

sitions, have fitted them each for a form of constitution equally appropriate to no other people; since no two nations are similarly circumstanced, not only in all these respects, but even in any one of them.

What could be more Liberal than the monarchy of Spain up to the accession of the Bourbon dynasty? the kings never reigning but by the consent of their subjects, and on the condition of unvarying respect for their privileges; but never, when once seated on the throne, checked and embarrassed in carrying through the measures necessary for the administration of the state. The monarch was a responsible but a free monarch until these days, when an attempt is being made to deprive him both of freedom of action and responsibility—almost of utility, and to render him a tool in the hands of a constantly varying succession of needy advocates or military *parvenus*, whom the chances of civil war or the gift of declamation have placed in the way of disputing the ministerial salaries, without having been able to furnish either their hearts with the patriotism, or their heads with the capacity, requisite for the useful and upright administration of the empire. In Spain, the advocates of continual change, in most cases in which personal interest is not their moving spring, hope to arrive ultimately at a republic. Now, no one

more than myself admires the theories of Constitutional governments, of universal political power and of republicanism: the last system would be the best of all, were it only for the equality it is to establish. But how are men to be equalised by the manufacturers of a government? How are the ignorant and uneducated to be furnished with legislative capacity, or the poor or unprincipled armed against the seductions of bribery? It is not, unfortunately, in any one's power to accomplish these requisite preliminary operations; without the performance of which, these plausible theories will ever lose their credit when brought to the test of experiment. How is a republic to be durable without the previous solution of the problem of the equalisation of human capacities? In some countries it may be almost attained for a time; in others, never put in motion for an instant. No one more than myself abhors tyranny and despotism; but, after hearing and reading all the charges laid at the door of Absolutism during the last quarter of a century, I am at a loss to account for the still greater evils and defects, existing in Constitutional states, having been overlooked in the comparison. The subject is far less free in France than in the absolute states of Germany: and other appropriate comparisons might be made which would bring us

still nearer home. I would ask the advocates for putting in practice a republican form of government, and by way of comparing the two extremes, whether all the harm the Emperors of Russia have ever done, or are likely to do until the end of the world,—according to whatever sect the date of that event be calculated,—will not knock under to one week of the exploits of the French republicans of the last century? And if we carry on the observation to the consequences of that revolution, until we arrive at the decimation of that fine country under the military despotism which was necessarily its offspring, we shall not find my argument weakened.

I entreat your pardon for this political digression, which I am as happy to terminate as yourself. I will only add, that, should the period be arrived for the Spanish empire to undergo the lot of all human things—decline and dissolution, it has no right to complain, having had its day; but, should that moment be still distant, let us hope to see that country, so highly favoured by Nature, once more prosperous under the institutions which raised her to the highest level of power and prosperity.

Meanwhile, the elements of discord still exist in a simmering state close to the brim of the cauldron, and a mere spark will suffice at any moment to make them bubble over. The inhabitants of Madrid are

in hourly expectation of this spark ; and not without reason, if the *on-dits* which circulate there, and reach to the neighbouring towns, are deserving of credit. Queen Christina, on her road from Paris to resume virtually, if not nominally, the government, conceived the imprudent idea of taking Rome in her way. It is said that she confessed to the Pope, who, in the solemn exercise of his authority as representative of the Deity, declared to her that Spain would never regain tranquillity until the possessions of the clergy should be restored to them.

Whatever else may have passed during the interview is not stated ; but a deep impression was produced on the conscience of the Queen, to which is attributed the change in her appearance evident to those who may happen to have seen her a few months since in Paris. This short space of time has produced on her features the effect of years. She has lost her *embonpoint*, and acquired in its place paleness and wrinkles. She is firmly resolved to carry out the views of the Pope. Here, therefore, is the difficulty. The leading members of her party are among those who have profited largely by the change of proprietorship which these vast possessions have undergone : being the framers or abettors of the decree, they were placed among the nearest for the scramble. In the emptiness of the

national treasury, they consider these acquisitions their sole reward for the trouble of conducting the revolution, and are prepared to defend them like tigers.

When, therefore, Queen Christina proposed her plan* to Narvaez, she met with a flat refusal. He replied, that such a decree would deluge the country with blood. The following day he was advised to give in his resignation. This he refused to do, and another interview took place. The Queen-mother insisted on his acceptance of the embassy to France. He replied, that he certainly would obey her Majesty's commands; but that, in that case, she would not be surprised if he published the act of her marriage with Muños, which was in his power.† This would compel Christina to refund all the income she has received as widow of Ferdinand the Seventh. The interview ended angrily; and, doubtless, recalled to Christina's recollection the still higher presumption of the man, who owed to her the exalted situation from which, on a former occasion, he levelled his attack on her authority. I

* It will be seen that this letter was written shortly after the Queen's return to Spain, and previous to the publication of her marriage.

† It is probable that this threat, supposing it real, may have assisted in determining the Queen's resolution, since executed, of publishing the marriage.

am not answerable for the authenticity of these generally received reports; but they prove the unsettled state of things, when the determined disposition of the two opposite parties, and the nearly equal balance of their force, are taken into consideration.

I was scarcely housed at Madrid, having only quitted the hotel the previous day, when the news reached me of the death of one of the fair and accomplished young Countesses—the companions of my journey from Bayonne to Burgos. You would scarcely believe possible the regret this intelligence occasioned me,—more particularly from the peculiar circumstances of the occurrence. Her father had recently arrived from France, and the house was filled for the celebration of her birthday; but she herself was forbidden to join the dinner-party, being scarcely recovered from a severe attack of small-pox. The father's weakness could not deny her admission at dessert, and an ice. The following day she was dead.

Acquaintances made on the high road advance far more rapidly than those formed in the usual formal intercourse of society. I can account in no other way for the tinge of melancholy thrown over the commencement of my sojourn at Madrid by this event,—befalling a person whose society I had only enjoyed

during three days, and whom I scarcely expected to see again.

The modern capital of Spain is an elegant and brilliant city, and a very agreeable residence; but for the admirer of the picturesque, or the tourist in search of historical *souvenirs*, it contains few objects of attraction. The picture-gallery is, however, a splendid exception; and, being the best in the world, compensates, as you may easily suppose, for the deficiency peculiar to Madrid in monuments of architectural interest.

To put an end to the surprise you will experience at the enumeration of such a profusion of *chefs d'œuvre* of the great masters as is here found, it is necessary to lose sight of the present political situation of Spain, and to transport ourselves to the age of painting. At that time Spain was the most powerful, and especially the most opulent empire in Europe. Almost all Italy belonged to her; a large portion actually owning allegiance to her sceptre, and the remainder being subject to her paramount influence. The familiarity which existed between Charles the Fifth and Titian is well known; as is likewise the anecdote of the pencil, picked up and presented by the Emperor to the artist, who had dropped it.

The same taste for, and patronage of, painting,

continued through the successive reigns, until the period when painting itself died a natural death; and anecdotes similar to that of Charles the Fifth are related of Philip the Fourth and Velasquez. All the works of art thus collected, and distributed through the different palaces, have been recently brought together, and placed in an edifice, some time since commenced, and as yet not entirely completed. Titian was the most favoured of all the Italian painters, not only with respect to his familiar intercourse with the Emperor, but also in a professional point of view. The Museo contains no less than forty of his best productions. Nor is it surprising that the taste of the monarch, being formed by his masterpieces, should extend its preference to the rest of the Venetian school in a greater degree than to the remaining Italian schools. There are, however, ten pictures by Raffaello, including the Spasimo, considered by many to be his greatest work.

A cause similar to that above named enables us to account for the riches assembled in the Dutch and Flemish rooms, among which may be counted more than two hundred pictures of Teniers alone. I should observe, that I am not answerable for this last calculation; being indebted for my information to the director, and distinguished artist, Don Jose



ITALIAN GALLERY AT THE MUSEO, MADRID.

Madrazo. There is no catalogue yet drawn up. Rubens has a suite of rooms almost entirely to himself, besides his just portion of the walls of the gallery. The Vandykes and Rembrandts are in great profusion. With regard to the Spanish schools, it may be taken for granted that they are as well represented as those of the foreign, although partially subject, nations. The works of Velasquez are the most numerous; which is accounted for by his situation of painter to the Court, under Philip the Fourth. There are sixty of his paintings.

The Murillos are almost as numerous, and in his best style: but Seville has retained the cream of the genius of her most talented offspring; and even at Madrid, in the collection of the Academy, there is a Murillo—the Saint Elizabeth—superior to any of those in the great gallery. It is much to be wished that some artist, gifted with the pen of a Joshua Reynolds, or even of a Mengs (author of a notice on a small portion of these paintings), could be found, who would undertake a complete critical review of this superb gallery. All I presume to say on the subject is, were the journey ten times longer and more difficult, the view of the Madrid Museo would not be too dearly purchased.

Before I left Madrid, I went to the palace, to see the traces of the conspiracy of the 7th October, remaining on the doors of the Queen's apartments. You will recollect that the revolt of October 1842 was that in favour of Christina, when the three officers, Concha, Leon, and Pezuela, with a battalion, attacked the palace in the night, for the purpose of carrying off the Queen and her sister. On the failure of the attempt, owing to its having been prematurely put in execution, the Brigadier Leon was shot, and the two others escaped.

It appears that the execution of this officer, unlike the greater number of these occurrences, caused a

strong sensation in Madrid, owing to the sympathy excited by his popular character, and the impression that he was the victim of jealousy in the mind of the Regent. The fine speech, however, attributed to him by some of the newspapers, was not pronounced by him. His words were very few, and he uttered them in a loud and clear tone, before giving the word of command to his executioners. This, and his receiving the fire without turning his back, were the only incidents worthy of remark.

One of the two sentries stationed at the door of the Queen's anteroom when I arrived, happened to have played a conspicuous part on the eventful night. The Queen was defended by the guard of halberdiers, which always mounts guard in the interior of the palace. This sentinel informed me that he was on guard that night, on the top step of the staircase, when Leon, followed by a few officers, was seen to come up. Beyond him and his fellow-sentry there were only two more, who were posted at the door of the Queen's anteroom, adjoining her sleeping apartment. This door faces the whole length of the corridor, with which, at a distance of about twenty yards, the top of the staircase communicates. In order to shield himself from the fire of the two sentinels at the Queen's door, Leon grasped my informant by the ribs right and left, and, raising him from the

ground, carried him, like a mummy, to the corridor ; and there, turning sharp to the left, up to the two sentries, whom he summoned to give him admittance in the name of the absent Christina.

On the soldiers' refusal, he gave orders to his battalion to advance, and a pitched battle took place, which was not ultimately decided until daybreak—seven hours after. The terror of the little princesses, during this night, may be imagined. Two bullets penetrated into the bed-room ; and the holes made by about twenty more in the doors of some of the state apartments communicating with the corridor, are still preserved as souvenirs of the event. The palace contains some well-painted ceilings by Mengs, and is worthy of its reputation of one of the finest residences in Europe. The staircase is superb. It was here that Napoleon, entering the palace on the occasion of his visit to Madrid, to install Joseph Buonaparte in his kingdom, stopped on the first landing ; and, placing his hand on one of the white marble lions which crouch on the balustrades, turned to Joseph, and exclaimed, “*Mon frère, vous serez mieux logé que moi.*”

There is no road from Madrid to Toledo. On the occasions of religious festivities, which are attended by the court, the journey is performed by way of Aranjuez, from which place a sort of road conducts to the an-

cient capital of Spain. There is, however, for those who object to add so much to the actual distance, a track, known, in all its sinuosities, throughout its depths and its shallows, around its bays, promontories, islands, and peninsulas—to the driver of the diligence, and to the mounted bearer of the mail; both of whom travel on the same days of the week, in order to furnish reciprocal aid, in case of damage to either. A twenty-four hours' fall of rain renders this track impassable by the usual conveyance; a very unusual sort of carriage is consequently kept in reserve for these occasions, and, as the period of my journey happened to coincide with an uncommonly aqueous disposition of the Castilian skies, I was fortunately enabled to witness the less every day, and more eventful transit, to which this arrangement gave rise.

Accordingly at four o'clock on an April morning—an hour later than is the custom on the road from France to Madrid—I ascended the steps of a carriage, selected for its lightness, which to those who know anything of Continental coach-building, conveys a sufficient idea of its probable solidity. There was not yet sufficient daylight to take a view of this fabric; but I saw, by the aid of a lantern, my luggage lifted into a sort of loose net, composed of straw-ropes, and suspended between the hind wheels in precisely such juxta-position, as to make the portmanteaus, bags, &c.