-arms appeared. "Pass, madam," he said respectfully, lowering the point of his javelin, which he carried

on his shoulder. The infanta found herself in another gallery, that communicated with an inner court. She entered, and ascended a small staircase, and arrived at a sort of vestibule, where some soldiers happened to be present. They all rose when they saw her, and one of them came forward to open a great oak door, left ajar, and whence issued the sound of melodious voices.

The infanta found herself in the presence of three beautiful women. The eldest was Jimena, wife of the famous Cid Campeador, who had gained so many victories over the Moors in the reign of Alonso VI. The others respectively fourteen and fifteen years of age, were her two daughters, Elvira and Sol. The three, as I have already said, were of great beauty. That of the mother was grave and majestic; that of the daughters was sweet and angelic.

They rose to receive Uraca, who, with a gesture of her hand, motioned them to remain seated, whilst she sat herself down upon a wooden bench.

"Continue threading your pearls," she said to the girls, who were occupied in threading the tiniest pearls; "and you, madam, pray do not

leave off spinning your wool ; meanwhile I have something to tell you.

“ We listen, madam,” said Jimena.

“ Well, then, know that I am to be married,” said Uraca, with childlike impetuosity. “ The king, my father, is about to dispose of my hand to Count Don Ramon of Burgundy.”

“ To your cousin ?”

“ To the same ; do you know him ?”

“ No, madam ; we have never seen him,” replied Sol, speaking for them all.

“ Oh you cannot imagine a more good-looking cavalier,” exclaimed the infanta with enthusiasm, “ in his countenance beauty is blended with valour, his eyes are like the stars we love to gaze upon at night, his hair is fair like the sun, he is tall, like the young oak that grows upon our mountains, his voice is sweet, like the sound of rippling water, on seeing him smile, I fancied I beheld a red flower opening its petals to the wind : madam, my friends, no one is so handsome as Don Ramon !” So saying, the countenance of the infanta sparkled with joy, and the simple pride of happy and contented love.

Dofia Jimena contemplated her with a smile, and said—"It is but right that the man with whom we have to unite our lot should appear handsome in our eyes ; and I only hope, madam, that his sentiments may equal the beauty that has captivated you, and that like my Roderic, he may unite moral with physical virtues."

"Oh, he is without doubt good!" exclaimed the infanta. Is it not true that God puts a mark upon the brow of His elect? Well, on him you may see it. But I hear the sound of horses' hoofs in the court-yard ; perhaps he is going out. . . . He is going to visit the town. Come, Jimena, come, my friends."

The infanta ran to the window, and her companions followed her.

It was, in fact, Ramon who had gone out, followed by a numerous train of relatives and companions, whom he had brought with him. He was mounted on a snow-white steed, with splendid trappings ; and behind him came a cloud of pages from his home, as an ornament to his noble lineage.

"He is, in truth, a most gallant cavalier," said Jimena, "and you two, madam, will make the fittest pair in these kingdoms of your father."

CHAPTER IV.

Shortly afterwards, Uraca was married to Ramon, and both departed to their government in Galicia with the title of sovereign counts. The infanta was radiant with happiness, but not so her spouse, on whose countenance a dark shade of melancholy suddenly appeared. The newly married couple first went to reside at their palace of Grajal de Campos, and Uraca, blinded by her happiness, passed a long time without observing the abyss, by which she was sleeping. Nevertheless, she could not at last help noticing something strange in her husband : his smile was forced, his speech discordant ; he ever seemed impatient and fatigued, his sleep was restless, and oft-times on waking, his wife found him sitting by his bed, his face contracted with grief.

“What is it that troubles you my lord?” asked Uraca of her spouse.

“Nothing,” replied the latter essaying a smile.

“Nevertheless you are suffering in mind!”

“Indeed not; you fancy it, but you deceive yourself.”

The infanta was reassured for the time; her neart warned her of some misfortune, but she knew not whence it would come. In this state of anguish she gave birth to her eldest son, the infante Alonso, who afterwards reigned with the title of Emperor.

One night, believing the count to be in his chamber she called to him, without receiving an answer. She repeated her call, but still obtained no reply. The infanta sat up in her bed and looked about her; she was alone. Her servants, dismissed by the count, had retired to rest and the latter had remained alone with his wife. The apartment was lighted up, according to the custom of the age by a small iron lamp, suspended from the vaulted ceiling by means of three chains of the same metal. Uraca rose from her couch thinking to find her husband asleep in some separate corner of the apartment, perhaps overcome by fatigue; but although she searched everywhere, he was not to be found.

A terrible suspicion crossed her young and inexperienced mind; her husband was deceiving

her: the sadness she had observed in him, and his deep preoccupation was nothing else than another love. Where could he be? Of this she was ignorant, nor was she then able to ascertain. Bitter scalding tears coursed down the cheeks of Uraca: it was the first great and inconsolable grief that had entered the heart of the poor child. She sank into her chair, and gave full vent to her sorrow, the more overwhelming, inasmuch as she had no one in whom to confide. There she remained for some hours, pondering over her grief and weeping over her lost illusions.

At the approach of dawn, hearing cautious steps, she returned to her couch and feigned sleep. The count entered with joyful mien, appearing the same to her as when she first beheld him in Leon. He laid down, and soon sleep closed his eyes, and brought before them sweet and tender visions. A name escaped from his smiling lips, "Zoraida!"

"A Moorish girl!" cried the infanta raising herself with horror; "the insult is greater even than I imagined, I shall discover this woman, and cruelly avenge myself." The unfortunate princess could no longer sleep, and passed the

solitary hours in planning vengeance against her who had stolen her husband's love.

When she rose, her countenance was pale and haggard, but she maintained a smiling front, and a tranquil voice to her husband's enquiries, in order to carry out the scheme she meditated.

When night returned, and the count thinking her asleep went forth, she rose, dressed hurriedly, and accompanied by an old attendant, whom she had brought with her, amongst other belongings of her father, followed in her husband's footsteps.

The latter went out into the country through a postern gate, of which he possessed the key; the attendant of the infanta had provided himself with another, and he, followed by his mistress, also sallied forth into the open. The moon was shining bright, and the trees rustled gently in the soft night breeze; in the midst of a laurel wood, like a dove in a green nest, appeared a white house with red blinds. It was one of those wonderful Moorish palaces, in appearance modest and almost poor, but which contained treasures of riches in jewels, paintings, carpets, and everything beautiful that art could devise. That palace or house, which Uraca had never observed, was situated very close

to their own residence. Arriving at the door, Ramon had no occasion to knock, as he was expected; the door opened, and the moonlight disclosed a white and slender figure like a beautiful apparition.

"That must be the Moorish girl," thought Uraca, the rapid beating of her heart telling her so.

The door remained ajar; it led out into a beautiful garden, and the two lovers, believing themselves alone in the midst of nature, did not think of closing it to guard against a surprise. Uraca and the old soldier who accompanied her, entered by the same gate, and following the count and the Moorish girl, advanced into the garden, which in spite of the moon, was obscure from the thickness of the trees. On one side of the garden, laden with flowers and perfumes, a pavilion was erected, painted red and blue on the outside, and through the half opened persian blinds, was seen burning an alabaster lamp, giving a light similar to that of the moon.

The count and his companion entered the bower, and without doubt proceeded to another, as very soon the sound of their footsteps died away. Then the infanta, full of a mortal anxiety, peeped

in to examine the chamber. It was lovely, and might have been inhabited by the goddess of pleasure and beauty; marble, gold, and jasper shone on all sides; the choicest silk hung in rich folds upon the wall; in the centre a fountain played in a marble basin and descended in fine showers, watering a multitude of flowers of the most delicate tints. Round about the fountain rare singing birds slept in cages of carved ivory; tiny golden braziers slowly burned delicate perfumes, whilst a small table inlaid with mother-of-pearl was placed near a heap of cushions of blue brocade embroidered with silver stars.

“Remain at the garden door, Bermudo,” said the countess to her escort; “watch, and wait for me, I shall soon return.”

“Beware, madam,” said the old soldier, “these Moors are bad, and detest christians.”

“I know it, be not anxious on my account, good Bermudo,” said Uraca; “I shall not expose my life unnecessarily, and besides my husband is here, and he will protect me should I be in danger.”

“Be not too sure, madam! these Moorish women give philters, and bewitch their lovers, who after being in their company are no longer the same.”

The infanta overwhelmed, motioned her servant to retire to a greater distance, and remained alone in the magical and perfumed bower. "Oh heaven! how lovely this is," she murmured, "what a difference between this Moorish refinement, and our warlike rusticity! What beauty in the smallest details! What richness in the effect! And that woman . . . is she also beautiful? less so than I undoubtedly, for God in his justice could never have given all these means of felicity to an infidel." The infanta silent, crushed by the weight of her grief, detected a faint noise near her, caused by a hand lightly drawing a silk hanging, that covered a sort of window, which by its height, more resembled a door. Uraca looked at the hand that had drawn the curtain, and could hardly repress an exclamation of surprise. It was that of a girl from eighteen to twenty years of age, white as a lily, and whose beautiful countenance was lighted up by two large black eyes, and adorned by long tresses of hair of the same colour. Her beautiful head was rendered still more lovely by a turban of white gauze, fastened with an aigrette of diamonds. Her splendid dress was composed of purple and white silk, gold and precious stones ;

her bosom was decked with thick strings of pearls; long gold earrings hung from her ears and adorned her neck, and her fingers were covered with superb rings.

The Moorish girl perceived Uraca, and in her turn uttered a piercing cry, causing Ramon to run to her assistance.

But, as if that cry possessed the power of rousing the entire household, several lanterns hastily agitated appeared in every corner of the garden, and various slaves could be discerned in the distance.

Before them all, appeared an old man sumptuously dressed, with a long white beard down to his waist.

He ran hurriedly, and even from afar cried out in anguish:

“Zoraida!”

“My father!” exclaimed the girl; “we are lost!”

“Zoraida, my daughter! what is the matter,” pursued the old man; “what has happened to thee? Have any of those christian dogs perchance entered the house?”

On pronouncing these words, he arrived at the door of the pavilion, and in his anxiety to

penetrate, stumbled against the infanta, who recoiled a few steps. "Ah! I knew it was a Christian," said the Moor on beholding Ramon; and unsheathing a long poniard, which he carried hanging from his waist, and fastened by a shoulder belt embroidered in gold, darted towards the count. But at the moment of thrusting, his weapon encountered another breast.

A thunderbolt could not have been more rapid than Zoraida, who anticipating the fury of her father, fell between the poniard and her lover; the iron pierced her bosom, and a stream of blood spirted upon the forehead of the Moor who was still grasping the homicidal weapon.

"Daughter, my dear daughter!" he shrieked dropping the poniard, and precipitating himself upon the body of his daughter who had fallen to the ground without uttering a sigh; "My daughter what have I done! Oh I am unworthy to behold the light of the sun! I have slain thee, and thou wert my joy, and the life of mine eyes! Oh unlucky that I am!"

Whilst the poor father was thus lamenting, the infanta fearing his desperation, took the arm of her spouse, who remained motionless, and stunned, and said to him:

“Come! let us leave this place!”

Ramon allowed himself to be taken away without resistance, like one dazed, or in a dream.

Uraca conducted him to the door, that was guarded by Bermudo, and the three went out without any interruption, for the catastrophe had rendered those in the house terrified and speechless.

The infanta was afraid in her heart, but at the same time harboured the secret and joyful hope of returning to times of peace and happiness, which she had not enjoyed since their union; not a single word of reproach did she address to the count, neither on arriving home nor afterwards; her generous heart told her, that as heaven had chastised his infidelity, it would not be noble in her to open the wound afresh; she therefore tried to make herself amiable by proposing all sorts of distractions to him, and proving her affection on every occasion. But Ramon had already ceased to be the tender and enamoured spouse; a bitter and almost truculent melancholy took possession of him, and although he never mentioned the ill fated Zoraida, it was apparent that indirectly he accused the infanta of her death, by the care with which he avoided her, and by

the manifest repugnance with which he received the caresses and proofs of her solicitude.

Judge of the grief of that young heart of fifteen: all the joys of the infanta were obscured by a dark cloud; her illusions destroyed, fell to the ground, like the leaves that a storm rends from a luxuriant and rich tree; she turned her eyes about her, and felt she was alone in the world; her father had married again, forgetting the memory of her mother, and only thinking of his new wife and war. Besides why should she grieve him with an account of her misfortune? What could authority or paternal affection do against the evil that affected her! How was she able to change the heart and sentiments of the count, and reanimate the love which she had a right to expect, if the latter was extinguished like a lamp for ever. Such were the reflections of that child, whose clear understanding was superior for her age. Nevertheless she kept her grief locked up within her bosom, and trusted in the mercy of heaven.

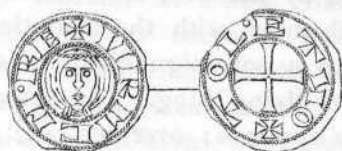
Eight days passed in the anguish of expectation of one who, having lost all the good that he possesses, awaits with anxiety the first ray of light, announcing to him the return of happiness;

however that ray never again appeared on the horizon of his life; the count continued gloomy, rude, and silent; not a kind word or a smile ever came to his lips, nor was the birth of a daughter able to separate from his mind the image of Zoraida, dead, and having died to save his life; he saw her in his dreams, and cried after her with outstretched arms, calling her by the most tender names; again he imagined her lifeless, and sobbed bitterly, blaming his wife for having gone there, and having forced from her that cry of surprise that attracted her father, and caused her death; then he cursed the day that he married the infanta, and cursed himself for not having despised appearances, and for not having eloped with the Moorish maiden.

On arousing himself from these terrible dreams that undermined his life with attacks of fever, the infanta was always by the bed, but he would hide his face in his hands, as if he could not endure the sight of her, and would fall into a silence now become habitual. Neither did the sight of his children, Alonso and Sancha, tend to dispel that terrible malady of his mind. He died at Grajal de Campos where the infanta had passed such

happy days, and sank into his tomb in the year 1107, leaving the infanta a widow at twenty-six years of age, and mother of two children of six and eight. Then all hope being extinguished, at once wounded by that terrible disenchantment, and by the blow of her husband's death, the mind of the infanta was filled with profound sadness; never did placid joy take up its abode in her again. She accused bitter destiny of having overwhelmed her by the aversion of her guilty spouse, who had expired without vouchsafing her a kind look.

Her father who during these eight years had been married three times, summoned her to him when he heard of her widowhood, and Uraca set out for Leon, but very soon weary with the noise of the court, and haunted by gloomy memories that rose in her heart, returned to her government in Galicia, as sad and dejected as when she left it.



Silver Penny of Uraca, struck at Toledo—extremely rare.

Obverse ✠ URACA RE; Bust, front face, with diadem.

Reverse ✠ TOLETUO; Cross potent.

CHAPTER V.

At the beginning of July, 1109, two years after her widowhood, Uraca inherited in her own right the kingdoms of Leon and Castile, by the death of her father, Alonso VI. This king, whose greatest desire was to have left his throne to a male successor, was unable to do so, although he had been married six times, and died with the sorrowful certainty, that his beautiful and flourishing kingdoms would be devastated by war.

The infanta summoned to the death-bed of her father, arrived speedily: arrayed in the white mourning of the time, she appeared in all the glory of her beauty, rendered even more attractive by an air of melancholy and dejection; she was

accompanied by her son, and was ushered into the royal chamber with the adulation and respect due to a sovereign about to assume the crown of the dying king. The chamber of D. Alonso was spacious; over his bed, adorned by military trophies, hung banners taken from the Moors, that seemed to cast a shadow over the severe features of the king. The chamber was full of grandees from Leon, Castile, and Galicia; Queen Beatrice his last wife, who was both good and modest, wept by his bedside.

The infanta entered taking her son by the hand; they approached the bed of the king, who opened his arms to them, looking with eagerness and pressing to his bosom the infante Alonso, sole hope for the future monarchy. "My dear daughter," said the king, to Uraca in a feeble and hoarse voice, "God calls me to himself, and I leave to thee rich, peaceful and flourishing, the kingdoms which I received from my father. As thy successor and heir I name, as will be seen in my will, thy son; as soon as he arrives at a marriageable age he shall be crowned king of Galicia. Thou must govern by the advice of my counts, whose opinion thou must always take, and above all

that of thy teacher, D. Pedro Ansurez, whom thou shouldst always consult. Uraca, a dark thundercloud is gathering on the horizon, Don Alfonso, king of Aragon, surnamed El Batallador,* now that thou art left alone, will covet possession of the kingdoms that I bequeath thee, fear of my arms having with held him until now, but all the nobility of the kingdom will defend thee and thy son."

The king ceased, fatigued ; great tears rolled down the cheeks of Uraca, and there were none present who were not deeply moved, because they knew that God enlightened the understanding of the dying man, enabling him to see the things of the future with terrible clearness.

The infante Alonso looked at his grandfather in fear and trembling ; his mother wiped away his tears and replied : " Father, and Sir, you may rest assured that I shall do all that your greatness and love command me ; I shall undertake nothing without consulting the lords of the kingdom ; I know what they are sir, and that nearly all our grandees humbly born, have been educated at the expense of your generosity, enriched with your

*The Combatant.

abundance, and exalted by you; I know that they have since fought on your side, and that they owe you a debt of unbounded gratitude."

"True," replied D. Alonso, "and I therefore subject them to thy obedience, and entrust them with the charge of thy person and kingdom, that they may aid and succour thee with fidelity and diligence; for thy part, fulfil thy promise by never undertaking anything without their counsel."

After these words, silence reigned, and the lords having retired, the king prepared to die with that pious faith, that had distinguished him throughout life; the Bishop of Leon, who was as great a warrior, as he was a good priest, administered the last sacraments to him, and the monarch rendered up his soul in peace and holiness. Beatrice, the queen dowager, returned to her country, leaving the infanta in peaceful possession of her father's states.

The first care of the grandees was to prepare with great pomp, for her coronation, and oath of allegiance, for they sincerely loved D^a Uraca, whose noble character they knew as a child, besides which they founded great hopes on her son, the young prince Alonso, who pleased everybody by

his beauty and gentleness. The ceremony of the coronation took place on the 22nd July, in the cathedral of Leon. At eleven in the morning, the procession left the palace in the following order. A great number of soldiers formed an advanced guard. The clergy followed with lighted tapers, after which came crowds of people in holiday attire. Behind walked the bishops, and some foreign noblemen, come to assist at the ceremony. Lastly riding on a white mare the queen advanced, dressed in red and gold, with the royal crown placed over her coif of fine linen. At her side, mounted on a spirited black palfrey, was the infante Alonso surrounded by pages, and next to him also seated upon a white mare like that of her mother was seen the tender infanta Doña Sancha, who afterwards became the glorious queen of Leon. About the queen and her children rode the lords and counts of the kingdom, carrying before them the standards taken from the Moors. The procession, closed by several warriors of the queen's guard, wended its way slowly through the streets invaded by the multitude come from the three kingdoms to behold and to salute their new sovereign, and to make the air resound with the cry of "Viva la Reyna Doña Uraca."

They arrived at length at the cathedral, which was magnificently illuminated; divine service commenced, the queen seating herself under the canopy prepared for her on the left side of the altar, and the infantes on other seats close by. After the celebration of the mass, Uraca knelt upon a rich silken cushion, two lords attired in their robes raising the royal crown that encircled her forehead, and sustaining it in the air. The Bishop of Santiago Don Diego Gelmirez anointed her brow with holy oil, and the two lords replacing the crown upon her head, the Bishop of Leon, who assisted with his colleague of Valladolid, said in a solemn voice, "Rise, Queen of Castile, and Leon, you are now consecrated and anointed, and your person is the image of God upon earth." The queen arose, but not a spark of happiness shone in her large eyes. The disenchantment of her first love, and the sufferings of her marriage, had deadened all the joy of her heart, and as though she only thanked heaven for the greatness bestowed upon her for the sake of her son, she gazed at him with a look of ineffable tenderness.

Two counts waved the standards of the realm, and each one having placed himself alongside of

the high altar before which stood the queen cried out "Long life to Doña Uraca Queen of Castile and Leon." "Long life to the Queen" repeated the multitude that thronged the cathedral. Divine service now ended, and the procession returned to the palace.

The queen's countenance bore the traces of a mortal sorrow: every wound in her heart was opened afresh. How happy would she not have been in sharing that pompous magnificence with her spouse, that spouse who loved her for some short time, only to make his going astray more bitter! How lonely she felt in the midst of her power! How sad in the midst of all that grandeur!

On returning to the palace she signed the confirmation of the privileges of the town, and territory of Leon, and this document was afterwards signed by several bishops, and by her tutor Don Pedro Ansurez, belying the assertion of some historians, who affirm that the first act of the government of Queen Uraca, was to dispossess the count of his estates, and to dismiss him from her favour.

CHAPTER VI.

The queen had not been crowned many months, before ominous and alarming rumours were current: it was said that the king of Aragon was making great preparation for war, in order to hurl Doña Uraca from her throne, and to take possession of her states. Neither the queen nor the grandees attached much credit to these reports, supposing them to be vain suppositions of evilly disposed persons; however they were repeated with such frequency, that she thought it prudent to send a confidential person to ascertain the truth. One of the brothers Ansurez being chosen, set out for Aragon, with all possible secrecy, the queen trusting entirely in his prudence and fidelity. His delay in returning was very short, and the queen wishing to prove her esteem to the grandees of the kingdom, convoked them to council, and received her messenger, who arrived covered with sweat and dust, in their presence.

"Madam," he said, "above all I must entreat your Highness to pardon the state in which I present myself before your august eyes, but the news I bring is of such importance, that I could have wished to have wings to arrive here sooner."

"Speak," replied Uraca, "where the interests of my kingdom are in danger, I stop at nothing. Do you consider them compromised?"

"Yes madam."

"Are these rumours true about the king of Aragon?"

"Unfortunately they could not be more so. Don Alfonso el Batallador is preparing to invade your kingdom."

"What! Would he dare?"

"It will not be long before we see him laying waste our countries and cities, which he is eager to possess, and will destroy if unable to do so. He is raising a formidable army. I am well informed, as I have gone over every quarter of the city, have heard, spied, and have not the least doubt of what I am affirming, my queen and mistress."

"It is well," said Uraca, whose feminine spirit, already oppressed by long and silent troubles was

profoundly afflicted on hearing this news. "Take a seat amongst my council, Ansurez, and let us see what can be decided to stem this desolating torrent."

A sorrowful silence followed the words of the queen, who made great efforts to preserve the appearance of serenity.

"And how, my lords!" exclaimed D^a Uraca, "have you nothing to suggest?"

"We know not what to suggest madam," said Ansurez, "for in all your kingdom, there are not soldiers sufficient to control that ferocious monarch."

"He is," added a bishop, "the most clever and valorous warrior of the times."

"It is not that which makes him so terrible," observed another. "More alarming still are his ambition, cruelty, and thoroughly savage nature."

"And is it thus," said the queen sorrowfully, "that you fulfil the sacred charge of your dying king? Is it thus that you watch for me, over the states he left rich, peaceful, and flourishing? And why! Because the invader sees me, a feeble woman upon the throne and wishes to usurp it, would you leave me, in terror at his fierceness, and

cruelty? Where are the warriors that Alonso VI. led against the Moors? Where are the valiant champions who cast the moorish banners on the ground, to be as carpets for their horses?"

Doña Uraca had risen, and spoken full of anger; her animated countenance, and brilliant eyes brought back the radiant beauty of former days, faded from the sufferings she had endured; confused, the nobles hung their heads, and for a moment no one uttered a word in reply to the vehement reasoning of the queen.

"Madam," replied the old man Don Pedro Ansurez, "I have a suggestion to make, but it is extremely hard."

"Speak," replied the queen, "however hard it may be, I must perforce accept it, for I cannot allow myself to be despoiled of my father's dominions."

"Well then, madam, as Don Alfonso is not married, you might be his consort."

Horror was depicted upon the countenance of Uraca, the animated colour from her cheeks disappeared, and was succeeded by a deathlike pallor.

"I," she exclaimed, "I, marry that crowned savage! What! Dare you propose it to me Ansurez?"

"I have already said it madam, it is the only means that exists, to my knowledge, of saving the kingdom, and perhaps your life, and those of your children."

"But what has become of our valiant warriors? Is it necessary that a woman who is a mother and a queen should be sacrificed?" exclaimed sorrowfully Doña Uraca." "Do you not feel the crimson blush of shame rise to your foreheads? lords, whom my father drew out of nothing, to raise so high, and place near his throne. Ah! if he had known what was your worth, he would never have extended his sovereign hand to you, nor suffered you to pass the threshold of his palace."

"Madam," replied one of the young counts, "your words inflame my blood; would that I alone were able to rally a thousand soldiers to defend the kingdoms that Alonso VI. our king and benefactor bequeathed you; but I swear by Christ and my sword, that it is impossible to carry on war with the king of Aragon: our army is nothing when compared with his, and he will come upon

us with fire and sword ; rather let diplomacy do, what force is not able to achieve ; marry him, and I for my part assure you, that though he be your husband, he shall never usurp the sovereignty ; it is necessary to give him this much, to contain him in his fury, and avoid war, but you will always remain under our guardian ship.

A bitter smile played on the lips of the queen. For some time her breast showed by its heavings the violence of her resentment, like the waves of the sea when they are swollen by the wind or the tempest ; sorrow, anger, and shame were boiling in her heart, but controlling her emotion, she at last said slowly,

“ So you find no other way of saving the kingdom from the power of the king of Aragon, but that of giving him my hand ? ”

“ None other madam,” replied a few voices ; “ had we known of any other, we should not have dared to propose this to you.”

“ Then,” said Doña Uraca “ I will obey my father, by following your advice, and will marry Don Alfonso ; but ought I myself to offer him my hand ? ”

"No, madam," replied Don Pedro Ansurez ;
"I will never consent that your Highness should
take that step ; leave the care of this affair to me."

Doña Uraca without uttering a word or
saluting the council, slowly descended from the
hall, and retired with bent head and slow step,
as one condemned to death.

Poor queen !

Her destiny was always to suffer, and that
ungrateful realm for which she had so nobly
sacrificed herself, only repaid her by calumnies
both during her life, and after her death.

CHAPTER VII.

That very day D. Pedro, and D. Fernando Ansurez set out for Aragon to negociate the marriage of the queen with King Alfonso. Soon after their arrival they were received by the monarch.

The Combatant was then about forty years of age, and it was not likely that any princess, or noble damsel of the time would summon up sufficient courage to marry him: true, he had made proposals to none, for he was contented in his rustic liberty, and happy only in the shedding of blood, now in war, now in his kingdom, where he imposed the most cruel punishments for the least offence.

He was short, stout, and robust; his skin was swarthy, and tanned from the constant exposure to which his wild and wandering life subjected him; his eyes small, greenish, and perverse in their expression would disappear completely at times under his ponderous eyebrows; coarse red hair fell over his narrow fore-

head ; with nose broad and flat, mouth large, and bristly beard covering almost all his savage countenance, he appeared fierce and terrible beyond description.

He received the two counts, seated under a canopy, and dressed in warlike garb ; over his armour hung a blue woollen cloak, embroidered with a greek pattern in silk, discoloured by time ; on his head he wore a spiked crown, with which he is always represented in his portraits, and in his hand resting on his knee he held a golden sceptre.

“What seek you?” he asked of the two brothers, who made a low obeisance to him.

“Sir,” replied D. Pedro, now a white-haired old man ; “rumours of war have reached our territory, and we desire to know if indeed you intend to carry thither your victorious arms.”

“A brave question by my life!” exclaimed the monarch with a brutal smile : “and is it perchance your queen who sends you to enquire?”

“No sir,” replied D. Fernando with presence of mind, “it is we who have come to learn the truth from your royal mouth.”

It would not surprise me, that a weak and inquisitive woman, like D^a. Uraca, should desire to know; however, as it is you who wish to learn the truth, know that I intend to enter your kingdoms very shortly."

"Is that indeed your desire sir?"

"Do I not do all that I choose? Have I not succeeded in everything I have undertaken?"

"There are other means however of entering our kingdoms and thereby sparing the horrors of bloodshed."

"What matters bloodshed to me? Do you think that battles terrify me, I whom men call the Combatant?"

"We know such is not the case; but why take the trouble to conquer what you may obtain for nothing?"

"How traitors!" exclaimed D. Alfonso rising impetuously, "do you come to offer me a free entrance into the kingdoms of D^a Uraca? Is it, thus that you serve her?"

"Sir," said D. Pedro Ansurez with serenity "far from betraying our queen, we come to you to spare her trouble and disquietude; why afflict her when all she possesses might be yours? Marry

her, and thus become lawful master of her kingdom."

"I had not thought of that," said the Combatant, "but how can I be master of her kingdoms if she has a son and heir to her states?"

"That son according to the will of his grandfather only inherits the crown of Galicia."

"It is well," replied D. Alfonso," who seemed to reflect. "Propose to the queen to be my spouse; if she accepts, let me know directly, but tell her that if she refuses I shall enter her kingdoms with fire and sword.

Thus terminated the delicate mission of the brothers Ansurez; the noble cavaliers were horrified when they considered into whose hands, they were about to consign the destiny of the poor queen; but nothing was truer than what they had affirmed; it was impossible to contain the king of Aragon in any other way, as his sanguinary character was known and universally feared.

They found the queen in her castle at Auñon: the unfortunate D^a Uraca had made great efforts to forget the possibility of that fatal marriage; seeking comfort in prayer, she hardly left her

oratory, and the time she did not spend there, she was always with her children, fearing they might be taken away from her.

When she saw the two counts, she fully realised the extent of her misfortune; she rose to her feet, and the nobles observed her shudder.

"Well?" she exclaimed with a faltering voice.

Don Alfonso demands your hand madam, replied D. Pedro.

The queen had to sit down; then she made an heroic effort, and said,

"Let the marriage take place immediately."

"And where shall it be celebrated, madam?" replied Count D. Fernando.

"Here in this castle,"

"Here?"

"Yes."

"But there will not be room for much pomp; the precincts are narrow. . . ."

"It is still too good to be the tomb of my repose, and my hopes."

"Oh, madam!" exclaimed D. Pedro Ansurez, throwing himself at the queen's feet, "I cannot see you thus despair without my heart breaking with sorrow! Do not marry. Rather let your

soldiers perish in your defence, and that of your states, for such is their duty! yes let them all perish, rather than see you given thus over to despair."

"Rise," said Doña Uraca, "rise count, and let me fulfil my destiny and the will of God: let me be the only unfortunate, and not my vassals, whom my pious father commanded me to consider as my children; I will marry D. Alfonso; what boots it more with him or another? If I have to lay by my widow's weeds does it so much matter? I have never loved more than one man, you know that, and he was my first husband."

"Perhaps madam you may love again."

"It is not likely!"

"And if it should thus happen? What will you do united to that ferocious and cruel man?"

"Resign myself for the good of my kingdom."

"But that is horrible! We cannot consent," exclaimed with passion, D. Fernando; "madam we have known you as a child; we have rocked you in our arms, and we should feel our hearts break, that you should be made for ever miserable on account of your vassals."

"Is there any other means but this marriage of avoiding war?"

The two brothers inclined their heads, and replied "no madam."

"Then let the king of Aragon come; I am ready to be his spouse."

In this manner the magnanimous queen of Leon and Castile for ever bound herself with that heavy chain, that oppressed her so sadly; the two nobles retired, and she prepared herself for the sacrifice of her happiness and her repose.

The king of Aragon was not long in arriving, he came as a conqueror, followed by a great number of warriors, and with that parade of military force that surrounded him all his life, and of which he made such boast.

Doña Uraca received him surrounded by her children and her court in the room of honour in the castle, and arrayed in white; her attitude was severe, and imposing; the Combatant saluted her with awkward but haughty demeanour, and said rudely:

"When have you decided, madam, that the ceremony of our marriage shall take place?"

"Now at once," replied Doña Uraca; "here is the Bishop of Santiago to bless it."

"Be it so."

The queen leaned on the shoulder of her son the infante Alonso, then ten years of age; with her other hand she took that of her daughter the infanta Sancha, who was only eight, and proceeded towards the door of the saloon.

Behind her followed the counts from Galicia, Leon, and Castile, together with the bishops and the nobility of the three kingdoms.

This suite separated the king of Aragon from the queen of Leon and Castile.

The Combatant went behind the nobles, and afterwards was followed by his court consisting chiefly of wild warriors.

In this order they proceeded to the chapel; at the door the queen halted, took the hands of the infantes, and said in a voice full of emotion: "My children I am about to be married to the king of Aragon, not because I love him, but to fulfil the wish of your grandfather, who enjoined me to be advised in everything by our counts:

"And have they, dearest mother ordered you to marry the king of Aragon?" replied D. Alonso fixing on the Combatant a look of wrath, and mistrust.

"Yes," replied the queen, "they have so willed it."

“For what reason?”

“Because D. Alfonso has threatened us with war, and extermination.”

“If I was older, this would not be a sufficient reason to fear him,” said the infante, “but never mind, patience, mother, I shall grow.”

The queen whose prudence on that occasion was well known, leaned again on her son, and entered the chapel.

Before the high altar, embroidered cushions were placed for the bridal pair; they knelt, and the bishop of Santiago united them for ever.

“How! has it never occurred to them” said one of the nobles to his companion, “that they are related to one another in the third degree of consanguinity?”

“I know not,” replied the other, “but I am glad if it is so, for it will thus furnish the Pope with a reason to annul their union, should it go badly with Doña Uraca, as I presume it will.”

The queen was unable to contain her grief, her breast heaved with sobs that rose to her lips; the ceremony terminated, she left the chapel accompanied by her children, without once looking at her husband,

Uraca entered her apartment with the infantiles, and sobbing embraced them. The poor children terrified wept also, especially the timid D^a. Sancha whose affection for her mother was great. As for D. Alonso he repeated continually "I shall grow, mother, I shall grow." The door opening violently made them keep silence. One of the partizans of the king of Aragon entered, followed by soldiers, and said to the child D. Alonso, "By order of the king, sir, be so good as to follow me."

"Whither?" said D. Alonso haughtily.

"Where do you wish to take my son," replied the queen.

"To the apartments that have been assigned him by my lord the king."

"Tell your master, said Doña Uraca, that here I govern, and that the infante my son shall not leave his apartments next to mine."

The cavalier without answering a word withdrew.

Shortly afterwards the teachers of the royal children, came to conduct each one to their separate apartments, and Uraca remained alone, a prey to sorrowful reflections.

The very thought of her brutal and terrible spouse made her shudder; judge therefore what she experienced, on seeing the woollen tapestry that covered a secret door, raised, and the savage countenance of the king of Aragon appear. The latter looked about him like a wild beast on entering a sheepfold to see where the shepherd is; on only seeing the queen, he advanced like a wolf towards the wretched sheep, when the mastiffs are away.

“What seek you here sir?” asked Doña Uraca rising surprised and terrified.

“I seek you replied D. Alfonso, as you may suppose; you are my wife, and I therefore have a right to enter your apartment.”

“You shall not pass beyond here,” said the queen; “do not advance a step further, know that if I have married you by a cruel necessity, I never intended to submit to you.”

“Poor woman,” exclaimed the Combatant; “What is it you imagine? What do you suppose me? Do you think I have married you to be the slave of your gloomy and fantastic humour? Your tears do not deceive me: I know I have entered the lair of the she wolf, and that she and

her cubs will bite my hands if I do not heed them, but I shall be on my guard."

"What do you mean, Sir?"

"That I shall adopt measures for ridding myself of you, but that neither you, nor your cubs, shall rid yourselves of me, and what! do you fancy that I have married you merely to do your will, and to suffer the eccentricities of your humour? No, here I am the master, as you will soon understand."

"In what way?"

"Acting as I do."

"Act as you please, D. Alfonso, I know not whether the Leonese, and Castilians will consent to be governed by you; as regards myself, know that I wish to live far from you, alone with my children, whom I shall defend from your violence, if it costs me my life."

"Think you so, said the king with a hideous laugh, but just see where your son is now."

"In his room" said the queen, who nevertheless paled on affirming it.

"Go and see."

D^a Uraca rushed to her son's apartments, and a moment afterwards uttered a piercing cry

this cry was followed by her re-appearance pale and dishevelled: the king of Aragon stretched on a bench, smiled in a cruel manner.

"My son, my son, where is my son?" exclaimed the queen, precipitating herself upon D. Alfonso.

"He is locked up in a safe place," said the Combatant, "I foresaw your conduct, and that our nuptials were only an artifice, which you and yours were attempting in dread of my arms everywhere victorious; but I shall soon show you, that no one mocks me with impunity; think it well over; either you treat me with the dignity due to me as a spouse, or your son shall remain a prisoner."

"My resolution is already taken," exclaimed the queen. "I do not wish my son to be deprived of his liberty for a single moment on my account; let my misfortune be complete. I am your wife, and nothing can take away from the horror of my destiny. Let me see my son free, and I accept your conditions."

The king blew a whistle, which hung round his waist, and at the same moment one of his captains appeared.

"Release the infante from his dungeon," he said.

"What! my son in a dungeon!" exclaimed Uraca sorrowfully.

"Yes, in one of the worst subterranean ones of the castle, and he would have perished, had you continued unreasonable." "Go" he said to him to whom he had given the order, and the man instantly disappeared.

"No, let me myself release my son," said the queen.

The king again blew his whistle, and the servant returned.

"The queen" he said "desires to go herself and open the prison of the infante; accompany her."

Doña Uraca and the captain went out; they traversed gloomy vaults, and at last came to one darker, and damper than all the other dungeons in the castle; indispensable places in those days when only terror dominated.

Nothing can describe the feelings of Doña Uraca on hearing the sobs that came from the most fetid, and horrible den; she recognized the voice of her son, buried alive in that sepulchre, and her heart was on the point of breaking with grief.

“Oh my poor son !” exclaimed the queen ; “and I who united myself to that monster to deliver thee and thy sister from the horrors of war, and to preserve the states of thy grandfather ! I whose sole ambition is thy happiness, behold thee here imprisoned, outraged, and treated as the worst of criminals ! I swear to Heaven that the Usurper shall never dispose of a handful of earth of the kingdoms that one day are to be thine ; before which may the fatal torch of discord for ever burn in them !”

Whilst the exasperated queen, swore that oath, so terrible for the tranquility of her people, the royal child left his prison, and throwing himself on the neck of his mother, burst forth into tears of joy. However very soon, Doña Uraca felt the tender embraces of her son loosening their hold upon her ; so many emotions had weakened him ; the terror of his sudden imprisonment and horrible dungeon was followed too soon by the joy of his liberty, and he fell back fainting. Doña Uraca aided by the Aragonese cavalier carried the infante to his chamber, and there lavished all sorts of attention upon him, so that at last towards dawn he recovered.

So passed the first day of the married life of Queen Uraca, and the Combatant king.

CHAPTER VIII.

The queen to avoid scandal, and above all, the rigorous treatment that menaced her children, was fain to submit to her second husband, notwithstanding her daily increasing aversion. It would have been impossible to find a man more resembling a wild beast than the king of Aragon; stubborn, vindictive and harsh, he would bend his will to no one. His first act was to put to death the bishops who had dared condemn his marriage with Uraca on account of their relationship.

He then deprived the queen's partizans of the command of the principal cities and castles, and gave them over to creatures of his own, who cruelly oppressed the people.

The queen beheld this conduct with profound grief but without surprise, as she looked for every excess from her husband; nevertheless such was the love she bore her subjects, for whom she had sacrificed herself in every way, that she could not witness their sufferings without pain.

"I observe" said she one day "that you do not act as I have a right to expect from you, and I conjure you to be more moderate in your dealings, or it will behove me to adopt measures to relieve mine own."

"What can you do?" mockingly replied D. Alfonso; "you and all your states are mine; otherwise, wherefore should I have married you? Simply because it was thus easier to obtain your dominions, than by force of arms."

"Then pray undeceive yourself," replied the queen haughtily, "for you shall never be lord of what is mine, in the same way that your possessions are, and ever will be a matter of indifference to me; I have my partizans, you have yours; if I married you, it was with the idea of moderating your fury, not that you should be master of the lives and property of my subjects."

"I shall now show you that I am master of everything, to commence with yourself," cried the brutal monarch, accompanying his words with a tremendous blow on her face, so violent that she receded several paces.

The terrified queen reeling leaned against the wall, and without strength to reach a seat sank senseless on the floor. The fury of Don

Alfonso knowing no bounds he rushed towards her, and struck her twice heavily with his foot.* Then he left the apartment to join the hunt, as serene as if nothing had happened.

The queen was some moments unconscious, so great was the terror and dismay that such an outrage had caused her, but on recovering her senses, she sent for the two brothers Ansurez, and closeted herself with them.

The counts were struck with amazement on beholding Uraca ; they had never known her look so terrible ; her cheeks glowed, her eyes flashed ; all the pride of her royal blood had risen, and indignation seemed to choke her.

“ Behold !” she cried pointing to her wounded cheek, “ here you have the mark of a traitor, who has dared to strike the face of your queen ; what, judge ye, shall be the punishment of his infamous audacity ?”

“ Death !” replied the brothers.

“ Know you the culprit ?”

“ No ; but whoever he may be he deserves it.”

“ It is my spouse.”

“ He deserves it nevertheless, and he shall die” said Pedro Ansurez.

*Historical.

“No” replied the queen “I do not wish to sully myself or you with a cowardly murder, but it is highly necessary to check his fury; by my order, and without further consultation, prepare to crown my son within a few days as king of Galicia; my father so disposed it, and it is also my wish; he shall raise an army to expel D. Alfonso from our realms, if he does not moderate his conduct.”

The decision of the queen frustrated the ambitious designs of her spouse, and increased his ire. On rising one morning she heard a clatter of arms and, looking forth, beheld her husband return. Her heart sank within her for she had hoped to live apart from him.

“Alas!” thought she “shall I never be free from this implacable enemy of my liberty? Is it not enough that I should have tacitly abandoned to him the government of Leon?” Her reflections were interrupted by the door being opened violently, and the queen beheld the Combatant before her.

“What would you of me” asked Uraca haughtily; “know that I shun and abhor you, moreover, my son is about to be crowned, and will raise troops to free both himself and me from your insupportable tyranny.”

"I will again prove myself your master" said the king "since you appear to have forgotten it." So saying, the cruel monarch seized the queen by the arm, drew her out of the room, dragging her in spite of her resistance the whole length of the gallery, and locked her up in a small dark chamber.

"Let two of you keep guard" he said, turning to his followers, dumb witnesses of his violence, "and the first person who attempts to pass, except those bringing nourishment to the prisoner, slay without mercy."

Two formidable warriors stood one on either side of the door.

The king walked slowly away and immediately went to secure the infante in his apartment, ruminating in his mind how he might destroy him.

However the tempest was gathering heavily about the throne; the day following the imprisonment of the queen and her son, D. Pedro Ansurez set out for Rome to solicit from the pontif Pascal II the separation of the queen and her spouse. Before starting, he recommended all possible vigilance concerning the fate of the unfortunate monarchs to Count Don Gomez Salvadores, one of

the most loyal noblemen in the service of Uraca.

“You are young” said D. Pedro to him “and therefore impulsive and prompt to act, qualities more valuable than the calm of my own age : Should you see that Doña Uraca or her son are in danger, call the citizens to arms, and fight even in the palace if necessary ; for we are now looked upon as enemies, and as enemies we should defend ourselves ; I shall tarry sometime, and would to God it could be arranged otherwise ! But a long journey lies before me, and my mission is arduous ; do not neglect those unfortunate ones Don Gomez : I leave you three lives to guard, for, when all else fails him, he will vent his rage on Doña Sancha, and will not hesitate to put her to death to reduce her mother to submission.” “Depart, Don Pedro” said the count “with the assurance that I will watch, as is my duty, over the queen and her children.”

After this conversation, the old count set out, and the queen, who was ignorant of what was passing, continued in her anxiety and perplexity. It was summer and the great heat of the season together with the anguish of her state, seriously affected her health.

One evening as she was sitting by the window of her chamber, she felt something fall into her lap. Surprised, she picked it up, and saw that it was a scrap of parchment which had been sent her by means of a crossbow.

She drew near the small iron lamp that dimly lighted her chamber, and read these words hastily scribbled upon it.

“Courage Madam: Count Ansurez has gone to throw himself at the feet of Pascal II to solicit your separation from D. Alfonso: he will not be long absent, having already departed some days. I am guarding the infante who, although deprived of liberty, is I am told well cared for; Doña Sancha is also in the enjoyment of good health. I know you cannot reply to this not having wherewith to write, but I am able to console you, and shall not cease writing whenever the opportunity offers. I shall hurl you my letters, as I have hurled you this, by means of a dart from the ruined rondel opposite your window, and from which you may see who I am to-morrow at sunrise. Burn this parchment immediately by the light of your lamp.”

Doña Uraca gave a sigh of relief. She now knew something of her children and of her fate;

she knew that they were alive and that her friends were striving to liberate her.

Who was that mysterious friend, that loyal servant, who interested himself in her misfortune? She knew not, for the writing was not signed, neither could she guess for that proof of affection and fidelity might arrive from several of her subjects. She waited anxiously for the sun to shed its golden rays, to look out of the window, and behold him from the crumbling turrets of the rondel. Not once did she close her eyes, and the dawn had hardly appeared in the horizon, when she left her rude gothic chair to run to the window. In the rondel were two apertures from which long grass like tangled seaweed was growing; they looked black and crumbling, and the sun itself which presently appeared in the horizon seemed unable to penetrate their obscurity. Then the queen could be seen at the window bathed in golden rays of light like a brilliant figure in a dark picture, her form full of beauty and majesty.

At the sight of Don Gomez, who was already known to her, fear left the heart of Uraca, and hope entered in its stead, for she was confident in the protection he offered her, and knew that Count Ansurez had indeed gone to solicit her divorce.

She waved her white veil, and Don Gomez held out a dart upon which was attached a small packet. The queen understood that it was another parchment, and drew aside to let it pass. Another second, and it was at her feet. She retired from the window to read it, and Don Gomez also disappeared. The message ran thus :

“Madam : The tyrant has designs upon the life of your son : twice has he attempted to poison him, but the person charged with the deed had not the heart to do so, and warning me, fled. We are guarding the future king of Galicia ; many of your faithful and devoted friends are preparing for the struggle, for it is evident the fierce monarch to whom alas you are united, will be induced to leave you by force and violence alone, but fear not, the cause of yourself and your son the hope of our country is holy, and all the good and true cavaliers of your realms have embraced it.”

The queen was overwhelmed with gratitude towards this man so interested in her welfare ; her heart, for years cold and silent, suddenly beat with enthusiasm and new life under the influence of that generous loyalty.

But her hatred to Alfonso of Aragon increased at the same time: she was no longer a feeble and tender woman incapable of desiring the death of her greatest enemy, the everlasting torment of her life, the would-be assassin of her son, and fervently prayed heaven to release her from her odious bondage. That night she saw in her dreams the manly and handsome face of Count Gomez Salvadores. Thus when the sun lighted up her prison anew she ran to the window, and saw her dream converted to reality. There stood Count Salvadores who respectfully saluted her.

For some days the queen and the count saw each other in this manner, and in the heart of Uraca sweet sentiments arose which had been strangers there since the death of her husband D. Ramon, the father of her children, and whom she had so dearly loved. Since the neglect of her husband the only love that had touched her, the only real affection upon which she had been able to rely, was that of D. Gomez. For his part he had loved the queen a long time; her beauty and misfortune had deeply moved him; that woman who had sacrificed herself for the good of her realms, and who had shown such a deep respect for the will of her dead father, appeared in his eyes a prodigy of virtue.

CHAPTER IX.

Pope Pascal II, irritated at the marriage of the king of Aragon with Queen Uraca, for they were indeed related in the third degree of consanguinity, listened attentively to the complaints of Ansurez, and then severely replied :

“That which Doña Uraca suffers is the just punishment of her fault, and the consequence of a union with so near a relative.”

“Observe Sir,” replied Don Pedro, “that she did not this from choice, but prompted by us to free her realms from the attacks of the king of Aragon which otherwise could not have been avoided.

“This is an extenuating circumstance” said the pontiff. “Go, my son, and through the abbot of the monastery of Clusa I shall give D. Alfonso to understand that his marriage is null, and that he must instantly leave Doña Uraca.” Count Ansurez, despite his many years, flew with all speed to deliver the message, which, spreading promptly throughout the city, soon

reached the queen by means of one of the arrows of Count Salvadores. Uraca at length breathed more freely, and the men of Galicia, encouraged by the decision of the Pope, resolved to possess themselves of the person of Alonso VII who was about to be their king, the Castilians and the Leonese agreeing at the same time to expel D. Alfonso of Aragon from their realm. Thus the fatal marriage of the queen did not prevent the civil war which she had sacrificed her tranquil widowhood to avoid. Two days after the return of Count Ansures the Abbot of Clusa demanded an audience of the king, who, ignorant of his mission, received him surrounded by his court.

Then the severe monk fulminated the sentence of divorce in the presence of every one, and the face of the Combatant expressed on hearing it all the fury of which mortal man is capable. "Good man" said he mockingly, "tell your master that I shall never obey his mandate, nor resign my wife and the states she brought me in dowry.

"Never!" unanimously repeated the partizans of the king. At that moment was heard a terrible clamour of arms and voices. The men of Galicia had invaded the palace, and demanded the person of Alonso VII.

“And we,” in their turn exclaimed the nobles of Castile and Leon present at the reception of the abbot and whom the king believed to be on his side, “we also request that Doña Uraca our lawful sovereign should be restored to us.” So saying, they were about to leave the court, but the king’s followers blocking up the way, a bloody struggle ensued, in which the Combatant himself took part. Whilst the battle raged within the very palace, and the partizans of the infante D. Alonso fought with those of the king of Aragon, a few with D. Gomez Salvadores at their head flew to release the queen and her son from their prisons. Thus the Combatant and his followers were ejected, not only from the palace, but also from the city, the queen remaining with her son free by all law, human and divine, from her miserable bondage.

After embracing her children, her first glance was for D. Gomez; their eyes met, and the countenances of both underwent a rapid and extraordinary change. The queen blushed, the count grew pale; neither spoke nor was there occasion for it, for the blushes of the queen were the confession of her love, and in the pallor of the count lay the protest of his passion. . . .

From that day war agitated its funeral torch over the realms of Uraca and her son. The king of Aragon having retired to one of the nearest towns, made known his intention of forcibly taking possession of the states of his wife showing no mercy to those following her cause.

Posterity and even historians have since blamed Uraca for having by separation from her husband caused a civil war ; but was it possible that the unfortunate princess could have suffered the assassination of her son and a continuance of that life of humiliation and outrage for herself? Surely no woman, especially a mother, could answer this in the affirmative. It was an unequal war, the king of Aragon gained ground, for as it has already been said, the command of the principal towns and cities of importance had been given over to his creatures, who by opening their doors to him despoiled the queen of her best inheritance.

The faithful Castilians and Leonese were much angered at this usurpation, and opposed a stubborn resistance, notwithstanding which the conqueror obtained through treachery the possession of several towns and gained great advantage ; then ensued a terrible effusion of blood, the

villages were decimated and the troops of the Combatant carried all before them with fire and sword. Uraca on the other hand, with great mercy ordered every possible means of resistance and enjoined each one to be content with the defence of life and property.

The king of Aragon fought in foreign territory and experienced a barbarous pleasure in laying waste the land, burning the castles, sacking the cities, and even taking possession of the sacred vessels used for divine cult. Uraca and her followers were unable to retaliate, and in the mean time, the califas of Damascus and Córdoba taking advantage of the confusion, added to their conquests, and enlarged their territory in Spain.

Then it was that calumny attacked the reputation of the unfortunate queen. Her enemies circulated rumours injurious to her honour, covering her with opprobrium; they accused her of maintaining illicit intercourse with the Archbishop of Toledo Don Bernardo, an estimable man whom she consulted in her moments of anguish, and entrusted with her confidence; at the same time, they openly spoke of an intrigue with D. Gomez whom the partizans of the king of

Aragon had great interest to discredit being the most able commander of the army of Uraca. Nevertheless her regard for him never exceeded the limits of decorum, and if the queen honored the count with her intimacy it was with every possible reserve.

With regard to the rumours current about the Archbishop of Toledo nothing could be more absurd ; but this is the bitter fruit of war ; every vice rises to the surface, and not the least among them is blighting and shameless calumny. The losses sustained by the queen's army were so terrible and repeated that the courage of the troops at last began to waver, and they were dismayed by the death of Don Gomez Salvadores who was slain at their head in the battle between Sepúlveda and Campo de Espina on the 26th October 1111. Then the lords proposed that the coronation of the infante D. Alonso should be carried out, and that he should go at the head of an army, to animate the troops by his presence ; to which the queen agreed though with great misgiving in her heart.

A few days afterwards, at the beginning of the year 1112, the cathedral of Santiago presented a

dazzling appearance; lights and flowers adorned it on all sides; broad silken hangings with the colours of Galicia decked the walls, sacred music resounded, incense rose in spiral columns and the sun's rays pierced the gothic windows, shining brightly on the armour of the numerous warriors surrounding the high altar. Outside, a sound of drums and trumpets announced to the nobles and bishops the arrival of D. Alonso for his coronation.

The procession kept the same order as at the coronation of Uraca, and the infante rode a white horse next to his mother. They alighted at the doors, and followed by the nobles, mother and son advanced towards the high altar where the infante was crowned and consecrated king of Galicia by the Bishop Don Diego Gelmirez.

The nobles were not deceived in their hopes; the lords of Galicia, animated by the presence of their young monarch, raised a few troops and marched with undaunted ardour to the defence of the territory of Leon. The king of Aragon directed all his efforts to capture Alonso VII dead or alive: he collected many Navarrese, Aragonese, and factious Castilians, and went to encounter the enemy at Viadongos, where the first battle at

which the king assisted was fought. The latter was clad in steel armour inlaid with gold, over a snow white shirt of fine linen. By his side in warlike garb was the Bishop of Santiago D. Diego Gelmirez, to whose guardianship the queen had specially entrusted her son.

The battle raged fiercely declaring itself in favour of the arms of the king of Aragon.

“Fly Sir! follow us” said some cavaliers to the son of Doña Uraca wishing to save him from certain death. “Cowards!” he cried raising himself in his stirrups and drawing up his diminutive person: “Fly you who are no kings, and sully your loyal names! I die here!” And with heroic energy, he plunged into a group of the enemy, who encircled him with their lances. “The king is lost” cried out in anguish one of the captains. Another turned round to succour him, but beheld the king in the arms of the Bishop of Santiago, who tore him from his saddle, “a king has no right to risk a life which belongs to the people” he said “It is not valour to die now; rather live to fight.” So saying, he placed him in front of his own saddle, and galloped from the camp of the enemy, who obtained a complete victory.

The valorous prelate continued to fly carrying as a prisoner the king who cried with rage, until he arrived with him at the castle of Orsilon, where the queen and her daughter resided.

A few days afterwards, Uraca, whose private fortune like the public treasury was nearly exhausted, went to Santiago to see by what means she might repair her reverses. She asked help of the clergy, who supplied her with jewels and money with which she was able to pay her troops and recover a few castles and villages in which partizans of the king of Aragon still dominated ; but all the rich nobility knowing the justice of the queen's cause and pitying her misfortunes, went over to her side.

Doña Uraca assembled them all, and spoke as follows: "Counts, lords, and nobles of my realms ; It behoves me to make a last effort to save my states and my vassals from the tyranny of the Usurper ; wandering from town to town, and from castle to castle with my children, my life is purposeless, solitary, and full of anxieties ; I shall go then and put myself with my son at the head of my army, sharing its dangers and fatigues ;

I shall animate it with my voice and presence, tend the wounded, console the dying, and pray for all; this I propose to do; I cannot fight, but I can accompany you, and pray for you; better this than the comforts of my palace."

The noble and generous words of the queen were received with universal acclamation. "Yes" said some "let us raise a new army, and on seeing their sovereigns at the head, the valour of the troops will be doubled; we shall then be invincible, and the king of Aragon must needs yield, and retire from your states."

"Go then" replied Doña Uraca; "prepare for marching at once: we shall proceed towards Leon, and there find in Astorga the ferocious enemy of our peace."

The nobles retired, and Uraca remained alone with the Counts Ansurez.

"What do you purpose doing Madam" exclaimed one of them "know you not what dangers you will encounter? Know you not that you are risking your life, and that of your son? Besides to whom will you confide the infanta Doña Sancha?"

"To you" replied the queen glancing towards D. Pedro Ansurez who had made the last remark, "you are now too old for warfare; as for my life, it is my duty to sacrifice it for the good of my people, and I shall do so; rather would I share the hardships of my army than remain here a prey to anguish and impatience: who knows besides what influence my presence may have upon my soldiers? Happy shall I be if I lead them to victory, and obtain the tranquility of my country.

CHAPTER X.

The queen also solicited aid from Henry count of Portugal, and set out shortly at the head of a newly organized and large army: she rode a splendid arab horse and in lieu of armour wore her silken robes, her royal crown and white veil. At her right was her son Alonso VII armed cap-à-pie, and the two were surrounded by the flower of the nobility of her realm. They marched towards Leon where Alonso VI formerly held his court, and which was a favorite city of Uraca, as there she had loved for the first time, and was married to the father of her children. The city was now in the possession of the Aragonese, who had marched as far as Astorga. The queen neither allowed herself nor her son more rest than that allotted to the soldiers, and complained neither of the cold, the sun, nor the rain which more than once drenched her thin apparel; joyful and animated, she encouraged the soldiers with gentle words, and promises of reward, sometimes giving them money, drink, and fruit, several mules following the army being laden with the latter by her command, to refresh the feeble and weary.

It was a touching sight to see a young and handsome woman marching amidst rude and begrimed soldiers, whom she called her children, giving them drink with her own hands, or offering them rich delicacies the secret of which the Arabs had brought with them into Spain. This conduct one need hardly say greatly increased the ardour of the soldiers, and the least brave among them felt himself capable of conquering the world. After a painful march of some days, the royal army reached the city of Astorga, besieged by the king of Aragon, who destitute of every resource began to lose courage. The army of Uraca was considerably reinforced by various bodies of Castilians, Asturians, and Leonese; the rich nobility hastened to arm their vassals, and marched to join the queen and her son.

The day at last dawned on which the *Batallador* should with justice have forfeited that appellation; the battle which took place was fiercely fought, the queen, spurring her horse into the thickest of the fray, and exposing her life as though it were of no value, animated the soldiers, and kept her son by her side to stimulate their valour; her clear and melodious voice was everywhere heard, con-

soling and encouraging the men, and imploring the God of armies in favour of her own ; her hair had fallen, and her long black tresses floated over her shoulders, entangled with her white veil ; in like manner appeared Minerva to the Trojans reanimating the valour of the conquered army.

“Fear not for thy unfortunate children” said she to one who mortally wounded had fallen at her feet ; “I will be their mother.” “God give thee the palm of eternal glory” said she to the dying man “and I with my own hand will plant a laurel over thy grave ; take my golden cross, kiss it, and think on our Redeemer.”

Uraca had ordered a large number of soldiers, chosen from among the oldest, most feeble, and least fit to remain near the field of battle, promptly to remove the wounded, so that they should not fall into the cruel hands of the enemy ; thither the queen and her son constantly directed their steps to ascertain the number of wounded ; two bishops with their deacons were also in that ambulance corps, dispensing to the soldiers the aid of science and religion. Victory at last declared itself for the arms of Doña Uraca ; for the first time the army of Aragon was destroyed, and so completely

that the Usurper king had to fly under cover of night, and take refuge in Carrion. The Aragonese who were not killed or wounded abandoned him, dispersing in a terrible panic. Many others were taken prisoners by the royal army.

Two days afterwards emissaries came to Astorga to announce to the queen that the city of Leon with its palace surrendered itself, and was ready to swear allegiance to her. Uraca sent to take the homage of the Leonese, and marched with her valiant army to Carrion, where she besieged her spouse for some time. One morning a white flag appeared over the towers of Carrion, a sign that the besieged monarch demanded peace and capitulation, and immediately four of the few warriors that had remained on his side issued forth, each of them holding a white flag. They were received in the queen's camp as spokesmen, and their petition was heard which was but a demand on the part of D. Alfonso for an honorable capitulation. It was proposed that the territory, castles, and towns should be equally divided between both consorts, with the condition that when either injured the other, the people should favour the aggrieved party.

"My lords" said the queen to the emissaries, "you may retire, whilst I submit the petition of your king to the council of my nobles." As soon as the ambassadors had gone, the queen convoked to council the chief of her army, and spoke of the enemy's petition, adding that in her opinion he ought to be more strictly dealt with.

"Madam" said one of them, your greatness has attained an imperishable glory, in the sole fact of having brought the king of Aragon to sue for peace, and there is no disgrace either to the realm or to you in acceding to what he demands."

"Besides" said another, "we and you yourself madam, are wearied with long war and with continual vexations; all sigh for peace and quietude, and would look upon an honorable treaty as a boon.

"What say you my lords?" said Uraca turning to that part of the assembly which had remained silent. "The same as our noble companions" replied a voice; "the queen in our opinion ought to agree to this proposal, since it ensures her liberty, and separates her from her husband."

"We shall draw up a new treaty" said another "and leave few outlets to the prince of Aragon."

“Do in everything as my august father would have commanded you,” said the queen, “draw up the treaty, and send it to D. Alfonso as soon as possible, so that each may return to the tranquility of his home.”

Thus the following day the elements of the treaty were sent to Don Alfonso in terms too favorable for that turbulent and sanguinary monarch; the cities and strongholds were divided into two equal portions, as many of those of the first order belonging to Uraca as to her spouse.

Nevertheless the rich and flourishing territory of Galicia and Asturias belonged to the crown of the child Alonso VII, and therefore remained subject to his mother Queen Uraca.

This excited the irascibility of the king of Aragon who wanted everything for himself, and who could not calmly brook the prosperity of his spouse and her children, richer than himself by unimpeachable rights.

CHAPTER XI.

Alfonso el Batallador had gone to Burgos, and Uraca thought it advisable to advance on that city to check the atrocities of her husband, who was barbarously employed in laying waste the country, and burning the villages.

The nobles, on beholding this unworthy conduct and the way in which he had broken the contract that he himself had proposed to his wife, one and all went over as agreed to the queen's side, abandoning the bad and disloyal cause of her spouse.

This unfortunate woman preserved in the midst of so many calamities a courage, which in itself would have been sufficient to ensure her everlasting celebrity, had not her piety, generosity, and the afflictions and reverses that surrounded her whole life, contributed to exalt her.

Doña Uraca assembled her hosts, and prepared to set out afresh. Her son did not wish to follow her; that youth, now in the hands of venal and perfidious courtiers, had as it were emancipated himself from his mother, and formed a court of his own at Santiago.

Guy, brother of Ramon of Burgundy under the name of Calixto II had succeeded Gelasio II on the throne of Saint Peter, and Gelmirez being somewhat ambitious, and wishing to ingratiate himself with the uncle by favoring the nephew had joined the banner of the young king of Galicia, as being that which offered the greatest advantages for the future.

Doña Uraca, the evening before she set out with her army, was in her private apartment in the palace of Leon, sad and dejected. Sitting on a high backed chair was her daughter Doña Sancha; the infanta, a tall girl for her age, possessed a face sweet and expressive; her dark eyes were full of tenderness; the early loss of her father and the overwhelming cares of her mother left her almost in constant solitude, and her features had acquired thereby a shade of deep melancholy: she was simply clad in a sky blue woollen gown, secured to her waist by a white band.

"Mother" she said, after a momentary pause in their conversation, "are you going to-morrow?"

"Yes, my daughter" replied Doña Uraca, unable to repress a starting tear.

“And whither must I tarry?” asked anew the infanta.

“Here.”

“Here! Alone?”

“Alone, my daughter; now I can trust nobody with thee; thy mother has no friends, for her partizans deserve not that name.”

“What have you done then dearest mother that nobody loves you?” naively asked Doña Sancha.

“I have done them naught but good” replied the queen sadly; “the bishops have favored me with a few jewels from their churches, but for every golden cross they gave me they obtained a town in exchange; I have forgiven everyone, have not avenged my wrongs, nor does my conscience reproach me in any way; however it is the will of God that I should suffer; His will be done!”

“But mother, do not they say that God is always just and good?”

“And He is; to doubt it would be great impiety. God sends me trials because He loves me. I trust that in His mercy He will reward me hereafter. Tarry thou here my daughter; Don Pedro Ansurez will remain to protect thee.

Were it not for thy tender years, thou shouldst accompany me."

"To the war? God preserve me" exclaimed the timid Doña Sancha "never, never, mother, will I go to the war! I will pray for those who fight, but I should never have your courage to be present on the battle field."

On the following day Uraca left at the head of her army, and the young king of Galicia had no sooner heard of her departure than he sent trusty ambassadors in search of his sister. Don Pedro Ansurez resisted as long as he could, but on hearing the decision of the infanta, who wearied and dejected at her loneliness was desirous to join her brother, he accompanied her himself.

Alonso VII now resolved to keep his sister with him. He gave her the title of Queen, and seated her by his side on the throne.

The infanta did not lose that title even after her brother had taken a wife, but retained it until the hour of her death. On the other hand, the unfortunate queen of Castile saw herself separated from both her children, and deserted by those she loved best in the world. To add to these misfortunes, on seeing her again at the head of her

army, calumny resumed its sway. All the lords of any worth who commanded her troops were successively set down as her lovers. It was sufficient for her enemies to discredit her, and the tale of her dreamt-of disorders has come down to us through the pages of history.

Deaf now to all slanders, indifferent to every calumny, she marched towards Burgos, from whose castle, city, and territory she ousted her husband, remaining absolute mistress, and entering the city with the honours of a triumph and surrounded by her court.

Don Alfonso reduced to the last extremity, without troops, and without money, knew not what plan to adopt, and such was the difficulty of his situation that he sent ambassadors to the queen, begging to be re-united to her, and with promises of the most complete amendment. The queen firmly refused to link herself again in matrimony with Don Alfonso, in spite of the embassy being composed of the highest nobility of the kingdom of Aragon. From that day forth the separation of both spouses was irrevocably decided according to the sentence of the sovereign pontiff, and D. Alfonso for ever lost the hope of reunion with his unhappy wife (1113.)

This, so far from settling matters, seemed to add to the already disturbed state of the country. Henry count of Portugal, to further his own interests, had allied himself with Alfonso, and after the defeat of Uraca at Campo de Espina, the army of the allies entered Sepúlveda. Some Castilian nobles, former friends of the count, represented to him, disappointed in his expectations from the king of Aragon, how much better it would be to make common cause with them, instead of with the enemy of Leon and Castile, promising him the command of the army, and that they would induce the queen to divide with him a portion of the realm of Alonso VI. Henry lent a willing ear to these flattering proposals, and abandoning the party of the king of Aragon, presented himself to Doña Uraca, who confirmed the promises made by the barons. They accordingly marched together to Astorga and Peñafiel, and were besieging the latter town, when Teresa countess of Portugal, sister of Uraca and wife of Henry, came to join her husband. This lady, who yielded neither in ambition nor intrigue to the count himself, made him insist on the promised division of territory, adding that it was

madness to risk his life and that of his soldiers, that others might reap the benefit. The count therefore exacted a fulfilment of the agreement. Meanwhile the Portuguese had given Teresa the title of Queen, and this in addition to the fulfilment of the treaty offended the pride of Uraca, who secretly apprised Alfonso, and raising the blockade, so as to satisfy the pretensions of Teresa and Henry, accompanied them to Palencia.

There she ratified her promise—apparently at least—handing him over the castle of Cea. Zamora, one of the most important cities allotted to him by the treaty, Henry determined to recover by the aid of the queen's troops. But Uraca secretly told her knights that should the city be taken, it was not her intention to hand it over. The two sisters then went to Sahagun, whose inhabitants were partial to the king of Aragon, and the queen, leaving her sister at a monastery, set out for Leon. Henry perceiving the conduct of his sister-in-law, and his hopes being shattered, went to besiege both Uraca and Alfonso at Carrion, but through some cause which history does not explain, was obliged to retire. He continued some time in his uncertain and

versatile career, without renouncing his ambitious schemes and dreams of dominion in Castile, until death put an end to all on 1 May 1114, in Astorga.

The queen had hardly left Galicia, when she was informed that the Count de Trava, in connivance with his intimate friend Bishop Gelmirez, intended to dismember her kingdom and form a large and independent state for their pupil. Thus it was that she returned to Galicia (1115), resolving to capture that artful and scheming prelate, who rose up in arms, and not only obliged her to yield feebly to his conditions, but also to appease him by promises humiliating to her rank, in which she swore never to give ear to false reports, and rather to lose her kingdom than offend him again. These resolutions lasted no longer than the previous ones. Whether as a result of his further scheming or not, for the third time the queen determined to imprison him; then Gelmirez threw off the mask, declaring himself openly in favour of the prince; and with him many barons of Galicia, amongst others the Count de Trava, who figuring at the head of the party, marched with his royal pupil to Santiago. The

queen, lacking neither activity nor resolution, marched precipitately towards this city, with as many men as she could muster, endeavoring at the same time to gain over Gelmirez by offering him bribes, and exciting his cupidity by favours and grants of castles. The prelate however continued on the side of the prince, and censured all who deserted him (1116.)

But the people of Santiago were not so disposed. Detesting their bishop, and having expelled the boy king with his governess the Countess de Trava, they opened the gates of the city to the queen of Castile. The rebellious prelate took refuge with his men of arms in the watch tower, and the burghers coming to plunder the episcopal palace, proclaimed him a rebel and an enemy, and demanded his deposition; the soldiers of de Trava passed into the ranks of the queen, and eventually, through the mediation of some of the nobles, a treaty similar to the others was arranged. The queen of Castile then went in pursuit of the partizans of her son, especially Count Gomez Nuñez, who was holding some of his castles. Whilst besieging the count, the queen unexpectedly saw herself attacked by a

fresh enemy. This was no other than Doña Teresa of Portugal widow of Henry, who, though in apparent harmony with her sister and without renouncing her pretensions, had secretly allied herself with Count Frolaz de Trava and Bishop Gelmirez. Uraca was in Soberoso when she was surrounded by their troops, and all the force of her Castilians was required to issue safely from that conflict; at last by means of an impetuous sally, she disconcerted the rebels and was able to retire to Compostela, and thence to Leon.

De Trava and the countess of Portugal, freed from the presence of the queen, advanced towards Santiago killing, taking prisoners, and lifting cattle; Doña Teresa halting in Galicia, until the dangers with which the Sarracens menaced the frontiers of her states, obliged her to return to Portugal.

The bishop remained in Santiago to oppose the hostilities of the count, in virtue of his last compact with the queen. But the latter had hardly absented herself, when the hatred of the Compostelans for their bishop burst out afresh, and they treated him with such contumely, as to oblige him to fly to Castile, and demand succour of the queen.

Uraca received him with urbanity contrary to the expectations of the Galicians, and this time placed such confidence in him, that after having presented him with the head of Saint James the less, brought from Jerusalem by Maurice Bishop of Braga, gave him the important mission of negotiating peace between herself and her son and his partizans. This was accordingly arranged, and a reconciliation was made between mother and son for three years (1117,) thirty nobles of each party agreeing to sign it. One might now surely hope that the kingdom of Leon had recovered the peace it so sadly needed. Nevertheless in lieu of a calm, ensued a storm. The queen again set out for Galicia with the desire of embracing her son. He received her with transports of affection, and after this act of maternal fondness, Doña Uraca proceeded to Santiago, to punish the unruly enemies of the bishop. They raised a fresh tumult, entrenching themselves in the cathedral. The news that the queen and the bishop intended to disarm them, increased their fury; and the envoys sent to order them to lay down their arms, were massacred. In the church itself they fought with

lances, arrows, stones, and every kind of missile; afterwards setting fire to the altars and doors, the flames rising to the very dome of the temple.

The queen and the bishop, not feeling safe in the episcopal palace, took refuge in the watch tower with their most faithful adherents. Soon the mob invaded the palace, destroying every obstacle to their progress. They then attacked the tower to which the queen and the prelate had fled, and as stones and slings were insufficient to make the illustrious refugees surrender, fire and combustible material were introduced through one of the lower windows. The smoke, flames, and angry clamour of the rebels filled the prisoners with such terror, that believing their last hour had come, they prepared to die piously, and confessed their sins to the prelate. The queen urged the bishop to fly.

"Fly you who are able O queen" replied Gelmirez "since it is I and my attendants who are the chief objects of the wrath of this furious people." And thus it was, for the mob shouted "Let the queen come out if she pleases, but death to the bishop with all his attendants." The queen accordingly determined to issue forth, but when in the street,

opinions were divided, some being for letting her go free, whilst others wished to keep her as a hostage to prevent by this means the punishment she might inflict on the rebellious city. Whilst they were thus debating, the blind and frantic multitude having lost all respect and shame, rushed at her, and amidst taunts and gibes, brutally outraged her, even rending her garments, tearing her hair, and leaving her ignominiously stretched on the ground.

Shortly afterwards the bishop issued forth disguised in a beggar's cloak, that had been hastily thrown over him by the Abbot of Saint Martin, and was fortunate enough to pass unrecognized through the furious crowd. He arrived at the church of Our Lady where the maltreated queen had also taken refuge. Thither some of them followed Uraca and kneeling at the door of the porch, implored pardon and grace of the offended sovereign.

The queen made no reply.

She neither saw nor heard, such was the stupor that seemed to have taken possession of her. The Bishop of Santiago and the Abbot of Saint Martin, with great difficulty made her

understand that the culprits had repented, and asked clemency.

"Yes" she replied dazed "yes; I will be clement with them, if they will but free me from the torment of their presence. Unless they wish to see me perish, let them depart." The crowds withdrew in silence.

The queen left the city that very day; she now realized her disgrace, and only breathed vengeance and extermination. The first thing she did was to decide with her son that it was his place to avenge her honour so foully stained. That youth misled by evil advice, and ignorant of what had happened to his mother, on hearing it felt his anger burn within him, and gave orders that his subjects should be armed for the siege of Compostela. The bishop also arrived with his troops, and lastly the queen's army, who according to the happy expression of Master Florez, *roared like a wounded lion.*

Uraca was less able to pardon the grievous sedition of her own subjects than the calumnies, indignities, and vexations of which she had been a victim from her enemies and partizans of her husband; and the ingratitude of the subjects of

her son, on whom when governor of Galicia she had only conferred good, pierced her to the heart. She was overwhelmed by a deep sadness; she lost her sleep and her appetite, and soon a premature old age enveloped her with its mantle of ice. Her hair, once so black and beautiful, became streaked with silver, her figure bent, and the lustre of her eyes dimmed.

The three army corps, those of the queen, king, and bishop, assembled before the rebel city, forming one large force. The ignoble treatment which had been inflicted upon Doña Uraca levelled the differences which existed between the three, and all agreed to chastise the culprits. Each of the powerful vassals of the mother and son, arrayed their troops for the decreed extermination of the city, which was at once attacked on all sides. Uraca, her children, with Bishop Gelmirez, and other prelates who on account of their age took no part in the siege, were assembled together in a large tent erected in front of the city, the queen having expressed her wish to see it razed to the ground. Ladders having been placed against the walls, the gates were suddenly opened; the conflagration was terrible, and some of the

besiegers were already inside. Meanwhile a procession of men and women dressed in black with their heads covered with ashes, their feet bare, and with ropes round their necks, slowly issued forth, and wended their way to the tent occupied by the queen. These were the canons and a few other inhabitants who had taken no part in the insurrection. The soldiers, who acted as a guard to the royal family, came with the notice that some inhabitants of the city wished to see her. "Tell them" replied Uraca angrily, "that they shall never more behold the face of the person whom they have so offended both as a woman and as a queen: "perish the cursed city without mercy!"

"Madam," said one of the prelates who had gone out to see those who were imploring the pardon of Uraca, "they are the canons and some nobles of the city who have not taken part in the mutiny: none of the culprits would dare appear before you, and even these ask to see Don Diego Gelmirez and do not seek to enter your presence."

"My son, and D. Diego may do as they think fit;" replied the queen "as for me I wish to see no one who has breathed on that God-forsaken soil."

The king not wishing to vex his mother, looked at the bishop perplexed. Those unfortunates were his vassals, and he could not make up his mind to let them perish without hearing their prayers.

“Sire, clemency is the greatest attribute of kings” said D. Diego divining his thoughts.

“Go my son” added the queen; “I alone am the offended one; hear them, but say I pardon them not.”

The king then went out, and the canons threw themselves at his feet, and demanded the pardon of the queen,

“Sire” said they to the king, “intercede for us with your august mother; let her inflict the most severe punishment upon us, innocent as well as guilty, but let her not refuse to see us; the women, the children, and the old men have committed no crime, but love and respect her, and would bless her always.”

Their cries were overheard by Doña Uraca through the silken hangings of her tent, and attracted little by little by the sorrowful voices, she advanced as far as the door followed by her daughter.

The people of Compostela on seeing Doña Sancha went up to her and knelt at her feet, not daring to approach the queen.

"Madam," replied the canons "you who are an angel of innocence have pity upon us! Intercede with your august and offended mother; we ask not pardon for the guilty, but compassion for the innocent. Let the city be decimated, and in this way the royal majesty insulted by them will be avenged, but destroy it not utterly."

"Mother do you hear" asked timidly Doña Sancha gazing at the queen with her beautiful eyes full of tears.

The queen touched, as she contemplated the hoary heads humiliated to the ground, replied in a voice full of emotion. "God forbid that I should ever give an example of harshness and cruelty to my children! Retire," she added speaking to the inhabitants of the city with mingled anger and pity: "a mother never refuses to hear those who seek her children as intercessors."

The canons and nobles rose hardly able to credit such generosity, that a woman so villainously outraged, and shortly before so indignant, should yield to their first prayers. The queen

herself finished by convincing them that they were not dreaming; she turned to one of the nobles about her, and said: "Go and give orders to suspend hostilities against the city."

Then an immense chorus of blessings and tears was heard around the magnanimous sovereign, and the people sent from the city kissed the hem of her garments, blessed her, and prayed heaven for her happiness and prosperity.

On hearing the word *happiness* a bitter smile played upon her lips. Happiness! That bird of passage had only touched her head with the extreme tip of his wings, but had never dwelt by her side or under her roof. "Depart," she said to those who came to implore her pardon; "to-morrow you shall know what I have decided concerning the rebels." They departed, but carrying with them the certainty of pardon. The following day had hardly dawned, when the entire town went to prostrate itself at the queen's feet confessing their iniquity and imploring her pity.

Doña Uraca sent to D. Diego Gelmirez to find out who were the promoters of the rebellion, that they should be decimated; but only a hundred of them were banished, thereby absolutely avoiding the shedding of a drop of blood.

The queen and the bishop then entered Santiago; Don Diego Gelmirez was reinstated in his apostolic see: the jewels stolen were restored, and the church of the apostle and the episcopal palace were repaired at the cost of the insurgents.

CHAPTER XII.

Not even after her magnanimous pardon was the daughter of Alonso VI freed from the calumny that poisoned her whole life. She was accused of harshness and rigour in her resentments, and they who had obtained the greatest favours at her hands became her bitterest enemies. They spoke with disrespect of her dissensions with the bishop, and charged her with inconstancy, untruthfulness, and laxity in the fulfilment of her promises.

Another accusation with which her memory has been defamed was, says a learned historian, that she had unjustly appropriated the treasures of the church; but Father Risco has justified her so completely, that were the queen herself alive she could not desire a more ample vindication. No doubt the grievous state necessities, together with the scarcity of money which she experienced whilst D. Alfonso was occupying the cities and fortresses of Leon and part of Castile, and laying waste her country, obliged her at times to receive jewels and property from several churches, but only with the sanction of the

Chapter; moreover innumerable writings, the originals of which are found in the archives, sufficiently testify that Doña Uraca hastened to repay tenfold, the benefits she had received from ecclesiastical sources. In 1116—and let this serve as an instance among many that could be mentioned—she endowed the bishopric of Leon with the town of Saint Martin. The document runs thus.

“I, the Queen Doña Uraca, make this grant to the church in return for a cross of gold which I received from the treasury of the Virgin Mary.”

May not the possession of a town compare with a few golden vessels and crosses? Thus in every other case did the queen reward with similar liberality the services of the Church.

In spite of the continued disturbances of her troublous reign, the queen incessantly exerted herself to restore peace to her ungrateful country, and to repress the many vices and abuses, which war had brought in its train. On several occasions, she assembled councils of prelates, and with their advice, adopted the necessary means to assuage and lessen the calamities that afflicted her realms.

Affairs went more prosperously in the subsequent years for Bishop Gelmirez than for the queen of Castile and her son. The ambitious prelate at last obtained from Pope Calixto that which he had vainly solicited at the hands of Popes Pascal and Gelasio, namely the creation of an archbishopric at Santiago, which he was to occupy with authority over the dioceses of Mérida and Braga. The Pope granted this on the condition that he should continue to favour the cause of the young king his nephew.

Meanwhile the intrigues of Bishop Gelmirez in favour of the son and in detriment to the rights of the mother, although masked and disguised were not so secretly planned as to escape the penetration of Uraca. It was perhaps these machinations that moved the queen to set out for about the fifth time to Galicia (1121) apparently to recover the states of Tuy that her sister Doña Teresa had usurped. Uraca displayed such diplomacy on this occasion that she induced the prelate not only to help her by his presence, but with his men of arms and even with the knights of Compostela who were not bound to serve in those regions. The campaign was so fortunate

that in spite of the difficulties caused by the river Minho, the troops of Galicia penetrated into Portuguese territory, burning and laying waste the land. The conquest of Portugal was rapidly advancing, and notwithstanding the hasty retreat of Doña Teresa towards the eastern district of Braga, her sister Doña Uraca succeeded in besieging her in the castle of Lanioso. The countess of Portugal owed her safety to an unexpected event, which reveals to us either the fickleness or the duplicity of the people who figured in this interminable maze of plots and intrigues.

The bishop who was doubtless in league with the countess, observing the prosperity of Uraca, expressed his desire to return to Santiago on the plea of attending to the affairs of his diocese. The queen who suspected his loyalty, and meditated avenging herself on the prelate, begged him not to deprive her of his presence in such circumstances, when his prudent councils might be of so much use to her. Only by this machiavelian design are we able to explain the treaty of peace and friendship that was suddenly concluded between the two sisters, by which she of Castile yielded to her of Portugal, the sovereignty of

much land in the districts of Zamora, Toro, Salamanca and elsewhere, and the latter swore to defend and succour her sister of Castile against all her enemies, Moors and Christians, and not to receive nor to tolerate in her dominions any rebel subject of the queen. On their arrival on the left bank of the Minho, Uraca commanded that the knights and men of arms of the bishop should cross over first. As soon as the latter was separated from his followers, the queen ordered him to be seized and confined in a castle to be kept out of further mischief, nothing being left for him but to protest against such a base and disloyal proceeding.

By one of those phenomena observed in revolutions, the Compostelans at one time so hostile to the prelate, and whom they bitterly persecuted, now united to defend him, and took every step to secure his liberty. When the queen returned to Santiago she was received with murmur and discontent. The Chapter swore to liberate its archbishop, although the doing so would consume all the revenues of the church. The fact of his imprisonment only hastened to develop the plot against the queen. Her son abandoned her,

and with him Count Frolaz de Trava and the principal noblemen of Galicia who encamped with their troops on the banks of the Tambre north of Santiago; the city rose, and the queen saw herself obliged to set the archbishop free, who not content with this, energetically demanded the restitution of his castles and revenues which the queen had confiscated, a vital question for Gelmirez, and in reference to which Doña Uraca remained obdurate. This was an offence which the archbishop was less likely to pardon than his imprisonment, and he swore not to withdraw from the league nor lay down his arms until the honours were restored to his church, that is, its castles and lands. The queen would not yield, and took the field with her troops. The archbishop also went out with his, united to those of Don Alonso and his confederates. They both encamped near Monsacro, and the armies were on the point of attacking one another, when at the instigation of the archbishop, negotiations of peace were set on foot. These negotiations ended in a treaty by virtue of which the queen guaranteed to render as hostages sixty cavaliers of her retinue. The final result was that the arch-

bishop gained the object he had in view, namely the recovery of his revenues. According to the authors of the History of Compostela, Pope Calixto had previously sent to the prelates in Spain at that time assembled in council, notifying to them the excommunication of the queen his sister in law, should she not at once liberate Don Diego Gelmirez, and reinstate him in all his possessions.

Towards the latter years of her existence when the nullity of her marriage with the king of Aragon had been definitely declared, Doña Uraca sought consolation and protection in matrimony, and consulting no one and making use of her sovereign will for perhaps the first time in her life, she married a Castilian noble, Count D. Pedro Fernandez de Lara.

No formalities preceded this union; the queen summoned the count, already advanced in years, and informed him that she stood in need of a true and faithful friend, and that none so well as he would suit her as a husband; on him her choice had fallen, but he was at liberty to reject or accept her offer.

The count gratefully acceded to the wishes of the queen, and the union took place without pomp

or ostentation. From that time Doña Uraca enjoyed a certain tranquility, and would often say to her husband : "To you I owe the happiest days of my life," to which Don Pedro Fernandez de Lara invariably replied, " And you have conferred upon me an honour which I cannot repay, for you have raised me higher than I could ever have dreamt of in my ambition."

In the space of three years Doña Uraca gave birth to two children, the eldest the famous Count Fernan Perez, and a daughter who bore the name of Elvira. These two innocent beings gave rise to fresh calumny, for report proclaimed them to be illegitimate, and that no marriage existed between the parents, but all these injurious rumours originated in the resentment of the king of Aragon. However this calumny was refuted together with the others, by the many public documents, in which the King and Emperor D. Alonso VII recognizes the infantes D. Fernan Perez and Doña Elvira as his brother and sister, and children of Doña Uraca and the count. Several trustworthy historians give evident proof of the third marriage of the queen, but add however that the same was not made public until after her death.

Doña Uraca died in March, 1126, in the forty-sixth year of her age, but calumny like a black reptile followed her even to the tomb, and left her neither peace nor repose. It was asserted that she had died in childbirth at the castle of Saldaña to the shame and disgrace of her realms, and to this several histories agree. Others say that her death occurred in the city of Leon, *bursting* while in the act of seizing the treasures in the church of San Isidro. Garivay supports this opinion, saying that he found writings to the effect that the queen *burst* on the threshold of the church whose treasures she had appropriated. But this fable is both ridiculous and improbable; the treasures which she is supposed to have robbed had been given to that church by her father and grandfather, and she could never have had the sacrilegious audacity to take them, her numerous donations proving her to be a generous and excellent christian, and the archives of the kingdom of Leon being full of the record of her good deeds.

In our opinion the History of Compostela is that which is most worthy of credit: it relates that the Archbishop of Santiago having sent his legates

to the queen, they found her in one of her castles in the territory of Campos, prostrate on her couch, and sick unto death. The queen informed them that she had made her will, and disposed of all her property, and that in the last clause she had remembered the agreement made with the archbishop concerning the castle of Cira.

The same year in which the queen died her son D. Alonso made a votive offering for the repose of her soul to the monastery of Silos in the district of Sinnovas.

Doña Uraca in spite of her disagreements with her son the king of Galicia, was always respected and honored both by the latter and his sister Doña Sancha, as also by the children of her third marriage. This proves that her life was irreproachable, for in those times when education did not modify the vehemence of passion, every vice appeared in all its nudity, and great virtue was necessary to keep one's reputation fair and unsullied. Both vengeance and calumny seemed to have united to injure the reputation of Doña Uraca, but her heart remained pure, in spite of the misfortunes of the disastrous epoch in which she reigned.

The king of Galicia continued to protect his beautiful sister Doña Sancha, who remained unmarried. This princess preserved a most tender remembrance of her mother, and was celebrated for her extraordinary piety; she made a pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem, returning to Castile through France, and in that kingdom visited the celebrated Saint Bernard, and requested him to send monks to found a monastery in Spain. These being granted by the saint, she founded that of the * Santa Espina, close to Rioseco; she also founded in Vierzo that of San Miguel de las Dueñas in 1152, and several other convents and churches: the Emperor her brother also confided to her the education of his natural daughter Doña Urraca, a name that he gave her to perpetuate the memory of his mother, whom he venerated after her death more than during her lifetime.

Doña Sancha took charge of her niece until she married the king of Navarre; she also acted as sponsor at the wedding, and superintended the entertainments which were carried out with the greatest pomp and magnificence.

She established the secular canons of Saint Augustin, formerly in Carvajal in the church

* Holy Thorn.

of San Isidro el Real of Leon, and was buried there by the side of her mother.

It has been difficult for us to follow up the history of Doña Uraca as queen regnant of Castile and Leon, about whom so many and contrary opinions exist; her body was interred at San Isidro in Leon, and on her grave is a peculiar Latin epitaph, which Master Florez translates as follows :

QUEEN URACA MOTHER
 OF ALONSO EMPEROR
 DAUGHTER OF ALONSO THE GOOD
 LIES IN THIS SEPULCHRE HEWN
 IN ELEVEN TIMES A HUNDRED
 SIX TIMES FOURTEEN
 ADD *: THIS IS THE ERA
 IN WHICH SHE DIED IN MARCH,

* Spanish Era of 1164 or anno domini 1126.

Nothing more remains to be said of this great but unfortunate woman, who lived incessantly outraged, misunderstood and oppressed by her vassals and children, neither has posterity even respected her memory. Her valour, generosity, patience, and piety, her readiness to pardon, and constant self denial made her worthy of a better fate.

FINIS.

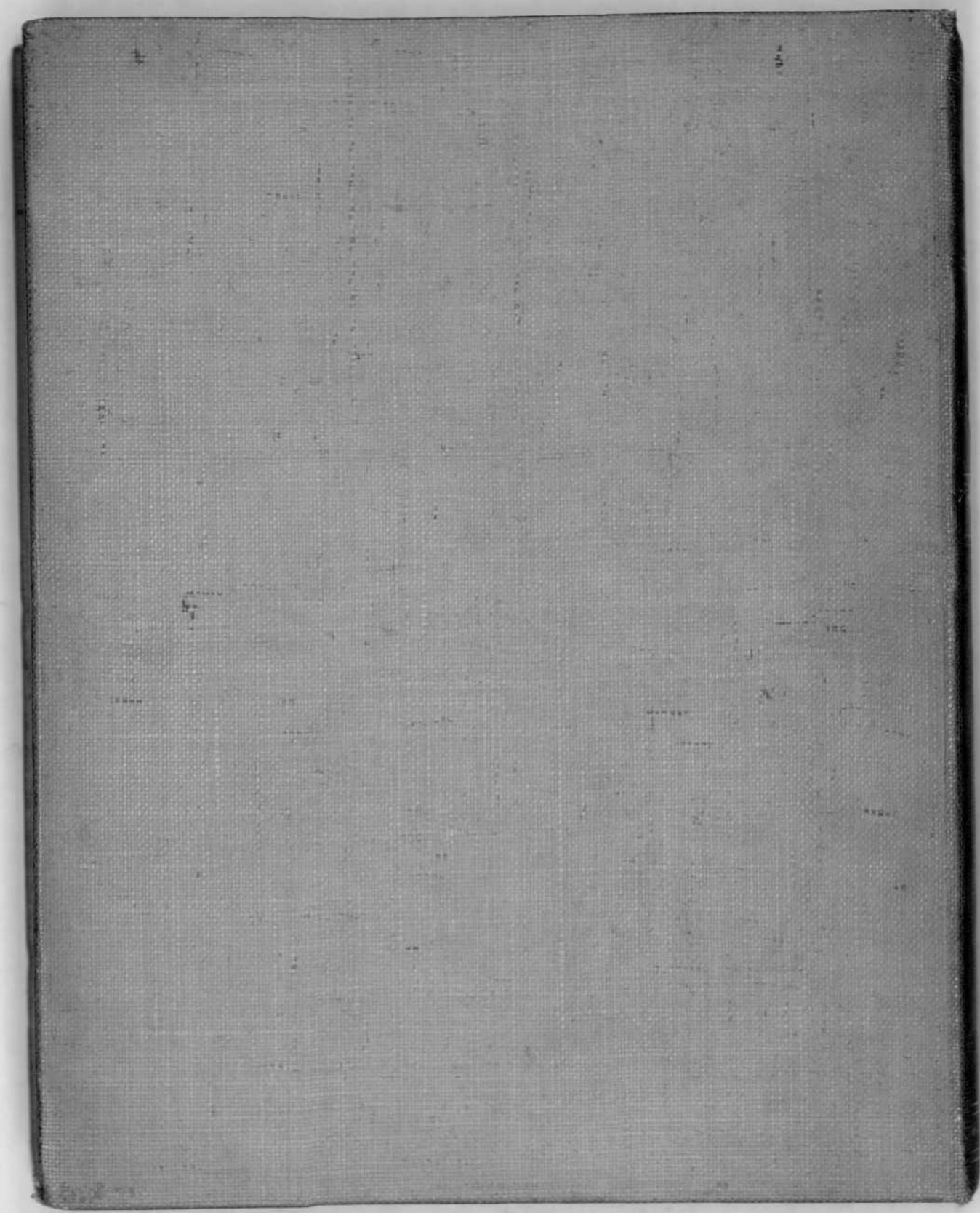
ERRATA

- In line ten of page 6 for "of Tours" read Turnense.
In line fifteen of page 19 for "brother" read cousin.
In line six of page 51 for "contain" read restrain.
In line eighteen of page 41, in lines fifteen and twenty
two of page 54, and lines six, and twenty-two of
page 55, for "Sir" read Sire.

BATH:

WILKINSON BROS., 19, UNION STREET

WORKS:—UPPER BORO' WALLS.





DONA

URACA



BATE

1890

