

Content for the present with the ravage he had made, and the victory he had gained, King Fernando now drew off his troops and repaired to his frontier hold of Martos, where they might rest after their fatigues in security.

Here he was joined by Don Pelayo Perez Correa, the Grand Master of Santiago. This valiant cavalier, who was as sage and shrewd in council as he was adroit and daring in the field, had aided the youthful Prince Alfonso in completing the tranquillization of Murcia, and, leaving him in the quiet administration of affairs in that kingdom, had since been on a pious and political mission to the court of Rome. He arrived most opportunely at Martos, to aid the king with his counsels, for there was none in whose wisdom and loyalty the king had more confidence.

The grand master listened to all the plans of the king for the humiliation of the haughty King of Granada; he then gravely but most respectfully objected to the course the king was pursuing. He held the mere ravaging the country of little ultimate benefit. It harassed and irritated, but did not destroy the enemy, while it fatigued and demoralized the army. To conquer the country, they must not lay waste the field, but take the towns; so long as the Moors retained their strongholds, so long had they dominion over the land. He advised, therefore, as a signal blow to the power of the Moorish king, the capture of the city of Jaen. This was a city of immense strength, the bulwark of the kingdom; it was well supplied with provisions and the munitions of war; strongly garrisoned and commanded by Abu Omar, native of Cordova, a general of cavalry, and one of the bravest officers of Aben Alhamar. King Fernando had already besieged it in vain, but the reasoning of the grand master had either convinced his reason or touched his pride. He sat himself down before the walls of Jaen, declaring he would never raise the siege until he was master of the place. For a long time the siege was carried on in the depth of winter, in defiance of rain and tempests. Aben Alhamar was in despair: he could not relieve the place; he could not again venture on a battle with the king after his late defeat. He saw that Jaen must fall, and feared it would be followed by the fall of Granada. He was a man of ardent spirit and quick and generous impulses. Taking a sudden resolution, he departed secretly for the Christian camp, and made his way to the presence of King Fernando. "Behold before you," said he, "the King of Granada. Resistance I find unavailing; I come, trusting to your magnanimity and