

Madrid Saturday September 23^d 1843.

Dear Papa,

The good Steamer Hibernia brought me yesterday your letter of August 29th and the delightful account of the progress of every thing at Reus: I am amazed at the performance of the fruitery and afraid that this will only be an exceptional year and that the peach trees will return to their former barren ~~and~~ and unprofitable condition, before I get back: You say nothing of the trees under glass and the grape vines. I suppose they are not behind the others: Should you break the colts without accident into a fine span, do not I pray you sell them, until I have seen them - I have always been very desirous that you should have a fine pair of horses of your own raising.

It is a delightful contrast to have these pictures of quiet, home, enjoyment in the midst of the confusion and trouble which exist in this country, where from a state of dreadful uncertainty you pass into the shocking realities of civil war: When I last wrote you, I believe I mentioned the conflict going on in Barcelona; since then the plot has thickened: a Brigadier Genl. with 1000 men has joined the Insurgents; most of the principal towns in Catalonia are up, and ^{ago} Zaragosa, the Capital of Aragon, pronounced four ~~or~~ five days ^{ago} driving out the Authorities and those of the troops remaining faithful: As Valencia, with Aragon & Catalonia formed the ancient Kingdom of Aragon and that province has generally followed the other two; the news of a rising there is next expected - yesterday the rumor went about that all Galicia in the opposite direction had joined in the dance, and in short that the Nation ~~seemed~~ ^{was} to be rising against their govⁿ as they did three months ago in opposition to Espartero - without

claiming to be a prophet which you know is a useless attempt at home, you will remember that in my letters from the Pyrenees, I doubted whether the Moderados and Liberals could work long together: the split has taken place much earlier and more decidedly than could have been supposed even here, and they are now as the poles asunder, or in more common phrase, they are cutting each other's throats. When Serrano (War Minister) first gave the countenance of his name and authority to the movement in Barcelona in July last, he promised, no doubt many things which the Govt have not thought proper to make good - the poor men shot a month since for mutiny in asking their discharge from the service, had I am convinced good reasons to believe this was to be one of the rewards for their desertion of the Regent; and the Junta of Barcelona have undertaken to prove that Serrano, Universal Minister at that time, bound himself and his colleagues to assemble a "Central Junta" (two delegates from each province) as soon as the fight was over and the Coalition victorious.

There is no doubt this plan of a Junta, or great National Convention with original & indefinite powers to make alterations in the Constitution, was the favorite object of the Exaltados or ultras, who first set the ball rolling against Espartero's government which was too moderate and constitutional to meet their views, and was therefore ^{the first} ~~an~~ obstacle to be removed. - It is said by many that there is a large party in favor of a republican form, tho' as yet ^{it is} not advocated very openly by many - at a meeting of liberals in this city in August a man of some note declared that tho' he would be content with abolishing the veto, he would be better pleased if they would abolish the Queen, and his sentiment was not received with any marks of displeasure - at the present time however this party of the extreme left desire a Junta in order to limit or take away ~~entirely~~ the royal veto, abolish the Senate, and make other changes in the constitution in a republican sense. - you can easily ~~be~~ conceive the rage and disappointment of these men, when they find that a revolution, which they began, has been neutralized and modified by the Moderados & Christina's friends who count in their ranks Narvaez, Concha, and other leading generals, who perhaps chiefly contributed to the rapid downfall of the Regent. - The Provisional Govt. as you have seen,

abandoning the idea of a Central Junta, convoked the Cortes for the 15th of next month, in the mean time pledging them by a half way measure to declare the Queen of Age at once; and ^{hoping} ~~in that way~~ to retain their posts: the elections have just concluded here and the opposition with my old friend Arguelles at their head have gained in the City a majority of 300, or about 3000. votes.

But the difficulties do not end here; besides the open opposition of several provinces and the abandonment of a large party, the Govt. has to contend with a division in its own Councils: - there are five Ministers only; the State Depart^{mt} being filled ad interim by one of the others; of these the Minister of War, is said to be entirely gained over by Narvaez and the Moderados - Lopez, the president of the Cabinet, and the most eloquent orator in the Chamber, is good for attack only; brilliant in a debate, he is weak and vacillating at the head of affairs, and with Mr. Frías, Minister of Marine inclines to the side of Serrano & Narvaez - Caballero, Minister of the Interior, universally acknowledged to be a man of character and cleverness, opposes the others in their anti-liberal measures, and is followed by Ayllon Minister of Finance and then the strong measures of Narvaez and the energetic men about him are either neutralized or defeated - in this way the apathy and indecision of the Govt. have been accounted for in regard to the insurrection at Barcelona, where they seem to have been copying the course of the late Govt. and allowing the rebellion to spread gradually throughout the Country.

Nowhere however is the position of the Ministry more critical than in this city, which was always attached to Espartero, and adhered to him to the last, against two armies united. - The National Guard of Madrid began the revolution of 1840, by which Christina was expelled; and the feeling against them among her friends was most indelicately & brutally exhibited in Narvaez's ~~letter~~ summons to surrender, wherein he declared he considered himself "the instrument of Providence to shed the traitorous blood of Madrid." the bitter feeling which this declaration created was increased at the time of the surrender when a stipulation was ^{said to have been} made with Aspiroz; one of the besieging generals, that the Nationals should retain their arms, and a Junta be appointed from their body &c &c. These stipulations, if entered into, were totally disregarded

ly, Narvaiz who on the day after his triumphal entry, disarmed the whole
body: this measure is now said to have been as ineffectual as it was irrita-
ting: each man was required to deliver up one musket; but it is well known
that through the various disturbances of late, 40,000 stand of arms have been dis-
tributed among the militia of the Capital, and there being only 16 or 17,000 men,
it is reasonably supposed, that in the event of a row they would be found as
well provided as before - so bitter is the hatred of these men against Narvaiz
that ^{the men} a company of ^{men} ~~it~~ ^{he} ~~stated~~ ^{sworn} to each other to take his life at
the first outbreak - Their antecedents have shown, that they are just the
men to make; and ~~to make~~ ^{to make good} such fearful engagements.

Here we are then at present: an insurrection predicted
by many; of various parties; and evidently expected by the Govt: the only
question is as to ~~the~~ time; some fixing on one day; some on another. - on the
10th of October, the Queen's birthday, there is to be a "festa mayor" or grand
reception at the Palace, and some have even deferred the uprising to that day.
In the mean time some live in hope; all in expectation - yesterday the rail
from Aragon & Catalonia did not arrive - Every body at once determined the
news was unfavorable and therefore intercepted by the authorities - I walked
at dusk to the Puerta del Sol; the centre & emphatically the heart of the
City, where the political blows are struck - seven or eight principal streets
meet in an open space; a rectangle, not a square; with the finest building
in Madrid; the Post Office, on one side, - like all public edifices in this
country built with great strength: the lower windows most formidably
barred and grated, - a square Court-yard in the ~~city~~ centre: This is
the principal Corps de Garde of the City; has witnessed several bloody fights,
and the death or defeat of Captains General: the last row held by Narvaiz -
to come back ^{to} my walk: I found an immense crowd ^{along} the ~~street~~ sides of
the place and up the principal streets; and at the entrance of the Post
office (a large hall) three or four times the usual guard; while officers
in groups were scattered thro' the crowd - throughout the night there was
the same state of alarm and expectation; officers were round; the streets
continually patrolled, and all the precautions used to put down any

attempt - the morning came without any disturbance, and I was quietly waiting for my breakfast a little after 8. when, I was astounded by two or three thundering discharges in almost instantaneous succession: the windows rattled & ^{glazed} shivered and ~~glazed~~ in all directions; the servants came running to me to say that no doubt a "cuartel" of troops had pronounced and they were firing cannon & bombs: when I got to the window, people were hurrying up & down in great confusion - It was soon rumoured however that ~~it~~ instead of a "pronunciamiento," it was a powder magazine which had exploded: and a dark heavy cloud which rose over the city and the absence of further discharges confirmed the story - I was on the spot between 9. & 10; meeting Naray with a brilliant escort and a regiment of infantry to keep order: the Magazine was about half a mile from one of the gates, and the people ^{were} flocking to it from all quarters - I met some of the men slightly wounded, and the others with dead bodies: the explosion was terrible, and as it appears by a flying sheet which I have just seen, destroyed 60 or 70 persons besides wounding several - fragments of timber, bombs, balls, and of human bodies were found scattered over the fields at great distances - It was a dreadful scene, and I left it in a very short time, while an immense multitude was still hurrying to the spot.

Within a few weeks I have seen in influential foreign Nationals projects of European intervention to establish something like order and even one or two Spanish papers, morbidly jealous, as they are of foreign influence, have admitted candidly that this would be better than to sink into hopeless anarchy - M. Bolognini, one of the cleverest men about the Govt. set off for Paris as Minister, a few days since - all suppose his mission connected with the Queen's marriage, which is a most difficult question; there being so many candidates supported by powerful parties or interests:

I am for my own part losing my faith in the progress of constitutional principles here, and beginning to think

of absolutism as the best; because it is the condition most likely to keep the people quiet. — if these troubles last much longer they will sink into it, ~~at~~ in the end from exhaustion —

I am living ^a quietly and of course somewhat solitary life; sometimes not leaving the house during the day & seeing no one but the servants. — As I become accustomed to it; it is not unpleasant since it gives me so completely the command of my time — I am taking care of my health which has been a little shaken ~~during~~ the last few months, during which I hope I have become acclimatized.

Before leaving Madrid I asked Eliza & Molly to send me now & then by way of Havre a London, the Intelligencer & American when they contained any thing of interest — the papers sent to the Legation are forwarded by a stupid agent of the State Dept in N. York by way of Cadiz, so that they generally arrive 4 months old — the only other ones we have are those sent by Mr. Loring's family.

Saturday Evg. — The alarm last night was greater than I had ~~supposed~~ — The Govt recd. notice that emissaries from Catalonia & Saragossa had arrived with the intention of raising the cry of "Junta Central." — Cannon were placed in the Puerta del Sol; and several regiments in the street adjacent. Narvaez & his officers on the spot at 2 o'clock: sentinels today in the streets leading to the Puerta del Sol prevented the formation of groups. — I noticed as I rode through this evening that it was much less crowded than last night: If the struggle does take place it will be a bloody one; for Narvaez is bold, active, full of energy, and not all scrupulous about the shedding of blood. — Rumors of new pronunciamientos at different points — If the Govt can hold out until the meeting of the Cortes there may be some chance of tranquility; but the interval of three weeks is dangerously long in this country. The Courier is off early in the morning and I close my package tonight: I shall write again for the packet of the 5th. — A great deal of love to all & many kisses to Mamma.

Adios: Your affectionate son J. H.