The reign of Abderahman III. (912) has been extolled as the most brilliant period in the history of the Spanish Arabs. Commerce flourished, and riches were accumulated to an unexampled extent. A powerful navy was formed, and maintained in full activity ; the arts and sciences were cultivated with ardour, because their professors were re warded with princely liberality ; many splendid works were undertaken in the towns of Mahommedan Spain ; and the king himself was the friend of industry and of merit. Still none of the territories which had been lost in previous reigns was recovered, and the Christians were gradually becoming more and more formidable to the Moors, when Moham­med, better known as Almanzor, appeared to restore the glory of the Saracen arms. He was an eminent general, an enlightened statesman, and a patron of the liberal arts. His campaigns against the Christians proved most fatal to them. The towns were ruined, the open country was ra vaged, and once more the mountains of Asturias became the inaccessible asylum of the native monarchy. At length the three powers, Navarre, Castille, and Leon, entered into a confederacy to repel the common foe. The armies met at a place situated between Soria and Medina Celi, where a drawn battle was fought. This check, and the fearful loss which he had sustained, so mortified Almanzor, that he sunk under the weight of his despair, and died, some assert by voluntary abstinence from food, in the year 1001. An event of some importance to the Christian cause was the erection of Castille into a distinct kingdom, by Sancho el Mayor, king of Navarre, the most powerful prince of his age and coun try. Besides Sobrarve, he held the lordship of Aragon ; and in 1026, in right of his wife, a princess of Castille, he became king of that country. By his conquests he considerably extended his dominions ; and the marriage of his son Fernando to the heiress of Leon gave him influence in the affairs of that kingdom ; so that at the period of his death, in 1035, he was virtually master of all Christian Spain except Catalonia. Before his death he divided his states among his sons, and Aragon fell to the share of Ramiro. The in dependence of Aragon as a separate kingdom is therefore to be dated from 1085, the year in which Ramiro I. obtained possession of the throne.

About the middle of the eleventh century Spain may be said to have been divided into two unequal parts, by a straight line drawn from east to west, from the coasts of Valencia to a little below the mouth of the Duero. The country north of this belonged to the Christians, who as yet had the smallest and least valuable portion, while all the rest belonged to the Moors. In point of wealth and real power, both by land and sea, the latter were much superior to the former ; but their perpetual dissensions materially weakened them, and every day facilitated the progress of the Christians. Indeed, had either party been united, the other must soon have been quelled ; but the Christians, although they did not constantly make war upon each other like the Moors, continued from time to time to be so em broiled by domestic feuds, as to be unprepared for striking a decisive blow with the combined armies of all the kingdoms ; while the same evils, existing to a still greater ex tent amongst the Mahommedans, rendered it impossible for their monarchs to take advantage of the untoward state of the affairs of the Christians. Among the Moors almost every city was a kingdom ; and as these petty sovereignties supported one another very indifferently, they, one after an other, fell a prey to their enemies. The rapidity with which the kingdom of Cordova fell to pieces has few examples in history. Alfonso I. king of Aragon, also of Navarre, and for some time of Castille and Leon, is reckoned among the most valiant princes of Spain. From his warlike habits he was surnamed *El Batallador.* He conquered Tudela, Saragossa, Tarragona, Calatayud, Daroca, Mequinencia, and much of the country south of the Ebro. Since the con­

quest by the Arabs, he was the first who carried the Chris tian ensigns into Andalusia. In 1134, however, he lost a great battle, and either perished in the conflict or died of grief shortly afterwards. This was a misfortune, but the misfortunes of the Christians were in general soon repaired, although for nearly a century their conquests were less brilliant than those achieved by *El Batallador.* At the commencement of the thirteenth century, indeed, the Moors gained some decided advantages, and reduced several important towns. But the balance was restored on the celebrated plains of Tolosa, where an enormous army of Moors from Africa was nearly annihilated. Alfonso of Castille having made some destructive inroads into Andalusia, Mo hammed Abu Abdalla, emperor of Barbary, prepared to punish his audacity. It is related, on credible authority, that one of the five divisions of the army which he assembled mustered 160,000 combatants. To meet this over whelming host, the Christian kings, fortunately at this juncture brought to terms of amity with one another, united their armies at Toledo, where they were joined by nume rous volunteers from Portugal and France. On the 16th of July 1212 the Christian army descended the mountainous chain which divides New Castille from Andalusia into the plains of Tolosa, where the Mahommedan army was drawn up in battle array. The conflict which ensued was obstinate and bloody, but victory at length declared for the Christians, and its immediate consequences involved the ruin of the Mahommedan empire in Spain. The thirteenth century is distinguished by other important advantages gained by the Christians. Ferdinand III. king of Leon, afterwards of Castille, by his numerous victories made himself lord of Spain, from the Bay of Biscay to the vicinity of the Guadalquivir, and from the confines of Portugal to those of Aragon and Valencia. In 1233 he triumphed over Aben Hud, king of Murcia, Granada, Cordova, Merida, and Seville ; and from that year to 1248 he successively obtained possession of Toledo, Cordova, the whole of Murcia, Jaen, and Seville. The loss of the city of Cordova, which in the eyes of the Mahommedans was sacred alike from its magnificent mosque, and from its having been so long the seat of their caliphs, was a severe blow to their power. About the same time King Jayme, the greatest name in the ancient history of Aragon, and surnamed the conqueror on account of his victories, reduced the Balearic Isles, and obtained other important victories. At this period Mahommedan Spain obeyed three sovereigns, who hated each other as cordially as they were all detested by the Christians. Mo hammcd, who ruled in Jaen, was the least powerful, but the most successful, of these petty kings. He successively got rid of his two contemporaries, and fixed his court in Granada, resolving if possible to extend, or at the worst to preserve, his new states against the independent walis or local governors on the one hand, and the Christians on the other. Thus the celebrated kingdom of Granada was found ed in the year 1238, for that of Cordova no longer existed. During two centuries and a half, this Mahommedan state withstood the hostile attacks of its Christian neighbours, and only fell when all Spain became united under one sceptre, and was consequently rendered irresistibly superior to the kingdom of the Moors.

The first king of Granada was equally valiant in war and wise in council, but he was not in a condition to con tend with Ferdinand of Castille. He submitted to do hom­age to him as his vassal ; and during the lifetime of Ferdinand a good understanding subsisted between him and Mohammed. But in succeeding reigns war again broke out between the Moors and Christians. In 1303 the strong fort of Gibraltar was reduced by Ferdinand IV. king of Castille and Leon. But the reign of this prince was mostly one of disaster. An iniquitous league was formed by two native princes, who proposed to share the kingdom be