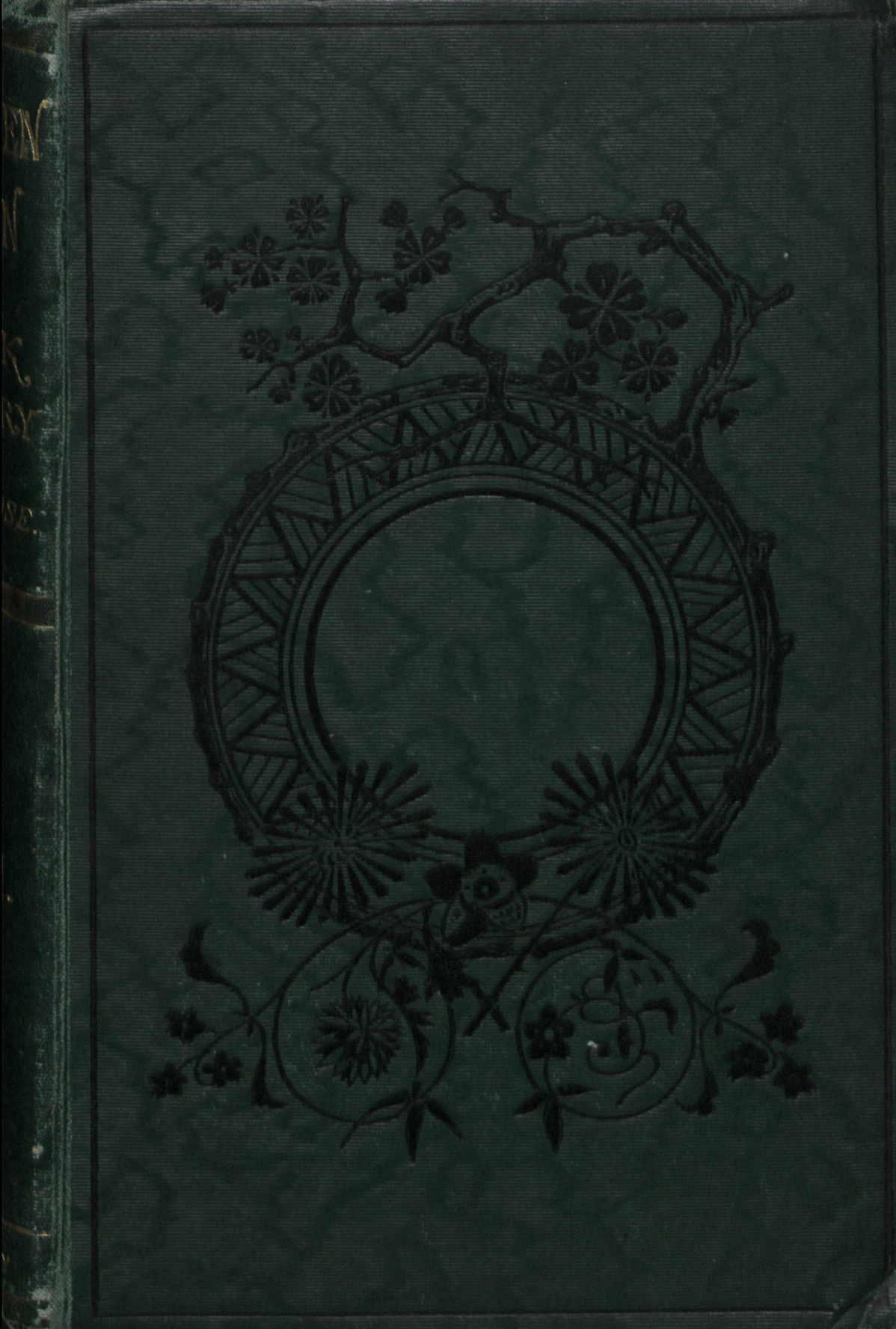
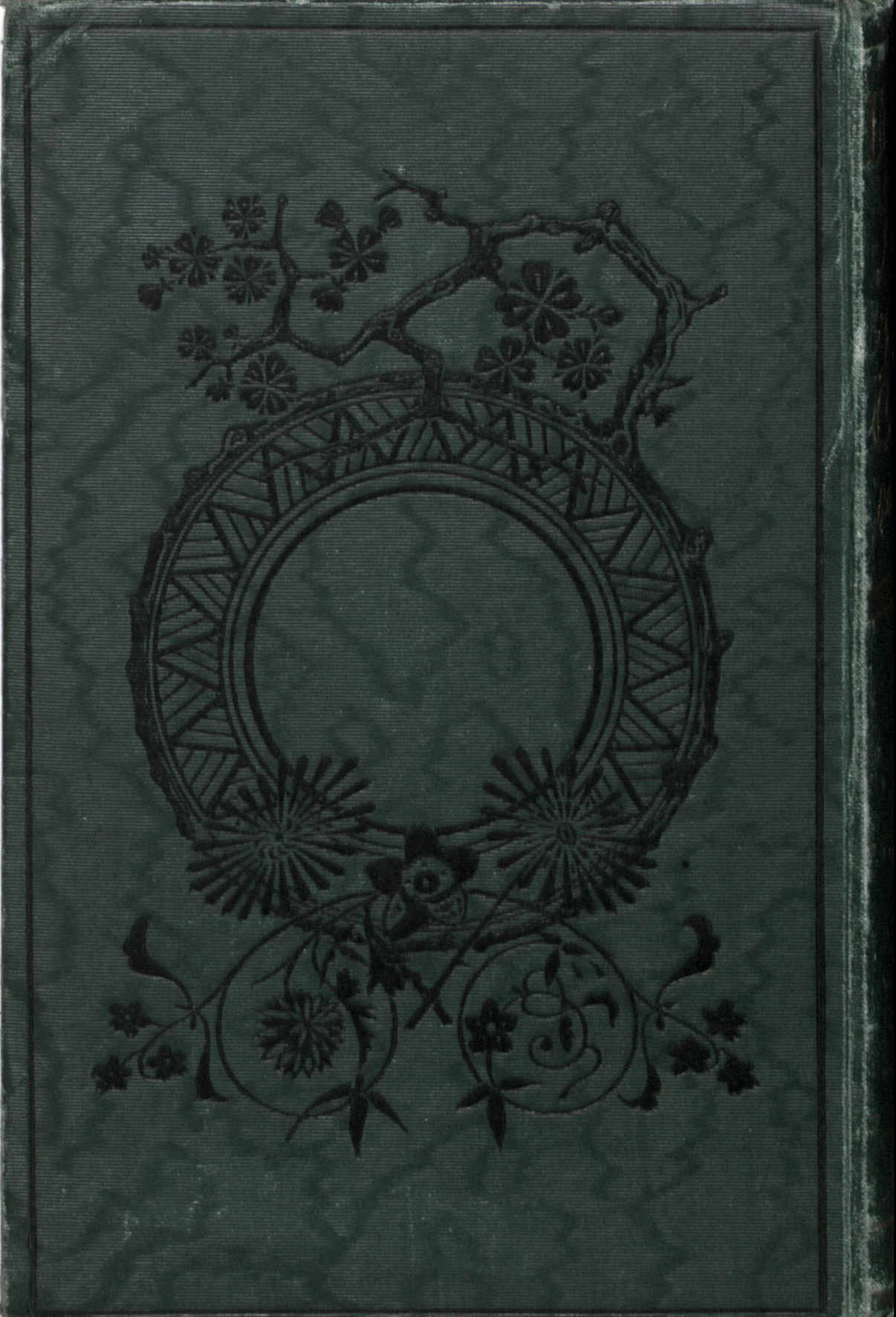


UNTRODDEN SPAIN AND HER BLACK COUNTRY

REV. H. J. ROSE.

VOL. II.

LONDON
SAMUEL TINSLEY



UNTRODDEN SPAIN.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
EDWARD J. FRANCIS, TOOK'S COURT,
CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

UNTRODDEN SPAIN,

AND HER

BLACK COUNTRY;

BEING

SKETCHES OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE SPANIARD OF THE INTERIOR.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1875.

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UNTRODDEN SPAIN,

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BLACK COUNTRY.

CHAPTER I.

BANDOS AND CEREMONIES IN SPAIN.

ALTHOUGH, taken *per se*, they are rather dry reading, yet a certain amount of interest attaches to the form taken by proclamations, official documents, ceremonial letters, and the like, differing in different countries. I therefore present a short sketch of some of those with which the traveller in Spain will become conversant.

First of all in importance comes the "Bando de guerra," or proclamation of martial law in a province. The surroundings and accompaniments of the proclamation of martial law are much as follows, and, having twice been resident in a town while martial law has been proclaimed, I may vouch for the accuracy of the picture drawn. There are certain towns in the interior which always enjoy an unenviable notoriety for being the head-quarters of disaffection, whenever disaffection—as in ill-governed Spain is far from uncommon—comes to a head. With one of these towns I was for some time familiar; it was a notorious

rendezvous for the Intransigentes, and, indeed, some of the governing powers of the town were supposed —though, I think, unfairly—to have a sneaking sympathy with those unhappy and misguided men.

One day, during last summer, the Intransigentes made a quiet entry into one of these towns. Save for whispers here and there, and the "run" upon the numerous shops where revolvers and cartridges are sold, and the numbers of armed men in the streets, one would hardly have known that the existing Government was being assailed, in many a secret gathering, with fierce invective, and being diligently plotted against.

Into the town marched a detachment of "Civil Guards": a few arrests were made, every one was disarmed, and every disaffected house entered, and the proclamation was that no *old* licences to carry fire-arms should be valid, and that no new ones should be issued for three months. These proclamations are printed, and pasted up at the post-offices and courts of law; they are also served on the leading employers of labour, at their office or counting-house.

It should be noted that, with that courtesy towards the "extrangeros," or foreigners, resident in Spain, which has characterized the various Republican Governments of this country, these proclamations are not applied to *them* in their full force.

A short time ago a body of the Municipal Guards went from house to house to levy "horse-impost." The horse-impost is not often had recourse to, but during the late troubles had necessarily been resorted to. It is this: every one, if called upon, must give up his horse for the use of the Government in carrying on the war. He receives, in lieu of his horse, a Govern-

ment "bill," accrediting him to be paid the full value of the animal when matters (las cosas de España) become "mas tranquillas," and the coffers of our country better filled. The Municipales came to my house, official register in hand, and proposed to enter my stable. I said, "Come in, by all means, señores; my stable would hardly hold a borrico (donkey), much less a *horse*."—"We need not enter your stable, señor,—doubtless, it is a very good one,—we see you are an extrangero. Adios."

In a later change of Government the bando was that of war—*i.e.*, martial law was proclaimed. This, then, was the run of events. Arms were brought into the town; notoriously disaffected persons walked about openly; the town authorities were powerless. A telegram was sent to Madrid, and at the small hours of the night we heard bangs as of thunder all down the silent streets and over the sleeping township. Looking out of the window, under the cold, pale light of the moon, and steely, cold grey winter sky, studded with its myriad stars, were to be seen in the street little knots of soldiers, in their long, heavy great-coats, some with comforters round their necks, some with their sleeping mantas thrown across their shoulders. This was the entry of the troops from Madrid; they were knocking up the half-frightened inhabitants for "billets" for the night.

Never did the people of our township sleep so soundly as they did that night! There were passing few "light sleepers," I ween, or the knockings had never gone on so long. But no one need fear offering a "billet" to a Spanish infantry man. He never—gentle, merry, chubby-faced lad as he is—comes home tipsy, like an English militia-man; never uses violent

or abusive language; wanders about the streets with a semi-important, semi-amused, and *nonchalant* air, his rifle in one hand, and his flat cake of bread in the other; or sits on the door-step of his "billet," cleaning his rifle (which seems almost bigger than himself) or mending the strings of his sandals.

Well may he value these latter, for, though he carries boots for wet weather, experience will prove, even to an English pedestrian, that it is a wise economy that allows the Spanish soldier to "march at ease" in his low, loose, string-tied sandals, of canvas or esparto-grass. The scorching sun and scorching road, on a summer's day, with the perspiration, constantly blister the feet and make them swell, and the boot can hardly be put on; if you attempt to walk in it, you walk with pain; the heat "draws" (to use a technical term, but one for which I know of no equivalent) the leather; and when you draw off the boot, you often find, after a hard day's walking, the stocking saturated with blood!

Next morning, at sunrise, the "bando" was delivered at every house of public resort, and a copy of it pasted up in every street, a translation of which shall be subjoined. Once more arms were taken away—once more soldiers with fixed bayonets, and officers with clanking swords, paraded the streets—once more shops were half-closed, and the shutters of private houses, in the lower stories, were "up!"

Going out for my morning's stroll, all was quiet as ever, save the above-mentioned appearances, but few persons were about. I heard a dropping shot or two, and followed the sound. It was a quarrel between the "new" and the "old" staff of night-watchmen. The old set, with the change of Government, had

received their dismissal, but received it unpaid, as is too often the case with the poor Spanish official. A quarrel arose, revolvers were drawn, and a shot or two fired.

Next day, "the old order ceased, giving place to the new"; and, instead of "Viva la Republica Democratica Federal," the stilly night and the wakeful head heard, "Ave Maria purisima," the old-established prelude to the hour! But "Hail, Mary, purest of women," *does* blend better with the dews of night than the political party-cry, "Long live the Democratic Federal Republic!"

Presently, two officers, in full uniform, followed by a straggling train (not marching in any rank or file) of guards of all sorts, and regulars, passed down the street where I stood, with the usual elastic, springy step of the untiring Spanish soldiery. They were evidently, as a ragged urchin in the market remarked, "bent on mischief." "Visitas, malo," said a Spanish gentleman to me, turning away with a shrug of his shoulders—"visitas," visits, being a term constantly used—a euphemism, in fact—to denote a visit for the purpose of seizing arms or treasonable papers. A few hisses rose from the crowd as the train passed through the market. I followed them to a suburb of the town, and, looking at a tiny paper they held in hand, the officers in pairs, the men standing in a semicircle outside, quietly, without ceremony, entered house after house to search for arms, and seize the papers of those supposed to be disaffected. They were unsuccessful. A day or two afterwards, however, the Civil Guards made a further search, and, knocking down a partition, made booty of fifty rifles and bayonets, with which they marched triumphantly through the streets.

Many arrests were made; many of the disaffected fled; recruits were taken from the young men of the town; the officials of the town were deposed, and fresh blood took their place. But, although English newspapers are so fond of conveying a dreadful idea to their readers by that very vague term (as applied to las cosas de España), such and such a town is "in a state of siege,"—which often does not, and cannot, as I have proved, imply more than what has been related above,—yet we all go on pursuing our daily round of work, and I have very often felt more secure living in a town when reported to have been "in a state of siege" than at other times; for the "state of siege" of the English press does not necessarily mean "bloodshed and blockade," but merely means, "in such a town martial law has been proclaimed." I value the English press, and the noble work it does for my country—work that could not be done by any other influence—highly indeed, but the term "in a state of siege" might far oftener with truth be rendered, "under martial law."

Here, then, is the bando militar. I give the original, as it may interest some to compare it with its fellow proclamation in England:—

CAPITANIA GENERAL DE ——,

Numero 1000.

BANDO.

En cumplimiento de lo mandado por el Gobierno supremo de la Nacion Ordeno y mando.

Articulo 1°. Quedan declaradas en estado de Guerra las cuatro Provincias del distrito militar de ——.

Articulo 2°. Se establecen consejos de Guerra ordinarios en cada una de las Capitales de —— ——.

Articulo 3°. Se prohibe el uso de toda clase de armas, sin prévia

autorizacion legal para ellas; los contraventores serán reducidos á prision, y sujetos al fallo de la Ley.

Articulo 4°. Los que, de cualquier modo, alteren el orden público provocando á la rebelion, de palabia ó par escrito, y los que resistrésen á las órdenes de mi autoridad, con armas ó sin ellas, seran juzgados militarmente.

Articulo 5°. Las autoridades judiciales y civiles continuarán en el ejercicio de sus funciones, reservándome el conocimiento, de cuanto se refiera ó tenga conexion con el orden publico, y limitándose, en cuanto á este, á las facultades que mi autoridad les delegue.

(Date and Signature of Captain-General.)

An educated English reader will see at a glance the drift of this bando. It is sent out by the military Captain-General, or Governor, of so many provinces to all the towns under his authority, but, of course, only in those disaffected are its decrees actively put in force, as above described; and it provides (1) that the said provinces are to consider themselves under martial law; (2) that in each of the capital cities of those provinces courts-martial are established; (3) that those found in possession of arms, without a special licence, will be imprisoned, &c.; (4) that any one disturbing the public peace, by word or writing, with arms or without them, will be dealt with by court-martial; (5) that the law courts, &c., will still exercise their special functions, subject to, &c.

It will naturally be asked, with what equanimity does the Spaniard bear these arbitrary measures? He certainly cannot be said to accept them, for they are forced upon him by the right of might in too many instances.

Some of the townships bear these sudden changes of government with sullen distrust and indignation, that smoulders, and only bides its time to break out into a flame. Some acquiesce in it all, even with light-