

ters, and keep the people in subjection; and *empleomania* and strong ambition being very prevalent here, in consequence of the absence of a monopolist aristocracy, and through the democratic accessibility of all offices, even to regencies; the Gefes being, moreover, amongst the acutest men in the kingdom, and enjoying the most intimate confidence of the Ministro de la Gobernacion, or Home Secretary. This department is, next after the seats of Cabinet Ministers, incomparably the most important in Spain. The Gefes exercises a direct and powerful influence over the formation of the electoral lists and jury lists, intermeddling successfully, almost irresponsibly, with the two most important rights of the subject—the parliamentary franchise, and trial by jury. He can manage, with the Escribanos of the municipalities, to exclude from the lists the names of obnoxious voters, and when these subsequently send in their appeal to the provincial board, he can influence the decision so as generally to bring it against them. The applicant has an appeal to the higher courts, and finally to the Tribunal de Casacion, or supreme court of appeal at Madrid; but practically, the idea of such an appeal being prosecuted successfully, or at all, in a country so needy and indolent as Spain, is out of the question; and the individual sacrifices his franchise with a smile or a shrug. The Gefes can likewise weed the jury lists by a similar process, and appeals can be frustrated by similar means. But prosecutions for seditious libel are seldom successful, there being a strong, perhaps too strong a feeling in favour of the liberty of the press.

Here is a specimen of the impartial justice with which the political chiefs administer their functions: The Gefe of Cadiz issued the following superfluous proclamation, upon the receipt of the intelligence of Olózaga's dismissal, to demonstrate his fitness to be retained in office by the new ministry:—"The scandalous and unheard-of attempt committed by Olózaga on the sacred person of our Queen, must fill every Spaniard with indignation. The inhabitants of this heroical city and of the entire province, who are giving daily such proofs of their loyalty to the throne and respect for the laws, will participate indubitably in this sentiment."

The official account of the transaction at the palace was published contemporaneously with this Bando, and public opinion was thus audaciously prejudiced. But the tone of what follows is still more unjustifiable.

"As the first civil authority of this province, I will support, at all hazards, the constitutional authority of the Queen's government. I reckon on the secure support of all the loyal inhabitants of the province; and if *any malignant wretch* should, contrary to my expectations, attempt to disturb the public tranquillity, he will suffer the severest chastisement. Cadiz, 5th of December, 1843.—The Political Chief, De la Riba."

There is only one counterpoise to these intelligent gentlemen—the Provincial Deputation. This body is chosen by a process of election nearly similar to that which returns the Deputies to the Córtes, the franchise being annexed to the payment of a tolerably large amount of taxes. The persons chosen are, for

the most part, substantial and respectable men, but, unhappily, political partisans; while, in the municipal elections, the principle of household suffrage enables the worst popularity, the most overbearing intimidation, and the noisiest clamour, to thrust itself into the post of Alcalde, and exploit its corporate honours and influence to the furtherance of contrabandist, and sometimes of bandit, schemes.

The Provincial deputations may, in some degree, be likened to our shire grand juries; and to these are entrusted the distribution of all funds for the formation and conservation of roads, for bettering and extending communication, and the general supervision of material improvement. They are likewise in direct communication with the Government as to the levy of troops and their distribution in the province; and, above all, they have the management of the elections for the *Córtes*—*a department incessantly stained by the most tremendous abuses*. The substitution of this body for the *Ayuntamientos* is, in this respect, no subject for congratulation; for there is no ordinary iniquity which they will hesitate to perpetrate, to promote the success of their party. At home we may deplore the excesses of party spirit—here it is unbridled, ruthless, satanic; and unhappily so all-pervading, that there is no body in the State to which the “purification” of votes could be entrusted, without the most conclusive moral certainty that hundreds of good votes would be torn and destroyed in the urn. Those districts which send in a preponderance of votes hostile to the prevailing opinion of the Provincial Deputation are pretty sure to be disfranchised for the occasion, upon some frivo-

lous plea of irregularity, while the most audaciously irregular votes in its favour are sure to be acknowledged. The scrutiny is all carried on *with closed doors*, and remedy of course there is none. What then? Destroy this system of secret voting, with its consequence of secret doctoring of votes. It may be good elsewhere, or it may be bad; but here, it is suicidal. Let the vote be open, and the objection openly argued. Here again there will be violent uproar, conflict, assassination. Not so much more, perhaps, than at home. The Spaniards are hot-blooded; but the days of *Quesadaing* appear to be, in great measure, gone by. Anything will be better than the strangling of the infant thought in its cradle—than the stifling of the popular voice and feeling, under the sanction of popular forms. Practical despotism prevails here with all their talk of constitutional liberty.

The Provincial Deputations illustrate the general principle that all offices of trust are the subjects of factious contest, and are made, when obtained, a means of enriching their possessors at the expense of the public. The office, it will be observed, is in the highest degree honorary; and the Deputies are chosen to administer funds, with the high integrity presupposed by their standing in society, which would not be deemed safe in the hands of small municipalities. But the spirit of jobbing appears universally. Of the Provincial Deputations of Cadiz, within the last few years, one spent 75,000 reals (750*l.*), in conveying a few muskets for the national militia from Madrid, the muskets being supplied

gratuitously by the Government; the only thing they could show for this large outlay being a few boxes and baskets. Another spent 7000 reals (70*l.*) in invitations to their personal friends for a day's excursion to the country, and nearly as much in cigars; and another devoted 30,000 dollars of the public money to the support of an Italian opera company, without a shadow of authority. For a lunch on the occasion of blessing the bridge of Zurraque, they charged the rate-payers with 32,840 reals, or 328*l.*, and a specific amount ever since for the anniversary of the blessing of the bridge!

Whenever a Provincial Deputation shows itself independent and refractory, it is now the fashion to deal with it as Narvaez dealt with the municipalities, and dissolve it; electing by the screw of Government influence, one more subservient. Thus falsified and perverted, constitutional liberty becomes the most grinding of despotisms. The *Gefe Politico* is at once Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff, and he is likewise for the most part, an unscrupulous partisan. Every province has its captain-general and its political chief, the heads of the military and civil establishments; both are the sworn servants of the Government, and, by their harmonious action, the administration of the country is carried on.

The existing judicature of Spain has been copied, like so many of its other institutions, from France. The magistracy is all paid on a scale, unhappily, too small for much integrity. There are the *Juez de primera instancia*, and the *Juez de segunda instancia*, as in France; and the municipal *Alcaldes* have like-

wise magisterial functions. In the superior courts at Madrid the judges are too numerous and too ill paid to be above the influence of corruption, and suitors are well known to have a chance proportioned to the weight of their purses, though the recognised law costs are not considerable. This remark applies, though in a somewhat less degree, to the Court of Casacion, or Supreme Court of Appeal. The Castilian proverb seems much in vogue here—"Justice is blind, but the judge should have his eyesight."

Faction extends even to the judicial bench: honest and competent men are dismissed because they do not row in the same boat with the minister; and judges, not determined themselves to be partisans, are made so. It is difficult to resist the dictates of interest, when a non-compliance with the wishes of authority may involve the forfeiture of a family provision, and the absolute loss of bread. Yet it would be most unjust to infer that Spain has not honourable judges, and men who, in defiance of courts, will give efficacy to truth and justice. The charge of conspiracy to assassinate Olózaga was an instance of this. Señor Gaminde, one of the accused, applied for permission to be confronted with his accuser, which is not in accordance with the ordinary proceedings of Spanish criminal law. The practice, on the contrary, is very inquisitorial. The examination of witnesses is in a great measure carried on in the dark, the process to a considerable extent *ex parte*, and the mode of putting the interrogatories dictatorial. The judge seems often disposed to confound and entrap the prisoner, and, as in France, assumes the part of a cross-examining counsel,

and sometimes bullies and browbeats those whose guilt is merely suspected. The application of Señor Gaminde was happily, however, acceded to by the upright judge who tried him, and the effect of the confrontation was, that his accuser (a priest!) was unable to identify him amongst several of his friends, and literally pointed out another man as Gaminde. The result was an instant acquittal, and the indictment of the priest for perjury. The conduct of this person was unfortunately but too characteristic of the loose morality of a portion of the Spanish clergy. This judge was far too honest for Narvaez, and the escape of two of the alleged conspirators (for Gaminde and another were both acquitted at the same time) was too bitter a draught for the Captain-General, who doubtless preferred such judges as those of Ferdinand VII., who sent the Liberals off to be hung, without evidence, by order of the Camarilla. The mode of trial was changed, and the more congenial forms of a court-martial substituted for the constitutional decisions of the judicial bench. The case was transferred by order to the Military Tribunal of Madrid. The same perjured witnesses were here to give evidence against the remaining prisoners, and no resource was left to the latter but the eloquence and ingenuity of their counsel. Happily, however, the bar of Spain is a body endowed in many instances with splendid abilities, and the shame of pronouncing sentence in the teeth of evidence ably elicited, and held up to the light of day by a firm and masterly hand, is often the sole, but effectual safeguard of the prisoner. The advocates of Spain have asserted their intellectual superiority, by

filling the foremost ranks of the Senate, where their oratory shines unrivalled. Señor Olózaga developed his powers at the bar; and perhaps the most brilliant advocate in Europe, as well as one of the most delightful of parliamentary orators, is Señor Lopez. Not content with the appointment of a military tribunal for the trial of a civil offence, Narvaez dismissed five of its members to make room for his Moderado partisans. But, as if providentially to foil his wicked desires to secure a conviction, "*El dedo mostrador de Dios*," "the pointing finger of God," as Martinez de la Rosa expressed himself upon another occasion, interposed to obstruct his proceedings. The soldier and two civilians charged with the actual shooting, escaped immediately afterwards from a window in the barrack-prison of Santa Isabel. Señor Iglesias, the editor of the *Espectador*, likewise escaped to Paris; and there remained in the clutches of vindictive law only the Deputy Calvo, and the three editors of the *Eco del Comercio*, the charge against whom of having furnished money to procure the assassination, after the escape of the men who were expected to turn approvers, it was impossible to substantiate!

There is a judge in Madrid—Señor Olabarría—who in one single year, 1824, sentenced to death no fewer than forty Liberals, all of whom were executed for offences purely political. Olabarría is in fact the Spanish Norbury. During the lawless reign of the Provisional Government in autumn last, Olabarría was raised by Señor Lopez to the highest seat of judgment in Spain, being promoted to the Supreme Tribunal of Justice. The Constitution of 1837 guarantees the

independence and immovableness of the judges, except for criminal malversation. But Lopez, himself a strong Liberal, was amongst the first to violate the Constitution which he had a hand in making. "Doctor Joaquin Maria," the familiar name for the ex-Premier, suffered himself to be swayed by feelings of personal friendship towards his brother Doctor-of-Law, dismissed the judges of the Supreme Tribunal wholesale, without a shadow of authority, promoted Olabarría and other friends in their places, and forgot by how many ghosts of butchered victims would be encircled on the judgment-seat the blood-stained tool of Ferdinand.

The expenses of the department of Grace and Justice, consisting almost entirely of the salaries of the judges and magistrates, their escribanos, and the various law-officers of the Crown, are stated in the estimates for 1844 at 20,358,226 reals, or 203,000*l*.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

As England is the paradise of horses, and France of women, so the Peninsula may be regarded as the paradise of newspaper writers. They are loaded with decorations and with high political functions. The low standard of prevalent intelligence, and the obstinate inactivity of the people, cause the function of thinking, for them vicariously, to be far more important and more highly regarded here than in other more advanced countries, and habitual misstatement exerts a perilously powerful influence amongst societies of men who will not take the trouble of inquiring whether their brains' carriers are caterers of falsehood. The truth that "knowledge is power," is the more conspicuous the less is the general enlightenment; and the power of journalism, as a party weapon, is infinitely enhanced by the certainty that there will be few to detect the journalist's aberrations. Education is at a high premium in the midst of ignorance. In Spain, accordingly, upon the construction of each new cabinet, newspaper writers invariably grasp one or two ministerial portfolios; and in Portugal, when the session is brought to a close, it is wound up, according to the official reports, by the Queen and the Tachigraph-Mór, or short-hand-writer-in-chief—an extra-

ordinary juxtaposition ; whilst every editor has a seat in the Córtes.

There is scarcely a leading politician in Madrid who has not been an editor or proprietor of some one of the principal journals. Lopez, Gonzalez Bravo, Caballero, Martinez de la Rosa, Ayllon, Fuente Andres, Iznardi, Paz Garcia, and many others, have figured in this capacity. During the whole of the Carlist War, and the revolutions which succeeded it, the *Eco del Comercio*, under the management of Paz Garcia, and the editorial guidance of Lopez, Caballero, and Ayllon, exercised a most powerful influence, and was conducted with splendid ability. The *Eco* was the *Journal des Débats* and *Times* of Madrid, with the difference that it was much more democratic ; and this journal it was that crushed the *Estatuto Real*, prepared the way for the revolution of 1837, and contributed to expel Cristina from the kingdom. The *Eco* has since passed into other hands, and its late editors, Señors Medialdua and Meca, were imprisoned under a vague charge of having hired the man who attempted to assassinate Narvaez ; but still, through every vicissitude, it maintains its place at the head of the Spanish press ; it is to be met in every *café* and reading-room in Madrid, and in the provincial towns you scarcely meet any other journal. Last summer the *Eco* strongly opposed Espartero ; but in this there was nothing singular, for nearly the whole party turned against the Regent, and Spain unanimously regarded him as the assailant of parliamentary liberty. His repeated dissolutions of the Córtes irritated the country as much as they dismayed it, and his scouting

of Lopez and his strong majority, with the insulting preference given to the Senate over the Deputies, as evidenced in the choice of Becerra, the president of the former body, for prime minister, remains engraven on the Spanish mind. Having never had a strong hold on the middle and upper classes, he thus forfeited his hold on the lower; and the same mismanagement which suffered the deputies and the army successively to slip through his fingers, lost simultaneously his support in the press. After the expulsion of Espartero, the *Eco* took up strongly the question of the marriage of Queen Isabel to her cousin, a son of the Infante Don Francisco de Paula, and originated what was called the Francisquista party; but party, patron, and journal, were alike unfortunate. The *Eco* is at present conducted by Don Antonio Terradillos and Don Ramon Castañeira, [the latter a very violent writer, who has more than once been banished, or obliged to fly, on account of the violence of his articles against Queen Cristina and Espartero, in the *Progreso*, the *Graduador*, the *Sensatez*, and the *Patriota*.

The advent of Gonzalez Bravo, himself a journalist, to office, was signalised by the distribution of even a larger share of favours than ordinary to newspaper supporters. Three of the editors of the *Posdata* had valuable places given them under the government; the chief proprietor of the *Castellano* was made chairman of the junta for effecting sales of the Bienes Nacionales; and its principal editor was appointed alcalde of Madrid. The new chairman of the junta of sales renounced the salary of 50,000 reals, or 500*l.* annexed to his office, for which the Queen thanked

him in the *Gazette*; but his enemies declared that it was because he could not legally receive it. He had some time before been declared a bankrupt, as well as his chief, the Finance Minister.

The law for the regulation of the press has been lately promulgated—it is amusingly styled “the new law of the *liberty* of the press”—which places so many restrictions upon the right of free dissemination of thought, recorded in the Constitution, that to edit, or publish a popular journal in Spain, will be henceforth like dancing a hornpipe in fetters. By this law, which is so minute in its enactments as to extend to 112 articles, the responsible publisher of a political journal must pay to the state 1000 reals of direct yearly taxes in Madrid, and 800 in provincial towns. This qualification is immensely high for Spain. £10 of direct taxes to the government, independently of taxes on consumption, would in France be very high, and in England considerable. But the publisher must lodge besides an unproductive deposit of 120,000 reals in Madrid, and 80,000 in provincial towns, which, bearing no interest whatever, is in the Peninsula an enormous alienation of capital. Offences are still to be tried by jurors, but pressmen and venders are made responsible.

A marked and extraordinary difference between the newspapers of Spain and of England is, that every portion of the former is of a party character—there is no neutral ground; while in England, excepting the leading articles, casual letters upon political subjects, contributions of a decidedly party character, and reviews of literary productions by political opponents,

there is tolerable fairness displayed. The reports appear for the most part honest, whilst in Spain "the trail of the serpent," faction, is over every column of the journal. The highest political rank is easily accessible here, and every man has consequently his ambition. Each is determined to get on, and, as the most obvious means, becomes a party man. Editors, when their party comes into power, are promoted to excellent posts, such as ministerial portfolios and political chiefships; so they will write through gates of adamant for their section; and the other *employés* follow suit. Besides, those who take part in the management of the Spanish journals, are themselves influential politicians actively engaged in party struggles, which is rarely the case in England. The Madrid political correspondents of nearly all the provincial journals are Deputies, who hit their political antagonists most truculently in their communications, and you will often see the editor compelled to publish a dozen lines of these violent letters in asterisks. The *Córtés*' reports are given so briefly, that impartiality is next to impossible; and when men look for naked truth, they find a painted demirep.

The chief use to which the press in Spain is applied, is to blacken and intimidate. The ministerial journals blacken the opposition, those of the opposition blacken the ministry. This is of course true to a certain extent in all countries; in Spain it seems the only purpose for which newspapers are established. A newspaper here is the speculation of a handful of individual politicians—to promote their principles, to be sure, but principally themselves. Whichever journal,

therefore, becomes the most unscrupulous hack of party, appears the most certain of having its editors and proprietors promoted most rapidly. I fancy the political character of journals at home is not improved, either, by the personal admixture of their conductors in political contests. The result in all such cases is violent and easily-detected partisanship. The writer fancies, like the hunted ostrich, that because his head is hidden away, he is entirely invisible; but he is mistaken, for his draggled tail is seen by all the world. In Spain a newspaper paragraph too often intimidates the public functionary from doing his duty. A newspaper paragraph! Think of the force of a newspaper paragraph. More powerful than a culverin, more cutting than a sword. Most men pretend to undervalue it, there are none who do not feel it. I do believe that there is little severity of libel law which can be honestly pronounced undue, few punishments which can be deemed unmeasured for the wilful incendiaries, who demolish a reputation with every cast of their type, and "*timor atque infamia!*" from their black and smoky dens fling forth unquenchable firebrands. Robbery and murder are not uncommonly insinuated in Spain of a political adversary; sometimes openly charged, though utterly groundless. The object is attained for life by one day's lie. The feelings are atrociously wounded, and slanderous enemies can ever after rake up the odious falsehood, and say when they are put to the proof, "it was stated in the *so-and-so*." Mighty as are the advantages of publication, are not the disadvantages nearly equivalent? Insinuation, inuendo, indirect and infer-

ential statement, are so easy a mode of imputing any thing. The purest man in the community may by suggestion be made a Cæsar Borgia. These amiable uses of the press are nowhere understood so well as in Spain, for they sound there all the base notes of the great organ. If you take the trouble to contradict the calumny, "there must have been some truth in it;" if you treat it with scornful silence, you have "a contempt for public opinion"—just as Espartero for shooting Diego León was denounced as a brute, and if he had not shot him would have been proclaimed a coward. Strike high, strike low, you cannot please the factious.

The successful licentiousness of the Spanish press is very happily typified, first, in the fact of the late Prime Minister having, only three years since, been the editor and proprietor of that most remarkably scurrilous journal, *El Guirigay*; and next, in the circumstance that the same man, who assailed Queen Cristina, in that paper, with most unmeasured vituperation, was afterwards put forward by her party into the principal offices of state—the champion of the sovereign whom he had so lately pelted with mud. Bravo managed to control the votes of some fifty gentlemen of easy conscience, who oscillate conveniently between Moderado and Progresista principles, and, constituting the centre of the Córtes, decide everything by leaning to either side. In *El Guirigay* he contrived to make these gentlemen of easy virtue laugh at the sovereign, as they will laugh at their saints and gods. Hence the present influence of this *preux chevalier* of royalty. Scribbling in newspapers is the best business

going in Spain, and one newspaper in Barcelona was lately bought over by the government, by the distribution of no fewer than four primary posts amongst its editors, two of them political chiefships. The more scurrilous you are, the more surely will you become a Cerberus sopped. The *Fray Gerundio* and the *Tarantula*, at Madrid, perfectly well understand the uses and advantages of slang wit; and, with their coarseness, I must add, that some excellent humour is sometimes intermixed. The style of the metropolis is imitated, of course, in the provinces and colonies; there are smart journalists constantly hammering out stinging *jeux d'esprit* at Barcelona and Seville, and at Havana the *Esquife* and the *Tio Bartoló* gave so much trouble to the Captain-General of the island, under the *régime* of Cristina and the Estamento, that he took occasion to suppress them.

I witnessed at Cadiz the not uncommon spectacle of the total destruction of a newspaper office. The calm logic of these southern heads is too often the *argumentum baculinum*, and the interval even of a day is reckoned too tedious for a reply to the written attack. When the poison is more than ordinarily virulent, a prompt remedy is resorted to, which is usually to "gut" the printing establishment which offended by the outpouring of peccant humours, and administer a potent cathartic to clear off all its contents. Upon this occasion, as usually happens, the attack was expected, and the parties prepared. The friends of the newspaper mustered about half a dozen in number, armed with muskets, pistols, and carbines. But the assailing party, made aware of this determination,

counted more than twenty fighting men, all well armed; and their immense superiority of numbers made their task one of little difficulty. Neither watchmen nor patrol made their appearance, from whence I infer that the authorities were in the secret; and that the journal attacked being obnoxious to them as a vehement organ of the Opposition, the guardians of the peace and of public order were directed, like a band of carabineros, to keep patrolling the most remote parts of their districts, and thus give passage to the political contrabandists. Eight or ten shots were exchanged, but no serious damage done. The defenders were forcibly extruded, the types and presses tumbled into the street, and a huge bonfire made of all the numbers that could be laid hold of, past and present, of the journal. Some fifty reams of paper were likewise set in a blaze in the open Calle. This sort of holocaust is now a regular spectacle, which tourists should not miss.

As national peculiarities extend to the most minute particulars, it is curious to notice the pomp which pervades every class of society. Thus the reporters for the newspapers have established what they call a "Tachigraphical College," at Madrid, from whence they supply the provinces. A teacher of caligraphy at Seville announces his affiliation with this society, and proclaims his unrivalled capacity to write shorthand, "*con tanta velocidad como se habla.*" The unhappy prevalence of party spirit takes away from this class that impartiality wherein consists its virtue; and the world never saw before such unilateral reports. All on one side is loose and meagre, all on the other

energetic and triumphant. The official report of the Chambers is of course exempt from this censure, as the deputies revise their own speeches; but everything appearing in a newspaper is contaminated.

Political hatred here is in nowise swayed by considerations of decency. Don Sebastian Herrero of Sanlucar, on the Guadalquivir, where it flows into the ocean, was the fortunate author of the prize poem on the Siege of Seville, which was read in November last, at the Lyceum of Madrid, in presence of the Queen. This production possessed not one merit, and no remarkable quality, save that of extreme violence and vituperation, which doubtless secured for it the prize, and a place in all the newspapers. It set out with the declaration that "the impious fury of the insatiable tyrant (Espartero) made the Spanish soil to flow with an immense river of blood;" spoke of "his abominable troops," "his mad and infuriate host," and called him "the murderer of Diego Léon, and a thousand more."

De Léon y otros mil el asesino!

This was followed by a fugue of "tyrants," "cowards," "traitors," "Hell fighting with the invaders," "Espartero no gentleman."

And wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a Queen?

In periods of disturbance and of military operations, the Spanish newspaper reporters are invariably officers engaged on either side. It is obvious that these have the best opportunity of making themselves acquainted with facts, and so far the arrangement is beneficial;

but their statements are strongly tinctured with partisanship, and are of course little to be relied on. Even here there is no exception to the general rule, that the newspaper contributors of Spain are chiefly actors in the scenes which they describe. They are deeply interested, and as deeply biassed; and whenever a thumping falsehood is about to be told, the writer heads it with "I swear to *Ustedes*, by my sacred word of honour!"

While the Spanish military reporter is a military man, too happy to eke out by this resource the deficiencies of inadequate pay, the Madrid editor is very warlike upon paper, and more able, you would think, than the best general in the field to exterminate all his political enemies. He is powerful as a firebrand, and great at inciting to revolution; but when the muskets are shouldered, and the fuses lighted, the brilliant evolutions which he had sketched for the campaign are often confined, in his instance, to a well-executed retrograde movement. With the point of his pen he makes rivers of blood to flow; with the point of his sword he only picks the lock of some garret, where he may hide both himself and his inky laurels. But there are likewise editors who can handle both sword and pen.

The principal man in every Madrid newspaper is always a leading politician. When Donoso Cortés returned the other day from his mission to Queen Cristina in Paris, he immediately set up a new Moderado paper, *El Globo*. The consequence of this elevated position of journalists is, that court or cabinet secrets there are none in Spain. Everything finds

its way into the papers, the most recondite arcana become saleable wares; and editors on the government side are familiar spirits in the minister's cabinet, and frequently have a hand in the concoction of decrees. I have elsewhere mentioned that a Prince of the blood royal, Don Francisco de Paula, bought and managed for some time, last autumn, the *Eco del Comercio*, the leading journal of Spain. The consequence of all this is, that the journalists enjoy in the Peninsula a consideration beyond what is given them in any other European country.

The Spanish newspapers in size and arrangement resemble those of France. They are for the most part ably written, and contain a *feuilleton*, usually translated from the French. They are only moderately profitable, there being little rage for advertising; yet the notable device of inserting the same advertisement twice in different parts of the same newspaper, for the purpose of arresting the reader's attention, may be observed occasionally here, as in the London journals.

The newspaper press of England is said to have added a fourth estate to the three recognised estates of the realm. The newspaper press of Spain, while it is greatly inferior in character and morality to that of England, is far more influential, its dictates being still more irresistible than those of French journalism. Its power in shaping events, the tension of its feelers into court, the loud echo of its voice within the *Córtes*, the facility with which it "piles the pyramid of calumny," misrepresentation and prejudice, and unhappily retains its credit or its power—still more, the fact that, even more certainly than in France, its lead-

ing members mount to the ministry, that every chief editor is a deputy or a senator, and that the editorial chair of to-day may be a seat in the cabinet to-morrow—all these things combine to make the description of the press in Spain as a fourth estate, no exaggeration whatever. I believe it to have more influence than the deputies, I know it to have much more than the senators, I am sure that it has infinitely more than the crown. So that, by a comparison with the recognised estates of the realm, the three estates, and not the press, suffer. But there is, indeed, an estate to which, like all the rest, it is forced in its turn to succumb—the power which in reality dictates and decides everything in the Peninsula—which determines in the first instance, and in the last resort; which makes and unmakes at will, dynasties, laws, constitutions; which leaves its mark indiscriminately, and sets its seal everywhere, without the slightest authority; which at every crisis commands, and at every contingency interposes, though it is of its very essence to obey; which should reduce society to order, yet has made it a chaos—that *fifth* estate, like the Prophet's rod, quickened into a serpent to devour the rest, is the demoralised army of Spain.

CHAPTER XXX.

ACTUAL STATE OF SPANISH LITERATURE AND ART.

POLITICAL contentions have sadly tended to destroy whatever literary activity existed here; and the available talent of the country for the most part expends itself in journalism and political *brochures*. A portion of literary labour is likewise directed to the stage—after all an inconsiderable portion, and scarcely at all in original production, the highest efforts being for the most part confined to imperfect adaptation. The dramatist or novelist, in the words of the Castilian proverb, “gives of the coin which he possesses,” a somewhat debased French currency. The royal and literary mints of Spain are on the same footing of decay. The old dies and types are worn out, and the Peninsula is overrun with five-franc pieces. Yet, if the crown has lost its Mexican and Peruvian wealth, the infinite diversity of Spanish character, and the wit which is racy of the soil, are still a boundless and inexhaustible mine, which will yet be successfully explored when the political turmoil is over. Of the existing publications, few in their typographical arrangements are elegant, but compared with those of other continental countries, they are respectable. Besides the indispensable supply of professional works on law, medicine, and surgery, the chief issues are