theatrical ghost springs from a trap-door, at an abrupt turn a wild figure appears bearing right down upon us. A Carlist chieftain? Not so fast. A muleteer simply, sitting sideways on his prad, and leading a half-dozen mules laden with panniers in Indian file behind him. He told us we had reached the summit, and that there was a fonda a short distance off. Signs of life multiplied; we met mountaineers, with oxen drawing small cars with solid wheels similar to those of toy carriages—wheels that kept up perpetual creak and croak—and finally we encountered the caravan from Alsasua to Beasain. But we encountered no Carlists, that is, no armed Carlists, for every man there is Carlist in soul. The smoky fonda was as miserable as the most miserable of Irish shebeens; yet they gave us good white bread and eggs to eat, and, with the aid of the sauce of hunger and sundry glasses of acid Val de Peñas to wash it down, we made a hearty meal. The caravan overtook us in half an hour; the rest of the journey was downhill, the snow was deeper than on the other side, and the jolting terrific, but we did not care. Our goal was

near, and we had eaten and drunk. We laughed at the dangers we had passed, and even the Spaniard unbent and exhibited unexpected powers of conversation. Alas! for my judgment; he was no grandee of Castile, but a butcher from Saragossa, a mere *carnifex* with blood of the common red tint.

At Alsasua we came upon a village bleaker than Beasain, with soldiers billeted under every roof. They loitered in twos and threes about the wide street, which was drab with patches of dirty snow. Here were placed a few mountain guns under custody of a shivering sentry, there a bugler in slovenly greatcoat blew some call with pinched lips on a battered instrument. At the station—a rude shanty with wooden partitions and a plank erection run up as refreshment-stall—some attempt had been made at fortification. There were mud-works thrown up in its vicinity, and the walls were roughly loop-holed. A party of Linesmen were in possession. On a siding close by was the locomotive which had been riddled with shot by the insurgents on the now disused line to Pampeluna. Our own locomotive

was awaiting us, with steam up, and I hurried to procure my ticket. I pushed a piece of honest red gold through the wicket, and an extremely nice, slim female clerk gave me the pasteboard with my change and thanks. Something struck me in the silver shoved towards me; the leaden hue of the pesetas was suspicious. I took up one and rung it; the dull sound convinced me it was bad. I rung another—same result. I was desolate; but I had to call the attention of the extremely nice girl to the error she had fallen into; and she coolly, without adumbration of a blush, or faintest pretence at apology, took back the base coins, and gave me their equivalent in coins that were sterling. And then, for the first time, it broke upon me, that it was not considered a scoundrelly act to pass bad money upon an innocent foreigner, or upon an innocent native, for the matter of that. I further learned that if I had removed that bad money from the counter, I should have had to bear with the loss. That extremely nice girl would have assured me with all politeness that I must be labouring under an illusion.

The Spaniard has personal dignity to a prodigious degree. But his personal dignity does not hinder the ordinary Spaniard from endeavouring to foist counterfeit stamps upon his neighbour whenever he has the chance.

The tarantara of a bugle stirred a company of soldiers to take their places in the train. They were our escort to Miranda, on the borders of Old Castile, where we might consider ourselves out of danger. It is my opinion we were never in any danger.

We reached Miranda safely, and from that swept down in the darkness to Madrid without molest, the most of us snoring as regularly as the funnel of the engine snorted. I had a fearsome vision of a sweet Spanish maiden who had knowingly placed a worthless peseta in the tirelire at Mass, and had been sentenced by Santa Cruz to grill on the gridiron of hell for the term of her natural life. A carpet-bag utilized as a pillow was the origin of my vision. Had that carpet-bag been more carelessly packed, the penalty on the poor girl might have been prolonged to eternity.

CHAPTER IV.

Madrid—The Fonda and its Porter—The Puerta del Sol—Postal Irregularities—Tribute to the Madrileños—The Barber's Pronunciamiento—Anecdotes of King Amadeus—Checkmating the Grand Dames—Queen Isabella—The Embarrassed Mr. Layard of Nineveh—The Great Powers Hesitate—America Goes Ahead—General Sickles—Mahomet and the Mountain—Republicanism among the troops—A Peculiar Pennsylvanian Dentist—Castelar under Torture—The Writer meets one of his Sept—Politicians by Trade—Honour among Insurgents—Alonso the Reckless.

FIRST impressions of Madrid, "the only court," do not fill the visitor with awe. It is an aggregate of masonry, fragmentary on the edges, compact in the middle, on a sandy plateau in a waste of arid landscape. There is lack of natural shade and water, albeit there are tree-planted walks and gardens, with cedars and Himalayan pines, and fountains with fulness of clear flow are abundant. It wants a river; the Manzanares, I am told, is but a ditch.

I do not know if that is so; I never could see the Manzanares. A rugged, sun-blistered city, Madrid struck me as no more characteristically Spanish—or what I had taught myself to accept as such—than Turin is Italian; both are half-Frenchified. In the northern distance are the summits of the Guadarrama hills, and the unseen breeze which sweeps down from its snowy eyries amongst them cuts like an icicle. The Madrileño fears it, for it has a trick of permeating the streets with a subtile, chilling, killing breath; and when the Madrileño steps from the sunny to the shady side of the street he is careful to lift a corner of his cloak as screen to his mouth.

The central point of Madrid is the Puerta del Sol—a bare, broad, irregular area off which nine thoroughfares diverge. Round it the day-god, greatest friend of Spain, pivots in glory. Now he floods one side with radiance, now he drops his cloth of gold over another. The Puerta del Sol is the focus of interest for the population. Thither the gossips repair, and there the affairs of the nation are discussed very often by those who have acted, act, or hope to act as leaders of the nation.

Naturally I made for the Puerta del Sol, for it was of vital importance to me to be in the movement, in the very vortex of the pool. I was fortunate. I got rooms in the Fonda de Paris, an hotel at the corner of the Calle de Alcala, the principal avenue leading from the Plaza. As proof of the unsettled condition of affairs and its effect upon trade, it need only be said that at the *table d'hôte* of this, the first hotel in the capital, where one hundred and thirty persons usually sit down to dinner, there were sometimes not more than fifteen or twenty, and a proportion of these were fly-about Special Correspondents. Yet in this exiguous circle of prudent people who were detained in Madrid, or foolhardy people who had travelled there, turned up the irrepressible British tourist. Of the latter class we had charming specimens at dinner one evening in two English girls, with fresh peachy complexions, and hair like wavy masses of ripe maize. They had no guide but their faithful "Murray." What became of them subsequently I never ascertained; but it is to be trusted they were as lucky as the enterprising young lady who relied on Erin's honour

and Erin's pride in the reign of King Brian, and made the tour of the Emerald Isle with a gold ring on the tip of a wand. That would hardly pay the hotel-bills nowadays.

A great feature in the fonda was Constantine, the hall-porter, a tall swarthy man, who was as fluent a linguist as an Alexandria dragoman. He was Greek by birth, but had a strain of English blood on the mother's side. His sire may have been a South Sea cannibal or a South African lion-slayer for aught I remember; but that there was something phenomenally bold in him I am certain. Constantine's instincts were predatory, and his manners morose. There was a tradition that he had been a bandit in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, or an innkeeper by the Marseilles docks—much about the same thing, and that he was prepared to do little jobs of human carving for a consideration. However, these may have been fables got up by travellers in search of excitement to invest Constantine with an interesting air of romance. He was very civil to me and did not cheat me more than I chose. I never had occasion to ask him to kill anybody.

From my windows I could command the mid-basin in the Plaza, more for use than ornament, and as great a rendezvous of the quidnuncs as a village-pump. The panorama of life lounged or moved or bustled beneath—shifting groups of cloaked disputants, veiled women tripping gracefully along, stately Civil Guards in three-cornered hats, sombre priests with Don Basilio head-gear, the various moulds of human nature from the grandee to the mendicant, and above all that brood with which I soon grew familiar, and for which I conceived an invincible disgust—the sallow, peering, prating, importunate brood of hungry place-hunters, impatient to dip their fingers into the Government pie. Cabriolets passed to and fro, tram-cars with such sleek well-conditioned mule-teams jolted on the rails; here a horse-soldier trotted by with clattering accoutrements, there a water-carrier sturdily trudged; and in a sheltered angle a long-locked vendor of a magic hair-restorer vaunted his wondrous balm in sonorous patter, and occasionally curtained his face with his thick mane brought over from his back as tangible testimony to the fertilizing properties of

the balm. In short, from those windows I could take in the cardiac pulsing of Madrid. Below me, as I sat and smoked my cigarette, the beginning of change or crux, accident or riot, the initial whims or humours of the populace, the formation of a procession or the overture of a pronunciamiento, were within my ken. And at one corner of the Puerta were the General Post Office and Telegraphic Bureau, a matter of great convenience to me, if only they were properly managed. However, it was far easier to collect news than to send it to the desired destination. The post was as unsafe as in those days in another land when Mr. Richard Turpin, highwayman, and his comrogues intercepted his Majesty's mails. As for messages by wire, I was not long in learning that no important information was allowed to be sent; true, the money for its transmission was taken, but—delayed, or forwarded, or suppressed even—the strict rule in that establishment was "no money returned." Vain were complaints. The Special Correspondent had no resource but that of the negro suffering from toothache; 'twas his to grin and bear it. The idea

of ever again seeing the colour of the coin which has passed into the palm of a Spanish functionary is laughable in its pastoral innocence. As well expect to handle last year's snow. The system of ignorant espionage still obtained in the Peninsula, as I was forced reluctantly to observe: the word "Cuba" or "Carlos" on the telegraphic form at once aroused the scruples and suspicions of the official, and led to the confiscation of the message. In the end, I discovered how to facilitate the despatch of news; but as that is my secret I keep it to myself. Suffice it that in my bill of expenses the item "sundries" was elastic.

There are some valuable guide-books to Spain, and to them I refer the reader if he desire to be crammed with curious knowledge about churches and picture-galleries, museums of arms, and the beautiful upholstery of the Duke of Sixty-Blazons' palace. My behest was with living not dead Spain, as investigated during the throes of a political convulsion. I made my notes on the Madrileños without bias, and without bias I give them. I spent five weeks in constant and free intercourse with all

classes of the inhabitants. During that time I did not detect one Belleville face; I did not catch the glitter of a knife except at a dinner-table, nor remark a single drunkard staggering along the streets. Yet I was in every quarter of the town, to the lowest, at all hours. There are parts of London where the foreign visitor could not penetrate and come back with the same story. The Madrileños are indolent—granted; but they are frugal, temperate, and well-conducted. Occasionally a poniard is slipped into the ribs of an enemy, but mistakes will occur in the best-regulated families. If this be a vindictive and blood-sucking people, the vampirism is adroitly concealed; the dirty linen must be washed in the dark corner where the charcoal is stored, so that Paul Pry may not be gratified with the sight. There is no working population at Madrid; there are no large manufactories, no thriving centres of employment. That is one reason why Madrid is orderly compared to other and livelier cities. Prosperous Barcelona swarms with mechanics and artisans, and that is one reason why Barcelona is disorderly. The rights-of-man

agitators generally find favour there. The International has its ramifications in the Catalonian capital. In Madrid, the International is a pigmy failure. Its emissaries came once and laboured zealously to stir up the son of toil to a proper consciousness of his dignity. After months of propagandism they succeeded in persuading Figaro to shake a rebellious pole and fiercely flourish his lathering-brush.

"Know, ye smooth-lipped minions of the despot Capital," quoth the barbers in an indignant round-robin, "we shall no longer submit to the gross tyranny of shaving you before eight of the morning!"

But Figaro was defeated; Madrid let its beard grow.

The sudden departure of the Italian-bred monarch had apparently plunged the politicians into a pit of bewilderment. They did not know how they stood. Amadeus after his reign of five-and-twenty months had perchance left few partisans behind him, but assuredly no enemies. His principal fault, but that was fatal, consisted in his being a foreigner. It

was universally vouchsafed that he was very brave, a true hidalgo in that respect, and if he had been removed in the orthodox method by revolution or the assassin, his name would have been garlanded with rosemary for remembrance. But Spanish pride was nettled to the quick at the cavalier way he had tossed back, with a shrug of the shoulders, the gift of a crown when he had tired of it. He had looked upon the throne of Castile as a gewgaw to be surrendered with indifference, and steamed contentedly to Italy to enjoy his comparatively obscure Dukedom and rank of General in preference. He had chosen the wiser and happier part, but to those he had abandoned it was mortifying in the extreme. Still, he was an unquailing chevalier, almost fit to be a Spaniard, this son of Victor Emmanuel. He had disarmed hostility, and compelled the praise of the envious, the very day he entered Madrid, forty-eight hours after the funeral of Prim, when he spurred ahead of his escort and offered his breast undismayed to the aim of any or all assassins.

That entry of Amadeus could not have inspired him with much of the buoyancy of a bright ex-

pectation. There was in it more of sanguinary suggestiveness than sanguine hope. The ghostly presence at the King's first dinner in the palace could not be denied—that of the slaughtered "Paladino," no longer fiery and strenuous, but a figure, inert, waxen, blood-bolstered, a bullet-riddled flesh-target. It was most unpropitious of entries. There was an odour of cerecloth in the tapestry, the yellow hue of immortelles in the épergnes, a sediment of bitterness in the wine-cup, a strain of melancholy in the music. And yet there was some semblance of gaiety, for with all his austere stateliness your Spaniard is very like unto the Irishman:

> "With one auspicious, and one dropping eye,
> With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
> In equal scale weighing delight and dole."

There were sundry plots to take the life of Amadeus, but Providence protected him, and he made it a point, after each attempt or threat, to show himself in public with the ostentation of a reckless courage. He rode or walked about with a single aide-de-camp, which was a crime with those monarchists who set store by the pageantry of

state. On one occasion, as he was returning to the palace, the horse in a hackney-coach with a fat bourgeois inside took fright, and started off at break-neck speed, overtaking the King's carriage. The King's coachman whipped up his team, but the wheels of the two vehicles had locked in each other, and the horses galloped frantically side by side. The aide-de-camp, fearing a new and daring experiment in regicide, snatched his rapier from the sheath and began furiously prodding through the window of the hackney-coach. The fat bourgeois shrunk and flattened himself into a corner, drew in his breath, and dodged the lunges of the searching steel. When the palace-gates were reached, and the animals were stopped, the unfortunate citizen was extricated from his hazardous position more dead than alive. He was glistening with the wetness of fright, trembled like an aspen, and blubbered as he begged for mercy. The panelling was pierced, and the cushion ripped into rags; but by some extraordinary luck the poor man, who was a harmless dealer in provisions, had escaped without a scratch. But he owned that he never before had

five minutes of such violent exercise complicated with vile terror. During the scene Amadeus kept his seat tranquilly, and relaxed into a smile as he discovered the mistake of his too-zealous companion.

The conspiracies of the saloons were more successful, as efforts to annoy without contravening law always are. They are not so readily met. And the malicious ingenuity of woman, when she lays herself out to be offensive, is remarkably inventive and diabolically persistent. Some of the grand dames of Madrid had the impish inspiration to put the Royal couple into Coventry. There is a fashionable carriage-drive in the capital corresponding much to ours between Hyde Park Corner and Queen's Gate. Whenever Amadeus and his spouse went there for an airing, the blue-blooded of the opposition significantly trotted off. Once an immense procession of the aristocratic families made its appearance, and slowly and perseveringly "took the dust." Such a turn-out of gala equipages had not been witnessed for years. All the ladies were arrayed in the ancient Spanish costume; the

fan and veil with high comb and carnation in the hair in every case replaced the Parisian bonnet and parasol. It was a protest against the foreign dynasty, and was clearly meant as a demonstration of insult. One of the Royal household was equal to the provocation; whether Spaniard or Italian I am not sure, but the latter I think, so subtle was his revenge. He went round to all the houses of ill-fame in the capital that night, and entered into conversation, burnished with duros, with their female occupants. The next evening Madrid was afforded the spectacle in its most fashionable drive of a parade of courtesans, in ancient Spanish costumes, fanning themselves, and smirking at their acquaintances from the vantage of luxurious chariots. It was a scandal, but Madrid grinned, and the patricians of the antediluvian stem confessed themselves beaten.

There was still a lingering fondness for the deposed Isabella among the lower orders. They looked upon her as a good sort, one of the old stock, prayerful, and affable. She was accustomed to enter wayside cabins, and get into homely chat

with the peasants. The Italian woman never did that. Alphonse Daudet's description of Isabella as a stout queen, who by her massive jaws and high complexion resembled a coarse-rinded blood-orange, would not be endorsed by these humble yearners after the bygone. Indeed, they regarded her as one who had been a type of beauty in her time, and was still a type of good-nature, and were forgiving to her peccadilloes, she was so devout. Of course I must not be understood as speaking here of Spanish partisans of the Republican idea. They had no more pity for the creatures tainted with Royalty than the Polynesian for his leprous kinsman—but they were comparatively few.

Great Britain, at that period, was represented by Mr. Austin Layard, and the United States by General Daniel Sickles. The British Envoy was in a dilemma; he did not know how far he would be justified in recognising the newly-proclaimed Republic; if he received visits of ceremonial it would be an unpardonable breach of courtesy not to return them; in short, to use a very graphic locution of the masses, he was waiting to see how the

cat jumped, and cheerfully submitted to a diplomatic catarrh which confined him to his room. I went to visit him, when we had an interesting dialogue on some recently exhumed relics of antiquity and exquisite bits of crockery-ware. Mr. Layard impressed me as more taken up with concerns of Nineveh and Wardour Street than of *la haute politique*. But, as he frankly acknowledged, he was not free to act until he had received his instructions from Downing Street. Though there is no written pact to the effect, the rule is that Russia, Germany, Austria—the Great Powers in short—shall only act in conjunction, and after having exchanged confidential notes, when eventualities arise affecting all their interests, such as this in Madrid; and—another consideration besides—was there really any Government yet? It was only provisional. It could hardly be supposed that any of the Great Powers would refuse to bow to the will of the Spanish people; but what was its will? That was a question that could not be admitted to be definitely settled.

The United States had struck the key-note—had

recognised the infant Republic, while the Prime Minister, Señor Figueras, was waiting for the chorus of acclamation from the "robust voices" of those Great Powers which deliberate before they act. The United States are a fast-trotting buggy; but these Great Powers in this miserable, played-out old Continent are slow coaches. Not that there were not deliberations in the White House before General Sickles was authorized to use his discretionary power in signing the baptismal certificate of this Republic of accident. General Sickles was undoubtedly clever; he had experience in his time as a journalist, an advocate, and a soldier. It was his opinion that Spain had found in the Republic the means of establishing her power and prosperity on a solid basis. During the crisis, he kept his Government informed of what was passing, and to his demand transmitted by cable in the dawn of Wednesday, the 14th of February, an answer was returned within twenty hours, permitting him to exercise his judgment as he thought proper. He imagined that a Federal Republic, on the pattern of that of the United States, with provincial

legislatures in Catalonia, Aragon, Andalusia, and so on, and a National Congress in Madrid, was the panacea for the ills of Spain, and that that would be sufficient to dissolve all antagonisms of race, custom, and feeling, and amalgamate them into one accordant patriotic sentiment. The General was over-hopeful in the estimation of others, who knew Spain as well as he; but he acted rightly according to his views, and ably according to his gifts—only it was to be hoped the General would use his influence to dissuade his Government from offending its friends and brothers of Spain by proposing anew a transaction that would lead to the abandonment of Cuba—an awkward mission with which he was once charged. Surely if a diplomatic representative could quietly talk the influential personages of the nation to which he was accredited into a zeal for the abolition of slavery in Porto Rico, he could quietly talk the influential personages of his own nation into letting Spanish territory alone. A pompous man this American Minister, active, talkative, and on cordial terms with himself. He hobbled about on his cork leg, leaning on the arm

of his handsome Spanish wife, the second. There was a legend in Madrid that the General had lost his limb in a duel about a lady; there had been a question of petticoats in his career once, but it never entered into the minds of those simple Madrileños that a soldier without a breastful of decorations might have been wounded, as he had been, on the battle-field.

The United States were friendly; but France, Republican France, what was she doing? Why did she delay to move? She, at least, ought to have had some fellow-feeling for another Republic without Republicans. The truth was, M. Thiers could not come to any decision without consulting his Council of Ministers. His action was not quite so unfettered as that of President Grant. This was the more to be regretted that Señor Olózaga recognised the Republic of mob acclamation—that of the 4th September, 1870, in Paris—without hesitation. The same compliment was felt by Spaniards to be due to the Republic of accident.

On the 20th of February, Señor Castelar took a course that might give a galvanic shock to the

world of diplomats, but which was worthy of a bold Republican prophet. Since the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet went to the mountain. In plainer words—but has not one an excuse for being figurative when speaking of Señor Castelar?—the Minister for Foreign Affairs determined to take the bull by the horns (pardon this figure for the sake of its aptness in Spain). The representatives of the Great Powers did not call on him; he called on them. His coy advances were met with frigid politeness. A Madrid paper asserted that "an important and friendly conference" had been held between the Minister and Mr. Layard, which, to say the least, was a *suggestio falsi.* Mr. Layard, as an English gentleman, could not but have received his visitor in a friendly manner; but he kept within the strict line of his very delicate duties with a studious discretion. Señor Castelar saw plainly that events had not prepared the way and made straight the path of the new Republic towards recognition. The Great Powers could not be found fault with, if they were slow to admit to the brotherhood of nations a Republic which had