

CHAPTER XII.

Cruelty a predominant feature in Spanish history; exemplified by a brief view of the conduct of Spain in Europe, and by the horrors committed, by her authorities, in Mexico and South America, since the year 1810—Reflections.

THE deeds of cruelty which we have related in the course of our Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, may startle some of our readers, and incline them to doubt the correctness of our statements. We therefore deem it necessary to state, that in almost every instance which we have noticed of the atrocities perpetrated by the royalists, we have derived our information from the records of facts, either acknowledged or never denied by the Spanish government, and have generally obtained it from Spanish official documents, published in Spanish America, and in the Madrid Gazette. In the early years of the present revolutions in Spanish America, the viceroys, captains-general, and nearly all the royal officers, appear to have

emulated each other in defaming the American character, and in boasting of the inhuman deeds they had performed. They appear to have been regardless of the opinions of the civilized world, and exulting in that which should have caused the deepest shame, have placed on record the bloody deeds performed by their orders. But while they have thus set at defiance the judgment of the present generation, they have created a tribunal in the posterity of Spanish America, which will pass upon them a severe but righteous condemnation.

An inquiry into the causes which have operated to distinguish Spain among the nations of Europe for inhumanity, may deserve the attention of the future philosopher and statesman. The chivalrous exploits of the ancient Castilians, the generosity and nobleness which characterized the Spaniard of the olden time, have been the theme of admiration for many centuries; but an attentive examination of their history will convince us, that even in the era of their brightest glory, *cruelty* was a prominent trait in their character. In vain have they styled themselves the most Christian nation on earth—in vain have they called themselves the favoured people of God—in vain have they crowded their cities, towns, and villages, with

temples dedicated to religion, and spread legions of priests over their territories—in vain do they perpetually ring in our ears their pre-eminent piety, when all these advantages have been insufficient to check their propensities to the odious vice of cruelty, which, even in Savages and Pagans, excites our abhorrence and reprobation. Does this arise from physical causes, or does it originate in that vindictive and relentless spirit which has ever characterized ecclesiastical despotism, whether existing among Christians or Pagans?

In all the wars on the European continent in which Spain has taken a part, her officers and soldiers have been distinguished for their ferocity and cruelty, but more particularly in those of the reign of Philip III. It was in that monarch's reign, that Spain prosecuted a war in the Netherlands, accompanied by such scenes of licentiousness and barbarity, as cause her name, even to this day, to be execrated by the Dutch people; and it was during his reign, about the year 1609, that unparalleled deeds of horror were committed, in the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. These people had lived in the country eight hundred years, and were distinguished from the Spaniards by their language, religion, character, and manners. After a series

of bloody wars, the Spaniards at length overcame and reduced them to a state of vassalage, when the greater part of them submitted to receive Christian baptism. They were an industrious and frugal race; and while the Spanish villages all over Castile and Andalusia were falling into decay, those of the Moors increased and flourished. In consequence of this, their numbers rapidly augmented; and the Spaniards entertained fears, that if some remedy was not speedily applied, the Moors might regain their former ascendancy. The two schemes presented to the Christian cabinet of Philip III. were, *to put the whole of them to the sword, or to transport them to foreign parts.* There were numerous advocates for the indiscriminate slaughter of these unfortunate people; but it was apprehended that such a deed would fill all Europe with indignation, and therefore it was resolved to expel the Moors from the kingdom.

Among the ecclesiastics of those days, who bore a distinguished part in this act of violence and injustice, was *Don Juan de Ribera*, patriarch of Antioch and archbishop of Valentia, an aged prelate, highly venerated for his *piety* and learning, and eulogized by Spanish and Italian historians as one of the brightest ornaments that ever adorned the Christian church. The me-

memorial addressed to the king, on this occasion, by that so much lauded patriarch, breathes in every line the darkest spirit of fanaticism, and is the most outrageous violation of the principles of humanity and Christianity that was ever penned. According to the bishop's doctrine, even the Moors who had been baptized and converted to Christianity, were still to be considered as "dangerous heretics." He carried his intolerance and blasphemy to such an extravagant length, as to say in his memorial, "In baptizing the Moresco children, therefore, our consciences are greatly disturbed with the apprehension that we are guilty of violating the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has prohibited the giving of holy things to dogs, and the casting of pearls before swine."

It was finally determined by Philip, with the advice of all his counsellors spiritual and temporal, that the Moors were to be considered as obstinate heretics, and apostates from the faith, whom the king, if he thought fit, might justly punish with *death*; that therefore there could be no room to doubt the lawfulness of the milder punishment of *banishment*: and, accordingly, it was resolved that they should be immediately expelled the kingdom.

The manner in which this unfeeling sen-

tence was carried into execution, is calculated to make the heart freeze with horror: we shall content ourselves with exhibiting a brief outline of the enormities which ensued.

By the edict of expulsion, all the men, women, and children, were commanded, under pain of death, to be ready, within *three days*, to repair to the sea-ports for embarkation. All their effects were confiscated; and death was pronounced against those who should attempt to conceal any part thereof. The numbers that were massacred on their route to the coast, and that perished on their voyage to Barbary, have been variously represented by different historians, not one of whom makes the total less than *one hundred thousand* men, women, and children. They were barbarously murdered at sea, by the officers and crews of the ships which they had freighted. There are instances recorded of inhuman cruelties exercised on this injured and defenceless people, surpassing in atrocity whatever is related in sacred or profane history. Men were butchered in presence of their wives and children, and the latter afterwards thrown alive into the sea. Some of the females, on account of their beauty, were preserved alive for a short time, to glut the brutal lust of the murderers of their husbands

or brothers, and then either slaughtered or committed to the waves. Such were the deeds of horror which were revealed, upon the trials to which some of these inhuman barbarians were brought, in consequence of their quarrels concerning the division of the spoil.

The fate of those who reached the coast of Barbary was not less deplorable. They were furiously attacked by the Bedouin Arabs, a wild banditti, who subsist by plunder. Of six thousand Moors, who set out together from Conastal, a town in the neighbourhood of Oran, with an intention of going to Algiers, only one person survived to reach that place.

Had these unfortunate people been exterminated by the sword, as was at first proposed, it would have been an act of mercy, compared with the fate to which they were actually doomed; but their sufferings, so far from exciting commiseration in the authors of their calamities, were made a subject of exultation; and the act was pronounced by the Catholic clergy to be acceptable in the sight of God, and a signal instance of divine judgment against heresy.

In some parts of Spain, where the Moors either resisted the order for expulsion, or could not comply with it under the peremptory terms prescribed, they were butchered in the most

horrible manner. No favour was shewn to age or sex; while rolling in the dust, imploring mercy of their savage conquerors, they were indiscriminately slain. Some had sheltered themselves among the woods and rocks; but Philip fixed a price upon their heads, and soldiers were sent to hunt them as beasts of prey. Scarcely an individual escaped. Those who were taken alive in the mountains of Valentia, were conducted to the city; and, after suffering every species of mockery and insult, were put to death by excruciating tortures. Such of our readers as wish to examine the details of these dreadful transactions, are referred to Watson's History of the Reign of Philip III. and to contemporary historians.

A government that could sanction such atrocities, and a people who could rejoice in the barbarous spectacles of an *auto de fe*, and in the other horrors of the tribunal of the Inquisition, were of course prepared for the perpetration of all those inhuman acts which have taken place in the New World since the epoch of its discovery, and more especially of those enormities which have occurred during the present revolution in Spanish America, which it has become our duty to notice in the present chapter.

We shall first recapitulate the cruelties that have been exercised in Mexico. The proclamations and decrees of viceroy Venegas outrage every principle of humanity and civilized warfare; and his despatches to the court of Madrid, which have been published in the Gazette of that city, contain little else than an account of the number of insurgents he has slain in battle, or *murdered after he had taken them prisoners*. Commandant *Revollo*, in his official despatch to the viceroy, *recommends the promotion of a serjeant, for having slain his nephew among the insurgents*. Commandant *Bustamante* recommends in like manner *a dragoon, for having killed his kneeling brother*. General *Truxillo* boasts of *having murdered the bearers of a flag of truce*. General *Calleja*, on several occasions, writes in the most exulting style, of *the thousands he had butchered, while on their knees imploring his mercy*. In the action of Zamora, the royal commander states, that *all the prisoners were deliberately despatched*. General *Cruz*, in almost every despatch to the viceroy, boasts of *the number of prisoners he had shot, and of the towns and villages he had reduced to ashes*. Captain *Blanco* says, that *his troops, eager for blood, destroyed persons of every age and sex, until no more victims could be found*. Don

Caetano Quintero, in his despatch of the 29th of August, 1811, says, that in the attack of Amoladeras, which continued two hours, *no quarter was given*. Commandant *Villaescusa* describes the manner in which *he entrapped the bearer of a flag of truce, and subsequently murdered him*. General *Calleja* issues proclamations and edicts of the most sanguinary nature, and carries into execution all his threats. The burning of towns, the butchery of prisoners, and the annihilation of a defenceless population, are the perpetual themes of this monster, in his official despatches. Yet, as we have before stated, for these eminent proofs of his loyalty to his beloved monarch, he was promoted to the rank of mariscal de campo, made viceroy of Mexico, decorated with the cross of Charles III. and was last year nominated to the command of that expedition which was intended for new scenes of butchery in America, but which the influence of justice and regeneration has suppressed.

It must be understood, that the preceding outline of atrocities committed in Mexico by the royalists, is only a very small part of the tragic scenes already brought to light: they are merely a part of those which have been confessed in public documents even by the royal-

ists, and which we have casually met with, in various writers, prior to the year 1814.

While we were in Mexico, we carefully examined the official papers, respecting the cruelties referred to in the work of William Walton, Esq. published in London in 1814, entitled "An Exposé of the Dissensions of Spanish America;" and we found that they corresponded with Mr. Walton's statements. But when we reflect on the vast number of dreadful acts which were related to us by individuals who were witnesses of the transactions, and of which not the least account has yet been published, we feel justified in asserting, that not one-eighth of the long catalogue of cruelties committed by the royalists in Mexico, has yet been exhibited to public notice.

We perused a manuscript History of the Mexican Revolution up to 1816, written by a distinguished Creole (whose name honour and prudence forbid us to disclose), which contained a minute detail of the royal massacres and devastations. The enormities that were there related have no parallel on the page of history. The writer of that manuscript, trembling for his life in case such a document should fall into the hands of the royalists, committed it to the flames: fortunate was it for him that he did so;

for, a few days afterwards, he was under the necessity of delivering up his person to the royalists. He still lives, and we hope will yet have an opportunity of exhibiting to the world a faithful history of the revolution; for, until such a work shall appear, civilized nations will not be able to form a complete opinion of the sufferings which the Mexican people have experienced, during their struggle for freedom.

Having thus noticed the bloody scenes acted by Spanish policy in Mexico, let us take a cursory view of those which have taken place in other parts of Spanish America.

Venezuela, New Grenada, and Quito, at present constituting the republic of Colombia, have been the theatres of greater horrors, if possible, than those which have abounded in Mexico. The reader, overcome with disgust, would turn from the page that contained the recital of but a thousandth part of the executions which have taken place at *Carthagena, Mompos, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Popayan, Quito, Caracas, Barcelona, Cumana, La Guayra, Puerto Cavello, Valencia*, and other cities of those countries. Of the extent of those barbarities, some idea may be formed, when we state, that, *within the last nine years*, it appears, from Spanish official documents, that there have

been sacrificed in cold blood, by hanging, shooting, and other modes of execution, eighty thousand prisoners, in those three provinces. We must bear in mind, that in these eighty thousand victims are not included many thousand others who were put to death by a brutal soldiery, whenever they visited a village, the sentiments of whose inhabitants they suspected to be favourable to the insurgents. How many inoffensive men, women, and children, have been slaughtered, of whose fate no further notice has been taken, in the official despatches of the royal commanders, than in the following words: "The town or pueblo of ———, with all its inhabitants, has disappeared from the face of the earth!!!"

In June, 1816, the Spanish General Morillo entered the city of Santa Fé de Bogotá, then called the capital of New Grenada. In one of his despatches from thence, which was intercepted in its passage to Spain, he boldly describes the measures which he had pursued, in the following words: "*Every person, of either sex, capable of reading or writing, were treated as rebels.*" "*By thus cutting off all who could read or write, he hoped effectually to arrest the spirit of revolution.*" The authenticity of such an extraordinary official communication might

admit of some doubt, if the monster who penned it had not in reality executed the savage deeds therein announced. All persons in Santa Fé and in Carthagena, who had been distinguished by their learning, or eminence in science, or who had held stations in the provincial administrations, and in the congress, with their *wives and daughters*, were thrown into loathsome dungeons. Six hundred of them were hanged or shot, and their bodies exhibited on gibbets. All the *females* who were accomplished in literature, of which there were many, suffered the same fate. The learned and benevolent Mutis, of whom Humboldt has spoken in terms of admiration, Lozano and Caldos, who were his disciples in philosophy, a distinguished chemist, and several other men of science, who had not borne arms, nor held any public trust, were put to death by order of Morillo. Some of the females were indebted for the preservation of their lives merely to the fatigue of the executioners: these women were afterwards exiled. Nearly the whole population of Santa Fé supplicated Morillo to spare the life of the venerable Mutis; but the savage was inexorable, openly avowing, *that learned Creoles were more dangerous enemies than the insurgents in arms.* Yet, after having

committed such acts of vindictive cruelty; "this Spanish apostle of pacification—this practical and preventative philanthropist—this monster of inhumanity—this pillar of the Spanish constitution"—this very same Morillo, issues a proclamation from his head-quarters in Caracas, the 12th of June last, addressed to the emigrants from Costa Firme, in which, after reminding them of his *incessant efforts* for the *pacification* of that country, since his arrival in 1815, he assures them that his *sole object has been*, and continues to be, that of *rendering them happy!* In apprizing them of his determination to return to his native country, he expresses his ardent desire, that, before his departure, he may be enabled to give them a *fraternal embrace*; and, for that purpose, conjures them earnestly to hasten their arrival at Venezuela, that he may not be deprived of that great satisfaction, it being the only consolation remaining to him, on the eve of this *cruel separation!*

To what emigrants, it may be asked, can this pacific overture be addressed? Few are they indeed, unless those be included, "who, under the *special passport* of Morillo, have emigrated to another world, but whose spirits are heard around their tombs.

We are still more astonished in beholding

this same Don Pablo Morillo, who for five years has lavished upon the people of the Costa Firme the grossest epithets and execrations, suddenly addressing, for the first time, on the 17th of the same month, a letter to the Congress of Colombia, on the subject of his proclamation, and styling them, with the most consummate hypocrisy and adulation, "Their *High Mightinesses*, the Congress assembled at Guayana." In this letter, after beginning with "*High and Mighty Lords*," he dares to insult them by advancing the gross falsehood, that the present constitution of Spain was adopted by the universal suffrage of the *representatives of both hemispheres*; and informs them, that he had received "positive orders, from the *constitutional monarch of the Spains*, to enter into a just and generous accommodation, which shall re-unite all the family, in order to enjoy the advantages of their political regeneration, and to put an end to the fatal effects of a division, generated by a desire to be free from oppression, that, by a false calculation, had been considered peculiar to those countries, notwithstanding that it had been transcendental to all the empire."

The brief view we have taken of the murders of unfortunate Creoles, in the three provinces before mentioned, we are well convinced, em-