

occasion, and extricated her from embarrassment in the most gallant way, saying, like the true courtier that he was, "When the King speaks, his subjects must keep silence," at which happy sally the Queen laughed, and all was smooth again.

But while such *contretemps* must occur now and then, still it cannot be doubted that the little Alfonso is an element in the State which strengthens the monarchy. When the Queen presents herself with the King in her arms, the sight appeals to the Spanish people, as the sight of Maria Theresa, holding up her boy in her arms, appealed to the loyalty of the magnates of Hungary. Even Castelar, Republican as he is, feels the universal impulse, which he expresses in his hearty and generous way in saying: "I cannot fight against a woman, nor against a child in its cradle."

So strict are the traditions of royalty in Spain that the King, though but a baby-in-arms, must be treated with the ceremony that befits a sovereign. The national pride would be offended if a single detail of royal etiquette were omitted, and the little Alfonso is approached with almost as much deference as would be accorded to the Emperor of Germany. As a King, he has to be maintained in regal state. The Cortes voted him one million four hundred thousand dollars a year—rather a liberal allowance for his *nourriture*; but this includes of course the maintenance of the Palace and all the expenses of the royal household, in which there is an army of officials large enough to dispose of the most princely revenue.

Of course the Queen Regent, as the principal figure in every Court ceremonial, has to go through with a great deal of posing in public, giving audiences, and receiving the representatives of foreign governments, who, if they do not always come in such magnificence as the French

Ambassador with his gilded coaches, must at least be received with a degree of state that shall give them a proper sense of the greatness of Spain. All this must be very irksome to her simple German tastes, and she must long to escape from the burdens of a Palace to the freedom of a more quiet life, her fondness for which she shows in many ways.

The first time that I saw the Queen, she was walking in the street. Mrs. Curry had taken me in her carriage to the Prado, the fashionable drive of Madrid, which was crowded with handsome equipages, in which were the principal personages of the gay capital, when suddenly her attention was attracted by the appearance of a lady on the sidewalk, very plainly dressed, who, to judge from anything in her appearance, might have been a governess. She had no attendant but an old Dowager Duchess, with whom she was walking very slowly to enjoy the brief sunshine of the short Winter afternoon. It was the Queen of Spain!

After this I saw her but once, and, as it happened, on the very day that she had given that first audience to the French Ambassador, when the Court ceremony was revived in all the splendor of the time of Charles V. or Philip II. It was the hour that Mr. Curry had appointed to take me to call upon Senor Moret, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whose office is in a wing of the Palace. As we came out, we had stopped for a moment in an archway waiting for our carriage, when a modest coupé passed us, and a lady leaning forward made a very low bow. It was the Queen, who was so smiling and gracious that, although her bow was intended for Mr. Curry, I could not help taking a part of it to myself. No contrast could be more striking than that of her plain carriage with the gorgeous coaches drawn by six horses apiece, all spangled with gold, that had just

rumbled away from the gates of the Palace. She seemed like a person who had got through with a pompous and burdensome ceremony, and was but too glad to throw off her royal robes, and regain her freedom by a return to her natural simplicity.

Such is the Queen of Spain, simple and gentle, kind in heart and gracious in manner, and tranquilly yet profoundly happy. That which gave her the supreme joy was not that a Prince was born, but a child—a second Alfonso, as a perpetual reminder of the first. The appearance of that little being changed life for her. From that hour she was a different woman: no longer lonely, sitting at the Palace windows, looking out on the dreary landscape, across the barren plain to the bleak Guadarrama Mountains, and thinking of the blue Danube. At once the great halls of the Palace, that were so empty before, were filled with a new presence. The frigid atmosphere of the Spanish Court became soft and warm with an infant's breath. Something was singing in her heart all day long. It is very sweet to think of this deep joy that has come at last to one who has been so sorely stricken. In the hour of her bitterest grief God has given her an unspeakable consolation, to which she clings with all the love that is in a woman's heart. In the photographs of her seen in Madrid, she appears almost always with the little Alfonso in her arms, as if he were all that was left to her out of the wreck of her happiness. So the cloud is slowly lifting, and all who look upon that widowed Queen in those mourning robes which she still wears, and will perhaps always wear, will rejoice to see coming into that sad face, and into those eyes that have shed such bitter tears, a new and softened light, like the clear shining after rain.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CORTES—DEBATE ON THE LATE INSURRECTION.

Ever since I crossed the frontier, I have observed with wonder and surprise that I was in a country as free as my own. With the history of Spain in mind, as having one of the most despotic of governments, I was prepared to conduct myself with all due prudence and discretion, as I should do in Russia. If I had been in St. Petersburg, and gone into a café to get a cup of coffee, and a stranger had come and sat down at the same table and commenced a conversation, I should instantly have suspected him to be a spy, and although I might have replied to his inquiries so far as to give an opinion about the weather, and whether there was likely to be a storm on the Baltic, yet as to the Czar or the government, I should have been as silent as if I did not know that they were in existence. And even in Berlin, as one sits under the trees in the Unter den Linden, he needs to be careful in his words if he has aught to say of the Emperor, or even of Prince Bismarck. But here all this is conspicuous by its absence; I am not "shadowed" by a detective in my goings out and comings in, but go where I will, and talk as I please. Of course it is more considerate for a traveller to reserve his opinions of

a country until he has seen something of it, but that is merely a matter of taste or of common sense ; as to *liberty*, he is as perfectly master of himself as if he were in America. And this in a country where twenty years ago Sagasta and Martos and Castelar, if the Government could have laid hands on them, would have been shot! Truly, the world does move, even in Spain.

How far it has moved within these years, may be judged by what has recently transpired in the Cortes, of which I speak from personal observation, as I have watched the proceedings from day to day. The Cortes had been called to meet two weeks before I reached Madrid, and came together in a state of unusual excitement from recent events. It was hardly a year since the King's death, during which the country had been under the government of the Queen Regent, whose gentle person seemed to unite all parties, and the year of mourning passed in quietness and peace until near its close, when on the 19th of September there was an *émeute* in one or two of the barracks of Madrid. It was not a great affair, including but a few hundred men. But that was no fault of those engaged in it, who conspired to effect a general rising that should culminate in a revolution. Mr. Houghton, the correspondent of the London Standard, tells me what was told him by an officer in one of the barracks. At night he heard in the street the voices of soldiers calling to some of their comrades within by name, "to get up and come out." Surprised at this, he went to the cot of one of those so addressed, and asked what it meant. The man mumbled an incoherent answer, feigning sleep ; but when the officer pulled off the coverlid, he found that the man was *dressed* ! Turning to another, he found him in the same condition, at which he took alarm, and immediately summoned the guard, whom he posted

at the entrance of the corridor with loaded rifles, and then calling aloud that any man who stirred should be instantly shot, he went from cot to cot, and found that almost all were dressed, ready to spring up in an instant and seize their guns and join in the revolt. Those who had already gone into the streets were very turbulent, and three well known officers who tried to check them—General Velarde, Count Mirasol, and Captain Peralta—were shot down in cold blood. Hence it is quite probable that but for some unexpected delay or oversight leading to a want of combination at the proper moment, the rising might have become general, and ended in a revolution. As it was, it was put down in a few hours. But in this at least it succeeded, that the Government was terribly frightened. As soon as it recovered its composure, the chiefs of the insurgents were tried by court-martial. The leader was a General in the army, Villacampa, who was well known as a brave and daring officer, but also as a born conspirator and revolutionist. As the offence was not a mere matter of political opinion, but a clear case of mutiny and insurrection, which strikes at the very life of an army by striking at its discipline, they could not but be condemned, and accordingly some half-dozen officers were sentenced to be shot. The day of execution approached; it was within twenty-four hours of the fatal moment, and they had even been conducted to the chapel, according to the Spanish custom, to be prepared for death, when the last act was stopped by the hand, or rather by the heart, of a woman, whom love and agony made eloquent to save one of the condemned. It was the daughter of Villacampa, who, frenzied at the thought of the fate which awaited her father, flew from Deputy to Deputy, to get them to beg for his pardon; and from Minister to Minister, to throw herself at their feet to plead for the life so precious

to her. Before such entreaties they could not but be greatly moved. Villacampa was an old friend of Sagasta, the Prime Minister. But what could he do in a case so clear? At length the question was submitted to the Cabinet, of which there are nine members. Four voted inflexibly that the law should take its course, and the sentence of the court-martial be carried out; while four thought that the Queen Regent might exercise her prerogative of mercy without danger of encouraging further rebellion. Sagasta gave the casting vote in favor of pardon, and thus saved the life of his friend, who with his companions was immediately shipped off to Fernando Po, a Spanish island on the coast of Africa.

Of course all these things were the topics of universal discussion in the capital. For weeks nothing else was talked of, and in the midst of this excitement the Cortes was summoned to meet. For the enemies of the government, here was an opportunity not to be lost. What an occasion to charge it with want of foresight, that could allow such a conspiracy to come to a head; or with weakness and vacillation in passing sentence on men justly condemned, and then staying the hand of justice. No sooner were the Ministers brought face to face with the Cortes, than it was evident that there was to be a combined attack, and that they must expect a heavy assault all along the line. It began in a general discussion of the policy of the government. The aim of the opposition was to carry what in the English Parliament would be called "a vote of want of confidence." The debate had been going on for two weeks, and was at its hottest when I was first present at a sitting of the Cortes. Mr. Stroebel came for us and took us to the Parliament House in which the "Congreso" meets (the "Senado" meets elsewhere, near the British Embassy)—a large and handsome building,

fronting on a public square, in which there is a statue of Cervantes. Passing in by a side entrance, we went up to the Diplomatic box, from which we looked down on the whole assembly. It is composed of about four hundred members, the greater part of whom, to judge from their appearance, I should take to be men of position and education. Some bear names well known in the old Spanish nobility, but for the most part they belong to what in France would be called the *haute bourgeoisie*—the upper middle class. They have the air of being well-to-do, as indeed they must be to hold their places here at all: for in the Spanish Cortes, as in the English House of Commons, the members receive no pay, the honor itself being considered a sufficient reward; and indeed it is so highly prized that men are not only willing to take it without compensation, but to pay roundly, if not in money, yet in time and labor, for the distinction of belonging to the body which makes laws for Spain. Although for the most part men in middle life, yet they have the venerable look of a more advanced age, from the fact that so large a number of them are quite bald, having more hair on their faces and chins than on their heads. Indeed I never saw the light reflected from so many polished pates. †

In the grouping of the members, one does not perceive any great difference between this and a legislative body in America. The seats are ranged in a semi-circle, as in our Senate Chamber in Washington, the desk of the President being in the centre, or focus, where his eye is on every one, and his ear can be reached by any voice. A stranger would hardly know that Spain is not still a Republic but for the emblem of a crown woven in the carpet—a crown resting on two globes, in token that the Spanish rule extends to both hemispheres. The only bit of brilliant color in the whole chamber is in the mace-

bearers, two gorgeous creatures in red velvet, covered with gold, with red velvet caps surmounted by tall white feathers, who stand behind the President's chair leaning against the curtain of the recess, silent emblems of power and glory!

Looking down on the body below us, it was apparent that it was in a state of unusual excitement. Members came rushing in to take their seats, while ex-members and Senators, who have the privilege of the floor, were standing wherever one could set his foot, near the entrances and round the desk of the President.

The bench of Ministers was full. Of the nine members of the Cabinet, every man was in his place. At the head sat the Prime Minister, Sagasta, a man whose bodily presence gives little indication of the power which he is said to possess. There is nothing in his appearance that would arrest attention. In this respect he is in striking contrast with his colleague, Senor Moret, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who sits beside him, who is one of the handsomest men in Spain—tall, erect, with fine, open countenance, and winning style of address. He is a favorite not only in diplomatic circles, but in general society, as he well may be, for he is extremely courteous—a man to make many friends and no enemies. Near him is Leon y Castillo, Minister of the Interior, who has also a commanding presence, and is noted, among other things, for his stentorian voice.

This Cabinet, though holding power under a monarchy, is Liberal. The previous one, under the late King, was Conservative, although the Prime Minister, Canovas, was a man of large political wisdom. A gentleman who has lived long in Madrid said to me: "He is our only statesman." Perhaps he never showed his sagacity so much as by resigning power. When the King died, he felt that

there was great danger of a political upheaval ending in a revolution, and that it was all-important to rally to the Government the support of the Liberal party; and to that end he offered his own resignation, and advised the Queen to send for Sagasta, and give him authority to form a Liberal Ministry.

In this Cabinet of nine members there is *not a man with a title*. Every one has risen from the ranks—raising himself to his present position by his personal ability. Sagasta was an engineer, while Canovas was a schoolmaster! This is the stuff of which to make good citizens and good legislators. Could any fact show more clearly how the democratic spirit is creeping into the institutions of old Spain!

As we entered, the Minister of Finance was defending the policy of the government in regard to the late insurrection, and particularly in granting the “indulto,” or pardon of the officers engaged in it. He showed that the military insurrection was of but little significance, occurring as it did a year after the King’s death; whereas if it had taken place at that moment, when everybody was predicting a great catastrophe, it might have thrown the whole kingdom into confusion. Now, thanks to the wisdom and prudence of Senor Sagasta, he had gathered round him the best elements from all the political parties—from the Conservatives on the one hand, and from the *Posibilistas* (Castelar’s following) on the other—which showed the public confidence in the strength of the Government, and in its fidelity to its liberal professions, and fully justified its continuance in power.

But now rose up a man of military bearing, General Lopez Dominguez, a nephew of the late Marshal Serrano, who was formerly a supporter of Sagasta, but who, in the splitting up of parties into new divisions, now figures as the leader of the Dynastic Left—that is, he is a

Monarchist, while he dissents from the policy recently pursued. He was himself at one time Minister of War, and had proposed certain reforms in the army, which he thought of the greatest importance. He reminded the Government that he had warned them of the dangers to which they were exposed if these reforms were not carried out. But they had paid no heed to his remonstrance. To the neglect of those warnings; to the failure to carry out those reforms; he ascribed the late insurrection, for which he now proposed to call the Government to a strict account. He said that, "returning to Madrid shortly after that deplorable event, he did not find a single journal nor a single man in the cafés, in public gatherings, or in social circles, that did not think that it left the Ministry of Senor Sagasta in complete isolation, and that it was virtually *dead!*"

Here he was interrupted, and challenged to say who were the men with whom he had had interviews. He admitted that some of them were men who had been opposed to the Government, although others had been its supporters; but he denied that the conferences had been for the purpose of forming a new political party that should come into power. "I mention this," he said, "because I have been charged with being impatient and ambitious. The only impatience, the only ambition, that I feel, is to see grouped around the monarchy all the great forces of the country marching onward in the paths of liberty"—a sentiment that was received with much applause.

Then turning to the Republicans at his side, he charged them with giving encouragement and aid to the Socialists, "teaching as they did the right of insurrection"! "It is necessary," he said, "that you should be disarmed; that the revolution should be disarmed. You may discuss everything; you may display your programme; but you

have no right to break the laws, nor to be wanting in dutiful respect to the august lady who occupies the throne." (Cries of "Very good! Very good!")

In this strain the General spoke for an hour and a half, ending his vehement philippic by saying: "It only remains for me to add that everywhere and at all times my cry shall be 'Long live the country! [Viva la patria!] Long live the monarchy! Long live discipline in the army!' and that my only wish for the country is peace and loyalty at home, and strength, vigor, and freedom abroad!" With this he took his seat amid loud cheers from all sides of the chamber.

After this torrent of Spanish eloquence, it was a contrast to hear the Marquis de la Vega de Armijo—who, though not an orator, is a man of influence in Spanish politics—say, in a voice free from all excitement, yet clear and decided, that "while he belonged to the Liberal party, the Government party, he did not hold that a political party was a 'narrow religion' [religion estrecha]; and, without being a revolter or a dissenter from his party, he was free to say that he did not approve some of the late acts of the Government."

The debate, which had been in progress for three or four hours, was now at its height. The Cortes was in a state of excitement. Castelar rose from his seat and moved round to the chair of the President, and for the moment we thought he was watching for an opportunity to speak. But after a few minutes he returned to his place, leaving the debate to be ended by him to whom it rightly belonged, the Prime Minister, Sagasta.

All the evening I had been watching the face of this man, who holds in his hands at this moment the government of Spain. He has a Jewish cast of countenance, and perhaps has Jewish blood in his veins, as there is Jewish

blood everywhere in Spain. He is not tall, but lank, and, if it were not an uncourtly word to apply to a prime minister, we might almost say "raw-boned." His figure is so awkward and angular that he made me think of Abraham Lincoln, and he has a truly Lincolnian way of sprawling over the desk in front of him. He had a heavy, wearied look. Perhaps he was very, very tired, as he well might be. But when he rose to his feet, every trace of fatigue had vanished. Looking straight across the chamber, he met the enemy face to face. Straightening himself up, as Lincoln might have done, he stood with folded arms, looking at his assailants with an air of disdain. The lion was at bay. After pausing for a few moments, he unloosed his arms, and soon began to strike as the smith strikes the anvil, bringing his hands down with violence on the desk before him, as if to clench his argument. He made no weak apology for failures, but defended the action of the government as the only wise, and indeed the only possible, course for it to pursue. To show this, he drew a picture of the difficulties through which it had lately passed. One year ago the King had died, leaving the nation without a head. For months they knew not who was to be his successor, for the child that was to be heir to the throne, was not yet born. What a state of uncertainty and perplexity to tempt malcontents, in the State and the army, to seek some party or personal advantage from the calamities of their country! And yet, in spite of all this, the government had held on its way, maintaining peace at home and abroad—putting down insurrection when it showed its head, and was strong enough to pardon the miserable conspirators without danger to the State. He closed by a picture of the widowed Queen, drawing to her all hearts by the dignity with which she bore her great sorrow, and carrying in her arms the young life that was the hope of Spain.

This last allusion of course touched the Spanish heart in its tenderest point, and the house broke out into tumultuous applause, in which the Prime Minister resumed his seat. Immediately the Chamber rose, for anything would have seemed tame after such a display. An hour later, at a dinner at the American Legation, I met Leon y Castillo, to whom I spoke of what I had just heard from Sagasta. He replied "It was the greatest speech of his life ; he was *inspired!*" Of course I felt it to be a piece of extraordinary good fortune to be present on such a memorable occasion, and to have seen the Prime Minister of Spain at the moment of his highest power.

This was my first visit to the Cortes, but not the last. I had heard one side, and now wished to hear the other. At the first sitting, those who spoke were Monarchists of one type or another. Even Lopez Dominguez, in his fierce assault on the Ministry, was at special pains to declare his allegiance to the throne, and, like all the rest, threw upon the Republicans the odium of being the instigators of the late insurrection. But the Monarchists were not to have it all their own way : there was another side to be heard. Right under the Diplomatic box sat the Left, or Republican wing of the Chamber, which, if not in the majority, still constituted a minority that would be very formidable if it were a compact body, and not split into half a dozen factions, but which even now, divided as it is, is a political force, strong in its energy and boldness, since it does not disguise its opinions on any floor or in any presence. If it kept silent the last evening, it was only biding its time : to-night it comes to the front, and will declare itself without any reserve.

Among its leaders is Salmeron, who, during the period of the Republic, was for a brief time its President. The Republic is gone, but his faith is not gone : he is still and

forever for "The Republic, one and indivisible!" He spoke, not in the way of apology, but of manly vindication. In his style of address, as in his personal appearance, he is the very opposite of Castelar. Tall and somewhat stately in figure, he speaks in measured sentences, waving his long arms in a way which appeared to me very studied, not to say affected. Indeed, as he was formerly a Professor in the University, I thought he spoke more like a Professor, or a teacher of elocution, than like a tribune of the people. His slightly pompous manner led me to look upon him as a graceful and ornamental, rather than powerful, orator. And yet he is not by any means a man of mere words, but of action. Indeed it is said that during the last Summer he made a political tour in Catalonia, in which he openly advocated armed rebellion—a fact which must make it somewhat difficult for him to free himself from all complicity with the late insurrection. And yet he seemed not in the slightest degree embarrassed, but rolled out his sounding periods as calmly as if he were delivering a lecture to the students in the University.

Beside him sat a deputy from Leon, Senor Alcárate, of the same Republican faith, but of more fiery temper, who spoke with great vehemence, pouring his hot words into the very faces of the Monarchists and Ministerialists, who sat on the opposite benches—a passionate outburst which seemed to exhaust him, so that at the close he almost fell into the arms of Salmeron, who hugged him with affectionate admiration.

These were bold words, indeed, to be spoken in such a place. Leaning over the box, and listening with close attention, I could hardly believe my ears as I heard this proud defiance of any sort of tyranny, and this demand for the widest liberty. And this was not in the American Congress, but in the Cortes of haughty old Spain!

In these visits to the Cortes, which were repeated many times, I was very much surprised at the Spanish eloquence. In the first debate there were a dozen, perhaps twenty, speakers, but not a man used notes of any kind ; and yet they spoke with a readiness and fluency in striking contrast to the halting and hemming and hawing in the English House of Commons. They have the animated gesticulation of the Southern races, and at the same time their words flow with an ease and grace for which I was wholly unprepared, and by which I was as much delighted as surprised.

But there was something still better than this : the Spaniards are not only good speakers, but, what is still more rare, they are good listeners, hearing their political opponents, not only with forbearance, but with attention and respect—a respect which might well be imitated by their neighbors on the other side of the Pyrenees. If a debate on a topic so exciting as a military insurrection had taken place in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, it would have been interrupted a hundred times by angry charges hurled from one side to the other. But the Spaniards are a much graver people than the French ; they are less demonstrative. Exciting as the subject was, the Cortes listened for the most part in silent attention, only now and then breaking out into applause. Once or twice I observed a slight hiss, but this seemed to be directed not at the speakers, but at those who by any movement interrupted them. In such cases a touch of the bell brought them promptly to order. On the whole, no speakers could wish for a more respectful audience.

Indeed so punctilious are these Spaniards in their forms of politeness, that they seem to have a pride in outdoing one another in courtesy ; and sometimes when one is attacked with some degree of asperity, he will reply in the

blandest manner, taking good care to refer to his assailant as "*my personal friend*, although my political opponent." Some of our American Congressmen might learn the fine art of courtesy from these high-bred Spaniards.

Another custom I was glad to observe, which shows the Spanish simplicity: they call each other by their proper names. Instead of the absurd way in the English Parliament of alluding to a preceding speaker as "the noble lord" or "the right honorable and gallant member," it is simply Senor Sagasta, or Senor Canovas, or Senor Castelar.

The excellent order is preserved by a rule which prevents the constant interruption of speakers by those who wish to get the floor, and which I think might well be adopted both in the American Congress and in the British Parliament. In the House of Representatives at Washington, if a member wishes to speak, he rises in his place and calls "Mr. Speaker!" If he is the *only* one, he has the floor; but if a dozen rise at the same instant, it depends on whom the Speaker sees, or wishes to see, and as he is sometimes affected with blindness when looking in one direction, while very sharp-sighted when looking in the other, those of his own party are placed at a great advantage, by which serious injustice may be done, and a fair debate be rendered impossible. So in the House of Commons I have seen ordinary speakers put to silence by the loud and repeated calls for "Bright," when (as I happened to know from having seen him a few hours before) he did not wish to speak, but would have much preferred to remain silent. Here is a case in which we may plead for the rights of those who are *not* eloquent. One who has no gift of speech may yet have a fact to state or an opinion to express which is worth being heard, and he ought to have a chance, and not to be choked down.

In this matter we might take a lesson from the Span-