

the slave may be flogged without limit, but the scourge is not permitted to be applied to the back of a freeman. Every one of the mulatto prisoners was a free citizen. When therefore they were lashed, the constitution was grossly violated ; but one of the last subjects of praise or reflection to a Spaniard is the first in other countries—legal right.

As might be expected from his character and position, Placido bore with the resolution of a stoic the rude and unsparing stripes, with which his broad shoulders and back, down to the haunches, were speedily covered, with the brutality of a Russian knouting. Not a groan nor a sigh escaped him ; but he fainted away at last from loss of blood, and with such little apparent change that the executioners continued their butchery for some time after he was senseless. He was then loosed from the triangles and tied to a neighbouring stake, after the mummery of a five minutes' court-martial. He was still senseless when bound to the stake—lifeless, for all that his verdugos knew to the contrary. Revenge must not be defrauded of its victim. General O'Donnell has made it rather a familiar practice in Cuba for that which calls itself the law to tie dead men to a stake and shoot them. Placido was thus tried and shot ; but ere he received the fusillade he recovered from his fainting-fit sufficiently to exclaim in an audible tone :—“ *Los dias de la esclavitud son contados !* ” “ The days of slavery are numbered.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PARTY AND FACTION.—GENERAL DEDUCTIONS.

THE blinding power of faction, and the insatiable rapacity of hungry and interested supporters, make each successive government in Spain choose, for its first act, the absurd exhibition of a *felo de se*. Every situation, high and low, held under the previous administration, is remorselessly cleared of its occupants; and eager partisans, without experience, and equally perhaps without capacity, are thrust into the yet warm berths of the beggared outcasts from place. Thus thousands of conspirators and incipient rebels are created at once in a fermented mass, and evil and active spirits set to work for the destruction of the government which has displaced them. No professional career, no pursuits of commerce, no honest or profitable industry, is open to absorb them, and repress their mischievous energies. They have but one *métier*—to turn out as fast as possible the new administration, and reinstate their protectors in power and themselves in subordinate offices. Conspiracies are instantly set on foot, and hatched and fostered in secret clubs. The prevalent vice of Empleomania renders equally discontented the troops of active and intelligent men who are turned out, and the crowds of the minister's own adherents, whom it is impossible to satisfy. Like children born with an hereditary disease,

the seeds of destruction are imbibed by Spanish ministers with the earliest principle of vitality. Till this is amended, there is no peace for Spain.

Party spirit is a vice at home, it is here a poisonous bane. It leads to an enormous inequality of taxation, which in a free country is incredible. The party whose majority is returned to the Ayuntamiénto coolly proceeds to make the minority pay the taxes, inflicting frequently on the community the most unjust and one-sided assessments. There is little or no publicity given to an operation of such paramount importance as the imposing of the taxation of a district; and though detailed lists of names and items are required by law to be published, this is only one out of ten thousand things required by abstract law to be done, but determined by concrete laziness to be neglected. It would be well to associate with the Ayuntamiéntos the principal contributors in making and partitioning the annual assessment, to attach penalties to the absence of the fullest publicity, and to have a permanent board of appeal, of high character. By this means, that worst and meanest description of vengeance, which consists in dishonestly mulcting a political antagonist, might be henceforth avoided, and some popular acquaintance made with the rudiments of constitutional liberty. The provincial departments of the Hacienda or treasury are now regarded as a national calamity; and Esbirros extort and convert to their own uses large sums from the timid and from those of easy disposition, under fearful threats, as arrears of old standing suddenly come to light!

One of the worst results of political hostility in

Spain is, that it has set on foot an extensive and immoral system of espionage, encouraged and supported by each successive government. The remotest cities share in this grievous annoyance, and private life is embittered by suspicion. But the demoralisation of the army is a still more fatal consequence, and is promoted by this means, independently of pecuniary corruption.

Political hatred here is barbed with the malignity of true southern vengeance. The ancient and noble Spanish character runs the risk, unhappily, of being supplanted by falsehood, perfidy, and malice; and the intense ferocity of partisanship is carried to such terrible lengths that, one politician having heartlessly spoken irreverently of a deceased member of the rival party, another stated that, if he chanced to survive the person who offered the insult, he hoped to have "the satisfaction of spitting on his carcase!" They have a forcible adage for political apostacy: "*La traicion es aceptada, pero el traidor es aborrecido.*"—"The treason is accepted, but the traitor is abhorred!"

The intensity with which the passions, excited by political frenzy, rage here, cannot be conceived in our northern latitudes. It follows men to the grave, and defiles their tombs. A republican "notability" died the other day, and as his body was removed to its last resting-place some members of the rival party, from a remote part of the town, sent up fireworks! It was well that the offenders could not be detected, for, unquestionably, their blood would have been shed. The exclamation of one of the insulted party, when a certain individual was pointed out as the probable

instigator of the outrage, was—"We yet will dance upon his grave!"

They note the funerals of each other's "notabilities," with the view of picking holes, and detecting subjects of ridicule and remark. Thus a most accurate register is kept of how many gentlemen make their appearance at the obsequies of a deceased politician; how many in black coats, how many in long coats, how many jacket-men, how many shoeless ragamuffins! At every public *ayuntamiénto*, or gathering, a certain number of idle vagabonds always collect, and these are discounted from the funeral demonstration. It is a glorious triumph to be able to make the bitter remark: "At so-and-so's funeral (calling the deceased by some insulting nickname), the only black coats were the men who carry torches!"

Violent political pamphlets are a weapon as much in fashion now in Spain as they were in England during the dynasty of Napoleon and the trial of Queen Caroline. No sooner had Espartero fallen, than a succession of the most odious, so-called, histories of his life and political career teemed from every press; and when the editors of the *Eco del Comercio* were arrested on the charge of attempting to assassinate Narvaez, out came a pamphlet to prejudge them, entitled "*Los Periodista-Asesinos!*"

Recent political events have served very much to embitter social life in Andalucía, and reduce it, alas! in this respect, to a level with the rest of Spain. The withering simoom that has blown over the north and east, has extended to the southern tracts of the kingdom, and the delightful gaiety, *insouciance*, and *laissez*

aller of the Moorish Spaniard, has suffered no little from the events which have made Andalucía the theatre of a revolutionary struggle. The devil take their *pronunciamientos*! No man, native or stranger, can move in or out without being suspected, and a system of *coercive police* has established itself which leaves no one safe. In the month of September, amongst the fifty-four persons seized by the political chief, Bueno, in the Café del Turco, at Seville, for supposed political delinquencies, there were no fewer than three Englishmen! And in the following month an United States General was lodged in the Castle of Santa Catalina, at Cadiz, for no other crime than a free statement of his opinions in the cafés, and other places of public resort. A secret police is said to have been organised by the present Gefe of Cadiz, with a view chiefly to the detection of the adherents of Ayacuchismo; who, however, confident in their strength and numbers, conspire openly, if conspiring it can be termed which appears to have no definitive design, beyond the hope of climbing their ancient *cucaña* (*mât de cocagne*), and getting again at the good things on top of it, should the progress of events permit. Cadiz and Seville will follow, not lead or guide. They are too lazy and *insouciant* for that. Political hatreds have not burst as yet into many assassinations; though the only marvel is, that the intensity of the passions in motion has not repeatedly led to this result. The practice of carrying secret arms is now very general; and each man is a self-constituted *esbirro* for protection against those who, he imagines, conspire against his life. At the exit

from the theatre at midnight, people are especially watchful—a pleasant state of things! The dreams and the waking thoughts of all men during the autumn and winter have been of a *reaccion*, and arms have been constantly stored for the struggle which was momentarily apprehended. One assassination did take place—that of the unfortunate Ocio Pinedo—whose only fault was that he wagged too loose a tongue; and its perpetrators were never found. For many months no man felt safe who had heart enough to speak his political sentiments freely; for, in the words of Arcilla:—

“ No hay contra el desleal seguro puerto,
Ni enemigo mayor que el encubierto.”

“ There is no security against the disloyal, no enemy more formidable than the covert traitor!”

The moderate men of Spain have a hunger and thirst of government. The wise and the grave are weary of contemplating the spectacle of lawless juntas and a political soldiery, of local and self-constituted bodies, which rise up on every petty occasion, address or dictate to the sovereign, in absolute independence of the Government, and present a sad spectacle of utter disorder and anarchy. It is well that municipalities should be independent; but it is ill that they should affect the pretension of usurping the powers of the Executive, and wielding high prerogative. It is well that there should be a national militia; but it is ill that this body, instead of obeying the Government, should impose its will as a law, and mulct the people, as has been too often witnessed of late, by

forced and insupportable imposts. It is right that there should be an army; but it is not to be endured that it should make laws with the bayonet, and shoot ministers into office from the mouths of its artillery. Audacious factions must be curbed, irregular ambition controlled; and an echo must be found for that cry of peace which is raised from every point of the Spanish monarchy.

Spain, amid all her misfortunes, is great and beautiful still, and the national character, with all its vices, is still pre-eminently noble. The lightest, gayest hearts of Europe are to be found amongst her sons, and, unless where they are swayed by political frenzy, they are still the receptacle of every generous sentiment. The *mas picaro y pillo* amongst them is ever the lofty *caballero*. They may be revengeful, but they are seldom base; they may be daring, but they are never mean. They may rob on the highway, but they do not steal; they may be cruel, murderous even at times, but never without sophistical justification, presumed necessity, or to revenge what they regard as atrocious wrongs. There is more turpitude in one London police sheet than in a month's record of all that passes in the bosom of Spain. There are more cruel, heartless, and atrocious murders, too, in the British Islands than in the wide Peninsula, with its equivocal character. "Get a good name (says the Spaniard) and lie a-bed till noon." Personal outrage I believe to be rarer here than in England, considerably rarer than in Ireland, and even bandit outrages do not equalize the scales. Conduct yourself properly, and you will find security in almost every part of Spain.

The natives are proud of maintaining the national character of "*buenos Españoles*" in their intercourse with strangers; and there are few Spaniards who would not shudder in their dealings to be regarded as otherwise than the "*pundonoroso caballero*," the honourable-minded gentleman.

Let us hope for a speedy end to these barren throes of labour, these mocking and tumultuous efforts, which have liberty for their watchword, and with many, for their aim, but which never fail to end in despotism, whether military, monarchical, or popular. Let us hope for a durable reconciliation of parties, for a term to the Revolution. As in vulgar individual broils, the only gain is blows; even the victor is forced to take to his bed, and cuts and contusions are the miserable trophies. Let us hope for a new era. The character of the present representatives of England and France at Madrid is a pledge that the envenomed ingredients of foreign intrigue will no more be flung into the cauldron, and that a bald pretence for agitation will no longer be renewed. The silent but deep antagonism of France and England will be exchanged for a frank and honourable co-operation, and the future conduct of their envoys at Madrid will be a guarantee for the peace of Spain and of the world. What Spain requires is administration—what Spain requires is a replenished treasury—what Spain requires is a tranquil and enlightened spirit in her population, which will prove them worthy of the institutions they have conquered. What she wants is an object which may combine her rival parties—moderate progress. The fertility of her soil, the sources of her natural wealth,

her commerce, her agriculture, all require to be awakened—new communications to be opened, new springs of activity developed, a navy to be created, and a vigilant administration of justice. Civilisation, moral and material, tempts her with all its blessings.

There are symptoms at last of a desire amongst Spaniards for union, symptoms of a thirst for repose, which the nation needs, and will have before the lapse of any great interval of time; though it is easier to predict the result, than to specify the period, of its accomplishment. 'This great and noble country, this proud and generous people, are not doomed for ever to the curse of Cain, nor is the fairest portion of the earth, which ruled nearly half its circumference, Empress at once of the East and of the West, so hopelessly distracted by the dissensions of her sons, that she must merge her ancient glory in the shame of being unable to rule her own people. There is no Spaniard to-day who does not repel the imputation of being a Revolutionist; may we see this sense of stability and this abstract love of order realised in practice, as well as professed in theory; and while the Progresista shuns Revolution, may the Moderado shun Reaction. For the grand misfortune of Spain is not to know how to govern herself.

Whatever the faults of the Spanish people, they have exhibited invariably during the present century a rugged and sturdy spirit of independence. The fierce determination with which they rose against the French yoke, and the indomitable energy with which they persevered in their resistance, have been paralleled by the vigour displayed by them in resisting the

liberticide attempts of their own rulers. The despotic decrees issued by Ferdinand VII. at Valencia, on the 4th May, 1814, and at Port St. Mary's on the 1st October, 1823, the one with the customary craft of tyrants based on the fall of Napoleon, the other on the French invasion under the Duke d'Angoulême, were soon made inoperative, amid all their disastrous consequences, by the unquenchable energies inherent in a great nation. The subsequent *despotismo ilustrado* of Leo Bermudez, and later still the attempts of Cristina on municipal liberty, were as surely and powerfully foiled; and the intrigues of a Camarilla and of unworthy Spaniards have as slender a chance to-day. Although some constitutional changes are about to be introduced by the Moderados, there is little likelihood of any attempt being made to filch the popular institutions; but if made, by infallible tests, the people will be the stronger.

In the midst of all these broils and dissensions, and in defiance of the turbulence of her sons, Spain is decidedly and visibly advancing. The progress, to be sure, is slow and feeble, but may be traced in every direction. Material improvement develops itself in despite of political obstacles, comfort begins to be comprehended, and faction cannot check the tendencies of the age. New communications are opened, new roads constructed, old ones repaired and made more available to the community; minerals are explored, and foundries established for the melting of ores, with the aid of British skill and capital; the public vehicles are multiplied; inns with passable accommodation start up here and there for the first

time in the lapse of centuries; opposition on the bustling road gives its spur to speculative enterprise. The shipwright's cheerful sounds begin once more to be heard, and the Guadalquivir is about to be made navigable to Córdoba. Happily these are matters in which governments have no concern, and the local Ayuntamientos and Provincial Deputations in not a few quarters make an honest and successful application of the local taxes. New companies spring up for the working of profitable mines, and fostering of manufacturing industry. An association has been formed for the development of the colonial wealth of the Philippines; improved agricultural processes are likewise at intervals introduced; a system of telegraphs is about to be established; even a railway is more than spoken of. No roseate tints of fancy are added to this picture, but facts are stated which prove what a mighty thing is national vitality. The incumbent weight on the acanthus makes it sprout into more fantastic shapes, but still the growth is incessant; and if scoundrels were not at the top of the tree, the plant would wax tall and beautiful.

THE END.

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