

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 discharge 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 ^{very} flocking to it from all quarters - I met some of the men slightly wounded, and the litter 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 journals 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 - Mr. Plozaga, 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 became accustomed to it; it is not unpleasant. Since it gives me to 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. Swings & family.

Saturday Ev. — 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 "Santa Central." — Cannon were placed in the Puerta del Sol; and several regiments in the streets 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 pronunciamentos 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 morn'g and I close my baggage tonight: I shall write again for the packet of the 5th. — A great deal of love to all & many kisses to Mama.

Adios: your affectionate son J. H.