

Another heavy loss to King Fernando, about this time, was that of the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Rodrigo, the great adviser of the king in all his expeditions, and the prelate who first preached the grand crusade in Spain. He lived a life of piety, activity, and zeal, and died full of years, of honors, and of riches — having received princely estates and vast revenues from the king in reward of his services in the cause.

These private afflictions for a time occupied the royal mind; the king was also a little disturbed by some rash proceedings of his son, the hereditary Prince Alfonso, who, being left in the government of Murcia, took a notion of imitating his father in his conquests, and made an inroad into the Moorish kingdom of Valencia, at that time in a state of confusion. This brought on a collision with King Jayme of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror, who had laid his hand upon all Valencia, as his by right of arms. There was thus danger of a rupture with Aragon, and of King Fernando having an enemy on his back, while busied in his wars in Andalusia. Fortunately King Jayme had a fair daughter, the Princess Violante; and the grave diplomatists of the two courts determined that it were better the two children should marry, than the two fathers should fight. To this arrangement King Fernando and King Jayme gladly assented. They were both of the same faith; both proud of the name of Christian; both zealous in driving Mahometanism out of Spain, and in augmenting their empires with its spoils. The marriage was accordingly solemnized in Valladolid in the month of November in this same year; and now the saintly King Fernando turned his whole energies to this great and crowning achievement, the conquest of Seville, the emporium of Mahometanism in Spain.

Foreseeing, as long as the mouth of the Guadalquivir was open, the city could receive re-enforcements and supplies from Africa, the king held consultations with a wealthy man of Burgos, Ramon Bonifaz, or Boniface, by name — some say a native of France — one well experienced in maritime affairs, and capable of fitting out and managing a fleet. This man he constituted his admiral, and sent him to Biscay to provide and arm a fleet of ships and galleys, with which to attack Seville by water. while the king should invest it by land.