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Don Garcia Defies Don Sancho

Robert Southey

While King Don Sancho was busied in these wars, King Don Garcia of Galicia took by force from Donya Urraca his sister a great part of the lands which the king their father had given her. When King Don Sancho heard what his brother had done he was well pleased thereat, thinking that he might now bring to pass that which he so greatly desired; and he assembled together his Ricos-omes [Footnote: Noblemen, grandees.] and his knights, and said unto them, The king my father divided the kingdoms which should have been mine, and therein he did unjustly; now King Don Garcia my brother hath broken the oath and disherited Donya Urraca my sister; I beseech ye therefore counsel me what I shall do, and in what manner to proceed against him, for I will take his kingdom away from him. Upon this Count Don Garcia Ordonez arose and said, There is not a man in the world, sir, who would counsel you to break the command of your father, and the vow which you made unto him. And the king was greatly incensed at him and said, Go from before me, for I shall never receive good counsel from thee. The king then took the Cid by the hand and led him apart, and said unto him, Thou well knowest, my Cid, that when the king my father commended thee unto me, he charged me upon pain of his curse that I should take you for my adviser, and whatever I did that I should do it with your counsel, and I have done so even until this day; and thou hast always counselled me for the best, and for this I have given thee a county in my kingdom, holding it well bestowed. Now then I beseech you advise me how best to recover these kingdoms, for if I have not counsel from you I do not expect to have it from any man in the world.

Greatly troubled at this was the Cid, and he answered and said, Ill, sir, would it behove me to counsel you that you should go against the will of your father. You well know that when I went to him, after he had divided his kingdoms, how he made me swear to him that I would always counsel his sons the best I could, and never give them ill counsel; and while I can, thus must I continue to do. But the king answered, My Cid, I do not hold that in this I am breaking the oath made to my father, for I ever said that the partition should not be, and the oath which I made was forced upon me. Now King Don Garcia my brother hath broken the oath, and all these kingdoms by right are mine: and therefore I will that you counsel me how I may unite them, for from so doing there is nothing in this world which shall prevent me, except it be death.

Then when the Cid saw that he could by no means turn him from that course, he advised him to obtain the love of his brother King Don Alfonso, that he might grant him passage through his kingdom to go against Don Garcia: and if this should be refused he counselled him not to make the attempt. And the king saw that his counsel was good, and sent his letters to King Don Alfonso beseeching him to meet him at Sahagun. When King Don Alfonso received the letters he marvelled to what end this might be: howbeit he sent to say that he would meet him. And the two kings met in Sahagun. And King Don Sancho said, Brother, you well know that King Don Garcia our brother hath broken the oath made unto our father, and disherited our sister Donya Urraca: for this I will take his kingdom away from him, and I beseech you join with me. But Don Alfonso answered that he would not go against the will of his father, and the oath which he had sworn. Then King Don Sancho said, that if he would let him pass through his kingdom he would give him part of what he should gain: and King Don Alfonso agreed to this. And upon this matter they fixed another day to meet; and then forty knights were named, twenty for Castille and twenty for Leon, as vouchers that this which they covenanted should be faithfully fulfilled on both sides.

Then King Don Sancho gathered together a great host. He sent Alvar Fanez, the cousin of the Cid, to King Don Garcia, to bid him yield up his kingdom, and if he refused to do this to defy him on his part. When King Don Garcia heard this he was greatly troubled, and he said to Alvar Fanez, Say to my brother that I beseech him not to break the oath which he made to our father; but if he will persist to do this thing I must defend myself as I can. He called his chief captains together and they advised him that he should recall Don Rodrigo Frojaz, for having him the realm would be secure, and without him it was in danger to be lost. So two hidalgos [Footnote: A man belonging to the lower nobility, a gentleman by birth] were sent after him, and they found him in Navarre, on the eve of passing into France. But when he saw the king's letters, and knew the peril in which he then stood, setting aside the remembrance of his own wrongs, like a good and true Portuguese, he turned back, and went to the king. In good time did he arrive, for the captains of King Don Sancho had now gained many lands in Galicia and in the province of Beira, finding none to resist them. When Don Rodrigo heard this and knew that the Castillians were approaching he promised the king either to maintain his cause, or die for it. He ordered the trumpets to be sounded, and the Portugueze sallied, and a little below the city the two squadrons met. The Portugueze fought so well, and especially Don Rodrigo, and his brothers, that at length they discomfited the Castillians, killing of them five hundred and forty, of whom three hundred were knights, and winning their pennons and banners. Howbeit this victory was not obtained without great loss to themselves; for two hundred and twenty of their people were left upon the field, and many were sorely wounded, among whom, even to the great peril of his life, was Don Rodrigo Frojaz, being wounded with many and

grievous wounds.



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