

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE FORCE OF CALUMNY.

WHEN Olózaga had made his convincing statement in the Córtes, he received hundreds of letters from influential men, who, seeing exactly the true position of affairs, offered him their services in any shape—on the battle-field if requisite. But he wisely repudiated every means of defence save that presented by a judicial testimony. Hundreds of districts, too, from his province sent in their pledges of re-election; and the Spanish people took the same clear-sighted view which, with a rare unanimity, pervaded Europe.

It is impossible to doubt that Olózaga is possessed of the highest moral courage. At every step of his short career in the Córtes, after the horrid charge was preferred against him, he evinced it with remarkable force. He met his accusers at all points, faced the fray with a lion heart, and held his remorseless assailants at bay with a spirit unquenched and indomitable. But this very proud and inextinguishable energy constituted his chief danger, and the irresistible strength with which he tore his toils asunder doomed him to an implacable vengeance.

The designs for his assassination were neither concealed nor ambiguous. They were the boast of every foe, the terror of every friend, the ceaseless topic of

every mouth in Madrid. It was known that the report of the Commission of the Córtes appointed to consider his impeachment, would be hostile to the views of the ministry, and that the persecuting committee would be branded by a solemn decision against it. A government so thoroughly unprincipled would therefore proceed to extremities, and with no juster warrant than the villainy of power, would have thrown him into a dungeon. Poison or a subservient scaffold would have consummated the work of iniquity, and rid his implacable enemies of his more than detested presence. He was informed of this nefarious design, and had but one resource—to fly from Madrid.

The blackening form of slander, which a Castilian proverb well condenses in the phrase, "*El rey mismo tiene espaldas*"—"The king himself has a back," was urged by the Camarilla to the most odious lengths. The subservient tool and premier, Bravo, narrated with gross distortion in the Córtes some private conversations which he had held with Serrano, in which it was assumed that the conduct of Olózaga was pronounced outrageous towards the Queen; and was rewarded with a public affront which he had not the spirit to resent.

Female malice was next in requisition: and the Marquesa de Santa Cruz asserted, that Olózaga's wife and mother had gone weeping to the palace, to entreat her to get the decree of his dismissal altered from its original violent terms to the milder shape which it afterwards assumed—a falsehood of singular baseness, since it was solely the discrimination of the minister Frias, who refused to countersign it in its



primary form, that produced the change in question ; and if the ladies of Olózaga's family repaired that day to the palace, it was in utter ignorance of his unmerited fate, and solely to secure the introduction of a female relation at court. So subtle are the arts of a revengeful woman !

The old unwritten law of the Castilian monarchy, which the Moderados sought to revive in this instance, permitted no subject to express a doubt of the word once passed by king or queen. When Queen Isabel, the second consort of Philip V., resolved, upon her arrival in the Peninsula, to get summarily rid of the Princess Ursins, who occupied the post of Camarera Mayor in the court of Madrid, at the moment when the Princess presented herself for the first time before the Queen, and was proceeding, in accordance with etiquette, to compliment her Majesty upon her arrival—before, in fact, she had opened her mouth, and just as she was about to address her—the Queen pronounced these terrible words:—“*Faltasteis á mí en respecto*” (You have been wanting in respect to my person). In vain the Princess sought to justify herself ; the Queen ordered her to leave her presence on the instant, and had her carried without delay to the boundary of the Spanish territory. It was the month of December, and the cold was intense : the Princess was attired in a thin court dress ; and thus exposed to the inclemency of the weather, without servants, retinue, or provisions, she was placed in a carriage escorted by soldiers, and dragged without resting to the frontier. Had the present Queen Isabel dealt thus with her faithless Camarera Mayor,

instead of Olózaga, she would have been performing an act of substantial justice. Bitterly do the sayings of eloquent men come back "to plague the inventor." It was sharper than a serpent's tooth to Olózaga to find the use to which the Moderados applied his famous saying, when he formed with them the league against Espartero—" *Dios salve la Reyna! Dios salve el pais!*" When the declaration of Queen Isabel was published, and Olózaga was hurled from office, the Moderados, trampling on their fallen ally, exclaimed, "The nation saved the Queen; the Queen has saved the nation!"

In his first speech after the affair of the palace, he wept in addressing the Cortes; wept—not unnaturally, as any other man might have wept, and as any man endued like himself with intense and powerful feeling could scarcely fail to weep, while his heart was poured out in words and the hideous plot in all its blackness stood unveiled before him. He thought of the snares which had been laid—of the toils which had been lapped around him; above all, of the part which the young Queen had been taught to act—and he wept.

Talk not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of warlike men! The Moderados called him "a crocodile," and declared that they could not disguise their contempt. When a statesman (said they) sheds tears like a woman, we are disarmed; he only moves our pity. Candid, kind-hearted men!

It is needless to say with what feelings of rapturous delight the Republicans of Spain witnessed these movements of the Court. A proceeding which made



royalty ridiculous was precisely playing their game, and their principles were hugely advanced by the exhibition of an infantine Majesty, with its weaknesses, follies, caprices, and the crimes of its directing Camarilla.

A Queen grown hateful before she had ceased to be a child—a Sovereign made contemptible ere she had strength to wield a sceptre—the mystery of Courts laid bare—the curtain lifted from the show-box, royalty caught without its wigs or furbelows, the doll stripped of its gewgaw trimmings—such was the spectacle of derision presented by this execrable management, and such the effect of this encroachment by unprincipled courtiers upon the domain of responsible government. The friends of monarchy sighed for the re-enactment of Salic law, and thought that even a dotard in the shape of man were better.

Their Philip III. and Ferdinand VII. were the exceptions; but imbecility in female sovereigns appeared to be the rule. The long-bearded republicans of Madrid and Barcelona shook their sides and their hirsute chins with laughter, and coolly laid their plans for the establishment of a commonwealth. The assassination of leading politicians seemed to grow methodical at Madrid. They reconcile these things in the Peninsula to their sense of honour and religion.

The hedge-firing from about 30 guns, to which Narvaez was subjected, would have been quite successful but for one undexterous omission, the cutting of the traces; the attempt at poisoning which followed would have been likewise complete, had the nerves of

the pliant soldier, who was to have administered it, been artistically steeled with opium; the score of Narvaez's military satellites, who swore to assassinate Olózaga for tearing in pieces the fiction of the Camarilla, would have quite extinguished the degraded Premier, had they not mistaken the number of his new house; and the thirty valiant officers of the army of Spain, who chivalrously took a single editor's apartment by storm, might have chanced to find him at home, had they gone in couples, without tremendous swords and honour-inspiring epaulettes. Passion, like Love and Justice, is blind, and, happily for the bones of non-combatants, blinds those whom it possesses.

An attempt was made on the 12th by an assassin, supposed to be employed by the Camarilla, to assassinate Olózaga; and when he escaped this worthy's dagger, only through his fortunate precaution in having procured two friends to accompany him through the streets, he immediately resolved not to expose his person further, and was not again seen publicly in Madrid. He took counsel of his immediate adherents and of certain leading diplomatists, amongst them the Minister for France, and determined to withdraw for a time from Spain, as the only sure protection against the threats of the military satellites of Narvaez, and the chances of a judicial murder.

Portugal presented the readiest asylum, and following very nearly the course of the Tagus, the exile, escorted by twenty well-armed contrabandists, came by way of Talavera and Coria (the shortest route), on the back of a mule, in the disguise of a trader, with copious saddle-bags, and crossing the



little river Herjas into the Portuguese province of Beira, was soon in Castello Branco.

The vicissitudes of Peninsular politics have, of late, been curiously illustrated in Portugal. It is just two years since Narvaez took refuge there after the unsuccessful attempt on the palace at Madrid, and was immediately ordered to quit the Portuguese territory upon the requisition of Espartero. Eighteen months elapsed, and Narvaez having got back to Spain by the circuitous route of France, expelled Espartero in turn, who in his turn was expelled from Portugal, or never permitted to enter it; and now came the renowned knight errant of the Golden Fleece, Olózaga, who quarrelled first with Espartero and next with Narvaez, and was permitted, like them, to taste the black broth of exile, spied and persecuted, until England at last afforded him a sure asylum.

Spain and Portugal are in the precise relation towards each other of France and Belgium. The Revolutions of the larger are *presto* imitated in the smaller country; the literature of the larger is stolen by the smaller; the political forms are likewise imitated. The smuggling on the frontier is of the same or still greater extensiveness.

The political refugees of each resort to the other country; and, like the game of back-gammon, whenever a man is in difficulties, he passes into the opposite board. In short, they are reciprocal asylums. Ever since 1833, when Don Carlos fled into Portugal, followed by his puffing pamphleteer, Luzuriaga, the dominions of Doña Maria have formed the small

paddock where Spaniards under a cloud have gone, like Nebuchadnezzar, to grass.

Portugal has received alike the cruel Usurper, the wily Mendizabal, the conceited Pezuela, the audacious Narvaez, the downright Zurbano, the oily Linage, the feather-brained Iriarte, the strong-headed Olozaga—all, except Espartero, who was excluded, apparently because he alone, of all their statesmen and soldiers, had ever done Portugal a service.

There is no doubt whatever that had not Olózaga contrived to effect his escape through a cordon of police spies, the government would have managed to have him condemned by the Senate and sentenced to death, which, for the alleged crime of *lesa magestad*, might, according to some precedents in Peninsular history, have been inflicted by four wild horses galloping off with his limbs torn asunder, in different directions! This sentence would perhaps have been subsequently commuted into banishment to the Philippines, but the least that would have befallen him would have been transportation for life.

In that singular indifference to human suffering which still forms a remarkable trait of Spanish character, and which the horrors of the civil war have served to perpetuate, his fate upon a scaffold would have caused but an inconsiderable sensation in Spain; and the only observation which it would have probably called forth, is that shrug of the shoulders which is here more habitual than in France, accompanying the familiar phrase, *Son cosas de España*—“These are things peculiar to Spain!” Thus are



palliated or overlooked, the frequent butcheries of the people at Madrid and in the provinces, which are perpetrated by the soldiery on the most frivolous pretences.

A few *Mueras* and *Vivas*, raised perhaps by some government agent or reckless officer in disguise, bring discharges from picquets of infantry, not alone against the crowd which is permitted to be refractory, but down all the adjoining streets and into unoffending cafés. Blood-letting is here such a luxury! The editors of obnoxious journals are tried by courts martial, instead of the ordinary legal tribunals; and when Espartero had Léon shot, his answer to the remonstrance of a foreign minister was "*Es regular!*"



## CHAPTER X.

## QUEEN ISABEL.

THE appearance of Queen Isabel Maria to the eye of a stranger is that of a precocious but somewhat careworn and sickly girl—exceedingly pale, and with nothing either expressive or interesting in her countenance. But that her brow is circled with a crown, at a period of unparalleled youth to emerge from legal nonage, there is little there to arrest your attention; you are neither forbidden nor attracted; you deem her more advanced than her age, but this precocity, as compared with England, is universal in the Peninsula.

If you look more closely, you will see a shade pass now and then over her brow and features, indicative of waywardness of disposition, and of a character somewhat spoiled by destiny; and you will not be far mistaken if you draw this conclusion. But your eye is soon arrested by the sparkling face beside her, all radiant with vivacity and intelligence; younger, yet less frivolous; more laughing and joyous, yet with more of sentiment.

It is the Infanta Luisa, her sister—a charming child—a countenance radiant with the highest beauty, the beauty of the mind. In the sitting of the *Córtes*, where the majority of her royal sister was declared, this darling monopolised all the admiration.



Queen Isabel is said to be of a rather wilful nature, subject to pettish fits; at times not a little obstinate, and deficient in intelligence as well as in temper. These qualities are inherited in part from both father and mother. If she has thrown her whole soul into her Camarilla, it was likewise a maternal failing, for Mendizabal in his official interviews with Queen Cristina had frequently to lock out the listening Camarilla: the very charge laid at Olózaga's door.

Queen Isabel's Camarera Mayor, the Marquesa de Santa Cruz, now so notorious throughout Europe, is a very fascinating person, of most elegant and distinguished manners and high intellectual attainments—one of the few cynosures of the court of Spain—and to these qualities she is indebted for her influence over the Queen. It is fair to add that she wears one of the proudest and most glorious amongst the historical names of Spain. The Marquis of Santa Cruz, in the time of Philip II., was a most illustrious admiral, who defeated on numerous occasions the Moors of Africa, and completed the conquest of Portugal by destroying Don Antonio's expedition of 60 vessels fitted out by France. It was not he, but the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who commanded the Great Armada.

Queen Isabel has been very imperfectly and irregularly educated. That she should be little enlightened is not surprising; that she should be deficient in ordinary knowledge is a mere corollary of her inadequate tutoring. She was not altogether three months in the hands of Olózaga, whose instruction

was confined to her political education; and under the guidance of Arguelles, to whom she was previously entrusted, she was rather indocile and refractory. About the court, they say that she is capricious, wilful, *disimulada*; and fibbing, an ordinary characteristic of her age in young girls, is alleged to be very much the contrary of being disdained by her.

For the last three years she has been in constant correspondence with her mother, and inevitably thus impregnated with a strong dislike for the Progresistas, as a party and individually. It was they who drove Cristina from Spain, and who have always thwarted that princess's Absolutist tendencies. Never, therefore, could Isabel listen with affectionate respect to the lessons of Arguelles or of Olózaga, both of them eminent Progresistas; and in Espartero she could only see the tyrant who deprived her mother of the regency, and left herself an orphan. Still being obliged to keep up appearances, and the entire power of the state being vested in Espartero, she was taught to be false and artful by the force of circumstances, and trained by events to deceit. An intimate friend of the master who attended her longest, wrote things concerning her in a German correspondence which I should be sorry to transcribe, and which I prefer imputing rather to the imperfect formation of character at her age, than to anything inherently bad in her disposition.

Her Aya or governess, during a long period, was this very Marquesa de Santa Cruz, whose influence over her is now so unbounded, but whom the events of 1840 compelled, like Queen Cristina, to seek a



refuge in France. Isabel appeared to be warmly attached to the Marquesa, yet she received with not less apparent affection and tenderness the relict of the illustrious Mina, who after the Revolution of 1840 was appointed by the successful Progresistas to take the post of Aya, and was presented to her by Arguelles; and never did she utter a word to her concerning her previous Aya, not so much as an inquiry after her health!

During the Regency of Espartero, La Niña Real manifested towards him, as it seemed, the greatest respect and devotion. She even insisted on having the portrait of "*su caro amigo*," and made such a parade of her desire in this respect that at last it was given her. She placed it in her own room, guarded it with great care, and showed it to her visitors with seeming pride.

But when the Regent's sun became eclipsed, when Narvaez marched to the palace at Madrid, and the Señora de Mina was dismissed, Isabel showed herself affected to the same precise degree, but no further, as she had seemed at parting with the Marquesa de Santa Cruz. "Since you are leaving me," she said, "I must make you a present." And away she ran to take down the portrait of her very "dear friend" Espartero, which precious relic she handed over to her outgoing Aya, saying, "Keep this portrait, Señora; it will be better in your possession than in mine."

The conflicting influences in the midst of which Queen Isabel has been thrown, and the tossing to and fro in the whirlpool of contending passions and

factions, would have spoiled perhaps most hearts and intellects. Surrounded by a succession of rival intriguers friends and enemies have conspired to make her what she is. She knew not where to attach herself; her relief was in profound dissimulation.

The shoot of an old and deformed trunk, how, in the midst of such storms, could she grow straight or fair? Unhappily the women who surround her have a very doubtful reputation—it is the public voice of Madrid; and few fathers of families would entrust a daughter to their care. She has a great deal of *wilfulness*, but no *will* at all of her own; the distinction will be readily comprehended. By whatever arts Narvaez and the Marquesa de Santa Cruz had won their ascendancy over her, their control is unlimited—and I believe that, with a child of thirteen, it would be nearly all the world over the same.

The words pronounced by her, in her royal capacity, were as much repeated by her from their private instruction, as those of any holiday scholar. Her appearance at the grand bull-fight in August last, with the scandalous delight which she manifested at the torturing of the bulls and the agonies of the horses, should never again be repeated. Though with farcical inconsistency she wrote letters to "My dear Olózaga," inviting him to form a new administration, yet the forms of the old régime are preserved under a constitutional monarchy. A young Sevillian poet of my acquaintance, having written an ode on the declaration of her majority, repaired to Madrid, to have the honour of presenting it to her Majesty. The permission was accorded, and the work reve-



rently laid by him, *selon les régles*, at the royal feet. He should have likewise kissed her feet, but this part of the ceremonial was dispensed with; as it likewise was to Martinez de la Rosa, who the same day presented the new edition of the Dictionary of the Academy.

Queen Isabel has an extraordinary collection of sweets, the most perfect museum of confectionery in Europe. Her royal repository is perpetually vanishing, but not less frequently renewed; and her conservators stuff something much better than beasts or birds—their Sovereign mistress.

This pastrycook museum, which extends over every apartment of the palace, contains some most interesting specimens—the *tortas*, or tarts of Moron, the most celebrated in Spain—the *panes pintados*, or painted buns of Salamanca—the paschal *ojalores*, or carnival and easter dainties—the hard *turrones* of Alicante, composed of almonds, nut-kernels, filberts, and roasted chestnuts, intermixed with honey and sugar—*dulces* of cocoa-nut frosted with sugar—roasted almonds—avellanas, a peculiarly nice sort of filbert, whole and in powder—cinnamon, pine-apple kernels, jelly, blanc-mange, and custard—gingerbread in its several varieties, and sugared rice in its sundry convolutions—marmalade, jam, and *blando de huévos*, or sweetened yolks of eggs—*capuchinas*, *guindas* (cherry-brandy), barley-sugar, imitation walnuts and sugar-stick, *alfajor*, or spiced bread, and the delicious cheese *jijona*, pomegranate-jelly, *melocotones*, Mardroño strawberries, and other curious specimens. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the

youthful Majesty of Spain, is her relish and constant use of these *bonbons* and sweetmeats. Her papers of comfits strew the palace, her bags of sugar-plums visit the council-chamber, her *dulces* line the throne.

The books of heraldry are not in her case vain, which, as females have nothing to do with shields, inscribe their armorial bearings in a *lozenge*. If she is not "the loveliest," she is indeed "the sweetest" princess. When she is in a good humour, the most remarkable evidence of amiability which she affords is distributing these *bonbons* freely amongst her ministers and palace *grandes*. She does not ask whether these gentlemen have "a sweet tooth," but very naturally infers that what she likes herself must be pleasing to all the world.

The degrees of ministerial favour may be estimated by the number of presents of confectionery, and the Minister of the Interior is *first fiddle* by right of four bags of sugar-plums, till the Minister of Grace and Justice produces five sticks of barley-sugar. When she despatches business with her Ministers (which she does twice a week), she despatches a prodigious quantity of sweets at the same time; and the confectation of decrees, and discussion of dainties, proceed *pari passu*. On the night of the alleged violence, she gave a paper of *bonbons* to Olózaga; and the latter having mentioned this fact as a proof of his correct demeanour, the Palace put forth its version, which was, that the sweetmeats dropped on the floor, and Olózaga picked them up and kept them!

The personal character of Queen Isabel was compromised almost as much by her treatment of Lopez



as of Olózaga. These Liberal statesmen were indeed hustled with as little ceremony as if they were mere intendants of police in the days of Absolutism. Her last words to Lopez, when he finally withdrew on the 24th, Olózaga being on the point of forming his new Cabinet, were—"Whenever any important occasion arises, Señor Lopez, I shall certainly send for you."

Queen Isabel did not fulfil this promise; but, special as it was, forgot it within five days after it was uttered. On the night of the 29th, when the President and Vice-presidents of the Congress were called to her presence to consult as to the most fitting course to pursue with regard to Olózaga's asserted outrage, the Queen asked them, *Que os parece?*—"What is your opinion?" They suggested that other eminent persons should be called in, for the holding of a solemn consultation, and Lopez was named amongst them. Queen Isabel immediately replied, with a negative wave of her finger, *A! ese no!*—"Not him certainly!"

Since the recent return of the Queen-mother, her royal daughters and she have often been seen in public, and their visits to the churches of Madrid have indeed been somewhat ostentatious.

During the enormously protracted ceremonies of Holy Week, every one had an opportunity of seeing the royal family at their devotions. It was an interesting spectacle; three female personages of regal rank ranged by the side of the altar, isolated and exalted over the rest of the community both by power and by the accidents of social position; no

husband, nor father, nor brother, at hand, to afford the support of masculine protection, and their nearest male relative a hostile and wrongful usurper.

Apart from their dignified rank, and regarding them merely as women, two of the three might well stand for Graces, the mother and the younger child; regularity, agreeableness, and expressiveness of feature belonged to both, and elegance of figure and deportment. The brilliant eyes and Italian symmetry of Cristina's outline were reflected in her younger child; strange that the aspect of the elder was so entirely different! The resemblance between Queen Isabel and her deceased father is as remarkable (and each day it becomes more decided) as that of the Princess Luisa to their common mother.

The Infanta has carried away all the grace and good looks of the family; Queen Isabel seeming to monopolise not only the obstinacy, sullenness and violence of the unamiable Ferdinand, but the heaviness of eye, the coarseness of general outline, especially about the mouth and chin, and the unintellectual expression throughout, which indicated those qualities. The abruptness of her gestures, the discourteous mode of salutation, the frequent startings and tossings of the head, were singularly opposed to the elegant demeanour and graceful propriety of Queen Cristina (which made you forget all that you had heard of her peccadilloes), of which the charming little Luisa presented a precise counterpart; and which the mantillas, worn by them upon this occasion, set off to particular advantage.

The Queen-mother's appearance does not belie her



character as a strong-minded clear-headed woman, possessed of resolution, coolness and courage; not much burthened with scruples or fidelity, and therefore, on the whole, not ill adapted for Spain. In the words of a strong local proverb, "she is not one to trip on a pebble," yet firmness and conciliation characterised many acts of her regency. She is fond of governing; and in her new position will be a frequent originator of measures—for to her eldest daughter she seems to have transmitted but little of this ability.

One result of the Moderado re-instalment is a return to many of the old Court abuses. The Palaciego and Servidumbre class is more numerous now than at any period since the constitutional form of government was established. These expensive hangers-on of royalty have made an increase in the civil list indispensable; and the expenses of the royal household, in the estimates for 1844, are 32,050,000 reals or £320,000.

## CHAPTER XI.

## QUEEN CRISTINA.

“LA AUGUSTA REYNA MADRE, DOÑA MARIA CRISTINA DE BORBON,” for such is the formal designation of [Queen Cristina by her adherents, would have undoubtedly set out for Madrid immediately after the *débâcle* with Olózaga, but for difficulties of a nature to arrest the most enthusiastic.

It was announced to be the fixed intention of the Liberal party in the Cambers to demand the instant repayment of 8,000,000 reals, or 80,000*l.*, being a very small proportion of the amount of national property which Cristina carried from Spain on her expatriation. The proposal for restitution was certainly most unmannered, considering the enormous sums with which her Majesty fitted out Narvaez, Pezuela, Concha, and O'Donnell, for their crusade against Espartero in June last, and further remembering the two millions of francs which she trundled across the Pyrenees.

It was therefore not the prudence of Louis-Philippe, nor the delicate impediment of being physically *embarazada*, that checked her return to her beloved country, but a more substantial objection to “forking out.” The matter was placed in the most natural light. What more simple than to become the guardian to her second daughter, the Infanta Luisa?



But daughters are not quite so dear as dollars. A junta of refugees in Paris, Mendizabal, Hernandez, Parsent, Marliani, and Pallares, stung poor Cristina like envenomed wasps, and found their way into the columns of more than one Parisian journal.

To smooth Cristina's path over the Pyrenees, Narvaez and Bravo, without consulting the Córtes, (although the sacred right was involved of voting the public money), by decree restored to her the arrears of her pension, of which Espartero, with the concurrence of parliament, deprived her after the violent assault of her emissaries on the palace.

The sum thus restored amounted to twelve millions of reals, or one-half more than the amount of which the Progresistas threatened to demand immediate repayment. It was therefore a safe speculation: Cristina would pocket 40,000*l.* by the exchange, and really under the circumstances she might hazard the journey to Spain.

Into Cristina's private life it is no business of mine to enter, nor to lay bare the delicate mysteries of her second marriage. In her public capacity she has always been remarkable for four qualities, two of them virtues, and two the reverse:—Courage, resolution, insincerity, and avarice. No one knows better than she does the truth of the Castilian proverb, that "*quid pro quo* is at the bottom of everything;" and as to Cristina's possession of the last-named quality, her carrying off nearly the whole crown jewels of Spain, even to some of her royal daughter's ornaments, leaves little doubt on the subject. Her courage at one period, and her insincerity