towards the monarchists, he had another task which, if not more difficult, must have been to him personally more disagreeable, to vindicate it from the reproach of the Republicans. He who makes a study of Spanish politics will soon find that there is a great number of parties, which are almost hopelessly divided. There is not only a Republican party, but half a dozen such parties. Some of these openly advocate insurrection as the readiest means—and, as they think, the only means—to inaugurate the Republic. Against these Castelar is utterly opposed. Ungracious as it might seem to part from those who had stood by him in the conflicts of a former day, yet he could not sacrifice his convictions of duty even at the call of friendship. As far as political action could accomplish the object, he was willing to go; but when it came to armed insurrection, with all it might include of misery to the country, he shrank from the abyss.

Some of the more ardent Republicans had taunted him with being "behind the age," because he was not as rash and reckless as they! Alas! he must confess he was growing old! It was a new experience for him, who had been not long ago denounced as the leader of the Radicals, now to be reproached as too conservative and reactionary! By-and-by these youthful champions of the Republic would leave him far behind, and look upon him as little more than an Egyptian mummy!

I observed that these retorts were more enjoyed on the other side of the Chamber than on his own, and that the Monarchists cheered loudly, while the Republicans were silent. Yet Castelar is not one to taunt his political friends, even though he may suffer from their unjust imputations. To differ from them was evidently a matter of pain. He regretted deeply to be separated from his old companions-in-arms. But painful as it was, he must

be true to his convictions of what was for the good of his country. What it needed was not revolution, but stability of some kind—order, industry, and peace. And so he concluded: "Above all political differences; above all parties; above the mere form of government, whether it shall be a Monarchy or a Republic—I prize the peace and tranquillity of my beloved Spain!"

Such were a few of the points of a speech which lasted for hours. Indeed it was not ended that day (the strain was too great for one sitting), but concluded only on the following afternoon, when, as before, he touched, as it were, every note in the scale of human feeling, moving his hearers at will to laughter or to tears; but above all minor emotions, inspiring in them a lofty political enthusiasm.

The effect of such eloquence it is impossible to describe. If we were to take this speech merely as we find it reported in the journals of the Cortes, and undertake to analyze it, we might find it difficult to explain the secret of its power: for while it was brilliant from beginning to end, full of poetry and imagination, its power was not in these alone; nor yet in its force of argument, or its patriotic appeals; but in all combined, and fused together by the heat that glowed in his own breast. It was the man behind the words that gave them their effect: it was a human finger that touched us, as well as a human voice that thrilled us. The impression of course could not be fully appreciated by a stranger. I could follow it but imperfectly, from my ignorance of the language; and yet, as the Spanish is largely derived from the Latin, I could understand half the words, so that I could keep the run of the speech, even if I had not had (as I did) Mr. Stroebel at my side, to whisper the points the speaker was making; added to which was the best possible commentary in the looks of

the audience. Taken altogether, it was as great an intellectual treat as I have ever enjoyed—as great, I believe, as can be enjoyed in any country in this generation.

Once more I went to see Castelar, when I was no longer a stranger, but I may almost say a friend. Again we sat on the same sofa, and again did his eyes look straight into mine; and as he warmed with the conversation, he kept unconsciously moving his seat closer to me till he took hold of both the lapels of my coat and shook them violently, as if by this personal contact he would infuse a little of his Spanish fire into my cold American breast. It must have been cold indeed if it did not catch some warmth from such magnetism. My heart was all aglow as I looked at him, and remembered that this was the man, so full of life and of all the impulses of a generous nature, who had once been condemned to death! Thank God he "still lives," and Spain lives and will not die!

I had found at Laurent's, in Madrid, a photograph which it was said that Castelar preferred to any other that had been taken of him, and it occurred to me that it would have an additional value if it had his autograph, which he not only gave, but added such kind words for his "amigo," and for the Great Republic from which I came, as made it still more precious; and then, as I rose to leave, he put his arm round me in the gentle Spanish way, that seemed to say that he should always think of me as a friend.

Such interviews, with such a parting, naturally left a very warm feeling in my heart. But some have said to me that, with all his eloquence, he is not to be relied on, for that he is so carried away by his imagination, and so ambitious of oratorical effect, that he cannot resist the temptation of saying a brilliant thing even though it be at the sacrifice of sound reasoning, or even of historical

truth. "He is an orator," they say, "but nothing more—a mere rhetorician, a poet, a dreamer, but with no practical wisdom for public affairs." But it was not thus that Senor Moret, the Secretary of State (in the only interview which I had with him), spoke of Castelar. Though himself, as a Monarchist, of the opposite party, he represented his great antagonist as a man, not only of strong political convictions, but of real administrative ability. Castelar was his old teacher at the University, and I thought there was a certain tenderness in the way the pupil spoke of one who had been his master. Salmeron, he thought, was more of a doctrinaire—a man of theories; but Castelar, he said, had shown a high degree of political wisdom, notably in the affair of the ship Virginius, which was taken off the island of Cuba, with her decks crowded with American filibusters, some of whom were shot, an affair which caused great excitement at the time in the United States (Sickles, our Minister at Madrid, was ready to demand his passports), and might have involved us in a war with Spain but for the prompt action of Castelar, who was then President, and who instantly disavowed the act of the Spanish commander, and ordered full reparation. This decided action at a critical moment, Moret thought, showed a degree of sagacity, together with a courage and firmness (for every one of his Ministers was against him), which entitled him to an honorable place among the political leaders of Spain.

"An orator! Only an orator!" Even if it were so, yet "every man hath his proper gift of God," and one of the greatest is that of stirring men to high enthusiasms and resolves by patriotic sentiments, uttered with a mighty voice, and with that fervid imagination which captivates a people. He deserves well of his country who, gifted with an eloquence little short of inspiration, has never used it

but in the cause of liberty. Nor has he desired it for his country only, but has been just as ardent for the abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies, in Cuba and in Porto Rico, as for liberty at home. He has been the advocate of the cause of the enslaved and the oppressed of every country and clime. Thus he has proved himself a lover of his race, of whom it may be said as truly as of Ben Adhem :

"Write him as one that loves his fellow-men."

And so I give my hand and praise to the illustrious Spaniard whose great heart beats in unison with the heart of humanity, and whose voice is always the voice of liberty.

CHAPTER X.

THE DECADENCE OF SPAIN.

"Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments; whoever wishes to know how great States may be made feeble and wretched; should study the history of Spain."—MACAULAY.

Gibbon begins his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire with one of his majestic sentences, which seems to strike the keynote of the grand yet melancholy tale which he has to tell: "In the second century of the Christian era the Empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind." Since the fall of the Roman Empire no power on earth has attained, we might almost say aspired, to universal dominion; but of the States of Europe, none has come nearer to it than Spain in the sixteenth century. "The Empire of Philip the Second," says Macaulay, "was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that during several years his power over Europe was greater than even that of Napoleon. . . . In America his dominions extended on both sides of the Equator into the

temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted, in the season of his greatest power, to a sum ten times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth. He had a standing army of fifty thousand excellent troops, when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. . . . He held, what no other prince in modern times has held, the dominion both of the land and of the sea. During the greater part of his reign, he was supreme on both elements. His soldiers marched up to the capital of France; his ships menaced the shores of England. . . . Spain had what Napoleon desired in vain—ships, colonies, and commerce. She long monopolized the trade of America and of the Indian Ocean. All the gold of the West and all the spices of the East, were received and distributed by her. Even after the defeat of the Armada, English statesmen continued to look with great dread on the maritime power of Philip."*

How that which was the first power in Europe in the sixteenth century lost its preëminence; how from the highest position it sank to the lowest, till that which had been the greatest became the meanest of kingdoms; is a study in history which is full of interest and instruction. Perhaps its very greatness was one cause of its fall: States, like individuals, sometimes grow dizzy when elevated to too great a height, from which they are precipitated to their ruin. The moment of the culmination of a great power may be the moment at which its decline begins; the seeds of its growth may prove also the seeds of its decay. The discovery of America, which came in the very same year with the expulsion of the Moors, completed the glory of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, as it extended their dominion to another hemisphere; but it had its dangers also. It awakened a

* Review of Lord Mahon's War of the Spanish Succession.

spirit of enterprise that sent Spanish ships on voyages of discovery over all the seas and oceans of the world, which brought back riches to swell the national pride. But this very influx of gold was a doubtful good, for while it added to the magnificence of princes, it introduced a luxury which, too long indulged, saps the vigor of the most stalwart races. The mines of Mexico and Peru, which enriched the grandees of Spain, did not in the same degree add to the permanent wealth of the country or its military power.

But a still greater calamity was the destruction of the old liberties of Spain; for in its earlier and better days the air of freedom blew fresh and strong over the Spanish mountains. There is a common impression that Spain is so thoroughly monarchical, and so used to a strong government, that she rather likes it, preferring an iron rule to greater liberty. That this impression is not just, is proved by many tragic and many pathetic incidents in her eventful history.

At the dinner at Senor Castelar's, I was expressing to a member of the Cortes my surprise at the bold spirit shown in the debates to which I had listened. He answered (smiling a little at my discovery) that this ardor for liberty was no new thing here, but a legacy from former centuries; that Spain was free before England was; that a hundred and fifty years before the Revolution of 1688 (of which English historians make so much, as if it were the very birth of liberty), the same spirit showed itself here; in proof of which he related the following passage in Spanish history, which, as it was new to me, may be new to others: that when Charles V. summoned a Parliament to meet at Valladolid to vote fresh supplies for his wars in Germany, the city of Toledo sent two delegates, giving them positive and explicit instructions NOT

to comply with the royal demand, saying "What do we care about the Emperor's wars in Germany? They are nothing to us. Have we not paid enough already? We will pay no more." Thus instructed, the delegates departed, but when they reached Valladolid, and found themselves within the atmosphere of a court, subdued perhaps by flatteries, or by more substantial means of persuasion, they voted *for* the supplies which they had been instructed to oppose. Having performed this act of servility, they returned to give an account of their stewardship. But the bold burghers of Toledo were not to be appeased by lame excuses, and without more ado took these unfaithful servants *and hanged them at the gates of the city!*

Nor was this a solitary instance of resistance to royal power. Centuries before the time of Charles V., the Spaniards were noted for their sturdy independence. The people of one kingdom for a long time would not accept a king without conditions. "Law first and kings afterwards!" was the proud device of Aragon. From time immemorial they had enjoyed certain rights of local government, called *fueros*, which they stubbornly refused to yield; and when they took a king, they made their allegiance, such as it was, in this rather brusque and uncourtly fashion: "We, every one of whom is as good as you, and who all together are a great deal better than you, make you our king so long as you shall keep our *fueros:* OTHERWISE NOT."

Such was the inheritance of liberty which the Spaniards received three centuries ago. But their spirits were broken by a system of oppression the most cruel that ever crushed the life out of any people. That very Charles V., who had been supported so loyally by his people in all his foreign wars, was the great instrument of their subjuga-

tion, putting down the *Communeros*, the advocates of municipal rights, and beheading their leader, Padilla, with two of his compatriots. The fate of this hero of Spanish liberty was very much like that of Lord Russell in the Tower of London. Like Russell, Padilla had a wife of the same heroic mould, to whom he wrote on the eve of his execution a letter full of devotion to her and to his country, to keep up her courage in that awful hour.* The story is one of the most pathetic episodes of Spanish history.

For two long reigns—that of Charles V. and Philip II. —the great object of the government seemed to be to kill the national life. Of course that was not its professed object, which was simply the extirpation of heresy; but the means were so disproportioned to the end; the instrument employed was so wide in its sweep, and so merciless in its operation; that it cut down good and bad alike, or rather far more of the good than of the bad; and if it could have been carried out to the full extent—that is, if human strength had not failed in the bloody work—it would in time have not only extirpated heresy, but extirpated half the Spanish people; and if carried out equally in other countries, would have extirpated a large part of the human race. That instrument was the Inquisition!

Terrible as this instrumentality was, it was deemed necessary to uphold the power of Rome. The Protestant Reformation, that had swept over half of Europe, had crossed the Pyrenees, and appeared in different cities of Spain. It must be stamped out at any cost. The laws of the country were insufficient, even when supported with the utmost rigor by the civil tribunals. To strike terror into the hearts of all who were wavering in the faith, something must be devised, more quick to see and more prompt

* The letter is given in Prescott's edition of Robertson's History of Charles V., Vol. II., p. 32.

to execute; and this was found in a new Tribunal, wholly independent of the civil power; which should serve as a spiritual police, watching with its hundred eyes every city and town in Spain; nay, every village, even to the smallest hamlet in the mountains; and striking here, there, and everywhere, with such sudden strokes, cutting down the tallest heads, as gave the impression of a mysterious, invisible, and yet everywhere present and irresistible power.

When the idea of the Inquisition was first conceived, probably no one dreamed how terrible an agency it was to become; else surely it could not have been born in any heart in which lingered a spark of human feeling, of pity or mercy; least of all could it have owed its existence in Spain to a woman, and not to a Catherine de Medicis, but to the gentlest and sweetest of her sex, the good Queen Isabella, the friend and patron of Columbus. This seems the strangest of mysteries, and yet it is not so when we consider that the gentle Queen, who would have turned away her face from the sight of any act of cruelty, was completely under the power of her spiritual advisers; and when her confessor held up before her the crucifix, the emblem of that Cross on which her Saviour died, and asked if she would shrink from a duty to her Lord, what could she do—poor, troubled, trembling soul!—but sink down in passive submission to a will stronger than her own?

No sooner was authority obtained for the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain, than it began to take proportions in keeping with the tremendous work it was to perform. "Palaces" were erected for it in all the large cities: for such was the name they bore, though they might have been called castles as well, their huge stone walls and barred windows giving them a fortress-like character, that often recalled the Bridge of Sighs in Venice, with

"A palace and a prison on each hand."

These palace-prisons were intended to be a visible sign to all beholders that the Holy Office was not a myth, but a present and terrible reality. If any were so thoughtless as to imagine otherwise, they were quickly undeceived: for their senses soon apprised them that there was something in the air; it was as if a pestilence were abroad, which might well hush the mirth of the gay Spanish population. Men spoke with bated breath, lest a whisper might furnish a pretext for an accusation. No man was safe even in his own house, for a spy might be in his bed-chamber. Even while playing with his children, listening to their innocent prattle, the servant that swept his room might be listening for some unguarded word that could be reported; and at midnight, while sleeping the sleep of innocence and peace, he might be awakened by "the mutes," those terrible officials who deigned him not a word, while they took him from the bosom of his family, never to return. Once that he passed the door of the Inquisition, he knew that there was no escape. Over the gloomy portal might be written, as over the gates of hell,

"Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!"

He was thrown into a dungeon without the slightest intimation of what he was arrested for, or by whom he was accused. Here he was left for weeks or months to break his spirit, and then brought before a bench of cowled monks, "a court organized to convict," who were eager, not to ascertain the truth, but to make him commit himself. If questions failed, the instruments of torture were ready, and as his emaciated form was stretched upon the rack, which wrenched and tore his body, some faint word might drop from his quivering lips that could be interpreted as a confession, upon which he was immediately judged to be guilty, and the Inquisitors, with holy horror at the enormity of his crime (!), condemned him to death.

It adds to the ghastly grimness of this horrible scene, that these accusers and condemners of the innocent would not execute their own sentences. They, the holy men, could not shed blood (!), but having given over to death men who were a thousand times better than themselves, passed them over to the civil power for execution. This formal delivery of its victims was the Auto-da-Fé, which had in it so many of the elements of horror, in the cruelties inflicted upon helpless innocence, upon men with hoary hair, and even upon women and children, that it had a fascination for those who delighted in blood; and so it was made a public spectacle, that was exhibited in the presence of the Court, and of the Foreign Ambassadors, who were invited to witness it (as they would be now to a bull-fight), and of an enormous crowd of spectators.

When an Auto-da-Fé was "given" in Madrid (for the writers of that day speak of it as they would of a theatrical exhibition), the scene of the performance was in the Plaza Major—a square not far from the Puerta del Sol. I have been to it many times: for there is no spot in the capital so full of mournful suggestions. Here, sitting on a balcony in front of the royal residence, the King and Queen and attendants on the Court looked down on the long procession of victims (dressed in garments on which were figures of devils tossing them into the flames) who had appeared before the Tribunal of the Inquisition; and having gone through the form of a trial, and been condemned, were now delivered over to the civil power to be burned. This formality having been gone through with, the procession was again set in motion, and led out of the city to the place of death, where they were bound to the stake.

Such scenes of horror, recorded in history, were to come up after more than two centuries as a powerful argument for Liberty. A few years since there was an ani-

mated discussion in the Cortes on the subject of religious toleration—a step in advance which was opposed by the old Spanish Conservatives—when a Deputy arose (it was Senor Don José Echegargy, former Minister of Finance), who touched another chord by the mention of the following simple incident. He said that, in taking his walk that morning in the outskirts of the city, he had come to a place where workmen were making excavations in the street. As they struck their spades into the earth, they uncovered the surrounding soil, which, as it was exposed to view, appeared to be composed of several distinct layers. A closer inspection disclosed the fact that one of these was of *ashes*, in which here and there were fragments of human bones! A little farther from the centre, where the dying flames had spared some vestiges of humanity, had been discovered a ring that may have once graced a woman's finger; and farther still, a lock of hair! These slight remains told the story of three hundred years ago. This was the famous Quemadéro, the burning-place for the victims of the Autos-da-Fé; and these ashes, these charred bones, the maiden's ring, the lock of hair, recalled one of the most awful of human tragedies, when on this spot manhood and womanhood, the husband and wife, blooming youth and hoary age, the father and daughter, clasped in a last embrace, perished together! Such a resurrection of the dead was more powerful than any argument. Spanish bigotry might remain stubborn against the voices of the living, but was silent in presence of those whose unburied ashes were but just uncovered to the light of day. The picture was a plea, more eloquent than words, for that religious toleration which should make such scenes impossible forevermore.

But for the time that the Inquisitors were at work, no thought of the indignation of future ages troubled them:

they were too eager in the pursuit of blood, too mad with rage to kill and to destroy. Even Charles V. was so carried away with the fanaticism of the age that he was as full of zeal for destruction as any Dominican monk who sat in the secret tribunal of the Inquisition. Yet tyrant as he was, he was in some respects not only the most powerful, but truly the greatest, monarch of his time. He was not only King of Spain, but Emperor of Germany; and thus living in different countries, mingling with different peoples, and speaking different languages, one would think he must have learned something of the wisdom, if not of the virtue, of toleration. But such was his Spanish bigotry, that all lessons were lost upon him. Luther stood before him at the Diet of Worms, but he sat unmoved by that magnificent plea for conscience and for liberty. Indeed he grew colder and harder to that degree that he became almost ashamed of his moderation, and even touched that lowest moral state in which he repented of his virtues, regretting that he had not broken his pledge of safe-conduct to Luther, and burned him at the stake! Even age did not subdue him to a gentler mood. Once indeed it is said that a grain of sense penetrated his narrow brain. When he retired to the Convent of Yuste to pass the last year of his life, he amused himself with studying the mechanism of clocks; but finding that he could not make them work as he wished, he confessed his folly, in that he had been all his life trying to make men think alike and believe alike, when he could not even make two clocks keep time together! But this was a transient impression. Worn out with the labors of his life, and under the bondage of his narrow creed, his mind sank back into the old groove, and he remained a persecutor to the last; and on his death-bed charged Philip to cherish the Holy Inquisition, and extirpate heresy from Spain!

Philip bettered the instructions. His heart was cold, and his temper hard and unrelenting. Entrusted with unlimited power, he would have nothing stand in the way of his imperious will. So impassive was he that it is said he never smiled *but once*, and that was when he heard of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, at which he laughed outright! So fierce was his intolerance that it is told of him, that once when he sat watching an Auto-da-Fé, one of the condemned, who had been a faithful and loyal subject, cried out to him against the injustice and cruelty of his fate, to which the King made reply: "If thou wert mine own son, I would bring the fagots to kindle the flames for such a wretch as thou art!"

This work of destruction went on for the more than forty years that Philip reigned, through which he continued obdurate and cruel to the last, with the natural effect upon his unhappy country. True, Spain in the time of Charles V. and Philip II. was so powerful that she could stand a great deal; but continued wars abroad, with such defeats as that of the Spanish Armada, combined with this constant blood-letting at home, made a drain upon her vital forces that began to tell, and with this commenced her slow but sure decline.

The deadly effect of the Inquisition was not measured solely by the number of those who perished—a point on which I have found it difficult to obtain precise information. One who is well read in Spanish history, gives me his opinion that from the establishment of the Inquisition to the end, there perished (of Christians, not including Jews or Moors) not less than half a million of persons! This seems incredible, but whether there were more or fewer, still more important than the number was the character of the victims, for these men and women who thus marched to the stake, showed by that

very act their own sincerity and integrity, in that they were too honest to profess what they did not, and could not, believe. They were the excellent of the earth—good fathers and mothers, good husbands and wives, good sons and daughters, good brothers and sisters. In sacrificing them, Spain sacrificed the very best portion of her whole population, that which she could least afford to lose.

But the evil did not end here. These frequent Autos-da-Fé had an effect far beyond the immediate circle of the condemned. The whole population was stricken with terror: men hardly dared to speak, unless it were to proclaim aloud their allegiance to the Church. Those who were skeptical at heart, assumed an appearance of zeal lest they should be suspected and dragged before a secret tribunal where they should find no mercy. And so the nation was given up to the most demoralizing of all passions, cruelty and fear, in which its whole life stood still; its very heart ceased to beat.

This reign of terror, which began with Philip (in whose time the power of Spain culminated), continued through his successors—a long line of kings, of whom it were hard to say if one were better than the other, the only difference seeming to be in degrees of badness. No matter who reigned, whether one of the House of Austria, or of the House of Bourbon, all were alike incapable or tyrannical, the ready victims of intriguing priests, the tools of the worst of men and the worst of women. But all "cherished the Holy Inquisition" as much as Philip, and with the same result, that the life-blood of the nation slowly oozed away, till Spain fell back from the first place in Europe to the second, and the third, and fourth, and lower still, as the decadence continued almost without interruption for two hundred years—those gloomy centuries in which the Holy Office had full sweep to do its appointed work. And