

turias are served by none but grandees: but these of both sexes are indiscriminately taken from the three classes. There are grandees of the most ancient and illustrious extraction of the two inferior classes, and who do not esteem themselves the less on that account.

Philip V. who conferred many titles of grandee, created not one either of the second or third class. Ferdinand VI. imitated his example; but Charles III. has revived a distinction almost imaginary, which was nearly obliterated; and, in the last promotions, created several grandees of the second class. They do not all enjoy the privilege of being covered in the royal presence, except when they are received for the first time, and when they accompany his majesty at any ceremony. This honour does not, however, belong to them exclusively; they enjoy it in common with the nuncio, the family ambassadors, and some generals of orders, who also have the title of excellence, and as long as their
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dignity continues, are associated with the real grandees.

Besides the titles of grandee, which are hereditary, there are others that become extinct at the death of the possessor. Some persons obtain the honours only of grandee, and transmit them to their descendants. He who enjoys them bears the title of excellence, but is not covered in presence of the king. A more marked distinction in the different classes of grandee, and which is not founded upon law, but upon custom, still more tyrannical, is that which the grandees of ancient families establish between themselves and those of more modern or less illustrious extraction. The first speak to each other in the singular number, on all occasions, and whatever may be the difference in their ages, or the places they hold. I have more than once heard young grandees, who scarcely had the rank of colonel, speak in this manner to the minister for war, whom they looked upon as their equal in point
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of birth. But when they converse or correspond with grandees, whose extraction appears to them to be unequal to their own, they ceremoniously give and receive the title of *excellence*. The latter frequently suffer in secret by this mortifying homage; so ingenious is vanity in every country, in creating itself enjoyments, and even torments, and in converting vain chimeras into realities, which have an influence upon happiness. The new grandees solicit the honour of speaking to each other in the singular number, as they would do the favour of the sovereign. The refusal they meet with is the more mortifying, as this mark of equality and familiarity is sometimes granted by the most distinguished grandees, to branches of some illustrious houses who have not yet obtained the title, and who, thinking they have well-founded pretensions to such an honour, are distinguished by the name of *casas agraviadas*, injured families.

The title of grandee, when hereditary, is so in males and females, unless the patent formally expresses the contrary. There are many houses in Spain that, by marriages with heiresses to this title, have ten or twelve *hats*; which is the vulgar term to denote the dignity of grandee of Spain.

This accumulation is an imaginary advantage, which adds nothing to the dignity of him by whom it is enjoyed: and although he may have children, he has not even the power of distributing the hats among them. The right of primogeniture to the title of grandee is established in every family enjoying that hereditary rank. There are but few in which the second son has a title and a grandeeship in his own right. All the eldest sons of grandees receive, by anticipation, the title of excellence, but their brothers have it not, nor that of count or marquis: they bear the name of their family, preceded by that they received in
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baptism. Thus the brother of the duke of Uceda, is simply called Don Emmanuel Pacheco; and the younger sons of the late count of Fuentes, predecessor of the count of Aranda, Don Juan and Don Francisco Pignatelli.

This distinction must not be lost sight of by a stranger, who does not wish to be deceived by the vain words count and marquis, and by them to appreciate the rank of persons. There are many grandees of Spain who have no other title. There is no mark of extraordinary distinction in that of duke. It is given according to the pleasure of the sovereign, when he confers the title of grandee, on which account the patent is a little more expensive.

But all those who are honoured with the title of count or marquis are not grandees. Most of them are no more than what are called *titulos*, or *titles* of Castile. These titles prove not an illustrious race, but the favour of the
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fovereign, commonly merited by some particular and important service, either in a military or civil capacity. The king generally grants to him whom he thus honours, the liberty of applying his title to one of his estates; and sometimes adds a denomination which denotes the service he wishes to recompence. Thus was it that under Philip V, the admiral Navarro, who commanded the Spanish squadron at the battle of Toulon, received the title of *Marquis de la Vittoria*; he who in 1759 escorted Charles III. from Naples to Barcelona, that of *Marquis del Real Transporte*; and more recently, the Minister of the Indies; Don Joseph de Galvez, whose long services Charles III. wished to reward by one of these titles, took that of *Marquis de la Sonora*, from the name of a colony, which his zeal and talents had acquired to his country, by peopling and improving it, and by freeing the whole settlement from the incursions of the savages.

These titles of Castile give to those who bear them, and to their wives, the qualification of Lordship, *Vuestra Senoria*. The refusal of this, in matters of ceremony, carries with it a mortification; but the greater part are too reasonable to require or even suffer it from their equals in the ordinary intercourse of society; though their inferiors bestow this honour upon them very lavishly. There are every where flatterers, as well as persons who love to be flattered. But those who are more particularly exact in rendering them their due in this respect, are such as have a right to the title of excellence in return, and who love their own ears should be tickled with a sound so pleasing.

There is a title between this and lordship; that of *Ussia Illustrissima* (most illustrious lordship) which is given to archbishops, bishops, and great magistrates.

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The dignity of grandee, as well as the titles of marquis and counts of Castile are not only unaccompanied with any pecuniary advantage, but are not even bestowed gratis. Those who obtain them, immediately pay a duty which has been received ever since the reign of Charles V, known by the appellation of *Demi-Annates**.

The grantees pay about twenty thousand livres (833l.) which, by the fees of the Chancery are increased to twenty-five thousand (1040l.) This duty is paid as often as the title descends, and is more or less according to the greater or lesser distance between him who inherits it, and the person from whom it is derived. Besides the duty on taking up the title, the grantees annually pay another under the name of *Lanzas*.

* The king sometimes remits this duty. The count d'Estaing received from the Spanish monarch this additional favour on obtaining the rank of grandee.

This is the remains and faint image of the military service, which the great vassals of the crown formerly performed, by furnishing a certain number of spears. As foreigners, who are grandees of Spain, cannot be subjected to this species of servitude, it appears equally conformable to reason and custom that they should not pay the duty of *lanzas*.

According to an arrangement mutually agreed to between the courts of Madrid and Versailles, since the same family has been in possession of the two thrones, the grandees of Spain are to rank with the dukes and peers of France. This acknowledgment of equality was not obtained without much opposition on the part of the former. When the question was agitated at the beginning of the reign of Philip V. the duke of Arcos, in the name of all the grandees, remonstrated against it to that monarch in the strongest terms. He asserted, that the grandees could not but be greatly surpris'd and offended at finding themselves considered

as on a level with the peers of France. At their own court, said the duke, the grandees see no one between them and the throne but the sons of their sovereign, whilst the peers of France must give place, first to the princes of the blood, next to the legitimated princes, and lastly even to foreign ones, not only to those of Italy and Germany, but also to those who, although descended from royal families, hold places in the service of the king of France, such as the dukes of Lorraine, de Bouillon, and others. The duke endeavoured to prove by many facts, that the grandees in Spain constituted the first order of subjects immediately after the royal family; and that most of them were in possession of privileges, as descending from royal ancestors, either in the male line, as the dukes of Medina Celi, descended from the infants de la Cerda, or in the female, or even from bastards. He gave instances of kings of Spain, and even of emperors, who had treated them as equals with the princes of Italy and Germany, and proved

that the grandees had always enjoyed the same honours as the princes descended from sovereigns, when they were not royal ; that when the courts of France and Spain had named representatives, those of France were princes of the blood, and those of Spain grandees ; without the least difference being made in the respect and honours paid to each. From all these proofs the duke concluded, that the dignity of grandee of Spain corresponded with that of the princes of the blood in France, and not with that of the peers.

These arguments were certainly plausible, but they were ill-received by Philip, who had contracted at the court of his grand-father a taste for despotism. The answer he returned to the duke was, that he would do well to go and signalize his zeal with the army in Flanders. This order was obeyed, and the duke, when on his return through Paris, was the first who desisted from the pretensions of which he had been the advocate.

vocate. He made the first visit to the princes of the blood, gave them the title of highness without receiving the same, and addressed the dukes and peers by the title of excellence without requiring a return ; thus the cause of the grandees was lost for ever. Their number rapidly increased ; their dignity was granted to several foreign noblemen ; and, as all things are diminished in value by being multiplied, the grandees have become accustomed, by degrees, to see themselves, without any great mortification, considered as on a level with the dukes and peers of France. We are not to suppose, however, that the grandees of Spain, who derive their dignity from the reign of Charles V, do not think themselves superior to others, as in Germany the princes of ancient families believe they are to those who were created by Ferdinand and his successors ; but this difference so flattering in secret to vanity, vanishes from before the eyes of the nation, and especially from those of the sovereign.

These grandees may, indeed, entertain a very high opinion of their own dignity and illustrious birth, but in other respects they are extremely affable and obliging. They are far from possessing that fullen pride attributed to them by European prejudices. Many of them are as remarkable for a gentleness of manners and goodness of heart, as the great in other courts for a haughty and forbidding dignity. It is not that they do not possess that which might be, if not a motive, at least an excuse for the assuming airs of pride; high employments, illustrious birth, and immense fortunes. Indeed, with respect to the latter, they are superior to those of the most opulent at the court of France.

There are no fortunes at Versailles to be compared to those of the duke of Medina Celi, the duke of Alba, the marquis of Penafiel, the count of Altamira, or the duke of Infantado. It must however be confessed that their
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external appearance does not correspond to their fortune. They do not ruin themselves as in France, in large and numerous houses, entertainments and English gardens. All these species of ostentation are in Spain yet in their infancy : theirs is more obscure, but perhaps not less expensive. Numerous sets of mules, rich liveries which are displayed but three or four times a year, and a multitude of servants, are their great articles of expence. The ill management of their estates, into which they seldom or never examine, considerably diminishes their income. They have stewards, treasurers, and various officers, like those of petty sovereigns. They keep in their pay, not only the servants grown old in their service, but those even of their fathers, and the families whence they inherit, and even provide for the subsistence of their children and relations. I was assured that the duke of Arcos, who died in 1780, maintained three thousand persons. This magnificence which disguises itself under
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the veil of charity, appears to have more than one inconvenience, it encourages idleness and causes mismanagement and extravagance, which while dependents are thus multiplied, must escape the most careful vigilance. Notwithstanding all this, there are fewer great families go to decay and ruin in Spain than in most other countries. The simplicity of their manners, their little taste for ostentation, and repugnance to ruinous arts, which, in other kingdoms, are found so seducing, conspire to preserve the estates of the Spanish nobility; but whenever the grandees of Spain shall chuse to imitate the example of those of other courts, their splendour will be equal to that of the most brilliant. This may be judged of by the appearance some have made in foreign countries when the dignity of their nation required a display of magnificence. They have hitherto indeed but little sought the paths which lead to the gratification of ambition. At the beginning of the present century, when they were divided between

tween the two princes who aspired to the throne, when once their passions were roused, they made efforts and displayed talents, which were not always employed in the best cause, but which proved that the latter reigns of the princes of the house of Austria had not benumbed their faculties. A kind of supineness, which continued half a century, succeeded to this fermentation; but in the present reign they have shaken it off, and proved that the most distinguished subjects in a nation are not always the most useless. They embrace with eagerness the profession of arms, which in fact offers them but few temptations, and which in Spain is more subjecting to courtiers than in France. In the political department they have more than one distinguished statesman to boast of, without mentioning that noble personage who is too intimately connected with us to permit me to put his modesty to the blush by an homage which I should have so much pleasure in rendering to his talents and virtues.

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The body of the grandees furnishes at present but few members to the church, which in Spain has not so many attractions for the vanity of great families as in other catholic kingdoms of Europe ; but the few individuals of this class who have devoted themselves to the sacred duties, without regard to worldly considerations, are exemplary for their learning and piety. The only dignity with which they at present are invested, is that of Patriarch of the Indies, who at the court of Spain performs the functions of grand almoner. This is not merely a place of ceremony ; he who holds it is constantly in waiting near the person of the sovereign. No other grandees, except those in actual service are near the monarch : these are the grand-master of his household, his grand equerry, his *Sumiller de corps*, his first equerry, two gentlemen of the chamber, the captain of the guards in quarter, and he who attends the prince of Asturias, his *Sumiller de corps*, and four gentlemen of the chamber, who in turns serve him by two and two.

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This prince and the princess of Asturias, have each their grand-master and grand equerry; which great officers constantly reside near the persons of their highnesses. All the other grandees have their fixed residence at Madrid, whence they are but momentarily absent to make their court. Some, though but few almost constantly reside in the capitals of provinces; but I know none who habitually reside on their estates, which they dignify with the pompous title of *States*; and which, from their extent and the privileges annexed to them, are not altogether unworthy of the title.

The dignity of grandee is not announced by any exterior insignia. Those who are gentlemen of the chamber wear a golden key. There are six orders of knighthood in Spain; but not one to which the grandees have an exclusive right. The most distinguished is the order of the golden fleece, founded by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and which the court of Vienna continues

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to confer in concurrence with that of Madrid, although the former had renounced this prerogative, by the treaty which terminated the great quarrel between Philip V, and the archduke. The number of knights of the golden fleece is very limited in Spain, and this is the order, which of all those in Europe, has best preserved its ancient splendour.

There are also four military orders, founded at the time of the crusades; and since the time of Ferdinand the Catholic, the king has been grand master of them all. They are those of *Santiago*, *Calatrava*, *Monteza*, and *Alcantara*. The three first are distinguished by a red ribbon, and the last by a green one. These four orders have commanderies, which are conferred by the king. They were for a long time given to every class of persons, provided they could bring the requisite proofs. Charles III, recalled them to the spirit of their first institution, and prescribed to himself an irrevocable law to bestow them on none but military men.

men. An honourable distinction for the rest of the subjects was therefore wanting. This he supplied in 1771 by creating a fifth order, which bears his name, and is dedicated to the conception of the virgin. It is composed of two classes: that of the great crosses and simple knights. The great crosses wear the great ribband of the order, sky blue, edged with white. On days of ceremony they are clothed in a great mantle with these two colours, and wear a collar upon which are alternatively displayed the arms of Castile and the king's cypher.

The number of the great crosses should be limited to sixty. When the order was first established the members were chosen from among the grandees, except two of the great officers, one of which was the archbishop of Toledo, and the other the Patriarch of the Indies. A short time afterwards the king made an exception to this rule, in favour of his marine minister, the marquis of Casteljon.

jon. This exception was afterwards extended; though the order was still confined to the most eminent personages of the kingdom, such as the ministers and some general officers, distinguished either by their zeal or services.

The simple knights were two hundred in number, each enjoying a pension of a thousand livres (about forty pounds). A few years since the king bestowed this lesser order upon some persons in France, who are not reckoned in the original number. In their favour he has departed from the statute which rendered this order incompatible with all others, by permitting it to be associated with the cross of St. Louis.

Proofs of nobility are necessary to this latter order, as well as to the four military ones; this I must believe, because I have been assured of it by several people of veracity, otherwise I should have had my doubts of its truth, or have imagined at least that there were several means of eluding the law.

- It is true, that nobility in most of the provinces of Spain, is not difficult to establish.

- It is sufficient that he who aspires to this distinction proves himself, and his ancestors, to have lived nobly, without having exercised any of the professions, few in number, which law and prejudice declare to be vile; he is then reputed a gentleman by descent; *hidalgos*; for in Spain, nobility by creation is unknown. Some humorists have observed, that there are whole provinces of which all the inhabitants are gentlemen: nor is this any great exaggeration.

Philip V. ennobled all the Biscayans. All the Asturians are believed to be descended from the ancient Goths, who took refuge in the mountains of Asturia, and are reputed noble on account of this honourable origin. But there cannot be a more glaring absurdity than to imagine that two or three hundred

thousand men, who settled some centuries ago in a small province, were all noble. If all men measured five feet six inches the words giant and dwarf would be obliterated from the dictionary. Nobility necessarily supposes a more numerous class, who are ignoble. Thus, in fact, there are in Biscay and Asturia, as in other parts of Europe, distinguished families, in the opinion of the public, who have made a great figure in the district in which they reside, either by their opulence, or the places they have held; and whatever may be the pretensions of obscure neighbouring families, the former affect a pre-eminence, which these acknowledge by their homages: this, however, prevents not the latter from cherishing the ideas of grandeur, which preserves in their minds a nobleness undoubtedly preferable to the chimerical nobility of blood: so that if by chance they arrive at some employment less obscure than their birth, they think they have only regained their proper place, and are less insolent and
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vain than most upstarts in other countries. I have more than once remarked this distinguishing characteristic, even in the lowest ranks of the Asturians and Biscayans. They have, in their appearance, something more haughty, and are much less humble in their homages. They are not awed either by titles or riches. A man in place, is in their eyes a fortunate man, who has won in the royal lottery, in which they all have a ticket, and may win in their turn; and this prejudice, ridiculous as it may seem, keeps them on their guard against meanness, and even against degrading crimes.

Notwithstanding those imperceptible gradations, which in Spain separate the nobility from the inferior ranks, the proofs required, in certain cases, are closely examined: but there, as well as in other countries, money and interest procure genealogists not over scrupulous. A reflection, applicable to every nation, may be made with respect to the nobility of Spain, which is, that

the less a monarch is limited, the more arbitrary are these distinctions, and the more irregular the gradations. Despots, even those the least tyrannical, prefer or neglect their subjects, according to their caprices. Unlimited monarchies, more or less, approach this uncertainty: and there are few in which the sovereign authority is less circumscribed than in Spain.

Under the ancient form of government it was more confined; but it changed by degrees, and without commotion. The intermediate ranks scarcely exist in name.

The history of Spain sufficiently proves how great an influence the Cortes had in the most important affairs of government, in war, peace, and the levying of taxes. These, for a long time past, have not been assembled, except for the sake of form. And the sovereigns, without violence, without formally, rejecting their intervention, have
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found means to elude their authority. They promulgate from the throne ordinances under the name of *pragmatiques*, the preambles of which give us to understand, that they claim the same authority as if they had been published in the assembly of the Cortes; which are never convoked except at the accession of a new sovereign to the throne, to administer to him an oath in the name of the nation, and to swear to him fidelity.

On this occasion, letters of convocation are sent to all the grandees, to all persons bearing titles of Castile, to all the prelates, and to every city which has a right to send deputies to the Cortes. The two first classes represent the nobility, the priests fit in the name of the clergy, and the cities which depute one of their magistrates, represent the people. Except on these occasions, of which there have been but two examples in the present century, the Cortes of the whole kingdom have

not been assembled since 1713, when Philip V. convoked them to give their approbation to the pragmatic sanction, which changed the order of succession to the throne.

They are still consulted, for the sake of form, in certain cases; but then the members of which they are composed correspond with each other, without assembling. A faint image of them, however, remains in an assembly, which constantly resides at Madrid, under the name of *Diputados de los Reynos* (deputies of the kingdom).

At their breaking up in 1713, it was regulated, that they should be represented by a permanent committee, whose office it should be to watch over the administration of that part of the taxes, known by the name of *Millones*, and which had been granted under Philip II. with the formal consent of the Cortes, upon certain conditions, which the monarch swore to observe. They retained
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the administration of these imposts until the year 1718, when Cardinal Alberoni, whose ardent and imperious genius was irritated at such shackles, transferred it to the hands of the sovereign. From that time the assembly of deputies of the kingdoms, held no more of the state revenues than the small portion necessary to pay the salaries and defray the expences of the members. These are eight in number, and are chosen in the following manner :

But first it will be proper to observe, that the division of Spain into kingdoms and provinces, as described in maps and geographical treatises, has scarcely any place in fact. The government knows but one division, *the provinces of the crown of Castile, and those of the crown of Aragon.* These two parts of the monarchy differ from each other with respect to the administration, form, and collection of taxes; a distinction which had its origin at the time when Castile and Aragon were united by the

marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand the Catholic, and which since that time has undergone but few alterations. The crown of Aragon possessed only Aragon, properly so called, Catalonia, the kingdom of Valentia, and that of Majorca composed of the ancient Balearic islands, Majorca, Minorca, and Ivica. The crown of Castile possessed the rest of the Spanish monarchy. The deputies of the kingdoms are chosen according to this division. All the provinces of Castile unite to name six; Catalonia and Majorca one; and the Regencies of Valencia and Aragon elect the eighth. These deputies sit but for six years, at the end of which a new nomination takes place in the same manner. As a relict of their ancient rights, they still retain the privilege of being, by virtue of their places, members of the council of Finance, by which the sovereign communicates to the nation the necessity of levying any new tax; and the approbation they are supposed to give to the royal resolution is a shadow of the consent of the Cortes, with

without which taxes could not formerly be either levied or augmented. But it is easy to perceive how feeble this rampart of liberty must be, which is only formed of a small number of citizens, who possess but little real power, are under the controul of government from which they expect favours and preferments, and who, after all, represent only the people, the most numerous but the least respected part of the nation. The provinces of Biscay and Navarre, which have assemblies and particular privileges, send also, on some occasions, deputies to the throne, but they do not make a part of the body of the deputies of the kingdom, and their constituents fix at pleasure the object and duration of their temporary mission.

We may perceive from this sketch how little the soveraign authority is limited in Spain. The will of the monarch is also carried into execution by several permanent bodies, under the name of Councils, who are the interpreters

preters and keepers of the laws, and of which we shall speak more particularly after having conducted the reader to Madrid.

Before we quit the residence of the sovereign, it will be proper to say something farther concerning the ministers who are constantly near his person; and with whom alone, at present, he shares the weight of royalty. Their authority was formerly counter-balanced by the council of state, which was consulted on all important occasions; which still subsists and forms the most distinguished body in the monarchy; but which, since the administration of cardinal Alberoni, has not been permitted to assemble or exercise its functions. The place of counsellor of state is now only honorary, with a considerable salary annexed to it, and furnishes the sovereign with the means of rewarding those of his subjects who have deserved well of the state, in the most distinguished employments. The various offices