



REVELATIONS
OF SPAIN
IN 1845

HUGHES

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REVELATIONS OF SPAIN

IN 1845.

BY

AN ENGLISH RESIDENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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REVOLUTIONS OF SPAIN

AN ENGLISH RESIDENT

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

At a period when public attention has been so strongly attracted by Spain and Spanish affairs, and when the changes and revolutions which have occurred in that singular country are still unaccounted for and incomprehensible to the vast majority of Englishmen, no prefatorial apology can be deemed necessary for the present volumes. The want has for some time been felt of a book, which, while conveying to its readers an accurate account of the changes above alluded to, should also afford them abundant data by which to form their own judgment as to the causes, immediate and remote, of those changes. A sound opinion on so intricate a subject could not be formed without an accurate knowledge of the institutions of Spain, and of the Spanish character as it really is, and not as popular error and prejudice, or superficial observers, have frequently portrayed it.

In these volumes the above conditions have, it is believed, been amply fulfilled. The result of no partial tour or hurried passage through the Peninsula, but of the residence for several years in that country of

an intelligent man, gifted with great powers of observation, and ample opportunities of observing, there is scarcely any subject of interest connected with Spain and its inhabitants that the author has not handled in detail. The country under all its aspects, and the people, in all the phases of their contradictory and bizarre character, pass before our eyes: Spain fighting and feasting, pronouncing and fraternizing; Spain in the circus and in the senate-house, torturing bulls, and baiting ministers; Spain in its hours of mad folly, and its rare moments of reflection. Where it has been necessary to go back into Spanish history, in order to make matters of to-day more intelligible, it has been done; as in the chapters on the Camarillas, where the rise and progress of that illicit appendage of Government are traced from its first appearance in the remote days of the early Spanish kings, and through all its vicissitudes, until it is found unabated and flourishing under the fostering care of a Christina.

The absence of the author from England has unavoidably caused the correction and revision of his work to be committed to other hands, and this circumstance must form the excuse for any verbal or other inaccuracies which may have escaped the editor's notice.

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REVELATIONS OF SPAIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE FALL OF ESPARTERO.

THE events of the year 1843, in Spain, have been of so very extraordinary a character, and the principle of representative government in the Peninsula has been tried by such severe and unusual tests, that the social and political state of that remarkable country seems at no previous period to have claimed a more attentive interest.

The springs of society have been stirred from their depths; the pillars of the Commonwealth rudely shaken; order subverted, and laws defied; the executive Chief of the State has been exiled and deposed; a child has been raised to the exercise of sovereignty before the period recognised by the Constitution; a Minister, after six days' tenure of power, has been expelled from office by a Palace-plot, and like the Regent five months before, been obliged to fly for his life; Parliament has been summarily closed, its scrutiny contemptuously evaded,

its functions audaciously usurped ; the heads of the popular party have been thrown into dungeons without warrant ; the lives of numerous citizens forfeited without trial ; the Sovereign has been brought forward in an indecent attitude, and a military government, or the lawless rule of dishonest civilians, established. In such a phase of society, in so dire an agony of political systems, the character of the people must have presented, to an observer on the spot, some novel and singular features ; and the violent paroxysms through which the country has passed, must awaken some public curiosity as to the national vitality which has preserved it. My testimony is that of an eye-witness ; it may not be penetrating, but it is at least impartial.

The early part of the year was spent, under the ministerial presidency of the Marquis of Rodil, in parliamentary struggles between the Regent Espartero and the majority of the Deputies in Congress. The bulk of his own Progresista party was gradually alienated from the Regent's side ; the Minister persisted for a time, in spite of his lost majority, and a crisis was fast approaching. The day on which the Lopez Ministry was formed, was the memorable 9th of May. The new Administration immediately presented to the Regent a project of amnesty, by which the Moderados, banished for the daring attempt on the Palace, in October 1841, were to be permitted to return to Spain. The Duke of Victory regarded this project with feelings of the most determined aversion, and beheld in it a design to compromise his position, and sap the foundations of his power. The

bitter enmity of the military chiefs and politicians whom this measure would bring back to Madrid, was not disguised or doubted. It was an intense hatred and unmeasured hostility; for the victims who had fallen through a mistaken loyalty, whom Espartero sternly sacrificed, more, perhaps, as an example than in revenge,—Léon and Montés de Oca, Borso and Quiroga, Fulgosio and Frias, Boria and Gobernado, —were deeply and indelibly remembered.

The Regent therefore regarded the design for the Moderados' recall as a personal blow. But the nation was undoubtedly disposed for the amnesty, and the popularity of Espartero was forfeited. His very army was averse to the further exclusion of these, their former comrades, whose three years of exile were held to be an ample punishment; while the list of executions, transcribed above, appeared to be a sufficient expiation. It would have been nobler, doubtless, and more politic in Espartero, to have given a graceful consent to the amnesty; disaffection would have been disarmed of its strongest weapons, and opposition would have worn the look of ingratitude. The most powerful foot cannot trample down human feeling, and a silken cord may lead what adamantine fetters will not bind. Espartero, who would probably still be Regent had he chosen a wise course, preferred a stubborn resistance; and the Progresista leaders had no friendly feelings for one who had excited amongst them dissensions and jealousies, who governed with but slight reference to their wishes, and excluded all but a few favourites from the practical management of affairs. The amnesty was therefore

made a paramount question, by which ministers would stand or fall. Unfortunately, too, for Espartero, it was a question essentially popular, a question sacred to human liberty. The expatriated Moderados were homeless and penniless wanderers; "peace and union amongst Spaniards" was a formidable watchword and rallying cry, and the feelings of many Progresistas, as well as of all the Moderados in the country, were sincerely enlisted in the cause.

The extent of the amnesty its import, and tendency, were by no means of a sweeping or dangerous character: the project, on the contrary, was restricted and statesmanlike. It merely conceded to those who were in a position to partake of its benefits, the rights, protection, and security guaranteed to every Spaniard by the Constitution; it granted what it was difficult longer to deny, and was at once both just and generous on the part of the nation towards a number of unfortunate exiles, powerful only as long as they were oppressed, whom it was neither unwise nor undignified to recall, when peace was firmly re-established. The measure involved no peril to the State, for it accorded to the amnestied no social or political importance, and gave to the Moderados no preponderance in its councils. It simply declared that the Government was empowered to employ, if it thought fit, civilians and military men who had previously held public situations.

The question of conceding this employment was reserved for a consideration of individual circumstances, and a government acting with ordinary prudence could easily avert contingent danger.

But the amnesty was scornfully rejected by the Regent; and his private secretary, Linage, was employed to communicate with the Ministry in a way which, significantly evincing his master's chagrin and displeasure, was pronounced to be entirely unconstitutional, and gave deep offence to the Progresista leaders. The dismissal of Linage, Zurbano, and others, a sort of military Camarilla, was called for; the severe requisition was proudly refused. The Lopez Ministry was itself dismissed, and in direct opposition to the Chamber of Deputies, where that Ministry had a large majority. Don Gomez Becerra, the President of the Senate, was called to the head of a new administration. Then was immediately formed that powerful coalition of the Moderado and Progresista interests, which had for its object the removal of Espartero from the Regency, and called itself the Parliamentary party. Soon after, and in consequence, took place the Pronunciamento of Reus in Catalonia, which flew to Barcelona and Valencia, and was instantly followed by all the provinces in succession. Revolutionary juntas sprang up like mushroom in a night. As if a train of gunpowder had been laid over Spain, town after town rose in rapid succession; the aspect of affairs was changed as if by magic; and instantaneously the whole Peninsula was in a blaze. God was invoked to save the Queen and the country, and the restoration of the Lopez Ministry was peremptorily demanded.

Spaniards are imperfectly acquainted with the more refined machinery of representative government; and for a series of pronunciamentos, revolts, and out-

breaks, which, to the world at large, have appeared inexplicable, an abundant excuse to Spanish minds was to be found in the Constitution itself. The oath taken by both Sovereign and Regent, under the Constitution of 1837, is an express invitation to the people to canvass the royal acts, and rebel against any one of these which to their judgment appears illegal. This oath was taken by Espartero in 1840, and by Queen Isabel in November last:—"I swear by God and by the holy evangelists that I will keep and cause to be kept the constitution of the Spanish monarchy, promulgated in Madrid on the 18th of June, 1837; that I will keep and cause to be kept the laws, attending only in what I shall do to the good and profit of the nation. If, in what I swear, or in any part thereof, I shall do the contrary, I am not to be obeyed, but that wherein I so contravene shall be null and of no effect. So God assist me and be my defence!" Here, then, is a direct invitation to every Spaniard to "pronounce" when he thinks proper—for private judgment is distinctly authorised. Nay, more, the individual opinion is to become at once an armed resistance; for the same Constitution says—and it is engraven on stone in the centre of every town:—"Every Spaniard is bound, at his country's call, to defend the Constitution with arms in his hands."

It requires little to decide the Peninsular reformer to rush to the public square and make a new revolution. At times, he is so quick about it that *he forgets to put on his shoes*; a fact surprising to our Northern natures, but familiar to all who have witnessed an

alboroto* in Madrid, Barcelona, or Seville. A dozen *vivas*, the beat of a drum, three steps in advance—it is done! But this supposes a previous preparation of the minds of the multitude—and the multitude was now prepared. Espartero's power was completely undermined; his hold on the popular sympathies, lost: right or wrong, he was individually and strongly opposed to the majority in parliament. The people does not fine-draw, the people is no sophist, the people understands not subtle political distinctions. It saw the broad and striking fact, that Espartero sought to govern in opposition to the wishes of their representatives, and it rose against a dictator. It is easy to talk of French gold and of conspiracies in Paris, but you cannot bribe a nation. The conspiracy was a-foot—the gold was sent—the army was corrupted, but the people judged and acted for themselves; the municipalities declared against the Regent on what they deemed sufficient grounds; and, absurdly as his offences were exaggerated by the prism of political passion, it would be still more absurd to suppose that every city and town, every village and hamlet in Spain, pronounced against the idol of three years previous without substantial reasons, or at the beck of France. The Germanada, or Holy League of Cities, was the only antecedent parallel in history; and if that League was overcome and Spain reduced, it was by the genius of Charles V.

The flame leaped from town to town; the torch was borne with terrible speed—a speed that appalled the Regent's heart and froze him at Albacéte. He

* Emeute.

remained in La Mancha too long ; he went forth from Madrid too late. The Pronunciamento was a Gorgon that turned him to stone ; perplexing intelligence rushed in from every side—he stood in cataleptic trance. The cry that went forth from Reus (which two queens afterwards visited because it was the first to plant the standard of rebellion) was caught up by turbulent Barcelona ; it awoke the congenial spirit of Catalan rebellion ; it reverberated along the Pyrenees ; it passed over that proud and liberty-loving Aragon which Ferdinand annexed to Castile, and over that Navarre which he conquered ; from Zaragoza—unshaken after forty assaults by the French in the war of independence—to Pamplona, rising like a fortress over the banks of Arga. It strode from Toledo to Talavera, from Talavera to Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo, on the confines of Portugal. It passed from Estremadura, where Charles V. died, to Valladolid, where Philip II. was reared, and Ferdinand and Isabella received the nuptial blessing. It penetrated to Logroño, to Soria, and to León, and resounded through the scholastic cloisters of Salamanca. It ascended the rugged mountains of Liebana ; it woke the echoes of the forests of Asturias, where the Moor could never penetrate, and where the noble Gothic race remained for eight centuries unconquered ; arousing wild Galicia and savage Finisterre, where the legions were dismayed by the vast extent of ocean, and on their return to Rome declared that they saw the sun sink in the western waters with terrible noise and majesty.

Granada, too, had its pronunciamentos, and its

conflicts between milicianos and soldiery. The national flag was hoisted on the red battlements of the Alhambra; the fiery torrent blazed over peaceful Andalucía. The kingdom of Iliberia felt the epidemic frenzy, and arose with an enthusiasm only short of Barcelona and Valencia. From the dragon's-blood orange grounds of Murcia, it passed to the lemon-groves of Almunecar; from the pomegranate huertas of sunny Malaga to the garden-plain of Córdoba; it flitted over the Elysian Fields of the ancients; it flew from the banks of the Guadalquivir, where Roderick lost the battle that won Spain for the Saracens, to the massive walls of Tarifa, where the first Saracen landed; it crossed the Southern Straits to Ceuta, and bounding backward, avoided the European Pillar of Hercules, where a Northern rider bestrides the couchant lion; but it entered San Roque, which Spanish jealousy to this day records as the "*civitas Calpensis*," and careered in triumph over the Campo of Gibraltar.

The standard of Castile waved at the same moment in rebellion from the summit of the magnificent Giralda of Seville and on the towers of the Alhambra—first planted there by Ferdinand the Holy when he wrested Seville from the Moors, and by Isabella the Catholic when she expelled them from Granada. Revolutionary juntas imitated in their mad enthusiasm the most impressive acts of ancient kings, and the thunderbolts of a blind fanaticism were hurled at the devoted Regent's head. The chiefs of the municipality, the civil and military functionaries, were gathered together beneath the majestic roof of

the cathedral of Seville, and in front of the golden altar the Canon Capáro swore them on the cross to die, if needful, in defence of the city, but never to surrender; while prayers were addressed in a hundred churches to the Virgin Lady of Anguish for the triumph of the national cause. To show what enthusiasm will accomplish: when in the middle of the bombardment three convents were burning, struck by Van Halen's shells, the nuns rushed forth into the streets, "Virgins of the Lord," as they were styled in the municipal proclamations, and calling on the inhabitants by the name of brothers, said they were prepared to endure all, so the tyrant Espartero was not suffered to enter. "The tyrant Espartero!" Such is the force of words. What knew these nuns of party politics? What of the secrets of party intrigue? But the torrent of words had carried them away with the rest of their countrymen—the vertigo had reached their cloisters.

Narvaez and Concha, Pezuela and O'Donnell, lost no time, upon their arrival in the South-eastern ports from France, by connivance of its government, but at once proceeded with extraordinary energy to carry into operation their preconcerted design. One placed himself at the head of the revolution in Castile, another proceeded to raise Andalucía, a third repaired to Navarre, while Narvaez himself, the master-spirit of the enterprise, set out with a handful of troops from Valencia, and raising the siege of Teruel, struck the first blow and gained the first success, which here, as ever, was half the battle; while the Regent remained for weeks in unaccountable apathy