

was afterwards more closely connected with France than with the rest of the peninsula; Leon was united to Castile, Aragon absorbed Catalonia, and acquired Sicily and Sardinia, at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In 1469 the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon to Isabella of Castile paved the way for the union of the two kingdoms and the beginning of the greatness of Spain. In 1481 the two sovereigns began the long war with the Moors which was ended in 1492, in spite of the desperate struggle of the defenders, by the capture of Granada.

UNION OF  
CASTILE  
AND  
ARAGON

Thus after nearly eight hundred years of warfare, the last stronghold of the Moors was recovered by the Christians.

CAPTURE  
OF  
GRANADA

The year 1492, famous for the capture of Granada, was also rendered noteworthy in the history of Spain as the year in which Queen Isabella sent out Columbus on his famous voyage of discovery, and thus gained for Spain her future empire in the New World.

### 3. *Portugal*

Portugal was at first only a vassal country dependent on Castile, but it rapidly grew. In 1139 the count became a king, and by the middle of the thirteenth century the kingdom had almost reached its present extent. During the Middle Ages the Portuguese were the boldest sailors in Europe and undertook many voyages of discovery. Their ships sailed southwards along the west coast of Africa. By 1350 they discovered the Canary Islands, Madeira, and the Azores. In 1485 they reached Cape Verde, and in 1486 Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope. His voyage,