centuries, and it becomes necessary to follow the fortunes of each state separately. Into the history of Granada it is as impossible as it would be tedious to enter within the limits of this article. It is a long record of revolution and civil war, in which nothing above the most petty personal interests are concerned. There is no change of dynasty, but one perpetual struggle between members of the same family. It would not be easy to enumerate even the names of the successive rulers, many of whom were several times deposed and restored to power. Even during the final struggle, when the existence of the king­dom was at stake and the one hope of resistance lay in unity, the national cause was sacrificed to the jealous rivalry of three claimants of the throne. The history of Castile and Aragon, on the other hand, assumes a new character and interest when the attention of kings and people ceased to be absorbed in the overwhelming excite­ment of a great religious war.

The constitution of Castile traced its origin back to the institutions of the Visigoths, which had been carried by the original refugees into the mountains of Asturias, but it had been profoundly modified by the circumstances under which the kingdom had risen to greatness. The war with the infidel, while it had given strength and unity to the monarchy, had at the same time compelled the granting of considerable independence to the nobles and the great towns. The religious character of the war had enabled the clergy to retain greater powers than they possessed in any other European country, though they had lost that omnipotence which they had enjoyed under the Visigoths. Their councils and synods, which had once formed the sole constitutional machinery of the country, had been superseded by the secular assembly of the cortes. The early history of the cortes is wrapped in great obscurity, but its main outlines are fairly discernible. Originally a meeting of the great nobles and royal house­hold, it had attained the position of a national assembly in 1162, when the deputies of the chief towns were admitted to membership. Its powers and procedure developed gradually, and naturally varied according to the character of the different kings. Its first functions were the approval of legislation and the granting of extraordinary taxation, though it is difficult to say when its sanction of such measures was regarded as essential. The assembly consisted of the three estates—clergy, nobles, and citizens —who deliberated sometimes separately and sometimes together. Representation existed only in the case of the third estate, whose members were elected at first by all free citizens and afterwards by the municipal magistrates. The number of cities which sent deputies varied very much at different times. As to what constituted the right of attendance in the case of the nobles and clergy there is great obscurity, but it probably depended partly upon tenancy-in-chief and partly upon royal summons. As both classes were exempt from taxation, their functions were less important than those of the third estate, and on more than one occasion we find meetings of the cortes in which the upper orders took no part. The weakness of the assembly, as contrasted with the English parliament, lay mainly in the absence of any class like the knights of the shire to form a link between the burgesses and the great nobles. In early times, probably the most effective check upon the royal power lay in the independent privi­leges claimed and exercised by the chief feudatories. Their tenants were bound to feudal service; and the right of private war made them petty sovereigns on their own estates. The long feud of the families of Castro and Lara is only a notable example of the difficulties which the central power had to contend with. For the protec­tion of their privileges, both nobles and towns claimed

the right of forming an armed union or *hermandad,* which resembled the right of “ confederation ” exercised in later times by the nobles of Poland. The ordinary adminis­tration, except when war was going on, was local rather than central. The nobles had judicial powers within their domains, though it appears that these were granted by the crown rather than derived from their territorial position. The bishops and higher clergy administered ecclesiastical jurisdiction as in other countries, and at the same time exercised the same powers as the secular lords over the large estates which the piety or superstition of generations of benefactors had conferred upon them. The connexion with Rome, though established in the 11th century, had not become very close before the middle of the 12th century ; the appointment to most of the benefices was in the hands of the crown, and the church of Castile was more independent even than that of England. In the cities and great towns, most of which included a consider­able extent of adjacent territory, the administration both of justice and of local affairs was in the hands of elected corporations, which had received grants of liberties at the time when they had served as important outposts against the attacks of the infidel. In theory, probably, there existed in all cases a right of appeal to the crown, but this was a right which, in the nature of things, was rarely exercised. The attempt of subsequent kings to control or supersede the local administration of justice by the appointment of *corregidores* was always resisted as an encroachment upon traditional liberties. Even the taxes, though granted by a central assembly, were assessed and collected by the local officials, and jealous care was taken to secure that they should only be applied to the purpose for which the grant had been made.

Ferdinand III., “The Saint,” was succeeded in 1252 by his son, Alfonso X., “ The Wise.” The new king gave up the military policy of his father, and the only territorial acquisition of his reign, the province of Murcia, was won for him by the arms of Aragon. On the other hand, he was a great student and patron both of literature and science, especially of astronomy. He invited to his court the most distinguished scholars not only in Christian but also in Arabic lore, and he raised the university of Salamanca to rank with the great schools of Paris and Oxford. He also turned his attention to legislation, and his code, the *Siete Partidas,* is one of the great legislative monuments of an age which produced the *Établissements* of St Louis and the great statutes of Edward I. Com­piled under the influence of the civil and canon laws, the *Siete Partidas* was in some respects disadvantageous, especially as admitting papal encroachments upon the ecclesiastical power of the crown. Though drawn up under Alfonso X., it did not finally supersede the ancient *fueros* until 1348, when it was formally approved by the cortes. But Alfonso’s reign, though distinguished in the history of literature and law, was not on the whole a prosperous period for Castile, and it was to a great extent his fault that the opportunity of driving the Moors from the Peninsula was allowed to slip. On the fall of the Hohenstaufen he came forward as a candidate for the imperial dignity, and through the period known as the “ great interregnum ” he and Richard of Cornwall, chosen by rival parties among the electors, bore the empty title of king of the Romans. The expense of bribing the electors and of maintaining a magnificent court involved Alfonso in pecuniary difficulties and compelled him to alienate his subjects by imposing heavy taxes and by debasing the coinage. But the hardships inflicted on the country by the king’s futile ambition were as nothing compared with those which arose from a disputed succes­sion to the crown. By the old custom of Castile nearness