

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF SPAIN.

"CABRERA."

The advance guard of Espartero's army, in Lower Arragon, at the close of the civil war, in 1840, was commanded by General Leon. It consisted of ten battalions of the Royal, and ten battalions of the Provincial Guards, three squadrons of the Royal Guards, a squadron of English Lancers, a regiment of Dragoons, and some batteries of Horse Artillery. This division occupied the advance posts of the army, and was opposed at that time to the celebrated "Carlist Chiefstain Cabrera," surnamed by the Spaniards "El Tigré" (the tiger). How far he merited the cognomen, will be seen in the sequel.

The commencement of the sanguinary contest, which deluged Spain for seven long years with the blood of her own sons! found Cabrera in the cloisters of a convent. An incident occurred, however, which brought this young man out to take a most prominent and tragical part in the drama then being enacted in his unfortunate country.

Mina (who has not read of this name in the already blood-stained annals of Spain) was the representative of his sovereign (Isabel II.), as "virey" (viceroys), in the principality of Catalonia, at the time when political opinions began to divide men, generally, throughout the peninsula, as to the rights and merits of the two claimants to the vacant throne of the deceased Ferdinand.

With the truly impassioned character of the Spaniard, these opinions speedily caused a general breach in the social system of this unhappy kingdom. Former friendships and the closest ties were immediately severed; the bosom-friend became the most inveterate enemy. The father's dagger was oftentimes raised against the favorite son of other and happier days; and, alas! brother contended against brother in the deadly struggle. In no other province, perhaps, had this feature of anarchy and demoralization exhibited itself to so fearful an extent. The measures adopted by the viceroys were in keeping with the times, and presented a reign of terror, similar to the fearful days of the Revolution in France.

It was enough to be suspected, and then led to a military execution: there was no safeguard. Neither age nor sex could save the unfortunate victims; amongst the latter (alas! unhappy day for Spain), was the mother of the cloistered monk, the future renowned Carlist leader, the scourge of the party opposed to him. The young monk received the sad tidings of his parent's death with tearless eye but quivering lip. One second, one shock, had totally changed the man. Cabrera was a monk no more,—Cabrera had vowed revenge. And fearfully, most fearfully, did he carry into execution his firm resolve. From that moment he left his quiet and holy calling, to head a "partida" (small party), in favour of Don Carlos. He was successful. In every encounter he proved a skillful and undaunted leader. At last he became renowned, and feared—the terror of his enemies. At the time mentioned in the commencement of this sketch, he was Commander-in-Chief of the Carlist Army in Arragon and Catalonia.

I was in the division of the Queen's army, already mentioned, when it entered the province of Lower Arragon—the stronghold of this captain. Every town and every village was disputed by his troops; but the overwhelming force brought against them generally decided, and, in

a very short time, these encounters in our favour. It was on a fine winter's night, the moon shining brilliantly, and the atmosphere clear and cold, that we received orders, and left our bivouacs, to surprise a somewhat important town a few hours' march from us. This place was a favourite haunt of the Carlist chiefstain, and as it was reported that he, or some of his party, were in the then occupation of it, Leon had determined to push on, and take them by surprise, if possible. It was about one o'clock in the morning when we approached the town. Everything appeared quiet and in apparent security, and the usual precaution of advance picquets had been neglected. We halted about four or five acres from it, on the high road, leading, apparently, to the main gate. The neighbourhood was well covered with the olive and the vine, and, in the night, difficult to manœuvre on, as it proved, for without a knowledge of the locality, it required a great deal of time to take up the necessary positions, to cut off the garrison in case of a sally. After all had been reported ready, Leon, with a battalion and some artillery, advanced to the main gate, which, to our astonishment, was open; and, after receiving a shot from a solitary sentry, who bolted off, we entered without firing, and the whole division eventually took up its quarters in the neat, but dilapidated and open town. The garrison, having been apprized of our advance, had, after having quietly supped and shaken hands with their friends, betaken themselves to the opposite side of a small but deep river that ran on one side of it, leaving us in the quiet possession of good beds and plenty of good wine. I took up my quarters in the house of a very strange-looking old fellow, a blunt Arragonese (characteristic of his province), being a man far past the meridian of life, short, square-shouldered, long-armed, and bow-legged, but by no means deformed, and exhibiting extraordinary strength in his nether man. He was wrapped up, or rather swaddled like a mummy, in the everlasting large cloak commonly worn by all Spaniards, of dirty brown-coloured cloth, exhibiting evident proofs of the cleanliness of its wearer. From the top of this peeped a pair of black eyes very close together, and apparently prevented from uniting by the intervention of a very thin and red member, very like the well-cut comb of a cock, and commonly veiled the nose in other folk. Under this dangled an immense black moustache, that formed, together with the beard on the chin, a sort of coarse black circle, the centre of which was a volcano, emitting perpetual smoke: the whole surmounted by a black mop, frizzled and twisted as nature and negligence had left it. "Mi patron" (mine host) welcomed me, with the "*bien venido*" (welcome) in a very gruff voice, and with a visible inclination to growl out something else with the same intonation. And having disengaged one arm, motioned me to a chair near a fire-place that, from appearances, explained the reasons for the use of the cloak. I certainly felt very cold, wretched, and uncomfortable. But the arrival of my servant, soon put an end to my miseries; and whom, by the bye, I must take the liberty of introducing to the reader; for his eccentricities were numerous, and he was a well-known character in the division.

Nanouzi had been produced in the warm and sunny regions of Italy; had been a small "negociante" [merchant] in the town of Modena; his speculative genius and propensities barely dragging him out of the class of Lazzaroni. He was a free thinker and actor, and had, in his more palmy days, been a conspicuous member of

the secret political association, well known as the Carbonari in Europe. It had many adherents all over the continent, and numbered among its members many well-known and distinguished names. In no country had its effects been so severely felt as in the land of Dante and Nanonzi. Reader, like many a better man, after having run the gauntlet through bankruptcy, politics, and macaroni—poor Nanouzi had been compelled to leave his country for his country's good, and a short interval found him in Spain, fighting in the ranks of liberty and the Queen. This is the outline of his history, and a better creature never lived. Devoted to my interests and attached to my person, he had become my factotum. On his entrance into the room where I was seated, looking the picture of misery and wretchedness, he glanced his quick eyes round the scantily furnished and gloomy apartment, with a disdainful and disappointed air, and with a most quizzical face, narrowly examined our comical-looking "patron" [host]. I could scarcely keep my gravity. His salutation, however, completely upset me, and I enjoyed the scene, and laughed most heartily. "Hollo," quoth Nanonzi, "Signor Patron, if your nose does not tell mentiras [lies], we are in a good wine country, and you must have an excellent cellar. Madre de Dios," continued he, "mi capitán I see is freezing under your open roof, and your chimney looks like a half-finished cigarillo that you are reserving for another day. Come, come, stir yourself, or else I will call in la compania [the troop], and I warrant you will very soon see more fire than you have ever been rationed with since you were a niño [child]. Signor Capitán, I will go down into this Caballero's cellar, and see what quantity and quality of wine he has, and if he has more than he ought to have, why, Signor, to da la compania [the whole troop] are very cold, and it will soon warm them." "Santa Virgin," rejoined the patron, "Signor Capitán, que demonio es este? [Holy Virgin, Sir Captain, who the devil is this?] Order por dios [all you like] toda la casa esta a su disposition [the whole house is at your disposal], fire, wood, wine, ay, and comestibles [eatables]. Pero, por la morde Daos, no deja V. M. entrar toda la compania" [but for God's sake don't let the whole troop enter].

Nanouzi had gained his point, and a few seconds more saw him and our worthy host up to their elbows in wood and fire, pots and pans, flaggons of wine, and the comestibles (eatables). As the blazing fire ascended up the chimney, crackling and emitting a thousand joyous-looking little sparks, my feelings began to melt, and I felt more kindly towards our host, notwithstanding his cold reception of me; for, after all the sufferings these poor people had to undergo, being compelled to receive alternately both parties under their roofs, "malgré leur volonté," it is not strange that he received me with coldness and mistrust. Having assured my "patron" how gratefully I felt for his hospitality and generosity (thanks to Nanouzi, thought I to myself), he in turn actually began to exhibit more amiability and affability. He took a seat near me, unwilling that so good a fire should be monopolized by "un extranjero" (stranger), and his servant, busy-ing himself in preparing a rather late "cena" (supper) for his master. He began by the usual mode of approaching intimacy, by producing a small bundle of paper cigars, "cigarillos," and presenting one end, added "V. M. gusta?" (Would you like some?) I shocked him by taking at least a dozen, never having the patience to smoke one of these little, tiny tobacco enve-