and disagreeable, "and its results," as he expressed it, "must be almost certainly evil." It was a silent but incessant struggle of conflicting influences. His functions, however, as preceptor, could last only for a few months, it having been determined, as the only escape from the pressing difficulties of the case, to declare the Queen major in November. This brief interval was carefully employed by Olózaga. To the completion of Queen Isabel's political education his days and nights were devoted. He repeatedly explained to his royal pupil that there is no constitutional monarchy possible, if sovereigns listen to political discourse from any others but their responsible ministers, and yield to private affection, or to the solicitations of those whom they may happen to esteem, in preference to the counsels of the men whom the country interposes between ruler and people.

The doctrine thus laid down by Olózaga was rigid, perhaps severe; but it was absolutely compelled by the pressure of circumstances, and by the defenceless youth of Isabel. In the case of a mature sovereign this severity could not with propriety be enforced, but nothing short of it could prevent the complete formation of that unendurable Camarilla, whose nucleus was then gathered and growing harder and firmer daily. It may be said that the sovereign must be at liberty to hear all sides, to enable her to form just opinions, but the official reports of the proceedings in Cortes are accessible, and upon each measure may be obtained the opinion of her council.

The Queen's majority was declared, the functions

both of guardian and preceptor ceased with this declaration; the Lopez ministry retired, notwithstanding an unanimous approving vote from the Córtes, Lopez being resolutely averse to encountering the too powerful opposition of the Camarilla; and Lopez himself designated Olózaga for his successor. Olózaga, relying on his conscious strength, though well aware of all the obstacles, accepted the trying task. He underrated the hatred of the Camarilla.

The natural feelings of dislike on the part of Queen Cristina towards Olózaga have not been sufficiently dwelt on. We have here again the "*fœmina furens;*" a lurking hostility, and a deadly revenge. When Olózaga was in Paris as Espartero's representative, he demanded of the court of the Tuileries the removal of Cristina from the French metropolis, basing his demand upon an accusation of incessant designs hostile to the actual Regency of Spain, revolutionary plans in perpetual agitation, subsidies of money, and threatened inroads. The French Court did not listen to this demand, but Cristina deeply remembered it; and we have now the results of the secret instructions with which the Marquesa de Santa Cruz repaired to Madrid, as well as the source of Queen Isabel's hatred.

The Camarilla set to work at once with a vigour which disclosed their estimate of the powers of the man they had to cope with. They engaged in what Frenchmen call "*une guerre acharnée.*" Olózaga was no sooner called in, than a proposition was made to him "to arrange matters with the Captain-General." He asked whether it

was proposed that Narvaez should form one of the new Ministry? The answer was in the negative. Had it been affirmative, Olózaga would have at once resigned, because a Progresista government he was determined to form, and rejected as impracticable an infusion of Moderados, the political distinctions being too decided for compromise. He then was told that it was expected he would take Narvaez's advice as to the appointment of his colleagues. He answered, that that personage would highly honour him if he called him formally for the purpose in question; but that he could not respond to the confidence which had been reposed in him by his sovereign, unless he was to enjoy the most perfect liberty. The same matter was subsequently hinted at by the Queen, when Olózaga firmly replied that, if he was to be charged with the formation of a Ministry, no one but he was to have the management of the transaction; that his faith was exclusively in representative government; and that he must resist every procedure that was not strictly constitutional. The Camarilla was not yet defeated, and it was subsequently indicated to the sturdy premier, that Narvaez would be present at his deliberations previous to the nomination of the Ministry. The successful soldier was to be the Mephistopheles, Olózaga the Faust. The latter replied that there could be no inconvenience in the Captain-General coming to him whenever he pleased, but that in anything beyond this there would be the utmost inconvenience. A violent Moderado was pointed out for a particular ministerial portfolio, but Olózaga at once rejected the proposition, and said that all his col-

leagues must possess his particular confidence, and that deference should be paid as of right to no man out of the Cabinet. He added, that no one could be permitted to serve near her Majesty's person who should choose to interfere with affairs of state—a threat which was understood, and which he would have undoubtedly realized but for subsequent events.

Olózaga was proceeding to choose his colleagues entirely from his own Progresista party, when the first open demonstration was made by the Camarilla. The declaration of Queen Isabel's majority was celebrated first by a royal banquet to the leading members of both legislative bodies, and next by a similar banquet to the diplomatic corps, at Madrid. It was originally intended that none but the Ambassadors and Prime Minister (his colleagues not being yet appointed) should assist at this banquet. Notwithstanding the strict rule thus laid down, it was indirectly conveyed to Olózaga, as the Queen's desire, that Narvaez should be present at this banquet. The outgoing Ministry, Lopez and his colleagues, and Olózaga, by common accord declared that the proposed invitation would have a strong political significancy, and that either the exception should not be made or that it should be announced and laid down as a general rule. The determination to have Narvaez present was, however, persisted in, the Queen's wishes on the subject were positively declared; and a compromise was effected by which Narvaez was permitted a seat at the dinner, but his presence was balanced by that of other popular authorities.

On the following day, while Olózaga was engaged

in the Secretaria de Estado upon the difficult task of forming an administration, he was surprised by the receipt of a hurried message from the palace; and having repaired thither without delay, his surprise was increased on being told by the Queen that "he must form his Ministry without delay, for if not, there was another who would do it for him!" Olózaga did not resign in disgust, for he took pity on his sovereign, and his indignation at the back-stairs influence sustained him through the miserable conflict. He instantly formed his Cabinet, and the second day of its existence received for himself and his colleagues, from the Queen's mouth, an invitation to the royal table.

On the appointed day the new Ministers repaired to the palace, and were told at the door that there was no dinner for them! Olózaga, in no wise disconcerted, declared that they did not come to eat, but to have the honour of paying their respects to her Majesty, and pushed into the interior of the palace.

This glorious impertinence of Olózaga's drove the Camarilla to despair. The Marquesa de Santa Cruz—for she it was who came with that smoothly-told but rudest of fibs, and whom Olózaga merely indicated to the Congress, subsequently, as one who is *muy de cerca* to the Queen, "who has the honour to serve very close to her Majesty's person"—bit her lip, and had nothing to answer. The resources even of that cleverest of intriguing women were exhausted: no further obstacle could be improvised. The horrid man would take no rebuff nor refusal! To be sure,

it was deucedly unexpected. Think of a person thus grossly insulted, invited to a grand dinner at the palace, and told on his arrival with a contemptuous sneer that there was no dinner for him, having face and firmness enough to reply, with the most exquisitely cutting politeness: "My colleagues and I have not come, Marquesa, to eat at the Queen's or at any other table. We assure your Excellency that eating is not our object. We come desirous to enjoy the honour of her Majesty's invitation, by seating ourselves at her royal table. Her Majesty will dine and we will look on." The Marquesa had thought to *jouer* Olózaga, but she herself was *jouée*—she strove to humiliate him but was herself humbled, and detected in a very base untruth, for, contrary to her distinct declaration, Olózaga and his colleagues found a sumptuous banquet prepared! Any other man, taken aback by the Marquesa's cool statement, would have said: "No matter; some other day we will enjoy the honour." But Olózaga walked in, and partook of "a most abundant dinner."

A decree recognising the appointments and distinctions conferred by Espartero, up to the period of his quitting the Spanish soil, exasperated the Moderados. The determination announced by Olózaga to respect municipal rights, enraged them still further; and the retirement of Serrano from his ministry, occasioned partly by the decree above mentioned, and partly by the defeat of Lopez, in his candidature for the presidential chair of the Deputies, weakened the new Premier's power. The Moderados had triumphed in the popular assembly, and thrust into the presi-

dency, Pidal, a vehement partisan. The course which in this emergency Olózaga pursued, was to obtain from the Queen a decree for the dissolution of the Córtes, a decree to be used when the fitting occasion should arrive. Olózaga obtained this decree on the 28th, and held it *in petto*. Nothing was publicly heard on the subject till the evening of the 29th. Pidal, president of the deputies, was then called in to consult with the Queen, upon "a horrible and unheard of attempt" by Olózaga, in forcing her to sign the decree of dissolution; and on the night of the 29th, there was convened, by Pidal's advice, in the Real Camara, the vice-presidents of the congress, the minister Frias, and the ex-minister Serrano. To these the Queen detailed Olózaga's alleged violence; Frias signed the decree of his colleague Olózaga's dismissal, and Serrano the revocation of the decree for a dissolution of the Córtes. All the ministers resigned on the following day.

Everything in the world has a cause; and the more immediate cause of these portentous events was the bile of Narvaez. Whence arose the wrath of this fierce Achilles, this Captain-General of New Castile? From a slight but significant occurrence. The 26th of November, the day after the completion of Olózaga's cabinet, was a Sunday, and the Madrileños were abroad, as is their wont, for amusement, love, religion. A crowd gathered in front of the palace, and the word went round that Olózaga had sold himself to the Moderados. Slight is the puff that soon begets a whirlwind here. Within a few minutes, in the area before the royal Alcazar, there was a loud

and tremendous uproar, an *Algazara* * that rose from the Moorish blood of Spain. The populace called for the head of Narvaez, the heads of ministers—"*Mueran los traidores!*" Narvaez wanted to charge on the people; to cut out their tongues, or cut off their heads; to cut them down—it mattered little how. Olózaga answered "No!" And so determined was he not to throw himself into the hands of the Moderados, so resolved to give efficacy to Progresista principles, that he proceeded to acknowledge the legality of Espartero's power till the moment of his leaving Spain. Thus was Olózaga's destruction doomed.

The last day of Lopez's continuance in office was the 21st of November. The last day of Olózaga's was the 28th of the same month. He was thus in office exactly a week; and what a week! The march of a century. That little week sufficed to change the destinies of Spain.

* A loud tumult of voices.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROYAL CONSPIRACY.

On the 30th of November Gonzalez Bravo received his nomination as Ministro de Estado and premier, with which was combined that of temporary Grand Notary of the Kingdom, for the purpose of receiving the Queen's declaration as to the occurrences between her and Olózaga on the night but one preceding. Summonses were issued to most of the leading and official persons of Madrid to attend at the palace early in the ensuing day; and at noon on the 1st December the following persons presented themselves before Queen Isabel in the Real Cámara:—Don Mauricio Carlos de Onis, President of the Senate; the Duke de Rivas, and the Count de Espeleta, Vice-Presidents of the same legislative body; Don Salvador Calvet, Don Miguel Golfanquer, the Marquis de Peña Florida, and the Marquis de San Felicio, secretaries of the Senate; Don Pedro José Pidal, President of the Congress of Deputies; Don Andres Aleon, Don Manuel Mazarredo, and Don Javier de Quinto, Vice-Presidents of the same; Don Mariano Roca de Togores, Don Candido Manuel de Nocedal, Don Agustin Salido, and Don José de Posada, secretaries of the Congress; Don Ramon Maria de Lleopart, President of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice; Don Francisco Ferraz, President of the Supreme

Tribunal of War and Marine; the Duke de Frias, President of the Consultation Junta of the Ministry of State; the Duke de Castroteneño, Dean of the deputation of the Grandees of Spain; Don Francisco Serrano Dominguez, Lieutenant-General of the Spanish armies; Don Ramon Maria Narvaez, Captain-General of the first military district; Don José Maria Nocedal, Dean of the Deputation of Madrid; Don Manuel Larrairos, first constitutional Alcalde; the Duke de Hijar, Sumiller de Corps or Grand Chamberlain; the Count de Santa Coloma, Mayordomo-Mayor; the Marquis de Malpica, Sub-Caballerizo Mayor, or Great Under-Equerry; the Marquis de San Adrian, Gentleman of the Guard; Palafox Duke of Zaragoza, Chief-Commandant of the Alabardero Guards; the Marquis de Palacios, Mayordomo of the week on guard; Don Domingo Dulce, Gentleman with right of entry as Guard; the Marquesa de Santa Cruz, Camarera Mayor; Don Juan José Bonel y Orbe, Patriarch of the Indies; and Don Luis de Quintana, Her Majesty's Secretary and Chancellor of the Ministry of Grace and Justice. In presence of all these "notabilities," Her Most Catholic Majesty Isabel the Second made the following solemn declaration, which was taken down in writing by the Notario Mayor, Bravo:—

"On the night of the 28th of the month last past, Olózaga presented himself before me, and proposed to me that I should sign the decree of dissolution of the Córtes. I answered that I did not like to sign it, having this amongst other reasons, that these Córtes had declared me of age. Olózaga insisted; I again

refused to sign the said decree. I rose, directing myself towards the door, which is to the left of my table for despatch of business. Olózaga placed himself before me, and fastened the bolt in that door; I directed myself towards the door in front, and Olózaga again placed himself before me, and fastened the bolt of that door. He caught hold of my dress, and obliged me to sit down. He seized my hand and forced me to sign. After this he left, and I retired to my apartment."

The declaration, as attested by Bravo, proceeded thus:—"The foregoing manifestation having been read over by me, the undersigned, Her Majesty deigned to add the following: — 'Before Olózaga took his departure, he asked me if I would give him my word not to tell any person what had happened; and I answered that I would not promise.' Her Majesty then invited all present to enter the room in which she despatches business, and examine the place in which what she had just told them happened; and so they did in effect, all entering the Royal Cabinet. Afterwards I placed the declaration in Her Majesty's royal hands, who, attesting that that was her true and free will, affirmed and signed it in the presence of the above-mentioned witnesses, after I had asked those present if they had possessed themselves of its contents, when they all answered that they had so possessed themselves; whereupon the said act was announced to be terminated, Her Majesty commanding that all present should withdraw, and that this her royal declaration should be deposited in the office of my department, where it is now archived. And

in order that it may be known hereafter, and produce the effects for which it took place, I give these presents in Madrid this first day of December 1843.

"Luis Gonzalez Bravo."

Such was the Royal declaration, and solemnly attested act, which bore upon the face of it the stamp of impossibility, and, ere four-and-twenty hours had elapsed, was universally discredited. Its disproof, as will be seen in the sequel, was of the most convincing description; and never, indeed, was calumny confuted by a stronger array of human evidence. The Moderados imagined that none would presume to question the royal word, but, happily, they were hugely mistaken.

A remarkable feature in this transaction is, that amongst the great officers of state and of the legislature who repaired to the Palace to receive Queen Isabel's declaration, was her confessor, the Patriarch of the Indies. Her statement, therefore, was made in the presence of the only person in the world who could ask her, in the name of her God, for an account. Perhaps the eye of the right reverend father, when it met hers, rather troubled her; and perhaps this, in some degree, accounts for the excitement with which she ran to and fro, and said—"Here it was Olózaga caught my arm;" "here he held my hand," *et cetera;* with sundry "*palabras de houra!*" Probably the Patriarch since has told her, that a sullied throne is a throne undermined.

It was a proud position which the Progresista party took in this affair of Olózaga. The Camarilla,

and its Moderado allies in the Chambers—clinging to their ancient courtly recollections, to the shadowy prestige of Sovereign infallibility, and the sacredness of the Regal ark, which even a touch must defile—thought that, to crush the most illustrious subject in Spain, a Royal word sufficed. Who will dare gainsay it? argued the Camarilla, in its dark conventicle—enveloped by the thick pall of the Philips—imbued with the spirit of that Don Carlos, who, in 1760, having exchanged the throne of the Two Sicilies for that of Spain, signed the Family Compact with France—and with much of the spirit of that other Don Carlos, who, in 1839, was drummed out of the Peninsula. "*Grattez le Russe*," said Napoleon, "*vous trouverez le Tartare.*" Scratch the ultra Moderado, and you will find the rank old Absolutist! The Queen has said it—what more could you desire? *El Rey no cae*—"The King falls not"—declares an old Spanish law. "The Despacho Universal" was but the other day as omnipotent as the Decalogue. The Royal word made heads to fall as freely as the bow-string in Turkey. Who shall doubt the royal word? Impossible. A few years back the King was served on bended knees—a God—unquestionably the courtier's God. Many of these venerable customs had been revived within the month; grandees to wait at table—grandees to shut in the bedchamber—and the capital offence committed by Olózaga was to have given the Queen his arm to the dinner-table. The villain! His head rolling on a scaffold could scarce repay the indignity! Even in those odious contrivances—constitutional monarchies—the Sove-

reign was impeccable, irresponsible, inviolable. Ah, ha, Don Salustiano, you are caught in a trap! Why it was not so long—only 200 years—since he, whom the Duke d'Ossuna called the Great Drum of Monarchy, Philip III., was roasted to death before his own fire, a victim to that lovely etiquette which would be skinned alive before it touched its Sovereign without special privilege. Doubt the royal word, indeed—not in Spain! It was but a dozen summers since royal protests and contradictions decided most disputes, whether of palace or party, and the *obeissance* paid to the *dernier mot* of Ferdinand could, surely, not be withheld from his daughter. Think of the gallantry due to a girl, and say was it not an excellent plot? They never thought that Olózaga and his friends would have the impudence to defend him; they deemed that he would suffer himself to be led an unbleating lamb to the sacrifice—that he would succumb without a struggle to this personal vengeance. Indeed! The Progresistas were no such finished courtiers; sophistry and empty fictions have no such sway over human hearts. They were worshippers of royalty—not idolaters of its assumed infallibility.

The horrid plot, the deadly attack, was levelled against mankind. If sovereigns are entitled to legitimate command, there is a greater sovereign—Justice. If Queens are interesting, beloved, sacred, there is another, and a yet more powerful Queen —"the daughter of Heaven (as Señor Lopez said), the sister of Time, the companion of Eternity; the only resource and consolation of distress, the only shield

of innocence—Truth, Señores, to whom, since I was born, I have paid my worship—to whom I will pay it till I die; and when I fix my eyes upon her, all other objects disappear!" The Progresista leaders, therefore, did not hesitate to assert and prove the falsehood of the Queen's statement, feeling well assured that if Olózaga were made a silent victim, Doña Isabel's character, and the stability of her throne, would suffer more from this Turkish act of suffocation, this sacking up and Bosphorising of a Prime Minister, than even from the stain of falsehood. And they judged rightly. To "Burke" Olózaga would have been to make Isabel hated for life for an injustice not to be repaired, and a revolting inhumanity.

But the fib of a child of thirteen, however solemnly recorded, however obstinately persisted in, might by subsequent good conduct be redeemed; and no one could hold that such a child was a free moral agent. Without experience or suspicion, without reflection or foresight, without the perspicacity which is so essential in palaces, she was an obvious prey and a ready victim for black-hearted intriguers. Her feelings were wrought on, trifles were magnified, equivocal evidences of an imperious design on the part of the minister insisted on. Prejudices were engendered, nursed, encouraged; the flame was fanned, the rest followed easily. She was probably incapable of entirely perverting the truth, but was coaxed and led to distort it. The Deputies of Spain owe it to themselves, to their constituents, to the representative system all over the world, not to contribute to the

propagation of an odious falsehood, nor present themselves in the capacity of issuers of base coin, but to teach sovereigns the wholesome lesson that they are unequal to the extinction of the rights of the least of their subjects; that their caprice and their wilfulness cannot exclude the smallest ray of light, and that their power is nothing unless founded on adamantine truth and justice.

And even when kings were held in Spain to be sovereign lords of life and property, their power did not extend over those still dearer possessions—reputation and honour. To judge without proof, to condemn without a hearing, to accept as indisputable the word of a Queen—that Queen a child—without stopping to inquire whether the statement was suggested to her, whether the story was put in her mouth, is a principle so barbarous that it could not stand for an instant in any country of even surface-civilisation. If constitutional sovereigns "can do no wrong"—if kings are the visible emblems of the Divinity, it is precisely because, in their kingly capacity, they never expose themselves to the commission of evil, nor invite responsibility by setting their assertion against ministers and parliaments. But the infallibility of a Pope is questioned, if his word be contradicted by facts; and when the Deity himself took human shape, he was subject to human weaknesses. The Camarilla and the Moderados would place kings above the Godhead, and little ladies bearing crowns and sceptres in a tenth and superior heaven, unassailable by passion, or error, or infirmity.

"Give me," says Mr. Carlyle, "the beggarliest

truth before the royallest falsehood!" There is no misfortune—no national disaster comparable to the impurity which taints a throne—no burning disgrace to equal the shame which curdled the hearts of the Madrileños. Their Queen, their Queen was prostrate—the hack of the Camarilla, the sport of its vices, the tool of its treasons, the mouthpiece of its crimes—a hoary-headed girl! "Take any shape but that," they said, "and we are prepared to encounter our doom. But that! that perfidy is unutterable. In the grasp of that odious and unparalleled intrigue our voices are dumb, our hands benumbed, our energies crushed and paralysed. It is the *perfidia monstrua* of all calamities, the crowning disaster—we can but shut our eyes to the hideous spectacle, and weep for the glories of Spain!" Narvaez, with his charmed life, still was "master of the position;" the disarmed milicianos were hemmed in, and trampled down, his creatures possessed the palace, his reckless troops encircled the capital, the situation was rotten to the core. Lopez had withdrawn, not an hour too soon to escape being made a victim, had declined every overture to form an administration, thrown down his portfolio, and unlocked his advocate's box. The prouder and vainer Olózaga had dared the unequal contest, and fell in the first wrestling bout, championing liberty. Spain was fast again converging to despotism, Cristina was to return, the National Guard to be extinguished, the Municipalities to be nominated by the Crown. Where was Ferdinand with his embroidered petticoat? Where the crimsoned inquisitorial dungeon? The imbecile tyrant

and his priestly butchers alone were wanting to complete the situation, which even without them was gloomy and appalling.

The temporary alliance of the Moderado and Progresista parties had the violent termination in which coalitions are usually merged. No common principle bound them, nothing but hatred of an individual. With Espartero's fall the object of their union was attained, and it was impossible that it should survive its accomplishment. Their mutual hatreds at once came into play when he whom they had hated in conjunction disappeared from the scene. They quarrelled over the spoil. The successive expulsions of Lopez and Olózaga from the precincts of the royal palace proclaimed to Spain that the truce was broken. The combatants returned to the battle-ground, and occupied the old intrenchments. The hostile lines were again formed, and the field-artillery rolled to its position. New passions were set in array. Visors, raised for a time to display faces wreathed in mocking smiles, were now let fall and locked for the combat, and hands that had been clasped in false friendship grasped the lance and sword. No courteous tourney was now to be played; but a joust with the point and to the *outrance*. A Moor and Christian fought without quarter; so now was to be the contest of parties; and the ground chosen for the sanguinary battle was the miry soil prepared by court intrigue, which must for ever retain the traces of the combatants.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEVENTEEN DAYS' DEBATE IN THE CÓRTES.

The early winter had been productive of extraordinary excitement at Madrid, and the focus of heat and condensation of interest had been ever in the legislative Chambers. The interior of these has been described by other pens, and the accidents of the charge against Olózaga are all which it will be needful for me to depict; but vain indeed is the endeavour to give body to that grand and immeasurable excitement. Recal to mind the eagerness with which all London crowded towards Westminster at the period of Queen Caroline's trial, imagine the avidity with which the debates were listened to upon the third reading of the Reform Bill, figure the undying interest with which every sitting was repaired to in the three years' trial of Warren Hastings; and, multiplying these feelings by the intensity of Southern ardour, believe that you have fallen short in your estimate of the consuming and tremulous zest with which the Madrid population thronged, many hours before the opening, to the door of the Córtes, to the trial—for such it was—of the youthful Queen's veracity against that of her Prime Minister—to the case of Olózaga against the Camarilla—to the determining of the question which of the two was to be disgraced and ruined for ever!

Madrid is but a small place, and hence enormous mobs are not here met as in London and Paris; but then, for intense and tremendous excitement, for the ferocity of tigers, and the passions of fiends, when properly stimulated and armed, no other mob is comparable to this. The Porte St. Denis, and the Boulevard St. Antoine, Guildhall and Kennington Common, are pale by the side of these brown and impassioned faces, these black and wiry locks like the snakes of Tisiphone, these moustaches of Barbary darkness, these ever-moving lines and ropes of facial muscle, strangely set off by the peaked black velvet hat which is universally worn; and the cloak, which even in his rags, the Manolo wears with the grace of a Roman senator, and the dignity (for he thinks himself no less) of a Castilian hidalgo. It is at the Puerta del Sol that these constituents of the Madrid populace are to be met in most perfection. At the Congreso Nacional, the *entrée* is chiefly accorded to the middle and upper classes, the hearing space being limited: but substitute the ordinary costume of modern Europe for the more national costume of the lower orders, and with the same salient and indelibly marked lineaments, the same intensity of feeling, exciteableness of temperament, flashing of the eye, and play of mouth; the same subtleness, quickness, and promptness of repartee, you find all the elements of Peninsular humanity, polished to a higher breeding and decorum, but still the same, forming those impatient and interminable *queues* which besiege the doors of the Córtes.

They are there from the early morning hour—the