

But the selfish character of Spanish politicians makes this hope indeed chimerical.

The Progresista party of Spain has the strong support of the masses, and whenever its leaders lose their hold of power, they are invariably the victims of their own disunion. Inordinate ambitions and personal jealousies make difficult, if not impossible, the concert and mutual good understanding which are so essential to the effective action of parties. The zeal of adherents, not actually provided for, soon cools down; the weakness within are speedily augmented by the growing strength from without; and the doors of office are too slightly barred to resist the vigorous assaults of their rivals, and the backhanded blows of their false supporters.

Whenever, then, jealousies and internal dissensions in the Progresista camp attain to a certain pitch, the Moderados dispossess them by a *coup de main*—and this not scrupulously or constitutionally after the lapse of several years, as with the Whigs and Tories of England, but violently, recklessly, and at comparatively brief intervals of time. Adversity alone unites the different Progresista sections, and its lessons are too soon forgotten. Moderado principles have the undoubted adhesion of the bulk of the wealthy classes, but these are averse to change. The Constitution of 1837 has been accepted as definitive; and the capitalists and those who have succeeded to property, or have themselves realised it, have the same aversion which may be found in other countries to measures which are calculated to risk its security.

From no quarter have the Moderados a chance of

permanent support, unless by sincerely accepting and adhering to the existing Constitution. They may resist innovation, and shudder at advance, but never recoil backwards. They must submit to the same change which the Tories in England have undergone, and become *bonâ fide* Conservatives. The fears of the bulk of the people may thus be disarmed, and the frank adhesion of the moneyed classes, already well disposed towards them, be secured. This policy has just been strongly proclaimed by the most eminent leaders of the party, and the declaration of Martinez de la Rosa is important: "I judged, and I am still of opinion," (this statement was made by him in the Cortes during the debate on the affairs of Olózaga), "that the Estatuto Real would have sufficed for the happiness of the nation, for the enactment of the organic laws which it needs, and for curing by salutary remedies the evils which revolutions have brought in their train. But, while I retain this sincere persuasion, I am very far from thinking that the nation deserves to suffer a new revolution to carry it backwards. This is my opinion, and my deep conviction, that the country should not be exposed to a counter-revolution, and that it would be criminal in any man to attempt it. My conviction is, that with the Constitution which governs us the nation may be governed; and for this I have sworn it; had I thought otherwise, I would never have taken the oath, for I am not accustomed to be a perjurer." With these enlightened sentiments, the leading Moderados are well fitted to govern; but the violence of their bigoted supporters paralyses the more eminent men, who are unfortunately deficient in



courage, and in despite of whose better judgment reaction and subversive measures are invariably urged forward. The country is soon disgusted, and raised in arms against them; and the constitutional ardour and revolutionary habits of Spain burst forth in open insurrection. In the recent events, the violence of Narvaez and Bravo completely prostrated the good sense of De la Rosa and Isturiz; and most probably in vain did the moderate Moderados insert the small end of the wedge.

A false sympathy for Don Carlos has been recently got up in the British House of Commons. There never was anything more impossible than for that imbecile and blood-stained tyrant to establish once more a footing in Spain. If those who expatiate on this subject in London, making copious draughts on imagination, were to visit any part of the Peninsula, and take note of the popular feeling, they would instantaneously modify their sentiments. His son, Don Sebastian, would have as little chance as the father. Nothing could be more unfounded than the common speculation in England upon Narvaez's character as likely to prove another General Monk, the restorer of the English Carlos. Narvaez is the sworn ally and servant of Queen Cristina, whose daughter Isabel he would as soon think of contributing to remove from the throne to make room for her hated uncle and Salic rival, as of encircling the brows of Espartero with the regal round. The Carlist party in Spain, as Carlist, is without strength, standing, or influence, and is limited to the more factious clergy and to certain antediluvian grandees.

The guerillas who hoist Don Carlos' standard, display it merely as a pretence for robbery, and this year should have sufficed to dispel the most sanguine Carlist illusions. The temptation to fish in troubled waters was far from being neglected, but though the contrabandists filled their nets, the Carlists drew nothing but stones. The Pyrenean frontier has for many months past been crossed by *faccioso* adventurers from France, who have been uniformly shot in detail, or crushed if they resisted in numbers. In the Basque provinces, and in Navarre, no popular sympathies could be again enlisted; and the Vascongados, like the Aragonese, rose against the factious guerillas, and dispersed or slew them in detail.

The prevalence of political nicknames is a peculiar feature of modern Spain, and has doubtless led to mistakes in the foreign appreciation of political distinctions. The adherents of Espartero have been universally called "Ayacuchos," an odious reminiscence of the battle at which Don Baldomero and his brother generals lost for Spain the empire of Peru. The entire Progresista party have been termed "Exaltados," although violent opinions have been professed by but a section; and the Moderados on the other hand have been styled "Devoristas," to indicate an eagerness for place and plunder.

The Parliamentary strength in every *Córtes* returned without constraint and violence, has been usually, under the constitutional form of government, ranged on the Progresista side, and mutual jealousies have alone prevented them from uniformly commanding. The capital fault of Espartero's dynasty was in



promoting this jealousy and disunion. Instead of rallying all sections of Liberals in support of his authority, to the exclusion of the common enemy, the old Liberals, represented by Calatrava and Arguelles, were played off against the more modern reformers, Cortina and Lopez, Olózaga and Madoz, Cantero and Caballero. The Moderados were despised as an extinct faction, and grew in unnoticed strength with the unscrupulous aid of France, till they rose into irresistible antagonism against the Regent, through a league with the Liberals, whom he had mortally offended.

A powerful section of the Progresista party had supported the project of a triple regency, in opposition to the exclusive pretensions of Espartero to the exercise of the supreme power; and through a jealous and easily understood disinclination to the sole elevation of one who, however well-intentioned, was at best a mere soldier, and no regular proficient in statesmanship. These feelings were never eradicated; on the contrary, they grew more intense. Espartero was no advocate of violent theories of government, but he was too little attentive to the constitutional voice of the *Córtes*. His obvious policy was conciliation; but this policy is alien to Spanish natures. He excluded his opponents from a legitimate share of power. He leaned upon one section of Liberals, and found it rotten at last, and his imprudence has been doomed to a terrible expiation.

All government in Spain will be a farce, all enlightened administration impossible, until something

like stability and permanence is secured to successive ministries. As it is, even genius has no time to display itself; the fairest promise is nipped in the bud; the profoundest schemes of amelioration and reform are scattered to the winds before the foundation of the edifice is traced, or its ground-plan completed. Executive capacity, like a song, "is good if a body could sing;" but the social difficulty recurs, that "to finish we must begin."

The Spanish ministerial bravurist is kicked out before he has cleared his throat. A fair start is unheard of in the Peninsula. The jockeys are weighed, and permitted to mount; but just as they are drawing up the reins, and before they are firmly fixed in the saddle, a ruthless boot unseats them, and they are left sprawling in the mire; while the unruly and ungovernable animal they bestrode is mounted by a fresh rider. All the Ins are assailed by all the Outs, with a cry of "*Ote-toi que je m'y mette!*" Within the last twelve months, from May 1843 to May 1844, seven different administrations have directed the affairs of Spain. Espartero's last considerable cabinet, presided over by Rodil, fell on the 9th of May. Lopez's lasted but for ten days. Gomez Becerra's subsisted for sixty-five days, the bulk of which were revolutionary.

The Regent fled, Madrid was taken, and the Lopez-Serrano cabinet was again installed in office, which it held for four months. Olózaga was four days beating about for colleagues, and six days an actual minister. Gonzalez Bravo was 154 days in



power, and Narvaez is now the seventh! "*Poca ganancia y menos honra por los particulares que venian de toda España á servir al rey,*" says old Mendoza, in his *Guerra de Granada*; "There is small gain and less honour for those adventurers who flock from all Spain to serve the King."

## CHAPTER IV.

## "CENTRAL JUNTA."

THE subsidence of the waters, after the tossing of a tempest, is a thing not readily effected. There is a heaving swell, a breaking into foam, and an angry conflict of unruly currents, long after the storm has swept over the surface; and it was not oil but vinegar that Narvaez poured upon the waves. A multitude of causes combined to embitter the feelings of the nation; despotic principles were too evidently gaining an ascendant, and popular rights were too obviously treated with contempt. If one military dictator was got rid of, it was to be succeeded by another more desperately reckless. There was scarcely a law of the land, or an article of the constitution, which the Provisional Government did not violate within its first month of office. The revolutionary Juntas, by which the movement was effected, instead of dissolving when the country became restored to a normal state, retained their irregular and lawless existence, communicated with the Provisional Government upon a footing of equality, and had the pretension to advise, dictate, and almost command. When their suggestions were not attended to, when appointments were not made in their favour, nor their services, as they deemed, sufficiently rewarded, they proceeded, with the true instinct of Spaniards,



to re-pronounce against the Provisional Government, and demand a "Central Junta" to control it. Some leading towns effected this new movement quietly, and others by force of arms.

It was regarded as ominous by the country, that Cristina's Camarilla should be virtually reproduced at her daughter's court, and that the queen-mother's especial confidant, the Marquesa de Santa Cruz, should be despatched hot-foot from Paris to preside over the palace at Madrid, that the court-lady of the mother should be the court-lady of the child, and the mother's own general the child's body-guard. It was remembered, too, what Camarillas had been in the palace of the husband and father of these two queens, when the patriots of Spain were sent to the scaffold by the mandate of hidden courtiers, and freedom withered at the touch of a Calomarde and a Conde de España; when judges were compelled to give sentence whether evidence was adduced or not, and Rafael del Riego perished, the victim of a coterie. Still more was it remembered what worse than human wickedness, what execrable meanness and infamy, stained the crawling yet insolent courtiers of the earlier Bourbons of Spain, and the monarchs who immediately preceded them; what base and fawning subserviency ministered to royal wills; what grinding tyranny rewarded for these acts crushed down the people to powder; and though their devotion to their hereditary sovereign was not in the least impaired or shaken, though loyalty was cherished like a religious feeling, they shuddered to be enthralled once more by the curse of a Camarilla.

The cry of "Central Junta" is dear to the ears of

Spaniards. It was the rallying cry of the municipal and popular levies, which struggled so long for liberty in the early part of the reign of Charles V.; and during the Peninsular War it was this cry that sustained Zaragoza in its triumphant endurance of forty assaults, and enabled Valencia to repulse Marshal Monecy with terrible slaughter. According to the ancient usages of the country, upon great emergencies each province names a supreme Junta, invested with full power both of internal administration and military defence. Two members, deputed from each provincial Junta, proceed to the capital, and there sitting together constitute the Central Junta of the kingdom. Before the crowning of Joseph Bonaparte the Junta thus formed governed at Madrid, in the name of Ferdinand VII., under the presidency of Count Florida-Blanca.

Barcelona and Zaragoza were the first and boldest to defy Lopez and Narvaez, and make manifest their indignation at the deception practised on the people. These spirited towns withstood lengthened sieges, and did not finally yield except upon honourable terms. In many other towns there were partial attempts at insurrection, but for the most part unsuccessful.

During the siege of Seville there were several free corps enrolled, which were by far too proud of their triumphant defence to suffer themselves to be at once disbanded when their services were no longer needed. The Junta continuing its sittings, without any shadow of authority, for four months after the cessation of the siege, to the period of the declaration of the Queen's majority, could with no decency dissolve



the Cuerpos Francos, which only imitated their betters, and thus matters remained till the middle of November, to great public inconvenience. The Junta went on promoting their favourites from the rank of sergeant to those of *Alférez* or ensign, lieutenant, and captain, long after there was the slightest occasion for such irregular levies. The most absurd consequences resulted. A shoemaker, who had been advanced to the post of *Alférez*, having a quarrel in the Alameda Vieja with some of his fellow-townsmen, required as a military officer the assistance of four private soldiers, who chanced to pass that way, to arrest his adversaries. Arrested they were, and lodged in a neighbouring guard-house. This scandalous abuse led at last to an abatement of the nuisance, and none were permitted to assume military titles who were not confirmed in their appointment by the government.

The people of Seville exaggerated the merits of their defence. Van Halen's battering train was composed of only eight mortars, and about a dozen pieces of field-artillery, none of them more than fifteen-pounders; the guns did little or no execution, and of the mortars two were disabled and dismantled. The bombardment lasted but six days, and the notion of doing considerable injury with such matériel to a city of immense extent, containing 120,000 inhabitants, is extremely fantastic. But rhodomontade and grandiloquence are dear to the Spanish character, and especially to the natives of Andalucía, which has been called the Spanish Gascony; every man likes to have his courage spoken of, and the heads of the Sevillanos were turned by the pindarics of native

bards, and the high-flown compliments of the surrounding villages. The "Junta of Defence" believed themselves considerably greater men than Narvaez, and forwarded to him and Lopez accounts of the siege in prose and rhyme, with a request for places tacked to the end. When these historical memoirs and epic effusions were treated with profound indifference, when they found their encomiastic authorship cavalierly consigned to the trunkmakers, the cry for a Central Junta became very keen in Seville. Attempts at insurrection were made and persisted in with great pertinacity throughout the autumn, and nothing but the energy of the Government authorities and the vigour of Narvaez's military arrangements prevented their efforts, of which there were some twenty at different times, from being successful.

As the Sevillanos imagine themselves to have been treated with great ingratitude, I may as well record the real results of the siege. I saw full twenty houses in different parts of the city—this was about the entire number—which Van Halen's shells had entirely "guttled." The balls did limited damage—a mere crack against a wall, for the most part, a few stones dashed out, and there an end. But the bombs—that was indeed a different matter! Wherever they fell, unless when they struck the streets and were buried in the ground, they carried destruction. Lighting on the roof of a house, they invariably pierced through its four or five floors, and bursting below, laid the building in ruins. The lives lost by these tremendous explosions were fortunately but few—in all not more than twenty—for the male inhabitants were chiefly at



the walls, and the women huddled in the churches. One man who removed with his family to Alcalá, upon his return found the roof and floors of his house pierced by a grenade, which destroyed a sofa on which he had sat nearly every day in his life, and then made its exit through the wall. Throughout the siege there was happily no desecration of churches. The women cooked and slept in the magnificent cathedral; but if they did, they breathed incessant prayers to the Virgin; and no crucifix, with a cord twisted round its neck, was dragged in derision as at Barcelona.

"Ah, villanos con poder!" says Calderon, in his *Alcalde de Zalamea*. "Villains with power," indeed! The Juntas, the moment they were constituted, took measures to prove how sincere was their love of liberty, by persecuting those whom they hated. The brave men, too, who had so longed for the post of danger, looked shrewdly now to their personal safety; and the dignity of their new position, and dread of compromising the public weal by exposing valuable lives to danger, kept them always close in council, and as far as they could from the walls! The Junta of Seville was snugly ensconced in the nearly bomb-proof convent of San Paolo; and that of Barcelona, during the subsequent bombardment of October, packed itself up in a vault of the extinct Inquisition, with an arched stone roof of extraordinary thickness. They smiled in conscious security at the distant booming of the projectiles which flew through the Plaza de San Jaime, while their deluded adherents at their bidding were perilling life and limb. In their

mandates, their proceedings, and their cruel and sanguinary sentences, they followed unconsciously but with singular closeness the system of the ominous body in whose hall they had enshrined themselves. "*Ah, villanos con poder!*" Boys of twelve and thirteen years were compelled by them to do the work of soldiers—tender youths, torn from the mothers of Spain.

At Granada and Almeria there were severe conflicts between the citizens and military, but the attempt of the Centralistas was likewise here unsuccessful. At Xerez the authorities gave to the troops the word of command to fire on the revolted Nationals. But the soldiers, instead of obeying the mandate, joined in the citizens' cry for the Central Junta, shouldered their muskets with the butt-end uppermost, fraternised with the Nationals, whom they caught in a rough embrace, and made all their officers prisoners! The Ayuntamiento was speedily "no where." The next day all this work was as if by magic undone, and the town "dispronounced" itself at the point of the bayonet. Means had been contrived in the interim to pay up the soldiers' arrears. The enthusiasm of the previous day was miraculously abated. The highly brandied sherry assumed a pale and *golden* hue. Water was poured into the generous liquor, it was diluted to a mawkish negus.

The charming town of Xeres de la Frontera is every day assuming more of an English air, the cleanliness of its streets and the bright colouring of the fronts of its houses showing that the tastes of the British residents are diffusing themselves amongst the native population. But the savage nature of the



Spanish political partisan has burst out here, as in other parts of Andalucía, where, until of late, such manifestations were a pleasing rarity; and in October, on the occasion of electing the provincial deputation, a remarkable outbreak took place in this pretty little town. The committee of the Ayuntamiento was engaged in the scrutiny of votes; the populace was anxiously waiting the result in the open space in front of the municipal hall, and a considerable distance down the Calle del Consistorio. I was close to the Ayuntamiento myself, being curious to learn the result, and still more anxious to watch the evolutions of the crowd. The greatest suspicion of the scrutiny committee prevailed, and murmurings of bitter discontent were raised without intermission. The members of the committee in question were to a man warm partisans of the Provisional Government, and it was a part of the electioneering management of Lopez and Narvaez to suffer no Centralista and no adherent of Espartero to have a finger in that most important part of a Spanish election which consists in the scrutiny of votes.

The crowd knew this as well as the authorities. Presently, an active Ayacucho emerged from the municipality, and announced to his friends in the crowd, in the deep and rapid tones of a conspirator, that the game was up with their candidates! The scrutiny was going all against them, they had not one friend in the electoral college, and the best votes of the district were struck off, for no other fault but because they belonged to the Opposition. "*La mesa està podrida!*" (the table is rotten!) he exclaimed,

shaking his clenched fist with vehemence. The crowd understood him, and caught up the cry: "*Abajo el Ayuntamiento! Abajo la mesa podrida!*" (Down with the municipality! Down with the rotten table!) "*Viva la Junta Central!*" The "table" is the familiar name for the committee of scrutiny. The municipal guard interposed, but were speedily overcome. The front of the Ayuntamiento was instantly attacked, the windows were peppered with stones, the guard at the door interposed, but were vigorously resisted. All the neighbouring shop-doors were shut, and the windows barricaded. A message was sent from the back of the Ayuntamiento to the adjacent barrack, and the brigadier commandant of arms, Don Bernardo de Aguila, repaired without delay to the scene of the Alboroto, with the small force of infantry and cavalry at his disposal, which he planted in front of the Casa del Ayuntamiento, according to the best principles of military distribution, to do execution against a crowd.

At the approach of Aguila, with his handful of disciplined troops, the major part of the mob fled from the Calle del Consistorio into the small streets which branch off from it; and the commandant, with a piquet of infantry, succeeded in dislodging from the hall of the municipal house the portion of the crowd which had penetrated within. Several bayonet-stabs were dealt in this service; no serious wound was, however, inflicted, but the people were expelled. I retired to the house of an acquaintance fronting the municipality, and from one of its windows commanded a full view of the subsequent events. Tran-



quillity was for the moment restored, and the Amotinados (mutineers) seemed to have quietly abandoned the ground to the soldiers, who, of course, remained and prepared for hostilities. Aguila took all needful precautions; planted his men so as to guard against surprise, and posted sentinels in the streets adjoining the Consistorial, where there are some narrow passages. Now, however, came into play the ambushed guns, and a perfidious fire of musketry from the tops of houses and the corners of alleys took down no fewer than six of the soldiers. One of the infantry was killed on the spot and another was wounded; two of the cavalry were wounded seriously, and two slightly. The elevated and exposed position of the latter on horseback, made them more obvious aims for the concealed marksmen. The dragoons galloped up and down the street—the foot-soldiers ran to and fro, but there was no enemy to be seen; the murderous guns of their assailants were discharged from under cover, or from the inaccessible roofs of houses. Dragoons and horses champed the bit impatiently; some of them bit the dust. The infantry soldiers pointed their muskets here and there, but pointed them delusively, for the moment they raised their weapons their adversaries had disappeared. The popular fury now rose with the taste of blood, and women aided their husbands and brothers by flinging down tiles, heavy stones, and flower-pots, on the soldiers beneath, as at Barcelona. It is a fearful scene, street-fighting! Tamer, however, than the Catalan viragos, they hurled no chests of drawers—no hymeneal bedposts—no infants' cradles, on the shakos under them.

Aguila, undaunted by the ugliness of the weapons which rained down from numerous roofs, proceeded to make a *reconnaissance* in a café from which several shots had been fired. As he was in the act of entering with his men, one of the townspeople imprudently rushed out from the further door and darted down the street. The exasperated soldiers levelled their guns at him, and shot him dead! That man was as innocent of all participation in the fray as I was. He was indeed remarkable for his pacific and timid character, and if he fled it was in positive consternation. His life paid the forfeit of his want of self-possession. Such are the terrible chances of civil strife! The ammunition of the people became scantier; Aguila withdrew his sentries and pickets, and planted himself for the remainder of the day and night at the *Ayuntamiénto*. The firing of the *Amotinados* was now distant and ineffective, and the municipal committee with true Spanish *sang froid* continued its scrutiny uninterruptedly, without paying the slightest attention to the *zozobra* (whirlwind) outside. Aguila did not venture forth with his slight force again, confining himself to the protection of the municipal house; the people, too, declined to show close fight, but kept up a hedge-fire nearer or more distant during the whole of the night. The soldiers ensconced in the municipal hall received no further damage, with the exception of a couple of sentries who were wounded. The impassible aldermen continued their scrutiny for twelve mortal hours, striking off a vote, or thereabouts, for every hostile shot that was fired. Meanwhile an express had been sent off



to Cadiz for troops, and everything was got ready in the middle of the night. At five in the morning of the 16th, 300 men of the regiment of Asturias, under the command of Don Pedro Cabanas, embarked on board a small steamer in the midst of a heavy storm, crossed the Bay of Cadiz, with a surge sweeping to their gunwale, and (with such excellent expedition was the affair managed) were in Xerez four hours after.

This strong reinforcement decided the business. The town was patrolled in every direction; several arrests were made; the leading partisans of the Provisional Government now mingled with the soldiers.

The first Alcalde, Miguel Giles, and the political governor's secretary, Velasquez, read the *bando*, commanding all arms to be given up—and were fired on in the act—but the disturbance was effectually suppressed.

Such was the usual character and fate of the attempts to proclaim the Central Junta. Nevertheless it was determined, as a counterplot, to proclaim, without delay, the Queen's majority, and this ceremony took place with befitting pomp at the meeting of the Cortes, on the 15th of November.

## CHAPTER V.

THE OUSTING OF LOPEZ, AND THE EXPULSION OF  
OLÓZAGA.

It was a glorious sight, whatever partisans may say about it, when the second Isabel ascended, in her thirteenth year, the oldest throne in Europe—a throne numbering more ages than her years; a throne of fourteen centuries, more venerable than that of France, more chivalrous than that of England, more illustrious, in its early history, than any in the world beside; when the royal girl by her youthful innocence (would that she could have kept it unimpaired!) disarmed contending factions, exorcised the demons of infuriate strife, and beaming from a serener sky, like a pure and benign Santelmo, quelled in an instant the surges of faction, and dispersed the angry foam of waters! The first Isabel left deep on the throne the impression of her iron footsteps, combined the qualities which shone most worthily in the age which she adorned—for, like our own Isabel,\* she was strong and masculine-minded—put an end to a fierce and barbarous domination, joined many divided peoples in one, united two crowns, and linked two worlds! To every age its especial uses. The transforming power of time has renovating, of late, the face of the Spanish monarchy, and abridged the royal preroga-

\* Queen Elizabeth—the names are the same in reality.



tive. May the new Isabel (was the general prayer) shine worthily in her limited, but most powerful, sphere; controlling faction by the prestige of her name, and gathering round her throne, by the magic of her undisputed position, all that is most worthy and most virtuous in her empire. May that delicate hand wield a strong sceptre, reconcile freedom with order and progress with conservation; and beneath her quickening sway may the loyalty cheerfully paid to her sex and station, the homage of strength more readily accorded to weakness, revive all the chivalrous honour and lofty *caballeria* of the Spanish character, till the nation is as justly proud as of old, and its name and power, as of old, respected!

The nobleman appointed guardian to the Queen was found to be of such strong Moderado, even Royalist, tendencies, that it had been deemed requisite to counterbalance his influence by some other high appointment; and an extraordinary courier was despatched to the Basque provinces for Don Salustiano de Olózaga, with a letter from the Prime Minister, Lopez, imploring him instantly to repair to the Court. Olózaga obeyed the call, though with reluctance, his intention having been to await the meeting of the Cortes. He found that the Queen's guardian had nominated several violent Moderados to places near the royal person, and amongst the rest the Marquesa de Santa Cruz. He accepted the investiture of royal preceptor, with the well-understood duties annexed of constant vigilance and political inspection of the movements of the now undisguised Camarilla. The mission was both difficult