ſeem to have a power to difpoſe of the crown to what branch of the royal family they pleaſe. For the admi­niſtration of the government and of juſtice, here are ſe­veral councils and tribunals ; as the junto or cabinet- council, the privy-council, the council of war, the coun­cil of Caſtile, the council of the inquiſition, the council of finances, the council of the Indies, the ſeven courts of royal audiences, &c.

The general hiſtory oſ Spain proves how great an influence the Cortes had in former times in the moſt important affairs of government ; ſuch as war or peace, and the levying of taxes. But during a long courſe of years they have not been aſſembled, except for the lake of form ; and the ſovereigns, without violence, or for­mally rejecting their intervention, have found means to elude their authority. They promulgate from the throne certain ordinances under the name of *Pragmatics,* the preambles of which give us to underſtand, that they claim the ſame authority as if they had been publiſhed in the aſſembly of the Cortes ; who are never convo­ked but at the acceſſion of a new monarch, to adminiſter to him an oath in the name of the nation, and to ſwear fidelity to him. As this event happened ſo late­ly as the month of September 1789, when the preſent king of Spain received the homage of all his ſubjects in the church of St Jerome at Madrid, it may not be un­acceptable to give an account of the uſual mode of aſ­ſembling them.

“ On this occasion letters oſ convocation are ſent to all the Grandees ; to all perſons bearing titles of Caſ­tile ; to all the prelates ; and to every city which has a right to ſend deputies to the Cortes. The two firſt claſſes repreſent the nobility; the prieſts sit in the name of the clergy ; and the cities, which depute one of their magiſtrates, repreſent the people.” Except on the above-mentioned occasion, the Cortes of the whole kingdom have been aſſembled but twice during the preſent century, and only once upon public buſineſs, in the year 1713, when Philip V. convoked them to give their approbation to the Pragmatic Sanction, which changed the order oſ ſucceſſion to the throne. They are ſtill conſulted, for the ſake of form, in certain caſes ; but then, the members of which they are compoſed correſpond with each other without aſſembling. At their breaking up in 1713, it was regulated, that they ſhould be repreſented by a permanent committee, whoſe office it ſhould be to watch over the adminiſtration of that part of the taxes known by the name of *Millones,* and which had been granted under Philip II. with the formal conſent of the Cortes, upon certain conditions, which the monarch ſwore to obſerve. They retained the adminiſtration of theſe impoſts until the year 1718, when cardinal Alberoni, whoſe ardent and imperious ge­nius was irritated at ſuch ſhackles, transferred it to the hands of the sovereign. From that time, the aſſemblies of the deputies of the kingdom have received no more of the revenues of the ſtate than is neceſſary to pay the ſalaries and defray the expences of the members. Theſe are eight in number, and are choſen in the following manner : All the provinces of Caſtile unite to nominate six ; Catalonia and Majorca appoint one ; and the re­gencies of Valentia and Aragon elect the eighth. Theſe deputies hold their places six years, at the end of which a new election takes place in the ſame manner. As a relict oſ their ancient rights, they ſtill retain the privi­lege of being, by virtue of their places, members of the council of finances, by which the sovereign communicates to the nation the neceſſity of levying any new tax; and the approbation they are ſuppoſed to give to the royal reſolution, is a ſhadow of the conſent of the Cor­tes, without which taxes could not formerly be either levied or augmented. But it is eaſy to perceive how feeble this rampart oſ liberty muſt be, which is only formed of a ſmall number of citizens, who poſſeſs but little real power ; are under the controul of govern­ment, from which they expect favours and preferments; and who, after all, repreſent the moſt numerous indeed, but leaſt reſpected, part of the nation. The provinces of Biſcay and Navarre, which have aſſemblies and par­ticular privileges, ſend alſo, on ſome occaſions, deputies to the throne ; but they do not make a part of the body of the deputies of the kingdom, and their conſtituents fix at pleaſure the object and duration of their temporary miſſion.

The adminiſtration of Spain is divided into six prin­cipal departments. The miniſter for foreign affairs is in many reſpects the directing miniſter, and receives, as a mark of diſtinction, the title of ſecretary of ſtate. The miniſter of war has but a circumſcribed authority. He is preſident of the council of war, which is rather a tri­bunal than a board of adminiſtration ; but the inſpectors of the infantry, and thoſe of the cavalry, dragoons, and provincial regiments, draw up a ſtatement of what­ever relates to the corps of which they have the direc­tion ; and the miniſter at war has only to preſent the memorials they give in to the king. The marine mi­niſter has no aſſociates. The chiefs of the three de­partments of Ferrol, Carthagena, and Cadiz, and inspectors of the marine, are named by the king, on the repreſentation of the miniſter ; but the marine ordi­nances prepared by him alone, require only the sanction of the king. The miniſter oſ the finances ſhould properly be under the inſpection of the ſuperintendant- general of that department ; but theſe two offices were ſome time ſince united, and will probably be ſo continued; for the ſeparation of them would multiply, without necessity, the ſprings of government ; and the intereſts of the ſtate require that they ſhould be ſimplified as much as permanent forms, thoſe ſacred bulwarks of juſtice and property, will admit.

The higher nobility conſiſt of counts, marquises,and dukes. The grandees, who have precedence of all others, next the king and princes of the blood, are na­med out of theſe. They have the privilege of being covered in the king’s preſence, who ſtyles them in his letters *Illustrious ;* and in ſpeaking to them or of them, *their Eminences :* but there are others beside the gran­dees who are covered in the king’s preſence ; as cardi­nals, nuncios, archbiſhops, the grand prior of Caſtile and the grand prior of Malta, the generals of the orders of St Dominic and St Francis, ambaſſadors of crowned heads, the knights of the golden fleece, and of the three military orders of St James, Calatrava, and Alcantara, when the king aſſiſts at their reſpective chap­ters in quality of grandmaſter. No grandee can be ap­prehended for any crime but by the expreſs order of the king ; and they have many other privileges beſides theſe. The inferior nobility ſtyle themſelves *Cavallerοs* and *Hidalgos.*

Of the orders in Spain, that of the golden fleece is