

Madrid Friday January 6th 1843.



SHR

My dear Papa,

If you have read the English or French Papers, you will have seen that the late events in Spain have attracted much of their attention and been the subject of warm and even angry discussion - As I well remember that with all my efforts at home, I could only get a confused idea of what was passing here, you shall have the benefit of my being a looker-on, and in some degree behind the political curtain.

The events of every day convince me that the affairs of the Nation must become more and more entangled before they can arrive at a well-ordered Government, and this operation going on before one's eyes in a land, where every thing, public or private has a sort of melodramatic air, gives a deep interest to political movements.

The English Minister Mr. Aston who is an active, clever man has been putting every spring in motion to obtain from the present rulers, a Commercial Treaty, by which the English Manufactures, - now prohibited or of course smuggled into the Country, - should be admitted ^{at} a very moderate duty. With the Executive branch he is supposed to have succeeded completely and in October last while I was in Andalusia, rumors were very current that a treaty had been actually signed, and would be presented to the Cortes at the session which was to commence on the 14 Nov^r. - In Catalonia where the Manufactories are chiefly situated, and which has always been a turbulent excitable province, these reports created naturally great excitement and joined to the arbitrary acts of Genl. Turbano, who commanded one of the principal Towns, caused a decided feeling of hostility to the existing Gov^t.

On the eve of the 14th Nov^r a quarrel at one of the Gates of Barcelona led to an affray with the Guard which in the excited state of the populace soon spread into a general insurrection - It is now asserted by one party that French emissaries were the cause of the outbreak; but the I believe the French Agents had been for some time at work fanning the

Insurrection since the late elections - the Moderates appear from the Globe to the Democratic party generally to be what an old posside of political heresies - I'm afraid an election by the house is inevitable. I stand a bit for Maria and the girls - your affec. son John Allen

discontent of the lower order, it appears to me evident that the beginning of the affair was accidental - When once, however the struggle had commenced the National Militia united with the people, and after two days of hard fighting, drove the Troops from the City with great loss, and compelled the Citadel and another fort to surrender.

There still remained Montjuich, a Fortress overlooking and completely commanding the Town; but with the news of the success of the Revolters, there also came intelligence that this last stronghold was almost destitute of provisions and ammunition - In this emergency Mr. Astor, as I knew at the time, promptly sent orders to the vessels of War at Gibraltar to proceed without delay to Barcelona to succour Montjuich, and the Regent himself after confiding the safety of the Queen and of the City to the National Guard of Madrid set off for the scene of action with all the troops that could be spared from this section of the Country - Before the English vessels arrived, Turbau had fought his way into Montjuich with supplies for the Garrison, and the troops ^{beginning} to assemble from other districts, threats were repeated from day to day to bombard the Town, unless it should promptly surrender - The Insurgents, tho they received very little aid from the other parts of the Province, continued to hold out until at length on the 3^d of Dec. the batteries of Montjuich opened upon the City and continued their fire for thirteen hours - Several public buildings were destroyed, but no lives lost; a few persons only being wounded. - During the confusion of the bombardment the members of the "last Junta" (for there were several during the Insurrection) embarked in the French & other vessels in the Harbour, and made their escape, and the City had been for several hours at the mercy of 3 or 4 thousand desperadoes, who were fighting amongst themselves, when the inhabitants surrendered at discretion and the Troops marched in - Espartero who had arrived some days previously, did not himself enter the Town, remaining at Sarria (a few miles off) quite unwell - Van Halen the General Commanding, caused 14 men chosen by lot from a Company which had been most conspicuous in the revolt to be shot the day after the entry, and these are the only executions, it is believed, which have taken place - A new Captain General who has the reputation of being a stern soldier, has been appointed to rule over the refractory Catalans, and to aid him in keeping under subjection their sullen and discontented temper, large bodies of troops ^{have been} concentrated in the Province.

A few days after the surrender Espartero set out on his return to Madrid, which he entered in full military pomp on the 1st of January - His

reception by the People was very cold and in marked contrast to his former triumphal entries - This evidence of the apathy or dislike of the People is said to have had much effect upon him - The Diplomatic Corps called on him in a body in the eve, but he was confined to his bed, and of course could not receive us.

In spite of the outcry and abuse which has been lavished on the bombardment of Barcelona, it appears to me that it was after all the best way to reduce the Town: In comparison with the probable result of an assault, the event has shown that it was by far the most merciful course: It is impossible that a populous City should be captured at the point of the bayonet by an army exasperated by a recent defeat within its streets, without great slaughter, and the situation of the Province was too critical, if other reasons had been wanting, to wait for the slow process of reduction by famine; in which too the suffering must fall chiefly on the innocent and defenceless.

Such is the domestic history of this affair, and the considerations connected with it, I will now show you how England & France are connected with what they call "the crisis in the Peninsula".

As the Catalans oppose with great vehemence any approach to a treaty with England; to aid the Government of Espartero to triumph over this opposition, is to remove one of the chief obstacles in the way of a treaty. - This Mr. Astor has done as I have said, by sending ships of war with supplies; but this open connection and armed assistance in suppressing a rebellion, has roused the feeling of the Spaniards, who are exceedingly sensitive in regard to foreign interference, and so strong has been its influence, that, tho the whole of Spain with the exception of Catalonia ~~has~~ would be directly benefited by a Treaty of Commerce, the prospect of its ^{being} accomplished, seems now to be more distant than ever.

✱ - SHR The French Consul in Barcelona, was very active on several occasions during the Commotion, and in some instances certainly behaved very well in saving the families of both parties alternately - Prejudiced however as the Spanish Govt and its agents were against those of France, they saw a thought they saw in what he did the evidence of a direct participation in the movement: This they were anxious to publish to the world in their official Gazette, thereby making a most serious charge against the French Govt: - This has given rise to many conferences & negotiations in Paris, and the English & French Govts have been it is said very

bury upon this subject - as soon as the charge against the French Consul the
reached Paris, the French Govt. by way of answer, immediately sent him the Cross
of the Legion of Honor, which had since been extended to the Commander of the
French Squadron at Kat Coast and I learn that two days since, the French
Charge here, the Duke de Gluchberg, called upon the Secretary of State to require an
apology or explanation of some sort. When he was requested to make his demand
in writing; and thus the matter stands at present - ^{of the Cortes}

But this is not all: at the last session, the Ministry of M.
Gonzalez was in a minority and compelled to resign. but the Regent was
unwilling to select the Members of his Cabinet from ~~that~~ ^{among the} majority, but chose
moderate men of all parties - When the Cortes again assembled in Nov. Ministers
were again completely defeated - the Barcelona news arrived, and before he
left Madrid the Regent signed a Decree proroguing the Congress indefinitely; - how
however fearing the additional drama which these late events would create &
the Ministers have dissolved the Cortes, called for a new election, and a meeting
of the Chambers on the 3^d of April - In the mean time as their "Presupuestos"
or appropriation bill expires on the 1st of this month, the revenue must be raised
~~without the sanction of law, trusting to a bill of indemnity hereafter~~ - The
official paper this morning says that the Govt. relies or leans ("apoye") on
the army; which (tho it may be true enough) seems ^{to be} a very improper support
for a constitutional Monarchy.

The Regent gave notice that he would receive the Foreign Repre:
sentatives today, and when he arrived at Buenavista, we found the Palace and
the approaches to it crowded with officers of every grade. It appeared very
like what the opposition papers call it, the Cuartel General "or Head
Quarters" of a Military Govt. - Saturday Morn. Jan. 7th: We received yesterday
news by the Columbia; dated from New York to the 15th Decr. and Boston to the 16th - I hope
to have letters today; but as the French Courier starts at 12, they may not arrive in time
- The message has been much canvassed both in France & England; the papers for a day or
two have been filled with comments & extracts; your friend Lord Palmerston in the "Chroni:
cle" hits us hard; he will not make the distinction between the stale & Genl Govts in the
disgrace of repudiation, but says truly that if an attempt were made to punish Missinipi
for her bad faith, the whole Union would defend her, but when it is a question of dishonor
we refuse to bear any part of it - Our reputation & character are at the lowest point
throughout the civilized world; and will not improve until these abominable doctrines
are in turn repudiated - I am amused at the quarrel between the Globe and the adminis: