

chiselled face, long black locks smoothed over, downcast eyes, a meek demeanour generally—the characteristics are identical. The voice of this man, who essayed so awful a *rôle*, was low and sweet; and, to give him his due, he moved as if he was filled with respect for his dangerous part. The Virgin comes on the scene in the same Act. She is clad in blue nun-like raiment. The people who filled up the background wore sandals, and had white towels, swathed in folds like those of the turban, round their raven-black hair. The entry into Jerusalem was shown, the Saviour being mounted on a white ass. The orchestra here woke up, and played a joyous strain to a chorus commencing—

“ Con palmas y oliva
Y alegre cantar
Y pintadas flores
De lindos colores
Hijas de Judá
Llegad ! Llegad ! ”

and terminating with a hosannah to the Redeemer. The only anachronisms in dress that impressed me in this first Act were a silk net with which one

young person of Jerusalem confined her rebellious hair, and a strip of black velvet which another had fastened round her throat, bringing out the whiteness of her skin by contrast. In the second Act Caiaphas speaks of Jesus as the fomentor of a "thousand conflicts between Church and State." The Last Supper is pictured after Leonardo da Vinci, and Judas comes into relief, a sullen scowler, who overdoes his part thus early. In the garden scene in the third Act the figure of Jesus in prayer is shown with a ray of *luz Dumont*, the lime-light of our London stage, playing upon it! I left my seat after this, and loitered outside till the Crucifixion scene was on. At Ammergau it was appallingly impressive; here it was sensational purely. The drama wound up with the bursting open of the sepulchre. I came away free from any desire to witness Don Enrique Zumel's production again. Without absolutely shocking one's feelings on a subject which should be sacred and approached reverently, if at all, his Passion Play offended fine taste throughout because of the obtrusive staginess of its action, get-up, and surroundings. Still the

actors were occasionally applauded, and the audience left in a contented mood.

But the provisional rulers took care that those under their guardianship should have stronger pabulum than spoon-meat.

Napoleon I., unless the tale be a legend, used to order a new coat of gilding to be laid on the dome of the Invalides when the people of Paris chafed under his tyranny. That gave them something to talk about—supplied a sensation of twenty-four hours. The Spanish Republican governors are working on the same principle. *Panes et circenses* was the charter of the Roman plebs, “pan y toros” is that of the plebs of Madrid. I do not know how it is with the bread, but the rulers let the lieges have bulls galore to occupy their minds. There are grand corridas for professionals and amateurs. Nor is bull-fighting the only pastime provided for the populace; cock-fighting, with game-birds from the Canary Islands, is also carried on every Sunday morning in a pit constructed for the purpose, mains are scientifically fought, and money is prodigally squandered. All countries have their peculiarities.

In some, people go racing on the Lord's Day; in others they are content with getting drunk in the bosoms of their families.

NOTE BY MY VERY LEARNED AND AMIABLE ACCOMPLICE, DR. DANN.—That great writer on Spanish folk-lore, Mesonero Romanos, better known as “*El curioso parlante*,” who flourished some fifty years since, seems utterly ignorant of the record of the “*entierro*.” His account only goes to show that Spain is the most conservative country of Europe. A huge “*sardina*” placed on the top of a bier is carried by a number of fellows in carnival costume, each of them having on his head a cone of immense height, somewhat resembling the dunce's cap that was formerly such a usual thing in English village-schools. In front, and at the back of the procession, appears a crowd of young men and of girls from the slums of Southern Madrid, in three groups, called “*coros*,” or choirs. There is the “*coro de mancebos*,” or young men's choir; the “*coro de doncellas*,” or girls' choir; and the “*coro de inocentes*,”

or innocents' choir. The *locus in quo* is that part of the south of the Spanish capital which extends from the Vistillas de San Francisco to the Church of San Lorenzo; for, in contradistinction to Paris, the South of Madrid is almost exclusively inhabited by what M. Gambetta used to call the new social strata, while Mr. Bright spoke of them many years ago as the *residuum*. In connection with the sardina, and rising on the same coffin, a figure of "Uncle Marcos" is carried, somewhat similar in form to the stuffed Guy Fawkeses which are carried about in the streets of London on the 5th of November. When the procession has reached the Puente Toledana, the figure of Uncle Marcos is burnt on a funeral pile, and the sardina is buried in a ditch prepared on purpose. While all this is going on, songs intended to be parodies of the Catholic Church hymns and canticles are chanted by the accompanying choirs, and altogether the performance is, for all practical purposes, a parody of the Church processions so frequent in Spain and all Southern countries. When it is all over, a good many of the actors indulge in libations. Not un-

frequently the burial of the sardina is followed by a free fight, and half a dozen dead or wounded are the outcome of the battle. Disgusting as the whole performance may appear, more especially the blasphemous simulacre of religious worship, it must be admitted in palliation that the very idea of mocking the rites of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church never so much as enters the minds of the performers, who would repudiate with the utmost indignation the notion of intentionally placing themselves outside the pale of the Church, and violating the "buenas costumbres" by what they are doing.

CHAPTER VIII.

Another Chat with Mentor—A Startling Solution of the Spanish Question—The Penalties of Popularity—The Republic another Saturn—The New Civil Governor—The Government Bill—Outside the Palace of the Congress—Providential Rain—Wild Rumours—Federal Threats—The Five Civil Guards—Inside the Chamber—The Great Debate—The Two Reports—Compromise—Minor Speechmakers—A Pickwickian Contention—The Division—Victory for the Ministry—The Five Civil Guards Trot to Stables.

ON the morning of March 8th, I met my Anglo-Spanish Mentor in the reading-room of the hotel. To my usual inquiry as to the condition of health of the Republic, he replied that he thought we were nearing the critical point.

“There is a cataclysm impending,” he said. “We have got beyond the stage of changing the names of streets and substituting the Hymn of Riego for the Royal March. Everybody agrees that a *coup d'état* is necessary, and may be imminent; we want

an intelligent despotism—but the despot must always be a man of our own party. There is the hitch. Castelar probably may have some amiable hobby, like Lamartine, of ‘employment for adults and education for the young.’ Whatever be the sequel of the trial of strength, I hope we may have a strong administration, not one like the present, where the Minister of Grace and Justice is all grace and no justice.

“Do you know,” he added, after a pause, “I have an idea as to the solution of this Spanish question?”

“What is it, pray?”

“SELL SPAIN TO ENGLAND!”

I roared with derisive laughter.

“I am serious,” he continued. “This is the age of arbitration. Why not of colossal international barter? We could rule the country as we rule India, set Sikh against Hindoo, and play off Ghoorka against both.”

“You do not reckon with Spanish pride,” I said.

“Bah! The pride that lowered itself to the acceptance of foreign royalty might condescend to pocket foreign gold.”

“When Pedro brought me my chocolate this morning he told me there had been demonstrations in some of the lower quarters.”

“Yes; but they are easily accounted for. The populace do not see the impracticable promises of the Republicans realized, and are impatient for the millennium of liberty, equality, and fraternity, with no work and lots to eat superadded. But the demonstration was very trivial, it limited itself to the sticking of a red flag in front of a hall-door. There are wicked slanderers who say that Figueras had something to do with it, and passed the word that the ‘people’ should bring an outward pressure to bear upon his brethren of the Assembly, so that he might get rid of some of his ungrateful colleagues by the argument, ‘See, you are impossible, the people won’t have you; better for the sake of order leave, that you may avoid the humility of being sent away.’”

“Surely,” I expostulated, “Señor Figueras would not descend to such a base trick of democracy!”

“My innocent friend,” said Mentor, “once a man binds himself to what is falsely called the ‘people’

he has to put up with much inconvenience, swallow his pride, and humour his exacting pet. Figueras knows this already; he has been stopped by groups in the streets at various times, and obliged to amuse them by small harangues, the same as if he were a Punch-and-Judy showman, making his 'pitch' for ha'pence."

"Unpleasant situation," I remarked. "He must weary of that soon."

"Most likely his admirers will weary of him—and then," said Mentor, with a chuckle—"then for a spell of chaos. The Republic, like Saturn, has an ugly propensity for devouring its offspring. The mob fondles Republicanism as its exclusive property, spreads palm-branches under the feet of its prophets one week and stones them the next. Castelar, Figueras, Pi y Margall, are the prophets to-day; they will be victimised in the end. To them will succeed men more violent, who will make larger promises, and then, finally, will spring up a strong reaction and a return to something old-fashioned and stable."

Mentor was a thorough-paced Conservative and a

pessimist into the bargain. In order to draw him out I pleaded that the Government was doing its best to conciliate all parties. For instance, it had appointed Estévez, Civil Governor of Madrid.

“Aye,” said Mentor, “another evidence of the truth of what I advance. That was done to please the Intransigentes. Estévez is beloved of the Reds, and took to the hills a few months ago in assertion of Federal Republican principles. He held the rocky mountain pass of Despeñar Perros in Andalusia, at the head of a handful of men, but he boasts that he neither destroyed railways nor cut telegraphic wires, and holds certificates to that effect from the railway companies and the Government. He is an old soldier, a man of energy, and his influence with his party in this province is paramount. If the Constituent Cortes proclaim a moderate or a united Republic he may make himself obstructive. But I must bid you good-day; I am off for my constitutional in the Botanical Gardens.”

The reference to the Constituent Cortes reminded me that this was the date appointed for the consideration of the Government Bill for their election,

introduced into Congress on the night of the 4th of March. This Bill consisted of eight articles, the most important of which were that the elections should take place on the 10th of April and three following days, and the meeting on the 1st of May; that all Spaniards above the age of twenty should have votes; and that on the suspension of the session of the existing Cortes a permanent committee from their members, with consultative functions, should be appointed for the interregnum. It was felt that this was throwing down the glove, and the lines were now marshalling for the tug of war. The Radicals are disquieted. They know that if they go to the country not one-third of them will be returned, for the reason that whoever holds the Ministry of the Gobernacion, or Interior, in this paradise of universal suffrage can return the nominees of his party, and determine their majorities with mathematical certainty. Ministers act illegally in the article which provides that men of twenty may vote. The young men are the main strength of Republicanism everywhere, and this article at a single arbitrary scratch of the pen adds

half a million electors to the rolls. Hitherto the right of voting was restricted to males who had attained twenty-five years. The Radicals object to this sweeping alteration in the law, made with the distinct object of defeating their chances; and the hatred of those half-million of young men thus sought to be enfranchised by the new Republic will be acquired to the Radicals from the very fact of their opposition.

When the hour for opening the Congress came, the building looked more like a barrack than a House of Parliament. A grim Guardia Civil, in a three-cornered hat, stood sentry, with fixed bayonet, at the side-door in the Calle de Turco, by which the Deputies enter. At every window men in uniform were to be seen; officers with jangling scabbards moved about the lobbies and ante-rooms, instead of the usual moody, sallow, shabby crowd of taciturn waiters on Providence, muffled in mantles and hidden in smoke, who hang about for hours, and occasionally pass mysterious slips of paper by the liveried and silver-laced ushers to Señor Don This or That within.

What can their business be? I often puzzle myself by asking. Have they claims on Government for ancestral property gone down in the Armada? Are they pretenders to the succession in a licence to sell tobacco and salt in Minorca? Or are they simply intriguing for a ticket to the House? The problem waits for solution.

They are not here to-day. In their places are the soldiers who watch over the safety of the representatives of the people. Luckily it is wet, and the crowds outside cower and huddle under a camp of umbrellas. Your persistent drizzle is a terrible enemy to revolution. There is nothing like it for putting a damper on noisy out-of-door agitation. But the occasion is a great one, and though the clouds seem to have been transformed into tanks with bottoms pepper-castored with leaks, and never tire of the weary drip-drip, the citizens of Madrid bravely affront the weather and collect on the sloppy approaches to the Palace of the Congress to discuss the affairs of the commonwealth. They look resolute enough to go under a shower-bath in the interest of their country. Patiently they stand,

with knit brows, their soaked mantles clinging to their persons, while the Deputies drive or walk up, and enter to take part in the important discussion at hand—the discussion which is to decide whether there are to be barricades in Madrid and in all the great cities, and some widows the more in Spain within four-and-twenty hours.

Denser grow the throngs and livelier the excitement, for all the rain. Reports the most eccentric and alarming are bandied about. The people have burned down the churches in Malaga; but Malagueño, “as everybody knows,” remarks a French journalist, “is the synonym for *méchant*.” In another knot a rumour circulates that a meeting of Radicals had been held the evening previous, at which the German, Austrian, and Italian ambassadors were present, and that they spoke of the necessity of a joint intervention to assist in the restoration of peace. This senseless rumour was believed by some fools, and the Radicals who were supposed to be ready to open the door to the foreigner were cursed and hissed, or howled at, as they stepped into the Palace. Word passes that the Intransigentes are

in arms in the lower quarters of the town, and have taken up "strategic points" in view of any emergency that may arise. If the Government is beaten they mean to raise the red flag, to occupy the theatres as they did once before, to turn the Plaza Santa Ana and the Plazuela de Anton Martin into headquarters, and, if necessary, to march on the Parliament-house and make an example of those traitorous Radicals who would betray the people and bring back the Monarchy. Law-fearing Madrid is in a state of wan terror, and thanks Providence for that thrice-blessed rain. The men who compose the noisy groups belong to the lower classes; they are not very numerous, but they are very determined. The active demonstration is confined to a nucleus of some one hundred and fifty persons. Delegates occasionally arrive from distant parts of the town, whisper to comrades in the mob, and depart. It is known that the troops are confined to barracks, that a hundred picked men of the Guardia Civil have reinforced the garrison of the Palace of Congress, and that Señor Martos has not quitted it since the previous night.

Try and realise to yourself a crowd from Clerkenwell Green surging and yelling angrily in the open space before Westminster Hall, a battalion of the Coldstreams keeping watch and ward on the faithful Commons, and Mr. Speaker, for reasons of personal security, compelled to have a shakedown in the House!

At half-past three o'clock the flag is run up to the head of the staff on the roof, but it droops limp and woebegone in the wet. The Assembly is in session. The waiting crowds increase; the windows commanding a view of the Palace are filled, and the pavements of the streets contiguous are black with anxious loiterers, in spite of the detestable weather. News of what is going on inside the Chamber escapes by dribblets; as soon as a Deputy or a reporter comes out he is button-holed and interviewed.

"The Radicals hold firm," says one, and there is a howl of rage, and the chattering *flâneurs*, who linger on the pavement at a safe distance, stir their heels with a rare unity of sentiment. "Devil take the hindmost!" is the motto of these dignified

burgesses of Madrid when a cry of danger is raised ; bang go the shutters against the shop-windows in a jiffy.

At one period the attitude of the crowd immediately opposite the entrance of the Palace boded ill ; cries of " *Viva la República Federal!*" and " *Death to the Radicals!*" were raised, and Señor Estévanéz, the Civil Governor of Madrid, was obliged to come out and speak to his pet lambs, and pacify them with the assurance that the Federal Republic was safe. Five mounted Civil Guards took up their stations at the mouth of the Calle de Turco after this, and stood there silent, statue-like, with drawn swords in their gauntleted grip, until day had melted into twilight, and twilight into night. These five cavaliers, in their heavy cloaks, blacker than the darkness around, had really something supernatural in their grisly quietude as they rested stock-still in their saddles. Their mission was ominous of evil ; they were there an ugly index of what was feared. Had they found it necessary to clap spur to their horses and plunge upon the mob, I would not have given much for their lives. Those

five "lost sentinels" were sure to have been picked off before their comrades on foot could have sallied from the adjacent building to their rescue. Sinister-looking fellows, in jackets and fur caps, with rifles slung across their shoulders, were not ensconced in the street-corners in easy range without a purpose.

The scene inside the Chamber gave equal token that a question of vital interest was being debated. The gallery assigned to the public was crammed as closely as the pit of Drury Lane on Boxing Night; the press gallery ran over with reporters; every seat available was full but those reserved for the ambassadors. Their seats were empty; not even the war-worn figure of General Sickles was to be distinguished. Cristinos Martos, looking anxious but firm, was in the presidential chair; and the halberdiers in purple and gold, with their heavy silver maces and nodding white plumes, occupied their accustomed places to the right and left.

The President rings his bell for business. The first operation is to read the minutes of the previous sitting, which are approved. Then one of those obstructive members to be encountered in

every legislative assembly—be it Reichsrath, Rigsdag, Skupstina, or Storting—rises to take his little innings on some petty topic that concerns none beyond his own small circle. He is quickly bowled out, and the order of the day is arrived at—that for which we are all waiting, that which makes this one of the most serious and important sittings since the abdication of the King. The reading of the reports of the committee was first proceeded with, that of the majority taking precedence. This document was rather long, but may be summarised into a lament that the Government intended to make the permanent committee a purely consultative body; a declaration that the time was unsuitable for an election, civil war being actually carried on in Spain; and a protest that the clause establishing twenty as the age from which the privilege of voting dated was “an abuse and an irregularity.” It concluded with a project of law, in a single article, binding the Assembly to convoke the Cortes whenever it considered the condition of the country such as to guarantee freedom of suffrage and the interests of the Republic.

Primo de Rivero's report was then read. He based it on the conviction that the transitory period should be closed in the interest of domestic order, and that the Constituent Cortes would be the true representation of the national will. To effect conciliation, he would submit a bill fixing May 10th as the period of election, June 1st as that of the meeting of the Cortes, and twenty-one as the age at which Spaniards should have power to exercise electoral rights.

The consideration of the report of the minority, which was looked on as an amendment, came first.

The Chief of the Executive Power, Figueras, himself opened the discussion. The Government had presented a bill so framed that they hoped it would satisfy the divers aspirations of the Assembly. They thought they could go no further, but since Primo de Rivero had seen fit to draw up his conciliatory report they had resolved to modify their primitive proposition in certain particulars, such as the definition of the faculties of the permanent committee and the date of the elections. But that was the extreme limit of compromise. They would

stand or fall by the vote about to be given. If the Chamber gave them its support they would proceed with the rude task of administration, and they were resolved firmly to sustain order, military discipline, and the majesty of the law. Here Señor Figueras branched off into a schoolboy digression as to what the law was, and how it should be administered. Coming to the real point, he said if Primo de Rivero's bill were rejected, the Cabinet would hand in its resignation, and would ask the representatives to name its successors on the spot, for in those critical moments a solution of continuity in power would be attended with grave risks.

Señor Guardia then rose to deny that the existing Chamber had fulfilled its mission, and that the opportune time had arrived for the election of another. The very Government itself had made avowal to that effect. Certain bills remained to be discussed and voted. Besides, had they not other duties of greater necessity? What was the state of the country? An armed absolutism prevailed in some provinces; Catalonia recognised no chiefs but

those of the locality (here there were interruptions). In the cities of the South, the public forces had abandoned their arms to persons more or less authorised in some of them, and in others the partition of sacred property had been announced. In the heart of Castile and Andalusia the ayuntamientos had to resign in the presence of superior force. Under those circumstances no elections could be carried on with liberty. And, as if this were not sufficient, there was an article which added 400,000 electors to the register. This was an aggravation of difficulties when mistrust was supreme everywhere. The majority of the reporting committee (of which he formed part) believed that the initiative of a convocation of the Cortes should come, not from the Government, but from the Chamber. The destruction of the elements which were not represented in the Government was what was sought by this call for a new Chamber.

Primo de Rivero then explained his position, which was curious. He, a member of the Radical party, disagreed with his colleagues; but his motive was the salvation of the Republic. If his bill were

not accepted, the disasters that would fall upon the country would be tremendous and immediate. This plump declaration created what is called "sensation." The General next reviewed the different solutions which offered themselves. A new Cabinet of Republicans of long standing was not to be thought of, and a mixed Cabinet would be a calamity. One other solution remained, the formation of a Cabinet from the Radical majority. With all respect he would ask, Did that majority possess the moral authority to raise the standard of Republicanism? Did they recollect that their former chief, Ruiz Zorilla, called them cowards because they were about to proclaim the Republic? He repudiated the accusation.

Here there was a row, which recalled to mind that famous one between Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Blotton, of Aldgate. Señor Juan Ramon Zorilla rose to defend his absent relative. After a call to order, and a palaver, during which Primo de Rivero explained that he was speaking merely of Señor Zorilla the politician, but that Señor Zorilla personally was all that was honourable and patriotic, the discussion flowed back into its proper channel.

The General frankly admitted that the Radicals lacked moral authority. "Now," he said, "we are Republicans, but a month ago we were Monarchists." He then related with an ingenuousness that was remarkable in a professed friend, all the faults his party had committed, and prophesied that if a Radical Cabinet were formed it would not last three days. Who knows what might occur? Interruptions punctuated the soldier's discourse, but he turned round and told those who did not like what he said, that prudence was better than valour when valour was stupid and made reckless exposure of lives. He wound up by asking the representatives to seek inspiration in their patriotism and love of liberty, and support his bill, which he confessed was his in spirit only, and had not been drawn up by him but by members of the Government.

These opening orations of the champions of the two parties in the committee, the majority of six, and the minority of one, give the pith of the arguments *pro* and *con*. Then followed talkee-talkee by obscurities—speechlets of the maundering school, habitual of nights in St. Stephen's, when