

at Albacéte. Every hour of unworthy delay was recorded in pronunciamientos and desertion. Fresh troops repaired to Narvaez's triumphant standard; he marched into Aragon, extended the revolt through that kingdom, and was joined by all but its capital. The Regent, benumbed and paralysed, still lay at Albacéte! Narvaez, who shone with the very qualities which Espartero wanted, unhesitatingly marched on Madrid, effected his junction with Aspiroz, encountered the united troops of Seoane and Zurbano at Torrejon, fought the memorable but bloodless battle in which bullets were exchanged for dishonouring embraces, and entered the metropolis of Spain.

Meanwhile Serrano and Mazarredo held possession of Barcelona and the Catalan territory: the Regent, roused at last into action, united his troops to those of Van Halen, and proceeded to lay siege to Seville. Open as this extensive city was before them, with its low and serrated Moorish wall, Van Halen's batteries were entirely inadequate to its reduction; and motives of humanity, with probably a consciousness that the die was cast against him, withheld the Regent from taking it by assault. Meanwhile the news of the capture of Madrid spread with the accustomed rapidity of events of the first magnitude, like widening circles on the ocean. It reached Zaragoza, and Zaragoza (the last city but one that remained faithful), pronounced against the Regent; it reached Seville and struck him as with palsy. He retired on Alcalá, he passed through Utrera, he fled through Xerez, at every step deserted by fresh sections of his troops; he reached Port St. Mary's, hotly pursued by Concha

and his men, embarked in a small fishing-boat, was taken on board the Spanish steamer *Betis*, and carried across the bay to her Britannic Majesty's ship *Malabar*, lying before Cadiz, which city (the last in Spain where he retained a party), pronounced against him as he was taken on board, and sailed, a broken man, for England.

"En fin," says Sancho Panza, "bien dicen que es menester mucho tiempo para venir á conocer las personas, y qui no hay cosa segura en esta vida. Quien dijera que tras de aquellas tan grandes cuchilladas como Vuestra Merced dió, habia de venir por la posta y en seguimiento suyo esta tan grande tempestad de palos que ha descargado sobre nuestras espaldas?"

"In fine, it has been well remarked, that much time is required to come to know persons, and that there is nothing certain in this life. Who would have said that, after those terrible sword-cuts which your Worship dealt about, there would come so rapidly in their train this great tempest of blows discharged upon our shoulders?"

The first pronunciamiento against the continuance of the Duke of Victory's power as Regent, took place on the 23d of May; and on the 30th of June he embarked at Cadiz, calling at Lisbon on his way to England: repulsed with unparalleled meanness by the Portuguese, but received by the British nation as became a magnanimous people.

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE OF NARVAEZ.

IT was classic ground that Narvaez trod, when he went forth from Valencia to march to the metropolis of Spain. At Murviédro, on the sandy plain which stretches to the Mediterranean, his path was skirted by the site of the ancient Saguntum, a city founded by Greeks, the ally of Rome, and under the tutelage of Hercules—a city which the brave Celtiberians of other days, after sustaining an eight months' siege, enveloped in a sheet of crackling flame, and perished there with their wives and daughters, rather than submit to the yoke of Hannibal. As Narvaez with his handful of troops passed through the modern town, they might have read on many a stone, picked up from the vanished ruins to furnish other walls, Phœnician and Latin inscriptions recording this oldest victim of *Españolismo*. When they raised the siege of Teruel in the burning summer, and made the cry of "Central Junta" triumphant in the province of that name, they bathed their throbbing temples in the lovely and mingling waters of Guadalaviar and Alhambra, rivers of romance, where the Cid bathed them of old when Alfonso banished him from the Castilian court; and from the steep acclivity bearing still the name of *Peña del Cid*, where the hero fixed his resting-place, they passed by Montalbo and the towers of

Toledo to the field of Torrejon de Ardoz, the birth-place of the fortunate Muñoz, where his father kept a snuff-shop; and a ten minutes' friendly conflict made Narvaez master of Spain.

A scene of the saddest interest was here witnessed, the only redeeming feature of this strange "*transaccion*." Disgusted with the vile betrayal of his troops, and dismayed at the results of this bargain-battle to the discipline of the Spanish army, Seoane, as the leading General of the Esparterist forces, proceeded to write a brief despatch to the Minister at Madrid, descriptive of these deeds of shame. He wrote but a few lines, in substance the same words which fell from the lips of Francis the First on the disastrous field of Pavia: "*Tout est perdu fors l'honneur*." And having written thus far, and conscious that to none but himself and a handful of officers, out of the whole army, could these words of pride apply, his feelings of grief, of shame, and agony, overmastered his soldierly heart, and he fell to the ground in an epileptic fit. For many hours he did not recover so as to be able to hold a pen—his aide-de-camp was obliged to conclude the despatch. But Seoane's sentence remained unfinished; and these words are enclosed in brackets, in the only official record of the engagement: "Here the General fell senseless." His soldiers preferred the proverb, "*Una hora de vida es vida*."*

There is one Homeric epithet of Mars, to which Espartero may assert his right amongst his countrymen—the only one which they are willing to accord him—that of "wall-battering," the bombardier of

* An hour of life is life.

cities. Barcelona and Seville will live in the memory of Spaniards, as long as his defeat at Ayacucho in Peru; and whatever his absolute rights, the recklessness of those assaults upon life and property, and the indifference to the preservation of the noblest monuments of Spain, will be as indelibly engraven on their minds as the loss of Calais on the heart of the consort of one of their kings, our own Queen Mary. I do not approve this feeling—I believe that Espartero may in great part be justified. But such are Spaniards—I am recording prevalent impressions. The epithet "*heroica*" is undisputedly accorded to Valencia, because it was the first important city that pronounced against him, and because, threatened with all his forces, it resisted with the greater resolution; and the defence of Seville will be exaggerated to all posterity, because his strength was broken against it, when on the holiest of cathedrals was unfurled, to flout him, the standard of St. Ferdinand.

The sliding-scale of Espartero's greatness was rapid, yet distinct in its stages. His fall resembled the bumps of a man descending the rugged front of an inclined precipice. It was not the tremendous crash of an instant after a well-fought field—the doom of a Roderick, a Richard, a Napoleon, but the little and bit-by-bit descent, after no fighting at all, from Madrid to Ciudad Real, from Ciudad Real to Albacete [here there was a pause in the scale], from Albacete to Córdoba, from Córdoba to Seville, from Seville to Port St. Mary's, and thence to the wide ocean. In this sliding scale of foiled ambition, which popular characters would do well to study, he fell from idolatry to enthusiasm, from enthusiasm to attachment, from

attachment to respect, from respect to indifference, from indifference to contempt, from contempt to hatred, and from hatred he fell into the sea! Yet, let justice be done him: he has left none behind him in Spain who can effectually perform the task to which he proved unequal; none that can ride *that* whirlwind and direct *that* storm. No Atlas is to be found. To have even been a Phaeton was famous.

The project of law upon which occurred the grand struggle between Espartero and his Parliament, represented by Lopez, would have really ensnared the expatriated Moderados. The hostility of these to Espartero, more especially of the military section, was intense, and the question was regarded by him as one of life or death. He surveyed it through the mists of Southern passion, with whose lines his long dark features are engraven. But it must never be forgotten, that to accede to the measure would have been to deprive these outlaws of their sting; and it was not difficult to anticipate,—what occurred soon after,—their opening a path to Madrid with their swords. Generosity would have been sound policy. The boon would have made hostile measures by Narvaez ungracious and unpopular, and would have neutralized the obvious charge against the Regent—a charge which cannot be evaded—of daringly setting himself in opposition to the will of his Parliament. It is the Lower Chamber whose voice in the formation of ministries must preponderate in a representative monarchy; and the dismissal of Lopez, the Deputies' nominee, and substitution of Becerra, the President of the Senate, was a marked slight to the more

popular and powerful House, which it is impossible to justify.

One of the most energetic, though characteristically quiet and unboisterous, of Espartero's opponents, throughout the period of his regency, was that estimable character, Martinez de la Rosa. He never could forgive the rudeness and severity of Queen Cristina's treatment, and has frequently compared Espartero to Cromwell; predicting even with great confidence, that the sway of the Spanish Regent would be shorter than that of the English Protector. Martinez de la Rosa's prediction has been fulfilled; for while the Lord Protector reigned but four years, Espartero was not suffered to finish three. Most certainly nothing short of the grossest exaggeration could institute a comparison between the Duke of Victory and Cromwell; but the circumstance is worth recording, as denoting how differently the same facts are regarded in Spain and in England: and I may likewise observe, that a halo has been thrown round Espartero in British eyes (in consequence of his having been presumed to be the advocate of British interests), of which neither in popular estimation, nor in the opinion of sound politicians, could I even discover a trace in Spain. The Spaniards laughed at him even in the meridian of his power, as they laugh at their saints and gods; and if you probed their bosoms deeper, you found that there was little respect for his person; that he was slightly spoken of as a gambler and a *roué*; that the notion of his military achievements was derided; and that he was regarded in no other light but as a lucky intriguer.

When in 1838, during the ministry of Count Ofalia, Espartero first became troublesome to Queen Cristina, and intimated his wishes that two of her Moderado Ministers should be dismissed, Martinez de la Rosa, who was one of the honorary councillors of state called to assist the Queen Regent with certain advice on that occasion, addressed her solemnly thus: "I recognise no law for the construction of cabinets but the will of your Majesty and the parliamentary majorities. General Espartero may place his resignation in your hands, and he then may raise the army. But for me, there is one thing superior to all other considerations—the dignity of your Majesty's throne. To yield to this requisition is to fling the crown out of the window!"

It is generally assumed in England, that Cristina fell in consequence of an assault upon municipal liberty, and that this was the only parliamentary question upon which she was then at issue with the Progresista party. But there was another, and a still more momentous question; for, contemporaneous with the project for nominating instead of popularly electing the municipal Alcaldes, was the fact, that the Cortes re-voted a portion of the tithes for the support of the clergy. This vote was more symptomatic of reaction than the project regarding the municipalities by which it was accompanied; and the immediate consequence was the movement of September 1840, and the withdrawal of Cristina into France. The sales of the remaining church property have been recently suspended; but there cannot be a doubt that an attempt to restore the property sold

would be followed by another and a bloodier revolution than any that has yet been witnessed.

The question of a triple and a parliamentary Regency, or one composed of parliamentary notabilities, having been decided against the wishes of a very large section of the Progresistas, and Espartero having been raised to the supreme authority with nothing but soldiership to qualify him for affairs of state, it became in the highest degree incumbent on him to rule with moderation. He should have shown a suitable deference for the views of those parliamentary leaders, in unison with whom was effected the movement that carried him to power, and with whose general principles his own were in accordance. But so far from this, they were excluded from his private circles—not a man of high parliamentary standing was invited to his presence; and there was the frequent pretension of deciding every question, like Brennus, by the weight of his sword. A partisan spirit has hitherto blinded us in England, both to this most noticeable fact, and to the circumstance that the intrusion of his military secretary, Linage, was carried to a degree irreconcilable with parliamentary government. We are not to be blind to Espartero's faults, because Narvaez is so immeasurably worse. The intervention of a mere private secretary, invested with no other character, and as a foreigner jealously eyed by the proud spirit of Spanish nationality—the interference of such a man in affairs of state, and in high political questions, could be regarded in no other light but as an abuse of power; and the expression of a strong desire through such a channel, after more

direct but vain attempts to bend the will of the majority, was most decidedly unconstitutional.

The favour extended to Moderados rather than to old Progresista friends, the feuds and jealousies promoted amongst the latter, and the entire exclusion of a large section, were errors of quite sufficient magnitude, combined with the retention of his military habits of rule, to account for Espartero's downfall; and, though he always respected the letter of the constitution, he is no longer to be deemed (as his suppositious championship led him to be regarded in England) the victim of an atrocious conspiracy, so much as of his own mismanagement. The parliamentary league before which he fell was not a hollow fiction, but a reality; the unbought voices of the great majority of Spaniards were against him, and the French intrigues have perhaps been in some degree exaggerated.

But the activity of Maria Cristina and her partisans in Paris materially indeed conduced to this memorable result. Her hôtel in the Rue de Courcelles was a rival Spanish court, and her agents were more accredited at the Tuileries than the ambassadors of the lawful Regent. Her offended womanly pride thirsted for a large revenge, attainted soldiers stimulated to excess her natural feelings, and the astute sovereign by her side, who had already insulted Espartero, knew and discouraged not her plans. To win or corrupt the Spanish army, Narvaez and his friends were sent by sea, and a million of francs by land. It was just half a century (1793—1843) since a million francs went across the Pyrenees.

in the opposite direction. Carlos IV. sent this sum to the Spanish envoy at Paris, Chevalier Ocariz, for the purpose of bribing the leading members of the Convention to spare the life of Louis XVI., a fact divulged in a pleading of the elder Berryer. But the "Infernal Committee" conceived its suspicions, and Ocariz was ordered to leave Paris within four-and-twenty hours. Espartero had not the same penetration; and a second million of francs, sent likewise across the Pyrenees—from France—completed his destruction.

Espartero's sliding-scale of popularity is the same in London as at Madrid: with this difference, that his flight through its descending gradations was more rapid with us than with his countrymen. As if pursued by fatality, he must commit the gravest error of morality as well as policy, of feeling as of judgment, in the high-hearted land of his asylum; and, as if all Spaniards must be contrabandists, smuggled into the grand municipal banquet of London the murderer of women, Nogueras. Was there none near to tell him of the noble breasts of Englishmen, of their humane and generous sentiments, and their virtuous emotions? Were there none to tell him of Hastings' three years' trial for torturing the gentler sex, for butchering or oppressing the weak and helpless, and "placing death on the fountain of life?" Were there none to tell him of the trial of Queen Caroline, and of the torrent of indignation poured upon her persecutor? Was it well in one, so late of royal standing, to foist, under a false name, upon a convivial assembly of the *élite*

of the British capital, a man so universally branded? The failure of the triple plot to effect a re-entry into Spain, in which Iriarte, Linage, and Nogueras, rivalled the incapacity of their master, caused the illusions of the British public to melt away in indifference, and subside in mute contempt; the atmosphere of London became too cold, and the Duke of Victory lapsed into suburban life.

The moment Narvaez' troops obtained possession of Madrid, military violence became predominant. The convention, signed by Aspiroz, by which the rights of the national militia were to be held sacred, was shamefully violated; and the instant Narvaez had mastery of the city the nationals were disarmed. The entire Senate was dissolved, the provincial deputation was dissolved, the municipality of Madrid was dissolved! The laws of the constitution were violated in each instance, and the nominees of the government were thrust into these offices. The soldiery began to murmur, for the regular treasury was empty, and Cristina's irregular treasury was closed the moment the success of her footing was secured. For demanding their *licencia absoluta*, or leave to quit the service, on the faith of which they had been false to Espartero, and too true to Narvaez, this cruel and heartless adventurer had eight of his soldiers shot! Their brains bespattered the wall where they were slain in the suburbs of Madrid,—their blood lay in eight pools on the parched and dusty ground. The nationals and populace were fired on when a few gathered together, and the ordinary conversation of lively southerners was called a political disturbance.

Espartero's generals and ministers narrowly escaped with their lives. Zurbano stole from Madrid in the guise of a muleteer. Seoane proceeded with a safe-conduct towards France, and was faithlessly arrested on the road. Mendizabal and Gomez Bicerra were long concealed in the metropolis, and eventually succeeded by stratagem in escaping from the Spanish soil.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.—STATE OF PARTIES.

WHEN the Provisional Government, presided over by Señor Lopez, was installed at Madrid on the 23rd July, it found created a new and most difficult position of affairs. It was the child of peculiar circumstances, and to them it was compelled to bow. Lifted back to office by violence, created by an outrage on constitutional forms, its first acts must needs be of a strong character, and its measures, to be successful, moulded by necessity rather than by statute. Two rival parties, diametrically opposed in principle, and held asunder by mutual jealousies, were to be conciliated and kept in play; two separate sets of opinions to be treated with a certain deference.

The task was unsuccessful, because it was impossible. The most violent outrages on the Constitution were perpetrated in quick succession, the exaggerated plea of necessity was invoked for the most lawless acts, and in the end it was shown that they were unavailing. The Marquesa de Santa Cruz was appointed to the palace, and a nucleus of a Camarilla formed; the growing exactions of Narvaez were becoming more formidable daily, the future was obscure and heavy with dull forebodings. The ascendancy of Moderado principles appeared inevitable, and the adhesion of the army to Narvaez was complete.

Señor Lopez, noticing with pain these decisive demonstrations, endeavoured by remaining in power to keep the Progresistas in countenance, and repel the exigencies of Moderado aggression. His object, as afterwards avowed in the Chamber, was to tolerate and even recognise Moderado opinions, but not to permit their induction into power; to give those who professed them employment under the State, but never concede to them political command. The compromise had but one fault—it was impracticable.

The parties are committed to hostilities upon the most essential principles of government. The one is for standing still, or for retrogression, the other for perpetual advance. The one is the determined foe of innovation, the other is for innovating or renovating in every direction. They are opposed as to abstract theory; they are opposed as to material improvement; they are opposed in their financial policy; they are opposed as to popular franchise. The Progresistas established the constitution of 1837, and the Moderados sternly resisted. The Progresistas secularized the religious orders, and the old Moderados vehemently opposed them. The Progresistas sold the *bienes nacionales*, or confiscated (chiefly ecclesiastical) properties; the Moderados strongly decried the measure. The Progresistas abolished entails, seignories, titles; the Moderados exclaimed against all their acts as robbery. The various laws of administrative reform, which the Progresistas proposed and carried, were met by the Moderados with the strongest opposition.

They are alpha and omega, the bane and antidote,

the stationary milestone and the train that flies past it. Señor Lopez sought as a means of emerging from the difficulties of the case, and with the hope of reconciling conflicting opinions, to give a new organization to the country by a premature declaration of the Queen's majority. While Espartero retained his legal rights as Regent (and the royal nonage had yet twelve months to run), this clear infraction of the constitution appeared to be the sole resource. It was justified perhaps by the exigencies of the case; but the very policy here adopted in the hope of a triumphant result, like a random move at chess (the Queen advanced), was the most fatal which a Progresista could have pursued; for it made Isabel her own mistress, and threw her into the arms of the Camarilla.

Spanish political parties and their equivalents in those of England may be popularly thus defined. Of the two extremes in the graduated scale of party, Spain is without the one, and England without the other. There are no Tories in Spain, or their equivalent Carlists, in the legislative Chambers; there are doubtless some isolated Carlists at heart, but they dare not show their tendencies. In England there are no Republicans mixing as such in the political world; and whenever a stray voice is raised, there is no toleration for the doctrine. Chartism need not be taken into account, since it has, properly speaking, no parliamentary existence.

The Spanish legislature is composed of Moderados, Progresistas, and Republicans. The Moderado is nearly the equivalent of our Conservative, and the

Progresista of our Whig. The Moderados are the Right and the Progresistas the Left of the Chambers; the Republicans the extreme Left,—thus assimilating with France. There is a Centre oscillating between the two first-named, which was led by Gonzalez Bravo, and this is the party of “Young Spain.”

When at Madrid, in 1834, was formed the first Estamento (the Aragonese substitute for a States General), Moderado principles were in the ascendant, and the scandal was witnessed of the massacre of friars in the metropolis, which the government could neither prevent nor punish. In the following year there was a revolution set on foot to overturn a Moderado ministry; the ministry fell, and the revolution was successful. In 1836—after the lapse of another little year—there was a fresh revolution, the results of which were constituent Córtes and the actual Constitution of 1837. Three years afterwards, in 1840, there was a new revolution, the revolution of the first of September.

Queen Cristina was expelled from Spain, and Moderado domination fell with her. The greater popularity of the liberal views of policy was temporarily established, the Regent Duke of Victory attained to the highest place as their representative, and the Progresista party was triumphant until it fell by internal divisions.

The Moderado party of Spain, while it accepts the Constitution of 1837 as a fact accomplished, and professes the most utter repugnance to Absolutist principles of government, contends that the Estatuto Real, which was in force up to the revolution

of 1836, comprised within it all the germs of liberty ; and the most notable leaders of the party, Martinez de la Rosa and Isturiz, are fond of asserting in the *Córtes* that, by an application of the English principle of the Reform Bill, from the *Estatuto*, as a kernel, might have been legally and peaceably developed all the popular rights and franchises which are found in the existing Constitution.

But a calm examination of the forms of the *Estamento* of *Procuradores* of the kingdom, the only substitute for a parliament which it presented, leads to the conclusion that not reform but revolution was needed. In such an assembly popular feeling could never have asserted itself, nor effectually urged the concession of primary popular rights. The *Procuradores* were returned by electors with a very high pecuniary qualification ; the principle of election was indirect, and the delegates might conspire amongst themselves, and in returning the *Procuradores* falsify the wishes of the people ; while so little independence was then within the walls of the Assembly, that this so-called parliament, instead of sturdily electing its own speaker, was obliged to return five, from whom the minister selected the president.

The *Estamento* of 1835 was, in fact, no more truly a constitutional assembly than the existing States General of Holland, of Prussia, or Bavaria ; and it is a questionable blessing to a people to have conceded to it a sham parliament, which serves as a ministerial committee-room, and a complaisant voter of taxes.

The right of publicly questioning a government, called here the right of "interpellation," and plainly

one of the most important functions of a parliament, was recklessly strangled in the case of any troublesome member of the opposition; and the president, who was the tool of the court, did just as he pleased. Thus, in the Estamento of November 1835, Count de Las Navas, a leading popular member of the existing Cortés, rose and said, "I wish to make a proposition to the Estamento." The proposition was known to have reference to a proposed alienation of ecclesiastical property. The president replied, "I can receive no proposition at present," and immediately adjourned the session! The revolution followed speedily, for these Southern nations are too quick and fiery to wait for our Northern reforms.

The old Moderado party has latterly lost ground in the Spanish parliament, growing rusty during the four years that it has been excluded from the management of affairs; and having rather permitted the different sections of the Progresista party to fight it out amongst themselves, than combined for the formation of a vigorous opposition.

Content with their character of undoubted respectability, and confident in the support and concurrence of nearly all the property of the country, and most of the intelligence, they have not unnaturally lapsed into inaction; lagging in the social race, they have been outstripped by more vigorous competitors: and the literary *prestige* of Martinez de la Rosa, the eloquence of Donoso Cortés, and the sound statesman-like reputation of Isturiz, the most notable of the Moderados, have given way to the impetuous arrogance of Gonzalez Bravo, and the party of the Centre,

or "Young Spain." This latter young man, since he pushed himself forward to the post of Premier, has played such tricks in the Córtes as denote far more of vanity and vehemence than of true ability, and illustrated the perils of precocious oratory, disdainful of acquiring knowledge and experience, and bearing fruits that rot before they ripen.

The party of "Young Spain" is more respectable than its leader. It is composed of fifty deputies, who have planted themselves ably in the centre of Congress between Cortina on one side and the Moderados on the other; by their compact, energetic, and irresistible adhesion, forcing the majority of the Chamber in whatever direction they please.

The political views of this party are sufficiently plausible. Placing themselves midway between both extremes of opinion, they would moderate progress with the restraints of conservation, and make patriotic views, in profession, the lode-star of all their movements. If there be any hope of a powerful renovation in Spain, it is not unlikely to spring from this party, which, so long as it retains its unity, can absolutely rule the Córtes. Should it acquire moral strength to resist the lures of office, magnanimity to be regardless of selfish interest, and integrity to withstand corruption, it might permanently fill the proud position, which it held the other day, of saying who should and who should not be Prime Minister of Spain; have its wishes implicitly obeyed, and proclaim that no government should have its support but one endowed with virtuous energy, and power to organize the country in its administrative and judicial relations.