

Master of Santiago; but he sent him now with a strong military force, to play the part of a conqueror. The conquest, as may be supposed, was easy: Mula, Lorca, and Carthagena soon submitted, and the whole kingdom was reduced to vassalage — Fernando henceforth adding to his other titles King of Murcia. "Thus," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "was another precious jewel wrested from the kingdom of Antichrist, and added to the crown of this saintly monarch."

But it was not in Murcia alone that King Fernando found himself called to contend with his new adversary the King of Granada. That able and active monarch, strengthened as has been said during the late truce, had made bold forays in the frontiers recently conquered by King Fernando, and had even extended them to the neighborhood of Cordova. In all this he had been encouraged by some degree of negligence and inaction on the part of King Fernando's brother Alfonso, who had been left in charge of the frontier. The prince took the field against Aben Alhamar, and fought him manfully; but the Moorish force was too powerful to be withstood, and the prince was defeated.

Tidings of this was sent to King Fernando, and of the great danger of the frontier, as Aben Alhamar, flushed with success, was aiming to drive the Christians out of Andalusia. King Fernando immediately set off for the frontier, accompanied by the Queen Juana. He did not wait to levy a powerful force, but took with him a small number — knowing the loyalty of his subjects and their belligerent propensities, and that they would hasten to his standard the moment they knew he was in the field and exposed to danger. His force accordingly increased as he advanced. At Andujar he met his brother Alfonso with the relics of his lately defeated army — all brave and expert soldiers. He had now a commanding force, and leaving the queen with a sufficient guard at Andujar, he set off with his brother Alfonso and Don Nuño Gonzalez de Lara, son of the Count Gonzalo, to scour the country about Arjona, Jaen, and Alcandete. The Moors took refuge in their strong places, whence they saw with aching hearts the desolation of their country — olive plantations on fire, vineyards laid waste, groves and orchards cut down, and all the other modes of ravage practised in these unsparing wars.

The King of Granada did not venture to take the field; and King Fernando, meeting no enemy to contend with, while ravaging the lands of Alcandete, detached a part of his force under Don Rodrigo Fernandez de Castro, a son of the brave