



EMILIO CASTELAR

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EMILIO CASTELAR, Spanish statesman, orator, and author, was born at Cadiz, Spain, Sept. 8, 1832, and died at San Pedro, Murcia, May 25, 1899. While still young, he made several ventures in literature, and at the age of twenty-four became Professor of History and Philosophy in the University of Madrid, and delivered lectures which attracted attention. Eight years later, however, he was deprived of his professorship on account of his editorial association with a radical newspaper ("La Democracia") which opposed the party in power and advocated Republican ideas. In 1866, not only was the newspaper suppressed, but he himself was sentenced to death, and had to remain in exile until the flight of Isabella II enabled him, in 1868, to return to Madrid and resume his professorship. Elected to the Cortes in the following year, he took a memorable part in debate, and, in the provisional republic which succeeded the short-lived monarchy of Amadeus, he became minister of foreign affairs, and president of the executive. Constrained to resign his office, in 1874, he remained for many years leader of the Moderate Republicans, and universally acknowledged the greatest of Spanish orators; but in 1893 he announced his retirement from politics, expressing a regret that he had not supported the limited monarchy of 1869. His chief writings embrace a "Life of Columbus," and a work entitled "Old Rome and New Italy."

A PLEA FOR REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS

IN THE SPANISH ASSEMBLY, DECEMBER 18, 1869

BEFORE replying to Minister Sagasta's speech of last Saturday, I desire to say that my public life forbids me to defend myself against personal attacks such as the gentleman seems to delight in. The Minister of Government was extremely kind in speaking of my address as a brilliant one and extremely severe when he declared that it was wanting in truth. Neither criticism was just. Gentlemen, I would not have to defend my own speeches if they had the resplendency and the beauty attributed to them by Mr. Sagasta. I would be content to let them

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shine, confident, with the most eloquent and greatest of ancient philosophers, that "Beauty is the resplendency of Truth." After all, if there is any grand quality in this Assembly it is eloquence, the expressing of grand sentiments and sublime ideas in fervent language. I have heard such speeches come from every side of the Assembly and I would like to hear one, in the language of moderation, from the government. Discussions carried on in that manner, with eloquence and good judgment, give us hope for the future, for the laws of history do not permit a dictatorship to fasten itself upon a people whose faces are lighted by the fires of eloquence—a sure sign of grand apostolic work in social life.

I have said this, not being able to proceed without repelling a calumnious imputation directed against me by the Minister of Government. To a question of Mr. Oria relative to an attack on property, the gentleman replied that it was the work of the Federalists. In what article, in what proclamation, in what programme, in what bulletin, in what periodical, in what speech of a Federalist has the gentleman discovered that we attack property? Against the robbers are the courts and the judges, and it is an imposition on the Assembly and a calumny on our social conditions to charge us with such crimes and to seek to spatter this minority with the mud that bespatters all of you. This is not just.

Now, I must answer with calmness another slanderous imputation. The Minister of Government says that the Federal Republican party desired the dismemberment, the dissolution, the breaking up of this country. A party that aspires to a European confederation, a party that desires to see the abominable word "war" abolished, a party that de-

sires to unite disunited people cannot seek the dismemberment of a country bound together by tradition and law. We desire that from Barcelona to Lisbon, from Irun to Cadiz, there shall be but one flag—a flag, however, under whose folds the citizen may have freedom, the municipality autonomy, and the province rights that belong to the whole country.

The accusation of the gentlemen reminds me of the one concerning decentralization made by the Moderate party against the Progressive party, and the claim of the Moderates that with decentralization national unity was impossible. Notwithstanding this claim, it is generally believed to-day that people who suffer most in their independence have a centralized government, because it is enough to aim a blow at their head, like the blow aimed by the allied powers in Paris in 1815. The belief is general that those nations that have great internal dissensions are centralized nations, because they have an apoplectic head on a weak, stiff body. And I say that, as centralization is believed in to-day, federation will be to-morrow—a federation the belief in which will result sooner or later in the organization of the United States of Spain within the United States of Europe.

Mr. Sagasta began to defend the dictatorship, and in defending it he drew an awful picture of our social condition, talking of crimes and criminals, and telling you that our education in the past was very bad, and that the corruption of to-day is very great. And what have the Republicans to see from that? For three centuries, yes, more than three centuries, our Church has been as an enemy to the human conscience. For many centuries it has been inimical to the national will. Consequently, if there is anything very bad

or vicious here to-day, it is owing to institutions with which we have nothing to do. And more, this evil, this viciousness, owe their existence to a lack of respect among the people for the law. And this lack of respect for the law is born of the systematic abuse of power by our arbitrary government. Judges nominated by a party and appointed to revise the electoral lists; schools, so-called, for filling convents and military barracks; the jury outlawed; public life closed to the Democracy; political corruption extending from above down in all directions—this is the product, and these the products, of the sore and wounded people painted by Mr. Sagasta; people who are the natural offspring of a long heredity of crime and error. It is impossible to cure the people if the system is not changed. . . .

Well, deputies, what form of government has come to Spain since the September revolution? The republican form has come and is still here. It so happens that you have not been able yet to implant monarchical institutions in its place. After having been fifteen days in power you declared yourselves for the monarchy. Did the monarchy come? After the elections you declared yourselves monarchists and us outlaws. Did you create the monarchy in the primaries? When the Assembly convened, the monarchy was proposed; there we have had great battles. Has the monarchy been established? The Conservatives, although they have not said so, have, I believe, agreed upon a candidate; the Radicals, more loquacious, have told us theirs; but have you, separated or united, produced a monarchy?

The Conservatives have a candidate who really represents the latest privilege granted the middle classes. Why is it that they do not bring him here? Because they know

that this is a democratic monarchy, based, as it is supposably, on universal suffrage, and because the candidate has not, never had, and never will have, the votes, the indorsement, the backing of the people. And you? You want a monarchy to keep up appearances, a monarchy in order that Europe may say, "See how prudent, how God-fearing, how wise, how intelligent are the Spaniards; they have a disguised republic!" After a provisional government and a provisional regency you want a provisional monarchy also. You do not expect or want to be strong in the right, in liberty, in the will of the people or in national sovereignty. All you want is a king who shall represent the predominance and the egotism of a party. You ought to know that as the candidate of the Conservatives cannot come here without the consent of the people your candidate cannot come without the consent of the Conservatives. Do you believe that your candidate will last if all the Conservative forces do not support him? Notwithstanding all that the Conservatives have declared to their representatives here, not one of them has said that he renounces his dynastic faith. Therefore, deputies, you cannot establish the monarchy.

On Saturday I pictured to you, in colors more or less vivid, the prestige which monarchical institutions have enjoyed in our country, and for this the Minister of State upbraided me without understanding my arguments. I ask you to concentrate your attention for a moment upon the parallel which I am going to present and which may be called a summary of this speech. I said the other afternoon, that to establish monarchical institutions it was necessary to possess monarchical faith and sentiment. One must have the poetry and the traditions of mon-

archy. I said this because I know that, although the Assembly and the official authorities can make laws, they cannot decree ideas or sentiments, those real and solid foundations of institutions. Formerly, in other times, kings were representative of the national dignity, and now from those same benches we have heard that they sold their native soil to a foreigner and even prostrated themselves at his feet, the people in the meantime answering the enemy with the second of May and the siege of Saragossa. Formerly poetry, addressing the throne, exclaimed:

"Oh! what a profound abyss
Of iniquity and malice
The mighty of the world
Have made of your justice!"

Formerly art sketched the apotheosis of Charles V. with Titian's brush, or the ladies-in-waiting of Philip VI. with the brush of Velasquez; now it sketches the image of the communists, of the victims of Charles V., or the ship in which the Puritans took the republic to the bosom of virgin America. Formerly, the gala days of the people were the birthdays of kings and the anniversaries of the beginning of their reigns. Now, the great days of celebration are the tenth of August, the thirtieth of July, the twenty-fourth of February, and the twenty-ninth of September, days marking the expulsion of kings. Formerly, when a navigator landed in America, or an explorer went into the interior of a new country, the purest piece of gold, the largest pearl, the clearest diamond was reserved for the king. Now, your Minister of the Treasury claims from the king even the clasp which holds the royal

mantle about his shoulders. I will not continue this parallel, as the Chamber clearly sees the application.

What does this mean? What does it signify? If the throne has fallen, if the throne is broken, if the throne is dishonored, if the throne cannot be restored, Conservatives, Unionists, Progressists, Democrats, repeat with the poet:

"Mankind, weep;
All of you laid your hands on him."

As there is no possibility of establishing the monarchy, as no candidate acceptable to all can be found, it is necessary, it is indispensable to get rid of the suspense, and I say that we should establish a republic. Have you not said that the forms of government are accidental? Gentlemen, you know the republic I want. It is a federal republic. I shall always defend the federal republic. I am a Federal, but, deputies, understand one thing, the republic is a form of government which admits many conditions, and which has many grades. From the republic of Venice to that of Switzerland there is an immense scale. Adjoining Mexico, where Church and States are separated, there is Guatemala, where the clergy have great power. Close to the decentralized and federal Argentine Republic is the Chilian Republic, another decentralized country enjoying great prosperity, its paper money being quoted in all the markets of Europe as high as that of England. Consequently, deputies, amid this great affliction and this great trouble and this unstable equilibrium, which surrounds you, you can establish a form of government which is of the people and for the people, a form of government in harmony with the institutions you have proclaimed, and

with the sentiment which all of you guard in the bottom of your hearts.

Have you not seen in history the inability of an assembly or any power to establish a form of government in conflict with great ideas? Remember the eighteenth century. Never had a monarchy attained more power, never was absolutism so strong, never was the destruction of obstacles in the way of kings more complete. Philosophy ascended the throne with them, ascended with Charles III. and Aranda and Tombal. It ascended with Joseph I., with Frederick the Great, with Leopold of Tuscany. All seemed to conspire to establish the same idea, the idea of a philosophy and a liberalism. And did they succeed? No, they were the Baptists of the Revolution. They repented late, and the philosophy they had thrown at the feet of the thrones came to naught. And what happened? Some were sentenced by the Assembly. The crowns of divine right were melted into cannon balls by the soldiers of the Revolution. What does this signify? That great powers cannot place absolutism above philosophy any more than you can build monarchical institutions on individual rights. Therefore, I beseech you to establish the republic. You are assured of our patriotism, our great interest in the country, our abnegation. Cato committed suicide because he found a Caesar. Radicals of Spain, do not commit suicide because you cannot find a monarch. I have spoken.

SPEECH ON THE POLITICAL OATH

DELIVERED APRIL 7, 1883

GENTLEMEN,—The political oath is dead throughout Europe. Nominally it is still enforced. Custom preserves a worn-out institution of which the spirit has long since expired. Just as we still see the light of far distant suns long after they have been extinguished.

It is undeniable that if the political oath was a great and worthy institution it would merit the fate of all great and worthy institutions and be as immortal as compassion, charity, and beneficence.

There is a proper place for the oath; it belongs solely to the great and solemn functions of life, so let it not be contaminated by the strife of party politics.

Witness the stress laid upon oaths in every secret society; the more idolatrous a religion is, the more complicated its system of oaths, the greater the mystery, the more frequent the invocation to the supernatural; you see this in all secret societies, because there injustice and mystery are the rule; but you do not see it in public societies, because there law and order prevail.

Compare the mysteries of Eleusis and those for admission to the temple of the goddess Isis; compare any of the pagan liturgies with the command not to take the name of God in vain, and tell me, as Catholics, as believers in the Bible, as Christians, that it is not necessary to abolish the oath.

The modern social order is an evolution of natural law, and the natural law has as its characteristic note liberty of

conscience, and liberty of conscience rejects the useless multiplication of oaths. Why then should you civil and political legislators exact irrational formulas? Be satisfied with external obedience and respect for the law, which is the only thing you can demand by reason of the authority which the nation has given you and the only thing that we, as free and true citizens, can promise.

But you will reply that we have abolished the oath that confirms a promise. And here let me say a few words regarding this absurd concession.

Laws are not made for imaginary people, but for those that really exist. The idealist suggests that we content ourselves with pure law, but in truth we must derive our inspiration from reality.

Now, gentlemen, there is a contrast, a deep contrast between the expression of external respect for the official religion and the profound indifference that there is in most souls and in the majority of consciences.

Go to the house of a sceptic, a freethinker, of any kind of a rationalist, go to that house and you will see expression of outward respect. The unbeliever scoffs at the efficacy of baptism, but although he disbelieves, he will have all his children baptized with due form and ceremony. At the table, where the soup and fish are steaming, he will ridicule the lenten discipline and criticise the proclamation of the Bull, but he will take good care to join his family in refraining from meat on Friday, through love for his wife, through consideration for his daughter, through respect for his mother, and even through fear of his mother-in-law; he will not communicate at Easter, oh, no, because he is secretly afraid of committing a profanation; but he will secretly bribe the priest or the sacristan of the parish to obtain the certificate

that he has received his Easter communion, so that he may place it in the family prayer-book or present it to the pastor on his Easter visit.

He will work here in the Congress and in the cabinet that education may be freed from priestly influence, that marriage may be merely a civil ceremony, that the cemetery ought to be under the control of the laity; but nevertheless in his last will and testament he will request that he be buried in the shadow of the cross, under which rest his ancestors; for although he has really given up his faith and his religion, he has breathed it in from the very air; he has become so accustomed to it that it has permeated his whole being, and he wishes to die in that faith whose *dies iras* and *misereres* have taught him the terrors of death and whose prayers and psalms have given him assurance of immortality.

Well, gentlemen, do you wish some one to make promises. No one shall promise anything, I least of all. So then, instead of abolishing the oath, you have made it more burdensome.

Gentlemen, I am going now to differ from my friend the Marquis de Pédal. Do you think that any people could be more interested in the improvement of the moral conscience and even the religious conscience than the Republican party?

I have said a thousand times that as soon as material ties are broken moral ones become more binding. If this is true is it necessary to strengthen them either in Congress, in the committees, or in our public ceremonies, jubilees, and festivals in which all unite in their supplications to one God, whom they implore to guard them and to protect their rights.

And here, gentlemen, I call your attention—the attention

of all Liberals—to the fact that I have the same regret my friend the Marquis de Pédal has for the religious crisis, for the philosophical crisis through which the human mind is passing, for that cloud of sophism and error which at this very moment threatens all that we have loved and adored on the face of this planet. I also, gentlemen, protest against that philosophy which proclaims mere materialism and which worships blind force.

I cannot endure the thought that the immensity of space is only a funeral shroud, under the gloomy folds of which humanity lies as inert and soulless as stone.

I cannot endure the thought that time is only an eternal river, without beginning and without end, on the surface of which we behold human beings idly drifting toward a bottomless abyss, in which they are at last to be swallowed up.

I cannot bear to think of dwelling in a universe without ideals, without law and order, governed by chance and bounded by oblivion, that ogre which devours human souls and consigns them to nothingness.

Gentlemen, I abhor these errors, and lifting my arms toward heaven, I implore God to enlighten these blinded people who ask him nothing less than the proof of his existence; as if fundamental truth could be demonstrated and as if mathematical axioms were not undemonstrable postulates, without which other demonstrable truths would not exist.

God is seen in the light, is felt in the heat; we are conscious of him throughout our whole being; and the more weak and sinful we are, the more we deserve his mercy; the more wretched and miserable this world is, the more we need the aid of his divine Providence.

Gentlemen, now that I have protested against these doc-

trines which declare that the human being is but a collection of atoms, conscience and the mind merely an association of ideas; now that I have protested, I say that we must avoid another form of materialism. I mean that ecclesiastical materialism which converts the ministers of Christ into Carlists, which makes Mount Esquinza an altar, and which blesses the infamous gems of the Curate of Santa Cruz.

Yet, on the other hand, it is most necessary that sincere belief should have its foundation in the intellect, for we may be sure that if the soul is left free it will seek God as its centre of gravity.

Gentlemen, do you know what are the faults of Catholicism? That is to say, the faults of the practice of Catholicism (it would be a profanation to say that Catholicism in itself has faults). Do you know wherein it fails? In its form and ritual. For men go to Mass without understanding the prayers that are said, and to the Communion without realizing why they participate. They worship with their lips but not with their hearts.

Gentlemen, the longer we live the more we become convinced that there are no new revelations. The longer we live the more we are convinced that no new religious ideas are necessary; but what we do need is that the people of the Latin race should spiritualize the old ones. We find ourselves in a position analogous to that which characterized the sixteenth century. We of the nineteenth century need an ideal as they needed it then, when Martin Luther kindled the fires of the glorious Reformation; that great and extraordinary man, the successor of Armenius, educated, as he was, in a monastery, and so prone to mysticism that he saw angelic visions and imagined that the devil himself came to tempt him, this great man, I say, believed that as an antidote to

ecclesiastical materialism it was needful to read but one book, necessary only to follow the inspiration of conscience.

Luther recoiled from the marble cloisters surrounded with luxurious gardens, from incongruous groups of virgins and fawns, from elegant Ciceronians speaking classic Latin, which they were so anxious to retain that instead of praying to God they invoked the heathen deities of Rome.

Thus Luther brought forth that religious idea which in Germany has substituted the leadership of Protestant Prussia for the leadership of Catholic Austria, which has given to the world, instead of the Spanish colonial empire, the British colonial empire. And this new religion penetrates to the very heart of the people, and has made them more orthodox, because it has given them free thought and has proclaimed the great principle of the sacredness, the individuality, and the spirituality of conscience.

We need Christian unison; well, let us seek for it in our hearts. Do not demand a formal and liturgical oath; but instead take for an example the spontaneous prayer of gratitude which you offer God every day in return for his gracious gift of life.

I do not rise with a spirit of antagonism, gentlemen, but with a spirit of conciliation. I have no objection as long as they do not humiliate my conscience, my life, my traditions.

Why should I have any objections to using the name of God, gentlemen of the Congress? I see him in the realm of nature; I listen to him in the harmony of the spheres. I feel him in the beauty of art. I know him as the supreme immortal being. I proclaim him as the absolute truth in religion and in conscience.

I have no objection whatsoever to swearing by the holy

gospels, because, after having read the greatest books, I have found none more sublime than these. I have studied the greatest orators and have listened to their words, but I know of no oration so sublime, so divine as that which declares "blessed are they that mourn," "blessed are they that are persecuted." I know of nothing equal to our Lord's Sermon on the Mount.

I have seen the great places of the world—the Capitol which was called the head of the earth; the Parthenon, which was the spring of art; and I believe that there is no loftier height than the Cross, because its arms reach the heavens.

If you wish, I swear by God and the holy gospels, in the name of all we have respected on the face of this earth, with my hand upon my heart I swear fidelity by him alone who is eternal. I swear by him whose power has placed us upon earth; I swear by him, gentlemen, an eternal and inviolable fidelity to my country. But I will never take any other oath.

[Special translation.]