

In trying to reach one of the eminences which art and wealth have here decorated, apart from the dust of Madrid, we pressed on, till we found the beautiful artificial lake in the gardens of Buen Retiro. We found there temples all aflame, the shores all alight, the lake all covered with illuminated boats and caravels! We found a hundred thousand people surrounding the water, moving amidst the paths and groves, and wondering at the exquisite duplicates of the pyrotechnic temples and boats mirrored in the lake! And this was the last act in the drama of the new Constitution!



Travelling Harem (see p. 179).

CHAPTER XXII.

*MORE OF MADRID AND POLITICS—THE ESCU-
RIAL—MURILLO AND HIS ART.*

THE scene which I have pictured in the preceding chapter may not, in one sense, have much significance at the close of the year 1869. While the reader peruses my words, there may be new revelations of Spanish politics, if not revolutions. But my anticipations are in favour of the permanency of the present established order. The Carlists will make trouble; but Prim has the army, and he will ruthlessly suppress their attempt. Isabella has but little prospect of restoration, and her son still less. Montpensier is nothing, unless the Triumvirate—Serrano, Prim, and Topete—decree his elevation. So long as Serrano is nominally at the head, and Prim really the ruler—with a Cortes whose fiercest extreme left has been already, and may be more, conciliated by delay in the election of a monarch—so long the body of the people will be content. The priests are much berated for their incivism; but I believe that the great body of them, especially those who minister in charity and kindness to the masses of the people, and who therefore have their confidence, are acquiescent in the present situation.

If these political pictures of Spain have the tint of optimism, I must plead my earnest interest in the cause of national self-government, and beg the reader to make the necessary allowances.

The fiery processes are still going on in Spain. We hope for the best, yet fear the worst. The constitution has been accepted. It is for the most part as unexceptionable for Spain as that of the United States is for us. What is most needed is a just, firm, and honest administration. On General Serrano, the hero of Alcolea, this depends. The recent discussions in the Cortes show that there is much effervescing, if not writhing, among the Republicans. They fear the appearance of Montpensier, as if royalty were already established in his person. But there must be a fiery, tempestuous ordeal before that is accomplished. If the present regency could be continued in perpetuity—without a king—it would be better. The reality of a republic would then remain, though the form were monarchical. The Progressists, Union Liberals, and Democrats, when a republic impended, said: 'Give us rather an interregnum for all time than a republic for a day.' It is a curious condition of things—is it not? I am not sure but that General Prim means the continuance of a regency; though, perhaps, Serrano may not. Last week, the discussion in the Cortes was continued with fresh excitement and rare eloquence. It was opened by a Carlist orator, Ochoa. He desired Charles VII. to be elected by a plebiscite, and with him as king he predicted a liberal rule. Here was a bow to the democratic tendencies of the time from an absolutist advocate. He was answered by a 'Democrat,' Beccara, who sustains with a peculiar solecism of nomenclature the monarchical form and the Serrano republican, revolutionary regency. He thought that Serrano only could give full force to liberty by consummating the revolution of which he was the hero. After him, Castellar, the gifted republican orator, 'took the word,' and, with his usual brilliance and fertility of historical resources, electrified the

Cortes. He analyzed and enlarged on the difficulties in the establishment of a monarchy, paid a handsome tribute to Serrano, and hoped that the revolution would be accomplished and liberty subserved without a monarchy. Then the vote was taken—194 to 45 for the Regency and Serrano.

Spain has, therefore, an Executive, under the fifth title of her organic law, with all the functions of a king, except that it cannot dissolve the Cortes or suspend its sessions. The Cortes, like other parliamentary bodies in history, takes care to perpetuate itself.

Then General Prim had *his* grand performance. The troops of Madrid, 20,000 in number, must take the oath to the constitution. They are drawn up in line in the Prado and in the promenade of the Atocha. There Prim presents himself before their regimental banners. He cries out in a high key, and he has a sonorous voice: 'You swear to guard faithfully and loyally the constitution of the Spanish monarchy, decreed and sanctioned by the Cortes of 1869?' All the officers and men enthusiastically answer, 'We swear!' Prim then rejoins: 'If this you do, God and the nation will recompense you; if not, they will call you to account!' He then fixes some ribbons on the banners to commemorate the ceremony. Then the troops are reviewed by him amidst the immense concourse. Cannon roar till long after nightfall.

The day is done! The Spanish capital is pleased with these frequent appeals to their eye and ear. The crowds kept it up till long after honest people should have been abed. Strange to say, Madrid seems never to sleep, unless by day, like the owl. The newspapers are issued about ten at night. The streets then begin to be thronged. The shrill voices of women news-vendors begin. *La Correspondencia!* is sung with a Castilian ring, and seems to have the noisiest vendors

and the most frequent vendees. It is a little paper, badly printed, with plenty of news in short paragraphs, and the latest telegrams. It has a sort of semi-official authority, or, at least, authentic sources of information. Some twenty other papers, all small, a good many of them comically intended, called *The Cat*, *Don Quixote*, *The Padre*, *The Mosquito*, &c., are screeched, buzzed, hawked, and circulated about till morning. While at Madrid, at my hotel near the 'Gate of the Sun,' where men most do congregate after eleven at night, the tumult of the city concentrates and continues till daylight! It is as if night were turned into day for social, peripatetic, political, and journalistic purposes.

Two months' sojourn in Spain and much observation of her politics have made me somewhat suspicious of the permanency of the present arrangement, in some measure because parties are so indistinctly defined and combinations may be made so readily and disastrously. There are many inflammable questions. For instance, some of the bravest and most honoured of the generals are Republicans. General Prim had to say, in answer to a question in the Cortes, that if they did not swear to the constitution off their names would go from the army rolls! This was not balm to the wounds of the Republicans. Another, and the most perilous, question is that of finance. It is estimated that there will be a deficiency of many millions of dollars this year. The present government inherited from that of Isabella a large deficit. It was compelled to make new loans under difficulties. The finance minister must look the further fact in the face that his revenues are failing. I do not count this fact as at all ominous for Spain. Better have a revenue too small for the expenditure than *vice versa*. What Spain wants is economy. She never had it, nor could have it, under her previous

governments. They were the results of court and military intrigues. They were fomented and fed by—*spoils*. Narvaez and O'Donnell—O'Donnell and Narvaez—these, for years past, were the expensive and disastrous oscillations of the political pendulum. The people have found out recently, by the free discussions of forum and press, what it costs, and ought to cost, to carry on a government in the Peninsula of sixteen millions of people. The disbursements have been in excess of receipts by several millions. It cost an enormous outlay to collect and disburse these sums. Figuerola opposes such extravagances. But in spite of all these financial portents, Spain is advancing. The last decade shows an increase of population of over a million. The children are better educated. It is said, that whereas at the beginning of the century only one in 340 was educated, now there is one in every fifteen. I know it is the custom of travellers to depreciate Spain. They laugh at her pretensions and ridicule her performance. They sneer at her religion, and, in their hurried transit and superficial observation in the peninsula, see nothing but poverty, laziness, and beggars; but Spain is growing. She cannot grow worse. The leaven of progress has entered the lump. The country is peaceful and orderly. I was struck with the perfect decorum everywhere, even amidst the wild excitements incident to the past few months. Her volunteer militia are a stable security to keep the peace. But this orderly condition is owing to the provincial and municipal governments. Make a note of that, ye rulers of discontented states and people! Suppose the treasury is empty, and its credit down; suppose bankruptcy stares the nation in the face; suppose Isabella, or Don Carlos, do make disaffection here and there—yet Spain, like other nations I wot of, is improving in spite of certain well-defined drawbacks. These

drawbacks are the slinking, cowardly self-exile of her nobles and rich families. They have run from her troubles to spend their time and money in inglorious ease at St. Sebastian, Paris, or Biarritz. Trade, therefore, languishes in many of the large places, as at Murcia and Saragossa. Again, it is said that Spain has had to import 50,000,000 dollars worth of grain to feed her people the past year. This fact would seem incredible to one who has seen the breadth of land, yellow for the sickle, the past two months from Andalusia to Biscay. Notwithstanding the departure of her rich fugitives, her outlay for foreign bread—and other impediments—still Spain grows. Her *fête* days are still as numerous and as well attended; her public displays are still as gorgeous and imposing; her bull fights are still patronised as numerously and as noisily; her hospitals and churches are still supported abundantly; and all she wants is that fixed tranquillity which a substantial civil government, reposing on popular liberty and private right, can insure. Then she may begin a new career and grow with more blossom and fruit. Under such a rule there would be no foreign wheat imported; the waters which the Moor managed to direct into fruitful highways and byways would soon fill the land with plenty; for labour is not wanting, nor is it reluctant among the population of Spain. When she has this new order I will not reprehend the guitar and the dance. They need not be abolished, because Spain becomes more industrious and free. The tauromachian heroes and gentry might and would be a little less patronized under a better system, which would insure to industry its prompt and proper reward. The gaudily caparisoned mules—which, every Sabbath, drag out the dead horses by the score, and dead bulls by the dozen—from the arena, amidst the shouts of the populace—

might do something better than such unproductive Sabbath work. Instead of fructifying a few feet of the soil by their carcasses, the horses and bulls might be utilized for more remunerative agricultural purposes.

To the end of stimulating the industry and enterprise of Spain, it has been suggested to hold a grand exhibition. The Escorial is named as the place. It would be a magnificent site, and the idea is excellent. Besides, it satisfies the Spanish desire for congregating and enjoying themselves *en bloc*.

Upon the Saturday before we left Madrid, we made a visit to the Escorial. The journey is two hours from Madrid, on the Northern Railway. It passes through a bleak and uninhabited country. The road rises until at the Escorial it is at least 2700 feet above the sea. Nothing, hardly a flock of sheep, attracts attention on the way, until at length we see a mighty mass of granite. It is an edifice with glassless windows, and at first sight seems empty of all that is alluring and comfortable. This is the Escorial, the mausoleum of Spain's dead royalty. It is monastery and cloister—palace and minster—all in one; and that one utterly and sublimely dreary! Here are entombed the mortal remains of Charles V. and Philip II., the proudest and greatest of Spanish kings. Here, under the savage shadows of the Sierra de Guadarama, stands this shadowy shell of magnificence. It is of itself a gloomy shadow of the gloomiest of Spanish potentates. So far removed from human life and its ebb and flow, it awes one by its very isolation. How lonely! How sad! I never visited a place where everything so contributed to the heaviness of the associations; everything—but the happy company with whom we made the visit. The building is a rectangular parallelogram, nearly 600 by 800 feet. It boasts of 1111 windows outside and 1562 inside, 1200 doors, 16 courts, 15

cloisters, 86 staircases, 89 fountains, 3000 feet of frescoe painting, and some 90 miles of—promenading! It was erected by the second Philip, whose sour and gloomy visage, and gray, cold eye chill you from the canvas as does that of Charles V., opposite to him, in the palace which the former built to honour and entomb the latter.

Alighting at the depôt, we find, as it is Saturday, that there is a crowd. They at once take possession of the omnibuses and carriages. We, therefore, must walk up the hill, a mile nearly, to the palace. All is rock and desolation above and around, save this walk. Happily, as the sun is out, there are on the way grateful shade trees and stone seats. The cathedral we first visit. It is enormous in size, and produces something of the awe-inspiring effect of St. Peter's. It is without the ornamentation of the latter, and it fails to satisfy the taste. The dome is fine. The paintings of value have been removed to Madrid. Indeed, why not remove all beautiful associations hence? The storms of wind and rain, the storms of war—French and civil war—the storms of bankruptcy—civil and ecclesiastical—all the storms, have burst upon this grand, gray “eighth wonder of the world;” and nothing of serene beauty or gentle repose is left, or ought to be left. The very images of the Hebrew kings in the great court; the figures in the great picture of the Judgment (great in the size of its canvas) in the church; the very coffins and urns in the vault, where are the bones of Charles V., Philip II., and their descendants, and where there is one niche still for Isabella—which she does not come forward to claim—all seem to take the prevailing dreariness, as if from the heart, soul, mind, and features of the severe and gloomy founder of the Escorial, Philip II. Paradoxically the tomb is the most cheerful of all the objects. This Pantheon, as it

is called, is also the most interesting place in the Escorial. It is something to have seen the cinerary urns of great potentates. There is an *amour propre* about each person which arrogates to itself a borrowed dignity from the departed royalty. In this crypt there are six rows of niches, and six urns in each row. The death-chamber is lofty. The top is lined with black and red and other coloured marbles. It has not a very sepulchral look. It is gaudy with bronze. It is immediately under the high altar. The celebrant, when he elevates the host, raises it immediately over the dead. In descending the wide, yellow, jasper staircase, one must take care. The marble is polished and is slippery with wax from the tapers. The pathway that leads to the tomb is ever slippery; but to this tomb exceedingly so. The great chandelier, the gilt ornamentation, and the poor paintings do not impress one so funereally. Indeed, another Philip did this part of the business. The second Philip planned a tomb of the humblest dimensions and the gloomiest character. Immediately above, in the church, or in the oratories, on each side of the great altar, some of the kings and queens who are buried below appear in full effigy, kneeling before the King of Kings. The effect is more impressively serious there than in the decorated tombs below in the vault.

Three mortal hours afoot we trudged through these deserted halls. In the palace there was some relief. The rooms are hung with tapestry, rather bright; but old tapestry is never at best very cheerful. Then, there are three little gems of rooms in 'marqueterie' and gold and silver trimmings. The ladies were here in raptures. Old cabinets, old clocks, embroidered silks—all these are the ushers to the little gloomy side-rooms. Here Philip II. sat to hear mass when sick. A little door opened here into the church. It was

here that he died that lingering death which has been represented as so remorseful and terrible. They show us his chair in which he sat in summer; then the one in which he sat in winter; then the chair whereon he rested his lame foot; and then the stain of the oil from its bandages. All these are shown, and we retire satisfied.

I have no room or time to tell of the many corridors and courts; of the pretty box-rows in the flower-gardens, which you may see from the windows of the palace portion of the Escorial; nor of the fountains, the pretty temple, the statues of the Apostles, some, alas! partly gone to decay, and others going entirely; or of the little palace in the garden, for the 'spoiled child' of royalty, and all its exquisite paintings and decorations. Even this did not relieve the heaviness of the granitic scene and its sombre surroundings. A library, which is to me ever a cheerful spot, where 'hourly I converse with kings and emperors'—calling their victories, if unjustly got, to a strict account, like the 'Elder Brother' of Beaumont and Fletcher—was here very repellent. All the books, dressed in their toilette of pig-skin, turn their backs from us, and refuse to show us even their titles, as it were to relieve us from the sorrowing sight of so many dead titles and names, and useless works.

Far better would it be to change this monster mass of granite and mortar from its dull mortuary purposes into something else. Where the half monkish King Philip ruled with so severe a sceptre, let the gay Spanish people—for the present by their own grace sovereign—come to a jubilee of industry within the courts of their dead oppressors. Let the wine and oil, the grain and marbles, the pictures and statues, all art, science, labour, skill, and wisdom which Spain hath, here be gathered! Aye, even then and there let the

guitar twang, the castanet click, and the tambourine resound to the steps of dancing feet! No better dedication of the Escorial can be made. And all the world, of Europe at least, which regards Spain as apart from its routes and its interests, may be tempted to come, see, admire, and—invest!

As we leave the Escorial a crowd of beggars approach. One of the beggar boys addresses me in a confidential, ironical way, pointing to a tatterdemalion in a rusty cloak, hiding a skirtless body. '*That, Señor, that is, or rather is not, the son of the blind Cornelio!*' Well, as I had not known that Cornelio was thus optically afflicted, or that he lived hereabouts, or had a son at all, or that, in fact, there was any such person as Cornelio, blind or otherwise, now or ever, I asked: 'Who in the—name—of curiosity is Cornelio?' '*He is the false guide, Señor, against whom all are to beware!*' 'Ah! what does he do to travellers? Shut them up in dark crypts or haunted cloisters; starve them in lonely rooms, under spring locks, or under granite basements; or drop them neatly into unseen cisterns, from which cometh no sound or bubble? Or in unfrequented paths doth he plant the perfidious poniard beneath the unsuspecting rib?' '*None of these, Señor. He imposes on tourists by representing himself to be what he is not; for the veteran Cornelio, señor, the royal guide of guides of the Escorial, died in 1863, unmarried and childless!*' This was the climax of the Escorial desolation. I dropped a figurative tear over the childless blind Cornelio, and a peseta into the outstretched itching palm of my garrulous informant.

How pleasantly we spent the hours on returning to Madrid; how the evening wore away at the Minister's hospitable home in cheerful chat with the cordial Nuncio of the Pope, whom I had the honour there to

meet ; how the next day we visited the royal palace—but that must be told ; and yet what is there new to tell of palaces ? As one parlour is like another at home ; as a face is the counterpart of that which it reflects in the mirror, so is one palace in Europe very like to all the rest. Tapestry, pictures, malachite, mosaic tables, statues and candelabra ; old clocks, escritaires, and bedsteads, &c. ; but there *is* something magnificent in this palace of Madrid, as I recall it. Not the likeness of Narvaez, nor of the recent royal family who lived here ; not the peculiar white stone of Colmenar, of which it is built ; nor the stone statues of the royal line, adorning the Plaza del Oriente opposite ; not because Joseph Bonaparte (of Bordentown, New Jersey, formerly) here lived a brief time as king ; not because Wellington drove him hence after the battle of Salamanca, and lodged here in this palace ; not the rich and precious marbles (in which, indeed, all parts of Spain are so opulent) in floor and doorway ; not the crystal chandeliers, colossal looking-glasses ; not the mediocre frescoes, illustrating the dead majesty of Spain ; not the apotheosis of kings on the ceiling, and the rare china work, as brittle as the apotheosis with which the walls are decorated ; not the views from the windows—for there has been no Moor at Madrid to decorate the hills with verdurous loveliness ; not the royal library of 100,000 volumes, to which now no bookworm except the moth hath access ; none of these interested me, for I have been palled with their iteration. What I looked at in this palatial museum with wonder and interest were the splendid paintings upon wall and ceiling, especially those in fresco, of Spanish America. The new world—new Spain—every part of her once proud and rich empire—here, in a prouder day, was drawn and coloured by the hand of genius. The commentary is to be found at this

day, in her struggle to hold the last of her transatlantic possessions.

There is much beside to describe at Madrid. The Armoury, where the mediæval age of arms is illustrated; where one may see Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro in their own armour, on horseback or foot, as you may please. Then there is the convent of the Atocha. That merits a better notice. Why? Not because it is a convent, for, of late, convents generally have become uninteresting in Spain. In fact, they have been under the law mostly suppressed. But this is a place held very sacred, for many reasons. It was built by the confessor to Charles V. It was rich—was once, but is not now—in gold and silver. It has had the fate of war and pillage. To the chapel of Atocha Ferdinand VII. came to worship. So did his daughter, the deposed queen. She used to drive here in great style, drawn by eight mules, with husband and children. It was here that the attempt was made on her life by a crazed monk with a dagger. In wandering about its now empty cloisters—once full of Dominican friars, and of holy zeal and life, one cannot but remark the effect of the revolution in unsettling the reverence for royalty. The custodians joke and smile at the exiled queen; they laugh as they tell us the government has an inventory of this and every other religious place in Spain. But the reverence for this place is not entirely gone. General Prim chose it as the place for the oath to the constitution which he administered to his soldiers. It is regarded as an especial honour to be buried here.

While wandering about the cloisters and walls of the Convent of Atocha, I found the tomb of Marshal Narvaez, Duke of València, who died in April, 1868, and whose gross, sensual, imperious features I saw the day before yesterday in full-length frame in the Queen's

apartments at the palace. He was a red-faced, strong-bodied man. He sleeps within the same walls as his great rival, O'Donnell! With no effigy, no monument, no display, the great minister—of Irish descent as his name indicates—lies here interred. Only this inscription marks his resting-place: '*Enteramiento del Exmo. (Excellentissimo) Señor D. Leopoldo O'Donnell, Duque de Tetuan (Morocco), fallecio in Biarritz el dia 5 de Noviembre de 1867.*' This was all. Change the name of the Hiberno-Iberian statesman, one letter only, and you have O'Connell; change the *locus in quo* of sepulture from Madrid to Ireland; and, lo! what a contrast between the great minister of the now exiled Queen in his almost nameless tomb, and that of the Great Commoner of the Irish isle, honoured by a nation of fervid hearts. Only yesterday did I read that after a quarter of a century, an imposing ceremonial was performed in Glasnevin Cemetery, when the remains of Daniel O'Connell were removed to a crypt under the Round Tower! A requiem mass—a fervid oration—the presence of cardinal and bishops and thousands of Irishmen. These were the witnesses of the great virtues still perpetuated in remembrance as characterising O'Connell. The little inscription in the Atocha convent is all that marks the memory of the now hated and almost despised minister of royal spites and despotic power!

There are many excursions to be made around Madrid, besides the one to the Escorial. Indeed, after the month of June, excursions are indispensable. There are baths in the mountains near the confluence of the Tagus with the Cifuentes, called the Baths of Trillo; there are baths also at Sacedon, famous from Roman days, and now much resorted to. You may, in a few hours, reach La Granja, where the thermometer is about 68 degrees in mid-summer when it is

83 degrees in Madrid. This was the Queen's favourite resort. It is nearly 3000 feet above the sea, while there is still above it a mountain, La Penalara, three times that height. The scenery is Alpine. Here Philip V. built his farm-house—La Grange. Here he would live; here he abdicated and afterwards resumed the throne; here he died; and here he chose to be buried. His French affiliation made him dislike the Austrian associations of Spanish royalty, and so he would not allow his *corpus defunctum* to sleep in the company which we have seen holding their Court of Death in the Pantheon of the Escorial. Here, at La Grange, Godoy, the 'black-eyed boy,' immortalized by 'Childe Harold,' signed the treaty which made Spain, for a time, a fief of France. Here the father of the exiled Queen, in September, 1832, promulgated a decree abolishing the Salic law, and made Isabella heiress to the throne. From this little source in the mountain has thus sprung a devastating torrent of civil affliction.

I should be flagrantly unjust if I did not, before quitting Madrid, at least refer to its museum. It is, beyond doubt, the finest collection of paintings in the world. It had such patrons, such wealth, and such artists that every school of early and modern art received here warm welcome. Not for its architecture or founders did I care to visit it again and again. Architecture had better samples to show in Spain, and its founders have other more fitting monuments. But at the new dawn of art, when the finest flush of talent overspread the European horizon; when Titian, Velasquez, and Rubens were honoured in the palaces of Spain; when Murillo, Van Dyck, Claude, Canos, Paul Veronese, Teniers, and Albert Durer gave new splendour to churches and palaces; when Andalusia gave her Oriental imagination to Murillo and Velasquez—and