

European Intelligence

BILBOA, MARCH 28.

On the road from Vittoria to Durango, I had frequent opportunities of witnessing the conduct of several small parties of Carlists, particularly on one of the highest mountains in Spain about 30 miles from Vittoria. Descending a steep zig-zag road I was greeted at a short and dangerous pass, by having presented against me a musket, with the very agreeable salutation of "Alto." It was not requisite to repeat the command.—The Commander stepped forward, demanded whence I came, where I was going, my country, the news on the road, and examining my passport, he permitted me to proceed.—Having been kindly treated, I offered him some money, which he refused; saying that strict injunctions had been issued against it—that he was well paid and clothed, and that he desired no recompense from any other person than his King. Before I departed, a serjeant—a fine handsome fellow, in military clothing, having a foraging cap marked C. V., approached me, at the head of about thirty men. I entered into conversation with him; he was a man of much intelligence, an old soldier who had fought in the war of independence, and who had received many wounds. He spoke in raptures of Don Carlos, and said he was determined either to conquer or die for the cause he had adopted. I mentioned to him that I was afraid that I should meet with several brigands before I left the mountains, and begged him to point out the most dangerous spots. He felt pleased with the confidence reposed, and actually gave me an escort of seven men to protect me until I reached the next village. Thus on the high road, in open day, I marched under a Carlist guard, feeling more secure than I had done at any one period since I left St. Sebastian. We were frequently met by single armed men, who eyed me not as a friend, but who paid great respect to my companions. The Carlists were well dressed, plenty of ammunition, with happy looks, and not at all dissatisfied with their hardy life. From that time I commenced to descend the mountains, until my arrival at the village at its foot—about an hour and a half—I met upwards of 100 men, all in good spirits. Having passed through Durango, where the Queen has a garrison of 150 men; I reached this city on the evening of the 26th, without meeting with a single traveller who had equal courage to myself, to pass from town to town, without a military escort of some 300 or 400 men. As an Englishman, I run little or no danger from any but brigands: with the Spaniards it is widely different. If known to belong to any of the cities in the province, and to profess Christian opinions they are detained as hostages; not known they are conducted into the mountains, and guarded until they are able to produce testimonials of their having abstained from taking any part in the existing troubles.

I found Bilboa in a state of panic. The town is surrounded by the Carlists, who continually present themselves on the heights and sometimes on the bridge leading into the city. Along the river as far as Portu-Galette, the faction are in great force, on

both banks; on the right they have 600, and the left 800 men commanded by Castor.—They attempted a few days since, to make themselves masters of Portu-Galette, garrisoned only by 200 men, but owing to its strong position, being defended by the sea and river, and after experiencing some loss, they were compelled to retreat. About the same time, however, they succeeded in capturing a small coaster with 500 pair of shoes, much military clothing, and some money.—Great blame is attributable, so I am informed to General Espartero, who without any military knowledge, but great pretensions, acts constantly on his own weak judgment in direct opposition to the wisest and most prudent councils. The barge laden with the baggage I have just described, had been long ready to proceed by sea, to St. Sebastian, during the whole of which time there were upwards of 3,000 men in Bilboa.—Two days after the marching of this force into Navarre, Espartero ordered the barge to sail down the river escorted by only 30 men, and as was anticipated, they were surprised, the baggage taken, several of the men killed, and the remainder taken prisoners. The short-sighted General became enraged, he threatened vengeance on the poor old women in the villages near the seat of action, and actually issued an order, forbidding the peasantry from selling their vegetables in Bilboa, and delivered up a whole village, composed of six miserable smoke-dried huts, to the pillage of a courageous band, who went to frighten the aged, and infants; all the able-bodied men had long been enrolled among the Carlists. Not content with these magnanimous and heroic acts, he ordered all the inhabitants of a Franciscan monastery, to be marched into Bilboa, to the number of forty-four, between files of soldiers, and to be lodged in one of the convents of the city. Had Espartero taken this resolution of declaring war against the monks after mature deliberation, and had he been prepared to continue the system it might have had a beneficial effect. His present conduct on the contrary, has caused him many enemies—it is an act of revenge to cover the want of capacity—it is an affront offered to the community, and not to individuals convicted of treasonable practices. I feel certain that Spain can never prosper under the dominion of the priestcraft, but I do not think the better plan of remedying the evil, is to escort its ministers wholesale through the streets, between files of soldiers, holding them up to the ridicule of the profane and lawless miscreants. I have before observed, I felt certain that the affairs of Spain, can never be arranged without a revolution—the attacking of the Church by a military commander, is the commencement of that dreadful event. Disorganization and disorder will now follow with speed on the heels of each other, until the whole country becomes a prey to sanguinary and intriguing adventurers. It is to be hoped that Espartero will soon be removed from his command in Biscay. He is constantly forwarding to Madrid, despatches filled with false and exaggerated report. At one time he has driven all the Carlists into the sea—at another, a factious character is not to be found in the provinces—and latterly he had

the effrontery to state, that the enemy delivered up their arms by hundreds, when the fact was, that only seven men presented themselves for that purpose within the last three months. Indeed so alarmed have the inhabitants of the provinces become, from these false representations, which has induced the Government to withdraw nearly all the troops, leaving only about 2,000 in Biscay, and in Bilboa 300, that a deputation of the principal proprietors and merchants have gone to Madrid to lay the real state of the province before the Queen. The English merchants have also taken the alarm, and feel anxious for the arrival of the Nimrod, now at Passage. The French merchants have for their protection a small six-gun schooner. I think the English have little reason to fear injury from any party—they wear the national cockade, hitherto greatly respected, and they have orders to refuse payment of any contributions to any party except by force, and then under protest. A great noise was made a short time since at a few shots which were fired by the Carlists at a French Brig of war, who returned the salute. I am told it was a little bravado of the victorious party who had just ransacked the barge.

The opinion of the inhabitants of Bilboa, like that of Vittoria, is divided into two parties. The enlightened and principal merchants are decidedly liberal—the middling class, petty shopkeepers, and lower orders, Carlists—in numbers, the latter party have a large majority. The merchants seem to care but little for their privileges, provided the whole nation be placed on the same footing. Although at present, they have many advantages, yet they have many drawbacks, particularly in colonial produce, which they are obliged to procure from Santander, the law prohibiting all American productions from entering the port of Bilboa. The trade with England and its colonies, seems to have been latterly on the decline, and to have fallen principally into the hands of the Messrs. Barrow, wealthy and highly respectable merchants. The merchants now ship their stock-fish from Norway, instead of Newfoundland; and their heavy linens from Prussia. I am however, assured, that with little management this port might be rendered, in a mercantile point of view, of great moment to Great Britain. I saw little or no trade of any sort now carrying on. There are at present only two coasting vessels in the basin.—the one unloading stock-fish, the other loading grain. I have just been informed that an English brig has arrived in the river, laden with British produce.—*Correspondent of the Morning Herald.*

TRADES' UNIONS.

EXETER, April 9.—The approaching trial of the Unionists excites considerable sensation. The excitement is not merely confined to the labouring classes, but pervades every grade of society, on account of the very imposing and alarming attitude which the Unionists have taken. Troops are on their way from Plymouth, and the civil authorities are taking every precaution to prevent any outbreaks or violence in the event of an unpopular verdict being returned. There are 16 persons to be tried, and the charge is