The Chronicle of Ferdinand and Isabella by Pulgar is the last instance of the old style of chronicling that should now be noticed; for though, as we have already observed, it was long thought for the dignity of the monarchy that the stately form of authorized annals should be kept up, the free and original spirit that gave them life was no longer there. Chroniclers were appointed, like Fernan de Ocampo and Mexia; but the true chronicling style was gone by, not to return.

*CHAPTER X.

* 174

CHRONICLES OF PARTICULAR EVENTS.—THE PASSO HONROSO.—THE SEGURO DE TORDESILLAS.—CHRONICLES OF PARTICULAR PERSONS.—PERO NIÑO.
—ALVARO DE LUNA.—GONZALVO DE CÓRDOVA.—CHRONICLES OF TRAVELS.
—CLAVIJO, COLUMBUS, BALBOA, AND OTHERS.—ROMANTIC CHRONICLES.
—RODERIC AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SPAIN.—GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SPANISH CHRONICLES.

Chronicles of Particular Events. - It should be borne in mind that we have thus far traced only the succession of what may be called the general Spanish chronicles, which, prepared by royal hands or under royal authority, have set forth the history of the whole country, from its earliest beginnings and most fabulous traditions, down through its fierce wars and divisions, to the time when it had, by the final overthrow of the Moorish power, been settled into a quiet and compact monarchy. From their subject and character, they are, of course, the most important, and, generally, the most interesting, works of the class to which they belong. But, as might be expected from the influence they exercised and the popularity they enjoyed, they were often imitated. Many chronicles were written on a great variety of subjects, and many works in a chronicling style which yet never bore the name. Most of them are of no value. But to the few that, from their manner or style, deserve notice, we must now turn for a moment, beginning with those that refer to particular events.

Two of these special chronicles relate to occurrences in the reign of John the Second, and are not only

"Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,"

curious in themselves and for their style, but valuable, as illustrating the manners of the time. The first, according to the date of its events, is the "Passo Honroso," or the Passage of Honor, and is a formal *175 account * of a passage at arms which was held against all comers in 1434, at the bridge of Orbigo, near the city of Leon, during thirty days, at a moment when the road was thronged with knights passing for a solemn festival to the neighboring shrine of Santiago. The challenger was Suero de Quiñones, a gentleman of rank, who claimed to be thus emancipated from the service of wearing for a noble lady's sake a chain of iron around his neck every Thursday. The arrangements for this extraordinary tournament were all made under the king's authority. Nine champions, mantenedores, we are told, stood with Quinones; and at the end of the thirty days it was found that sixty-eight knights had adventured themselves against his claim, that six hundred and twenty-seven encounters had taken place, and that sixty-six lances had been broken; - one knight, an Aragonese, having been killed, and many wounded, among whom were Quiñones and eight out of his nine fellow-champions.1

Strange as all this may sound, and seeming to carry us back to the fabulous days when the knights of romance

¹ Some account of the Passo Honroso served in it verbatim, as in sections 1, is to be found among the Memorabilia 4, 7, 14, 74, 75, etc. In other parts, of the time in the "Crónica de Juan el it seems to have been disfigured by Pineda. (Pellicer, note to Don Quixrita, "Anales de Aragon" (Lib. XIV. ote, Parte I. c. 49.) The poem of "Esc. 22). The book itself, "El Passo vero y Almedora," in twelve cantos, by D. Juan María Maury (Paris, 1840, 12mo), is founded on the adventures Orbigo, by Delena, one of the authorized scribes of John II.; and was abridged by Fr. Juan de Pineda, and the "Passo Honroso," by Don Angel published at Salamanca, in 1588, and again at Madrid, under the auspices of the Academy of History, in 1783 (4to).

de Saavedra, Duque de Rivas, in four cantos, in the second volume of his Works (Madrid, 1820 - 21, 2 tom. and Rodamont maintained the bridge of Montpellier, for the sake of the lady of his love, it is yet all plain matter of fact, spread out in becoming style, by an eye-witness, with a full account of the ceremonies, both of chivalry and of religion, that accompanied it. The theory of the whole is, that Quiñones, in acknowledgment of being prisoner to a noble lady, had, for some time, weekly worn her chains; and that he was now to ransom himself from *this fanci- *176 ful imprisonment by the payment of a certain number of real spears broken by him and his friends in fair fight. All this, to be sure, is fantastic enough. But the ideas of love, honor, and religion displayed in the proceedings of the champions,2 who hear mass devoutly every day, and yet cannot obtain Christian burial for the Aragonese knight who is killed, and in the conduct of Quiñones himself, who fasts each Thursday, partly, it should seem, in honor of the Madonna, and partly in honor of his lady, - these and other whimsical incongruities are still more fantastic. They seem, indeed, as we read their record, to be quite worthy of the admiration expressed for them by Don Quixote in his argument with the wise canon,3 but hardly worthy of any other; so that we are surprised, at first, when we find them carefully recorded in the contemporary Chronicle of King John, and filling, long afterwards, a separate chapter in the graver Annals of Zurita. And yet such a grand tournament was an important event in the age when it happened.

vantes's nice observation of the work-⁸ Don Quixote makes precisely such ings of human nature. (Parte I. c. 49.)

IIº" (ad. Ann. 1433, Cap. 5), and in Zu-Honroso," was prepared on the spot, at Large portions of the original are pre- 12mo).

² See Sections 23 and 64; and for a a use of the Passo Honroso as might be strange vow made by one of the wound- expected from the perverse acuteness so ed knights, that he would never again often shown by madmen, - one of the make love to nuns as he had done, see many instances in which we see Cer-

and is highly illustrative of the contemporary manners.4 History and chronicle, therefore, alike did well to give it a place; and, indeed, down to the present time, the curious and elaborate record of the details and ceremonies of the Passo Honroso is of no little value as one of the best exhibitions that remain to us of the genius of chivalry, and as quite the best exhibition of what has been considered the most characteristic of all the knightly institutions.

The other work of the same period to which we have referred gives us, also, a striking view of the spirit of the times; one less poetical, indeed, but not

less instructive. It is called "El Seguro de *177 Tordesillas," the *Pledge or the Truce of Tordesillas, and relates to a series of conferences held in 1439, between John the Second and a body of his nobles, headed by his own son, who, in a seditious and violent manner, interfered in the affairs of the kingdom, in order to break down the influence of the Constable de Luna.⁵ It receives its peculiar name from the revolting circumstance that, even in the days of the Passo Honroso, and with some of the knights who figured in that gorgeous show for the parties, true honor was yet sunk so low in Spain, that none could be found on either side of this great quarrelnot even the King or the Prince - whose word would be taken as a pledge for the mere personal safety of those who should be engaged in the discussions at Tordesillas. It was necessary, therefore, to find some one not strictly belonging to either party, who, invested with higher powers, and even with supreme military control, should become the depositary of the general faith, and, exercising an authority limited only by his own sense of justice, be obeyed alike by the exasperated sovereign and his rebellious subjects.6

This proud distinction was given to Pedro Fernandez de Velasco, commonly called the Good or Faithful Count Haro; and the "Seguro de Tordesillas," prepared by him some time afterwards, shows how honorably he executed the extraordinary trust. Few historical works can challenge such absolute authenticity. The documents of the case, constituting the chief part of it, are spread out before the reader; and what does not rest on their foundation rests on that word of the Good Count to which the lives of whatever was most distinguished in the kingdom had just been fearlessly trusted. As might be expected, its characteristics are simplicity and plainness, not elegance or eloquence. It is, in fact, a collection of documents, but it is an interesting and a * melancholy record. The * 178 compact that was made led to no permanent good. The Count soon withdrew, ill at ease, to his own estates; and in less than two years his unhappy and weak master was assailed anew, and besieged in Medina del Campo, by his rebellious family and their adherents.7 After this, we hear little of Count Haro,

⁴ Take the years immediately about curred, and we find four or five instances. (Crónica de Juan el II°, 1435, Cap. 2; 1434, Cap. 4; 1435, Cap. 3 and 8; 1436, Cap. 4.) Indeed, the Chronicle is full of them, and in several the Great Constable Alvaro de Lu-

⁵ The "Seguro de Tordesillas" was 1434, in which the Passo Honroso oc- first printed at Milan, 1611; but the only other edition, that of Madrid,

^{6 &}quot;Nos desnaturamos," "We falsify 41 and 1444, Cap. 3. Well might our natures," is the striking old Castilian phrase used by the principal personages on this occasion, and, among the rest, by the Constable Alvaro de Luna, to signify that they are not, for the time being, bound to obey even the king. (Seguro, Cap. 3.) ⁷ See Crónica de Juan el IIº, 1440-

Manrique, in his beautiful Coplas on the instability of fortune, break forth, -

Que se hizo el Rey Don Juan? Los Infantes de Aragon, Que fue de tanto galan. Que fue de tanta invencion.

except that he continued to assist the king from time to time in his increasing troubles, until, worn out with fatigue of body and mind, he retired from the world, and passed the last ten years of his life in a monastery, which he had himself founded, and where he died at the age of threescore and ten.8

Chronicles of Particular Persons .- But while remarkable events, like the Passage of Arms at Orbigo and the Pledge of Tordesillas, were thus appropriately recorded, the remarkable men of the time could hardly fail occasionally to find fit chroniclers.

Pero Niño, Count de Buelna, who flourished between 1379 and 1453, is the first of them. He was a distinguished naval and military commander in the reigns of Henry the Third and John the Second; and his Chronicle is the work of Gutierre Diez de Gamez, who was attached to his person from the time Pero Niño was twenty-three years old, and boasted the distinction of being his standard-bearer in many a rash and bloody fight. A more faithful chronicler, or one more imbued with knightly qualities, can hardly be found. He may be well compared to the "Loyal Serviteur," the biographer of the Chevalier Bayard; and, like him, not only enjoyed the confidence of his master, but shared his spirit.9 His accounts of the

*179 education of Pero Niño, * and of the counsels given him by his tutor; 10 of Pero's marriage to

Luis de Aranda's commentary on this genio de Llaguno Amirola (Madrid, old Chronicle, - a rare circumstance in such commentaries on Spanish poetry.

8 Pulgar (Claros Varones de Castilla, Madrid, 1775, 4to, Título 3) gives a beautiful character of him.

⁹ The "Crónica de Don Pero Niño" was cited early and often, as containing important materials for the history of the reign of Henry III., but was not printed until it was edited by Don Eu-

passage is good, and well illustrates the 1782, 4to); who, however, has omitted a good deal of what he calls "fabulas caballarescas." Instances of such omissions occur in Parte I. c. 15, Parte II. c. 18, 40, etc., and I cannot but think Don Eugenio would have done better to print the whole; especially the whole of what he says he found in the part which he calls "La Crónica de los Reyes de Inglaterra."

10 See Parte I, c. 4.

his first wife, the lady Constance de Guebara; 11 of his cruises against the corsairs and Bey of Tunis; 12 of the part he took in the war against England, after the death of Richard the Second, when he commanded an expedition that made a descent on Cornwall, and, according to his chronicler, burnt the town of Poole, and took Jersey and Guernsey; 13 and, finally, of his share in the common war against Granada, which happened in the latter part of his life, and under the leading of the Constable Alvaro de Luna,14 are all interesting and curious, and told with simplicity and spirit. But the most characteristic and amusing passages of the Chronicle are, perhaps, those that relate, one to Pero Niño's gallant visit at Girfontaine, near Rouen, the residence of the old Admiral of France and his gay young wife,15 and another to the course of his true love for Beatrice, daughter of the Infante Don John, the lady who, after much opposition and many romantic dangers, became his second wife. 16 Unfortunately, we know nothing about the author of all this entertaining history, except what he modestly tells us in the work itself; but we cannot doubt that he was as loyal in his life as he claims to be in his true-hearted account of his master's adventures and achievements.

ALVARO DE LUNA.

Next after Pero Niño's Chronicle comes that of the Constable Don Alvaro de Luna, the leading spirit of the reign of John the Second, almost from the moment when, yet a child, he appeared as a page at court in 1408, down to 1453, when he perished on the scaffold, a victim to his own haughty ambition, to the jealousy

VOL. I.

¹¹ Parte I. c. 14, 15.

¹² Parte II. c. 1-14. 13 Parte II. c. 16-40.

¹⁴ Parte III. c. 11, etc.

¹⁵ Parte II. c. 31, 36.

¹⁶ Parte III. c. 3-5. The love of Pero Niño for the lady Beatrice comes,

also, into the poetry of the time; for he employed Villasandino, a poet of the age of Henry II. and III. and John II., to write verses for him, addressed to her. (See Castro, Bibl. Esp., Tom. I. pp. 271 and 274.)

of the nobles nearest the throne, and to the *180 *guilty weakness of the king. Who was the author of the Chronicle is unknown.17 But, from internal evidence, he was probably an ecclesiastic of some learning, and certainly a retainer of the Constable, much about his person, and sincerely attached to him. It reminds us, at once, of the fine old Life of Wolsey by his Gentleman Usher, Cavendish; for both works were written after the fall of the great men whose lives they record, by persons who had served and loved them in their prosperity, and who now vindicated their memories with a grateful and trusting affection, which often renders even their style of writing beautiful by its earnestness, and sometimes eloquent. The Chronicle of the Constable is, of course, the oldest. It was composed between 1453 and 1460, or about a century before Cavendish's Wolsey. It is grave and stately, sometimes too stately; but there is a great air of reality about it. The account of the siege of Palenzuela,18 the striking description of the Constable's person and bearing,19 the scene of the royal visit to the favorite in his castle at Escalona, with the

17 The "Crónica de Don Alvaro de Bacon, in his twenty-seventh Essay, una" was first printed at Milan, 1546 says, "The modern languages give un-Luna" was first printed at Milan, 1546 (folio), by one of the Constable's descendants, but, notwithstanding its value and interest, only one edition has been published since, — that by Flores, the diligent Secretary of the Academy of History (Madrid, 1784, 4to). Wolf, in the notes to the German translation of this History (Band I. pp. 684, 685) suggests, on the authority of the Boletin Bibliografico of Madrid, 1849, that Antonio Castellanos was its author. He was not aware, I suppose, that this suggestion had been disposed of by Flores in his Preface, pp. vii, sqq. "Privado del Rey" was the common style of Alvaro de Luna; "Tan privado," as Manrique calls him, — a word which almost became English, for Lord

to such persons the names of favorites or privadoes." Antonio Perez, who knew too well what the word meant, makes a bitter jest about it. "Priva-dos," he says, "llama la lengua Española, quiça porque en siendo Privados se hallan privados de la seguridad natural." (Aforismos, No. 41, Paris, s. a.) Mariana, who never disguises the faults or crimes of the Great Constable, still counts him among those "eversos inevidiâ populari." (De Rege, 1599, p.

383.)

18 Tit. 91 - 95, with the flattering piece of poetry by the court poet Juan de Mena, on the wound of the Constable during the siege.

19 Tít. 68.

festivities that followed,20 and, above all, the minute and painful details of the Constable's fall from power, his arrest, and death,21 show the freedom and spirit of an eye-witness, or, at least, of a person entirely familiar with the whole matter about which he writes. It is, therefore, among the richest * and * 181 most interesting of the old Spanish chronicles, and quite indispensable to one who would comprehend the troubled spirit of the period to which it relates; the period known as that of the bandos, or armed feuds, when the whole country was broken into parties, each in warlike array, fighting for its own head, but none fully submitting to the royal authority.

The last of the chronicles of individuals written in the spirit of the elder times that it is necessary to notice is that of Gonzalvo de Córdova, "the Great Captain," who flourished from the period immediately preceding the war of Granada to that which begins the reign of Charles the Fifth; and who produced an impression on the Spanish nation hardly equalled since the earlier days of that great Moorish contest, the cyclus of whose heroes Gonzalvo seems appropriately to close up. It was about 1526 that the Emperor Charles the Fifth desired one of the favorite followers of Gonzalvo, Hernan Perez del Pulgar, to prepare an account of his great leader's life. A better person could not easily have been selected. For he is not, as was long supposed, Fernando del Pulgar, the wit and courtier of the time of Ferdinand and Isabella.22 Nor

²¹ Tit. 127, 128. Some of the details -the Constable's composed countenance and manner, as he rode on his mule to the place of death, and the awful silence of the multitude that preceded his exe-cution, with the universal sob that fol-

show, I think, that the author witnessed what he so well describes.

²² The mistake between the two Pulgars-one called Hernan Perez del Pulgar, and the other Fernando del Pulgar seems to have been made while they were both alive. At least, I so infer lowed it - are admirably set forth, and from the following good-humored pas-

CHAP. X.1

is the work he produced the poor and dull chronicle of the life of Gonzalvo, first printed in 1559, and often attributed to him.23 But he is that bold knight who, with a few followers, penetrated to the very centre of Granada, then all in arms, and, affixing an Ave Maria, with the sign of the cross, to the doors of the principal mosque, consecrated its massive pile to the ser-* 182 vice * of Christianity, while Ferdinand and Isabella were still beleaguering the city without; an heroic adventure, with which his country rang from side to side at the time, and which has not since been forgotten, either in its ballads or in its popular drama.24

As might be expected from the character of its author, - who, to distinguish him from the courtly and peaceful Pulgar, was well called "He of the Achievements," El de las Hazañas, — the book he offered to his monarch is not a regular life of Gonzalvo, but rather a

sage in a letter from the latter to his place where he knelt when he affixed correspondent, Pedro de Toledo: "E pues quereis saber como me aveis de llamar, sabed, Señor, que me llaman tomb there with becoming reverence, Fernando, e me llamaban e llamaran Fernando, e si me dan el Maestrazgo de Santiago, tambien Fernando," etc. (Letra XII., Madrid, 1775, 4to, p. 153.) Eco the mistale and still occupy the most distinguished place in the choir of the cathedral, which was originally granted to him and to his heirs male in right line. (Alcántara, For the mistakes made concerning them in more modern times, see Nic. Antonio (Bib. Nova, Tom. I. p. 387), who seems to be sadly confused about the whole

23 This dull old anonymous chronicle is the "Chronica llamada de las dos Conquistas de Napoles," etc., the first edition of which is a folio in black letter, printed at Zaragoza in 1559, and reprinted at Seville in 1580 and 1582, and at Alcalá in 1584. In the first edition, to which my copy belongs, it is dedicated to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, and is attributed, — falsely, of course, —in the Introduction, to Hernando Perez del Pulgar, Señor del Sa-

24 Pulgar was permitted by his admiring sovereigns to have his burial-

the Ave Maria to the door of the mosque, and his descendants still preserve his Historia de Granada, Granada, 1846, 8vo, Tom. IV. p. 102; and the curious documents collected by Martinez de la Rosa in his "Hernan Perez del Pul-gar," pp. 279 – 283, for which see next note.) The oldest play known to me on the subject of Hernan Perez del Pulgar's achievement is "El Cerco de Santa Fe," in the first volume of Lope de Vega's "Comedias" (Valladolid, 1604, 4to). But the one commonly represented is by an unknown author, and founded on Lope's. It is called "El Triunfo del Ave Maria," and is said to be "de un Ingenio de esta Corte," dat-ing probably from the reign of Philip IV. My copy of it is printed in 1793. Martinez de la Rosa speaks of seeing it acted, and of the strong impression it produced on his youthful imagination.

rude and vigorous sketch of him, entitled "A Small Part of the Achievements of that Excellent Person called the Great Captain," or, as is elsewhere yet more characteristically said, "of the achievements and solemn virtues of the Great Captain, both in peace and war."25 The modesty of the author is as remarkable as his adventurous spirit. He is hardly seen at all in his narrative, while his love and devotion to his great leader give a fervor to his style, which, notwithstanding a frequent display of very unprofitable learning, renders his work both original and striking, and brings out his hero in the sort of bold relief in which he appeared to the admiration of his contemporaries. Some parts of it, notwithstanding its brevity, are remarkable even for the details they afford; and some of the speeches, * like that of the Alfa- * 183 quí to the distracted parties in Granada,26 and that of Gonzalvo to the population of the Albaycin,27 savor of eloquence as well as wisdom. Regarded as the outline of a great man's character, few sketches have more an air of truth; though, perhaps, considering the adventurous and warlike lives both of the author and his subject, nothing in the book is more remarkable than the spirit of humanity that pervades it.28

²⁵ The Life of the Great Captain, by ever, is not quite as rare as he supposed. Pulgar, was printed at Seville, by Crom- I have a copy of it in black letter folio, berger, in 1527; but only one copy of this edition — the one in the possession of the Royal Spanish Academy — could be found by Martinez de la Rosa. From this he caused a reprint to be made at Madrid in 1834, entitled "Hernan Perez del Pulgar, Bosquejo Historico," adding to it a pleasant Life of Pulgar and valuable notes; so that we now have this very curious little book in an agreeable form for reading, thanks to

^{1527,} ff. 24, remarkably well preserved.

26 Ed. Martinez de la Rosa, pp. 155,

<sup>156.
27</sup> Ibid., pp. 159-162.
28 Hernan Perez del Pulgar, el de las barn in 1451, and died in

It may be worth while to add here, in connection with the Great Captain, that a translation of Petrarca's Dialogues, "De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ," the zeal and literary curiosity of the was made, at his especial request, into distinguished Spanish statesman who fine old Castilian, by Francisco de discovered it. The original work, how-Madrid. (N. Ant., Bib. Nov., Tom. 1.

CHAP. X.]

Chronicles of Travels. — In the same style with the histories of their kings and great men, a few works should be noticed in the nature of travels, or histories of travellers, though not always bearing the name of Chronicles.

The oldest of them, which has any value, is an account of a Spanish embassy to Tamerlane, the great Tartar potentate and conqueror. Its origin is singular. Henry the Third of Castile, whose affairs, partly in consequence of his marriage with Catherine, daughter of Shakespeare's "time-honored Lancaster," were in a more fortunate and quiet condition than those of his immediate predecessors, seems to have been smitten in his prosperity with a desire to extend his fame to the remotest countries of the earth; and for this purpose, we are told, sought to establish friendly relations with the Greek Emperor at Constantinople, with the Sultan of Babylon, with Tamerlane or Timour Bec the Tartar, and even with the fabulous Prester John of that shadowy India which was then the subject of so much speculation.

What was the result of all this widely spread diplomacy, so extraordinary at the end of the fourteenth century, we do not know, except that the first ambassadors sent to Tamerlane and Bajazet chanced actually to be present at the great and decisive battle between

those two preponderating powers of the East, *184 and that Tamerlane sent a *splendid embassy in return, with some of the spoils of his victory, among which were two fair captives who figure in the Spanish poetry of the time.29 King Henry was not ungrateful for such a tribute of respect, and, to ac-

p. 442.) I have a copy of it—a most 29 Discurso hecho por Argote de Mobecoming black letter folio - printed lina, sobre el Itinerario de Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, Madrid, 1782, 4to, p. 3. at Caragoca, 1523.

knowledge it, despatched to Tamerlane three persons of his court, one of whom, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, has left us a minute account of the whole embassy, its adventures and its results. This account was first published by Argote de Molina, the careful antiquary of the time of Philip the Second,30 and was then called, probably in order to give it a more winning title, "The Life of the Great Tamerlane," - Vida del Gran Tamurlan, - though it is, in fact, a diary of the voyagings and residences of the ambassadors of Henry the Third, beginning in May, 1403, when they embarked at Puerto Santa María, near Cadiz, and ending in March, 1406, when they landed there on their return.

In the course of it, we have a description of Constantinople, which is the more curious because it is given at the moment when it tottered to its fall; 31 of Trebizond, with its Greek churches and clergy; 32 of Teheran, now the capital of Persia; 33 and of Samarcand, where they found the great Conqueror himself, and were entertained by him with a series of magnificent festivals continuing almost to the moment of his death,34 which happened while they were at his court, and was followed by troubles embarrassing to their homeward journey.35 The honest Clavijo seems to have been well pleased to lay down his commission at the feet of his sovereign, whom he found at Alcalá; and though he lingered about the court for a year, and was

⁸⁰ The edition of Argote de Molina and shows great simplicity of manners was published in 1582; and there is at the imperial court: "The Emperor

⁸¹ They were much struck with the works in mosaic in Constantinople, and mention them repeatedly, pp. 51, 59, and elsewhere. The reason why they did not, on the first day, see all the relics they wished to see in the church of San Juan de la Piedra, is very quaint,

only one other, the very good one went to hunt, and left the keys with the Empress his wife, and when she gave them she forgot to give those where the said relics were," etc., p.

²² Page 84, etc.

⁸⁸ Page 118, etc.

³⁴ Pages 149 - 198. 35 Page 207, etc.