

# SPAIN AND THE RIFF.

## Political Sketches

by JEAN & JEROME THARAUD

*translated by* A. S. MOSS-BLUNDELL

This book consists of a series of articles, by two famous Parisian journalists, on the Riff war in Morocco and the present régime in Spain, which throws light on the Military Directorate of General Primo de Rivera, Marquess de Estella. The brothers Tharaud had interviews with His Majesty the King of Spain, the General himself, and other notabilities of the rival factions, and afterwards wrote down their impressions. These interviews are at once shrewd criticisms of character and of the situation in general, as well as gems of literary expression remarkable for a buoyant freshness of style.

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# I

## A PROLOGUE OF BLOODSHED

*Madrid, 15th April 1925.*

IN the spring of 1921, two Spanish generals met on board a gunboat a few miles from Melilla, in sight of the Morocco coast. One of them was General Berenguer, Spanish High Commissioner to Morocco; the other was General Silvestre, Governor of Melilla. They had been bosom friends from boyhood, and always spoke of themselves as brothers. On this occasion they shut themselves up in the Lieut.-Commander's cabin for a confidential talk. Not long afterwards the Lieut.-Commander heard shouts of a violent altercation, which, it was evident, were audible also to the crew. To put an end to the scandal, the officer went into his cabin where he found the two generals almost coming to fisticuffs; and as, notwithstanding his presence, they still continued to hurl insults at one another, he had to threaten to put them both in irons and send them ashore.

It was professional rivalry that had set these two "brothers" against each other. Silvestre was of peasant birth and had risen from the ranks. A man of conspicuous bravery, bearing over sixty wounds, he was the type of soldier of fortune who had spent all his life in campaigns—the Carlist War, the wars in the Philippines, Cuba, and now Morocco. The King was very fond of him. But when, quite recently, there had been a question of choosing a High Commissioner for Morocco, the Government had passed him

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over in favour of Berenguer, also an old African, who was considered more tractable, more intelligent and more politically minded, Silvestre felt his disappointment very keenly. He was then in command at Ceuta; but the near neighbourhood of Tetuan, where the High Commissioner had his residence, became insupportable to him: he felt stifled in the shadow of his rival. At his own request, he was gazetted to the command at Melilla, where, well away from Berenguer, he could breathe more freely. But his disappointed ambitions left him no peace; and he intrigued to get Spanish Morocco divided into two zones: a western zone reserved for Berenguer, and an eastern zone where he would have been his own master. His intrigue, however, came to nothing, and whilst Berenguer was blissfully pacifying the tribes round Ceuta and Larache, and the whole Spanish Press was applauding his success, Silvestre was kicking his heels at Melilla, unable to obtain from the High Commissioner a gun or a man for any enterprise that would have had a little expansion about it.

At last, wearied by the humiliating situation in which his rival kept him; he called upon Berenguer to give him an explanation face to face. For a long time Berenguer refused. Finally they had met on this gunboat, to have it out, man to man. Once more Silvestre begged his old friend to let him have reinforcements to carry out a *coup* in the direction of Alhucémas, in the belief that the operation, if it succeeded, would put into the shade the small military

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actions on which Berenguer was engaged and from which he was gaining such profit and glory. But once more Berenguer refused to listen, possibly considering the operation too hazardous or possibly fearing the effect his friend's success might have upon his own position. Thus the rivals reached the point at which they were interrupted by the entrance into the cabin of the Lieut.-Commander.

Silvestre went back to Melilla mad with fury and spite, got together in the town and from the outposts of the pacified region every man he could lay his hands on (some twenty thousand in number, of whom one-third were natives), and in defiance of the orders of his chief, he threw the whole of this force forward in the direction of Alhucémas.

Now, the difficulties of reaching Alhucémas had never been so great before, for all this part of the Riff had just been raised by a certain Abd el Krim, then quite unknown to fame. Of a good native family, he had been brought up in Melilla in a Spanish school, thence he had gone to Spain to finish his education, and after travelling in France and Germany, on his return to Melilla he had been entrusted with a small post in the Department of Native Affairs. During the whole of the war he showed himself pro-German and a great friend of Abd el Malek, who led the fighting against the French on the northern frontier of Morocco. On various occasions Maréchal Lyautey had had to complain of this Abd el Krim to the Spanish Government.

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General Silvestre sent for him, swore at him, and is reported even to have boxed his ears, and finally packed him off to gaol. Abd el Krim promptly escaped and took to the mountains, leaving a letter for the General in which he said that he was not deserting of his own free will, but that he had been driven to it; that Silvestre would be responsible for whatever happened, and that they would meet again before long. In a few days he raised the Riff, and even in the pacified zone his men stirred up the natives, spreading the report that he was going to beat the Spaniards and enter Melilla, and that they had better be ready to lend a hand.

The Department of Native Affairs at Melilla was informed of all this, but Silvestre took no notice of it, carried away by his desire for action and glory, and full of confidence in his troops. Unfortunately for him and also for his country, there had recently taken place in Morocco a sad change in the corps of officers. Since the loss of the Philippines and Cuba, Spain, having no longer a colonial army, was sending to Morocco only volunteer officers, attracted by a love of adventure and the hope of promotion and decorations. Now, since 1917, the officers' *juntas*, soviets of a sort which had made themselves a law to the Army, had decreed the suppression of distinctions and promotion for feats of war. This act made the recruiting of officers very difficult, and such as were now coming to Africa were no longer fired by the desire to distinguish themselves, but by the

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sole desire to get through an uncomfortable turn of service as best they could. We are told that at Melilla many of them passed their time at a café or in a gambling-hell, leaving their posts on the sly for these entertainments. General Silvestre could not have been unaware of all this. But as he had been a confirmed gambler himself, and a great *viveur*, he relied on his prestige to carry all his entourage with him.

It had soon to be admitted that Abd el Krim's movement was much more serious than was thought at first. The Rifi began by attacking the advanced position of Monte Abaran, and took it by assault. On his side, General Silvestre sent eight hundred men to establish themselves at Igueriben, about two kilometres from the post of Anual. Abd el Krim promptly invested Igueriben, rendering its revictualling impossible. By the end of three weeks, these eight hundred men were without ammunition and food. Soon they had nothing to drink but the urine of mules and horses. Silvestre, who had his headquarters a few kilometres off at the post of Batel, made a reconnaissance with two squadrons to see if it was still possible to relieve the surrounded post. He then fell back on Anual, where four thousand men had been got together, most of them natives. He sent an order by heliograph to the men of Igueriben to retire upon Anual. But retreat was impossible. They would have to cross a deep defile dominated by the Rifi, and the lie of the ground was such that the guns of Anual could not cover the movement.

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The officers at Igueriben saw that all was lost, and as soon as the message was received, they shot each other rather than fall alive into the hands of the Berbers. The men left to themselves started on the retreat. Of eight hundred men, seven only were able to escape massacre.

In view of this disaster, a profound discouragement overwhelmed the garrison of Anual. Silvestre gave orders for a sortie. But the superior officers met together in a *junta* of leaders, and under pretext that the operations had been begun without the sanction of the Government, not only did they refuse to obey the General, but decided by a majority to fall back on Melilla. In vain did Silvestre try to impose his authority and make his officers go back upon their vote. He was not listened to, and the withdrawal began in a stampede under the grenades, rifles and machine-guns of the Rifi, through the same defile in which the eight hundred men of Igueriben had perished.

General Silvestre remained alone at his post, with his staff. He sent for his chauffeur and told him to bring him his dressing-case. According to this man's evidence, the General shaved off his moustache, took off his tunic, exchanged it for the chauffeur's pea-jacket, and gave the latter two letters and his uniform to take to the General's family. From that moment nothing more was heard of him. It is obvious that he committed suicide. But disguised as he was, Abd el Krim's men did not recognize his body.

Almost all the men of Anual met the same

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fate as their comrades of Igueriben. The native contingents went over to the enemy. The ninety posts of the pacified zone, left almost without defenders, were easily taken and their garrisons massacred. All the Berbers in the conquered region, to whom the Spaniards had given Mauser rifles, to enable them to defend themselves against the disaffected tribes, joined forces with Abd el Krim. The Rifi advanced to the very gates of Melilla and compelled the Spanish gunners, whom they had taken prisoners, to fire on the town. Those who refused had their hands cut off.

General Berenguer heard of his comrade's insubordination and of his death almost at the same moment. He made all haste to Melilla, and as he had gone ahead of the two thousand men he was bringing with him as a reinforcement, he found himself for a moment in the town with thirty-seven rifles. A little more audacity and dash and Abd el Krim, the pro-German underling of the Native Department, would have made himself master of a town where Spain has been established since Charles V.

The disaster of Anual, where General Silvestre and ten thousand men met their death, began the era of bloodshed and reverses for Spain in the Riff, and set the whole country in a ferment. There was an outcry for the responsible parties. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed to inquire into the causes of this fatal adventure. The Army, the King himself—who it was rumoured had urged Silvestre on by

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secret telegrams—felt themselves threatened. At the same time, in Catalonia, the situation was represented in tragic colours. The Catalan Separatists, who for years past had been demanding autonomy, tried to take advantage of the Morocco tragedy to obtain by violence the independence they desired, and the trades unionists, who were very numerous in this industrial province, made many attempts to set up a soviet government in Barcelona. There was a grave feeling of insecurity throughout Spain; and the Parliamentarians, exclusively preoccupied with their researches into the Morocco disaster, so far from bringing about any remedy, only succeeded in complicating still further the disquieting national situation.

It was at this juncture that General Primo de Rivera's military *coup de force* took place. A state of siege was proclaimed, Parliament was dissolved, constitutional liberties were suspended, and the Government was handed over to a Directory of five members; or, to put it more simply, to a Dictator, namely, Primo de Rivera himself. The public gave the *coup d'état* a favourable reception. The politicians themselves, who felt that anarchy could not go on any longer, did not at first display any great indignation. Up to this point the Constitution had not been violated, since it allowed the King to dissolve Parliament, provided that at the end of three months fresh elections were proceeded with. But twenty-two months have passed since the *pronunciamiento*, and Spain continues to exist

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in this abnormal condition. The Chambers are not yet reassembled, the state of siege still continues, and Primo de Rivera continues to govern without ministers, without Parliament, without control.

How has the King brought himself to violate a Constitution to which he has sworn fidelity? How has this descendant of Charles V and of Louis XIV, who, from all accounts, was not wont to bear very patiently the obstruction offered by Parliament to the royal initiative, been able to tolerate the tutelage of a Primo de Rivera, which, it would seem, must be more irksome to him than any parliamentary veto of his plans? Such were the questions that I asked myself on my arrival at Madrid. My desire was to see the King, not, indeed, to cross-examine him, but to attempt to discover from his voice and his expression (I hoped little from his speech, since I could hardly expect confidences on such burning questions) his true personal attitude and feeling. Accordingly I applied for an audience, which the King granted.

## II

### AN AUDIENCE OF THE KING

*Madrid, 17th April 1925.*

It was striking twelve as I reached the Palace, my audience being fixed for half-past. I entered a long hall or vestibule, where a messenger put me into the lift, and at the fourth floor I stepped out into one of those chilly regions in which officials all over the world pass their days. One of them, the Marquis de Torrès, came up and inquired what was my object in coming to the Palace. "To see the King, to converse with him," I replied, "and to give my impressions to a Parisian newspaper."

The official, whilst perfectly polite, seemed rather put out: "The King refused, only a day or two ago, to receive English, American and French journalists who asked him for interviews. Remember," he added, "that neither M. Mille-rand nor M. Poincaré granted them when they were in power. And although, as a general rule, there is much less formality in such matters under a monarchy than in a democratic country, I think I ought to warn you that you will not obtain your request."

"But I have already obtained it, sir. The King has granted me an audience for half-past twelve."

I was taken down two floors and emerged in a very different world. I had left the bureaucrats for the halberdiers. Halberds on shoulder they pace to and fro, from distance to distance, in the

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long sunlit corridors, where their regular steps were muffled by thick carpets. They passed me from one to another until I reached a halberdier waiting for me with a paper bearing my name. I was then taken into a vast salon hung with those splendid bright tapestries which in all these Spanish palaces seem to have been built with the walls, so perfectly do they suit the room. Two Jesuit fathers were whispering in a corner, and their sombre presence was almost a shock in the midst of this ballet of colour. Thence to another salon where I saw by the windows some brilliant uniforms and two crimson Cardinals sitting demurely on a settee separated by a lady in black. Standing beside them were two officers in scarlet tunics, white breeches and high boots, holding in their hands by their crest their silver helmets with horsehair plumes trailing on the carpet. A personage detached himself from the group of brilliant uniforms. Over the gold lace of his embroidered coat he wore a red ribbon *en sautoir*, and I noticed that he carried in his hand, as a wand of office, a beautiful tortoiseshell cane with a golden handle. It was the Duke of Miranda, the Grand Major Domo of the Palace. With a perfect grace and simplicity he came towards me, bade me welcome. I thanked heaven that there was about him no shadow of those reticences which hovered like an evil cloud over the floors above. All was light and brightness in this beautiful salon. The magnificent costumes recalled the canvases of Velasquez and Goya.

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From time to time some ladies passed through dressed entirely in black, with no hats, their arms bare and gloved up to the elbow, their corsages decorated with red cockades with diamond centres. They were the Queen's ladies, as she also was receiving. The two dreamy Cardinals, one of them with a sad face, the other with a less anxious air, still separated by their maid of honour, were like two dazzling prisoners kept severely under observation by the two officers in scarlet. The Duke of Miranda explained to me that they were the Archbishops of Seville and Granada whom the Pope had recently raised to the dignity of the Cardinalate. The King had just received them and they were now waiting to be presented to the Queen. They were already wearing the little red skull-caps that the Pope had sent them with their nominations, by the two officers of the bodyguard who had come straight from the Vatican, and might not leave the prelates until their arrival in Rome. To-morrow, in the chapel of the Palace, the King was to place on their heads the square red caps, before the Pope in person hands them the actual cardinal's hat. "After all that," said the Duke, "they will be well hatted."

But another officer now came forward. My turn had arrived.

The King is before me, very simply dressed in a blue pea-jacket with red stripes and gold stars on the sleeves, his hand extended, and on his face a most pleasant expression of frankness

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and youth. "A cigarette?" He strikes a match, gives me a light, and we fall into conversation.

"Naturally, you are surprised that we should have been living for twenty-two months outside all the rules of the constitutional régime. But, frankly now, have you noticed while you have been travelling in Spain that we were living in a state of siege, under military oppression? I read in the foreign papers that our Directory is shooting and imprisoning people and causing a terror of the police to prevail everywhere. Is that your impression? There has been no change whatever in our usual mode of life; and I may add that, for my part, I don't know any country where the police are less troublesome than here. You can stop right in the middle of the road and talk to your friends without any polite but firm policeman immediately calling upon you to 'Pass along, please.' You can drink anything you like at a café after midnight—which I defy you to do in New York or London, those homes of liberty. At Madrid you can shout, bawl, or sing, if it gives you any pleasure, up to five o'clock in the morning. The only changes since the Directory are that you can walk about with money on you without any risk of a foul blow; that there are no more strikes, that our factories are working, and that employers no longer have their workmen presenting themselves every morning, revolver in hand, to assassinate them or force their terms upon them. You must admit that that's something. . . . Ah! of course, that has to be paid for. General Primo has led us

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outside the Constitution, and that is a serious matter, evidently. . . .”

I looked the King in the eyes, but I did not find there any very profound bitterness. It is clear that the sorrow with which a *cacique*\* tells you:—“For twenty-two months we have been living outside the Constitution,” has no place in his (the King’s) heart. A rather amusing story comes into my mind:—The former Rector of Salamanca, Miguel Unamono, was telling, in a Paris salon, how one day, chatting with the King, the latter told him that when he was a little boy, one of his favourite games was to make pigs jump through paper hoops. “You have kept it up, Sire, with your ministers,” replied Unamono.

However, the King continued:—

“Could we have done otherwise? There are certainly fewer Communists here than there are with you, but our climate, no doubt, makes them more virulent. And whilst at Barcelona they used to assassinate you in broad daylight, and our whole social and economic life was in a fair way to go to pieces, our Parliament spent its time over miserable parochial questions, or the paying off of grudges. We couldn’t go on like that. General Primo then did what you know. He told me at the time that he expected to clear up the situation in three months, and to return to legality within the time prescribed by the

\* The leaders of political groups in Spain are called “caciques”.

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Constitution. That was not my opinion. I had a feeling that three months would not be enough. And, in fact, six months went by, then another six months, and before long we shall have been living for two years without either Parliament or ministers."

"How long do you think, Sire, that this régime may last?"

"Our only wish is to get out of it, all the same we must have the means to do so. Now the caciques, the leaders of groups, have given us no proof up to date that they have renounced their former prejudices, their personal quarrels, their policy of the parish pump, or that they are ready to rally to the idea embodied in the Directory—the protection of our social and economic life, and the defence of our common interests. I know that among them there are some very intelligent men, whom, personally, I like very much, but they have not cut themselves off from any of the detestable elements who make up their entourage, and whom they are the first to despise. If we were to reopen Parliament under these conditions, we should see the same old parties, who were leading the country to ruin, recommence their disputes and resume their idle talk at the point where General Primo interrupted them. It would begin all over again. The work of twenty months would be destroyed. The Communist leaders, exasperated by their sojourn in goal, would stir up the people to outrages and strikes more than ever. We should fall back into that anarchy from which

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for two years we have been making vigorous efforts to escape."

"But then, Sire, I don't quite see how from henceforth Spain is going to do without the Dictatorship."

"Yes! Yes! In our country we have not yet acquired that sense of public life which is so familiar to a Frenchman or to an Englishman. We have no public opinion, properly speaking. With each fresh election the nation is handed over as a grazing ground to the politicians who lead it. But the Directory is devoting itself to organizing a union of all those who are not politicians by trade, and who only ask to be allowed to work in peace and quietness. The Patriotic Union proposes to rally all well-disposed men who have been disgusted by our former policy, as well as the immense mass of indifferents, who have never troubled themselves about such things. It is open to everybody, to Liberals as well as Conservatives, even to Socialists and Republicans. Its object is not political; its sole aim is to give the mass of the nation some sense of its vital interests. It is on this force, just now becoming conscious of itself, that the Directory means to rely, on the day when new elections will bring the country back to regular government. When will that be? I know no more than you. But does it strike you that the country is manifesting any great impatience to see that moment arrive? Do you think that in this twentieth century a country like Spain could submit to a Government it disliked

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without a movement of revolt? how shall I put it—without any complaints beyond those of the politicians deprived of their usual occupations? This quiet acceptance, this perfect tranquillity that you have been able to remark on all sides, doesn't it amount to a tacit plébiscite given by the nation day by day in favour of the Directory? Besides, don't you see, the question that has just arisen for Spain is one that is infinitely beyond us. The Russian revolution in the face of Western civilization has set up another and a different conception of life, which it seeks to impose by force. The great problem of to-day is to know whether parliamentary government is capable of defending the existing order of things against the soviet spirit. Italy has been the first to see that it is not; Spain has realized it in her turn. Who knows whether to-morrow other nations will not also be obliged to step for the time outside strict legality? I see the shadowy outline of the sword beginning to materialize on all sides. . . . But to come back to Spain, here are two eloquent figures:—There are in this country five or six thousand politicians; believe me, there are not more. For them parliamentary government is a sacred ideal. Perish the nation rather than the parliamentarians. Opposed to them are twenty million Spaniards completely indifferent to political manœuvres and who demand only one thing—security of work and respect for their property. To please these six thousand persons, is it necessary to sacrifice twenty millions? I leave the answer to you. . . .”

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Thus spoke Alfonso XIII, and the most profound impression that I brought away from my visit may be summed up as follows. I had just been listening for an hour to a young king full of energy, with a lively, active mind, possessing in a high degree the sentiment of regal authority. His eye had lighted up when in the course of our conversation I told him that, even in the opinion of those who were fighting against the Directory, it was he who was the sole master of the hour, the real strength of Spain. He had not made any answer, but his very silence was singularly eloquent. Evidently this King cannot but be humiliated by the dictatorship of a soldier of the army of which he himself is the chief. But he accepts the situation, which certainly weighs more heavily upon him than upon any one of the politicians of Spain, because very sincerely he sees in it the salvation of his country.

### III

#### PRIMO DE RIVERA: OR THE OPTIMISM OF A GAMBLER

*Madrid, 19th April.*

GENERAL Miguel Primo de Rivera y Orbaneja, Marquis d'Estella, Grandee of Spain, and for the last twenty-two months absolute master of his country, bears very lightly the outward and visible favours and blessings of Fortune. Left an orphan at a tender age, he was brought up by his uncle, the Marquis d'Estella, also a general, and formerly Minister for War, who used all his influence to secure his nephew's advancement—as Primo de Rivera, with his usual good humour, is the first to acknowledge, always adding that it is not an example to be imitated.

During the war he came over to us, visited the Allied Front, and stayed chiefly with the English staffs, for whom he conceived a lively admiration. On his return to Spain, he caused great scandal by proposing at a conference the exchange with England of Ceuta for Gibraltar. He was at the time Captain-General of Cadiz. The Government at once relieved him of his post, but a few months later he was gazetted to Madrid in the same military office. In the meantime he had become a Senator; and in the Senate, as in his private conversation, he lost no opportunity of expressing his aversion from the policy of conquest that Spain was following in Morocco. On one occasion he made a speech that caused a great sensation, in which he de-

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clared that the wisest course was to abandon the Riff. When he had finished speaking, the President of the Council replied that Senator Primo de Rivera had a perfect right to any opinions he pleased, but that the Captain-General of Madrid was in no way bound by these words, for the Government had at that very moment relieved him of his functions.

This fresh disgrace lasted hardly longer than the previous one. On the death of his uncle, the Marquis d'Estella, Primo came into the title, and, to the surprise of many people, the King, so devoted to everything connected with Morocco, made him a Grandee of Spain, an honour the defunct Marquis had never attained. Shortly afterwards the General became Governor of the Province of Barcelona, and he was still holding this appointment when, twenty-two months ago, he accomplished the *coup de force* that put the Dictatorship into his hands.

Everyone is agreed as to the common sense that prompted this *pronunciamiento*: interior anarchy, strikes, Communist outrages, the Separatist agitation in Catalonia, and, above all, no doubt, the menace held over the Army and the very person of the King by the parliamentary committee charged with the investigation of the disaster at Anual. But the conditions in which the *coup d'état* was accomplished are still rather mysterious. Did Primo de Rivera take the sole initiative upon himself? Or was he merely the agent of the soviets of officers, those famous *juntas* which at that time dominated the army?

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Or, again, was he impelled to it by the King? The whole affair is still difficult to determine in detail; what is certain is that, at that moment, the King, the Army, the whole country and the politicians themselves, wearied of a political system that produced nothing but mortifications, called for something different. And this state of mind was so universal that the General met with no opposition in carrying out his *coup*.

Never was a *pronunciamiento* imposed with greater ease: not a drop of blood was shed, and no voice was raised in dissent. For almost two years now the dictatorship has existed, without the smallest exercise of brutality, governing, one might say, by kindness, a despotism benevolent in the highest degree. This is partly because the mass of the people, whilst profoundly indifferent to politics, is very easily managed, and also because the Dictator is far less of a soldier than a clever politician, and a man of naturally amenable disposition.

A Liberal statesman said to me the other day in speaking of him:—"I made a great mistake in not making him Minister of War when I was President of the Council. He would have made an excellent Liberal minister." There is nothing of the Mussolini about him. This Spanish General has none of the violent and ostentatious ways of the civilian and former Socialist, who has become Dictator of Italy. He brings to his enterprise the venturesome manner, easy and detached, that has always characterized him in private life. He belongs to the country of *Figaro*.

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They tell a host of amusing stories about him in Madrid, quite worthy of Boccaccio, and there is a current saying:—

Neipes, mujeres y botella,\*  
Son el blazon del marques d'Estella.

He himself is quite free from hypocrisy. The care of State business has not suspended for a moment his habits of pleasure. Sometimes, at the end of a banquet, he will admit that he regrets having wasted his youth, and that if he could have foreseen that fate would one day place the destiny of his country in his hands, he would have worked instead of concentrating on having a good time. But I imagine that he is the last person to take his own protestations seriously, because his strength lies in the very fact that he is not the least in the world a man of theories and books. Primo de Rivera has been formed solely by experience of life and he possesses that realistic sense in regard to men and affairs, a thing not very lofty in itself perhaps, but certainly useful on occasion, which is the schooling that clubs and other haunts of pleasure offer not, assuredly, to the *flaneur*, but to the intelligent man.

I saw him the other day in his private room at the Ministry of War. And, I may remark in passing, that I got as far as the orderly officer,

\* Cards, women and the bottle are the arms of the Marquis d'Estella.

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who guards the Dictator's door, without having encountered on the staircase or in the corridors of this vast Ministry a single soldier or a single messenger to trouble me about what business I had there.

He had arrived the evening before from Melilla, and I wanted to ask him what ideas the Dictator of to-day had on the subject of that Morocco which he had held so cheap as Captain-General of Cadiz and Barcelona. I saw before me at the end of a long bare room, seated at a table, a man dressed in mufti, with white hair and moustache, who when he rose to shake hands with me, impressed me by his tall figure and his powerful build, but above all by the fineness and distinction of a face that from photographs I had always imagined to be of common mould.

"My ideas about Morocco have never varied," he said. "To-day, as before, I think that Spain cannot effect a successful military occupation of the country. You have seen it for yourself, for you have just come from Fez and the Riff frontier; the country is impossible, And I may add—what is not generally known—that it is very populous. I don't think I am far out when I say that in the Spanish Riff and in the French Riff zone, there are five hundred thousand rifles. To hold such a territory we should need two hundred thousand men. That is a sacrifice that Spain cannot allow herself. We have therefore established ourselves on a line some distance behind the former front,

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which offers us great advantages. It is not in the air as our former line was, and we no longer have behind us a whole population that, in a too rapid and too confident advance we have not been able to disarm, and whose rising in our rear has been the cause of our disasters. In the future we can revictual our outposts without having recourse to columns that have to fight every day, and the situation is now changed to our advantage. It is we who now harass the enemy. Our flying corps bomb his markets and his villages, our patrols carry off his harvests and his cattle. The Rifi are getting tired of this regime. It is only with great difficulty that Abd el Krim can maintain obedience among the tribes. Further, I estimate that the munitions which our men abandoned during the retreat, with the usual carelessness of soldiers, are beginning to give out, for the Moroccans, naturally, have not husbanded them very carefully. Marshal Lyautey is closing his frontier completely; neither arms nor ammunition nor food are getting through from *your* side. On *our* side we are stopping contraband coming in from the coast. Under these conditions the enemy has no longer the keenness he had before. The retaking of Alhucémas, which we hope is not far off, will show you that I am right. We shall then try to rectify our line a little, but our whole military effort will be strictly confined to that. I have no intention of recommencing the conquest of Morocco; it would be a mad enterprise. From now onwards, when a tribe or a fraction

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of a tribe comes and offers me its submission on condition that it is given the protection of a post, I will have nothing to do with it. This would be to fall back again into our former errors. One post calls for another, we should have to re-victual them, to defend them, to sacrifice men and money; and all a dead loss. So I tell these people:—"If you wish to be on good terms with us, organize your defence yourselves. We will do our best to help you. As opportunity offers we will supply you with ammunition, but do not count on a single soldier." And that will be our rule in future. We want to follow a policy of negotiation and of good understanding with the natives in the Riff."

I then said to the General: "I have heard a great deal of talk here about forming one of those chartered companies for Morocco which have been so successful for the English in Nigeria and Rhodesia. It seems to me that your pacific policy would fit in very well with such a scheme."

"Possibly," said the Dictator, "it is a question to be considered. In any case, by the end of the year, I think we shall be solidly established on the line that I wish to occupy but not to overstep. I shall then propose to the King the means I consider the most economical for our maintenance in the Riff."

In all this there was never for a moment any question as to the difficulties such a policy might create for us in Morocco. The other day,

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when I was talking over these same questions with the King, I noted that this aspect was also quite absent from his mind. However, I did not raise the objection with Primo de Rivera, for I knew only too well what his answer would be. It would be the same as Alfonso XIII had given me: "Our diplomatic engagements leave to Spain and France the right of judging, each from their own side, the manner in which they should conduct themselves in their own zones. And I do not agree that our withdrawal operations have placed you in a difficult situation." Evidently neither Alfonso XIII nor Primo de Rivera takes into account the fact that the Spanish debacle obliges us to hold a line four hundred kilometres long, to protect ourselves against the attempts of tribes amongst whom the Spaniards, according to our mutual agreements, ought to establish police. But what would be the good of talking about that? At this moment it is quite evident that Spain cannot offer military guarantees for the tranquillity of the Riff. Will she succeed any better with the new policy from which the General expects such fine results? Knowing the Moroccans and their hostility to Spain, I question whether this native policy, which is only supported by an invisible army behind its lines and the fear of the flying corps, can ever lead to anything.

But the Dictator is an optimist. That is evidently the most pronounced feature of his character. I asked him in turn what he thought

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of the interior situation—of the State, of the Army, of the *juntas*, of Separatism in Catalonia, of the Communists, of finance—in short, I questioned him on the different problems which might then be engaging the attention of the Directory. To all these questions he replied with a slight grimace of his long thin mouth, and with the same satisfied air which he would have used in lifting a glass of champagne to his lips:—

“The *juntas*? but they no longer exist. The army forms one single block in which nobody thinks of anything but obedience to his chief. The former rivalry between the home troops and those of Morocco is now no more than a memory. Communism has disappeared with the removal of a few Communist leaders to gaol. The country, disgusted with party politics, only asks for good administration. As for Catalonia, the Directory has just promulgated a provincial statute, which for the moment is producing some slight agitation, but which will, no doubt, end in satisfying the people of Barcelona.”

I paid particular attention to these words, and although I had seen with my own eyes that Spain seemed to accommodate herself very easily to the policy of the Directory, I could not help thinking that in these declarations there was the same optimism as appears in the official *communiqués* to the Press. I stand by this opinion, but I understand that optimism is not the only element in this immovable serenity

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of Primo de Rivera. When I congratulated him on such a happy situation, and on the simple solution he had been able to find for matters of such difficulty, he exclaimed: "Difficulty!" still with the same smile on his long sensual lips, just as if he had just looked at his hand and found it contained all the trumps, "Difficulty! Nothing is difficult. Difficulty? There is no such thing!" And this expression threw a vivid light on the man before me. His optimism was not optimism to order: it was the optimism of a gambler who has plenty of pluck and knows that his luck holds.

## IV

### THE SORROWS OF AN OLD LIBERAL

*Madrid, 20th April.*

SHORT of stature, badly crippled as the result of a riding accident when he was a child, with a huge crooked nose decorated with a couple of warts, a toothless mouth, in fact, a personage *à la Goya*, and with it all an astonishing flash of wit, of kindness and of mischief, there you have Count de Romanonès, formerly President of the Council, and now the head of the Liberal party in Spain, withal a great man of business and the largest taxpayer in Madrid.

“Our King is a very able man: his ability is his greatest defect,” said the Count. “When a man has political gifts, talent and ideas, how can he be content to make no use of them and simply vegetate as a constitutional king? I am entirely devoted to his service, I like him personally very much, but it cannot be tolerated that a country like Spain should be deprived for nearly two years of all its political rights, and that a Liberal monarchy, for which so many Spaniards have given their lives, should end to-day in Carlist absolutism.

“Our interior situation was not such that there could have been any need to have recourse to extreme measures. As they say in Andalusia: ‘There is room for something between silence and the drum.’ Take Catalonia: was the Separatist movement so disquieting that, to overcome it, it was necessary to establish a state of siege and a dictatorship over the whole of Spain? The

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idea is as absurd as if England, during the Irish troubles, had at a stroke suppressed her Parliament and suspended all her liberties in order to settle the question of Irish autonomy. There, on the contrary, life went on as usual, the government did not lose its head, but granted Ireland reasonable liberties, and a situation much more dramatic than ours by degrees calmed down. Instead of that, what have we done? We have thrown straw on the embers, and because we no longer see flames, we imagine that the fire is out.

“With regard to Morocco, our Directory seems to live upon similar illusions. Matters over there are far from being in the satisfactory state proclaimed by our Dictator. According to him, Abd el Krim is at the moment weary. But will he always be weary? You know the Rifi; they may stop for a moment only to resume their attacks next day more furiously than ever. I grant you that our people are fairly well satisfied with the Moroccan policy of General Primo de Rivera. We are glad to see a few regiments coming home, for the conquest of Morocco has never aroused any enthusiasm in the mass of the nation, who cannot understand why we are making such sacrifices there. But the Moroccan affair is far from being terminated. On the contrary, the Dictator, by his retreat, has only added to its complications. He may have rendered the position of our troops more tenable, but he has singularly lowered our prestige in the eyes of the natives, and, from the diplomatic

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point of view, he has placed us in an extraordinarily delicate position. By the Treaty of 1912, France and Spain mutually engaged to establish security in their respective zones. Unfortunately it is now evident that we are unable to fulfil our part of this engagement. The Riff escapes us. Whatever he may say about it, General Primo de Rivera's policy is a policy of surrender. His idea of replacing force by diplomacy may be excellent in theory, but how will it work in practice? With the Moroccans, the employment of force by itself only leads to vexatious results. We have seen that clearly. But a policy of negotiation and of understanding that cannot be supported by force runs the risk of being still less effective. In the meantime it is indispensable for us to hold on to the Riff; for the abandonment of Spanish Morocco would be the end of Spain, the proof of her absolute impotence.

“That does not prevent me from recognizing that our Dictator is a very able man. On his arrival in Morocco, he had all our Moroccan officers against him. They knew his ideas, and detected in him the opponent of General Berenguer, who had made every effort to push the Army forward. Moreover, they charged him with being the representative of the *juntas* at home, jealous of the officers in Morocco and of their too rapid promotion. They looked askance at his project of abandoning strategic positions which had been so dearly won. Well, to-day, in Morocco, the General is popular.

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“ He has used over there his great gift of fascination, his knowledge of character, his skill in handling men. It is true that a great number of the officers of the former army are dead. To the others he has given promotion, decorations, posts more advantageous than those they were formerly filling. As to his great adversary, General Berenguer, he began by clapping him into gaol, but as brutal methods are repugnant to his character, he came to an understanding with him and finally persuaded him to accept the post of Captain-General of Corunna. He did even better, he entrusted Berenguer's brother with the evacuation of Sheshawen, the occupation of which had been his, Berenguer's, own most glorious feat of arms! Verily, he is a clever man.

“ It is also true that there are no more strikes and no more Communist outrages at Barcelona. They have shut up several of the leaders, many more than you have been told. But was it indispensable to put the whole of Spain into prison, for really that is what it amounts to. No more Parliament, nor liberty of the Press, nor liberty of public meeting, nor provincial liberty, nor communal liberty.

“ All our political rights have been torn from us at one stroke. There remains to us just exactly the right of walking in the street, up to five o'clock in the morning, as the King told you, if we particularly want to. But in Russia, too, the Soviets allow people to walk in the streets. The saddest part of the affair is that our

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unhappy country seems to find all this natural. It is not surprised, and there is no reaction; it has submitted to the Dictatorship with a lamentable languor. One concludes that the country is satisfied; but in Russia again, the moujiks don't move, whence it would be logical to infer that they also are content with their lot, which remains to be proved. The truth is that there is nothing to be done against the strength of the Army. The power of General Primo de Rivera does not lie in his famous Patriotic Union, which is a complete fiasco, and in which people only enrol themselves because they are driven to it, but solely in the Army which supports him.

“None the less, if I were in the Directory, I should not be so free from anxiety. Remember what happened when the brother of your Napoleon, King Joseph, was reigning at Madrid. All seemed perfectly calm; Spain appeared to be resigned to foreign domination. But, without any apparent reason, a revolt broke out, and in a few days the country was plunged in the misery of fire and sword. I do not wish the Directory any such cruel fate. Only, Spain is a country where there is not much sense of continuity. It is liable to sudden and unpredictable changes of temper. And though it may be correct to say that we have no public opinion, irresistible currents can nevertheless establish themselves in our populace, unsophisticated though it is. Our people are easy-going, docile, full of good nature, and at the same time very barbarous. These qualities, or these defects, whichever you

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choose to call them, are being utilized at the moment by the Directory, but they may turn against it to-morrow on the slightest provocation, and there are many quarters from which the storm may arise."

As I listened to Count Romanonès, I could well understand how a man who knew the people and the affairs of his country better than anyone else was bound to feel sad on seeing himself roughly excluded from the political life in which he had moved for so many years, and which, of all his occupations, evidently was that which interested him most. But, at the same time, I couldn't help thinking of the immense distance between this eminently modern spirit and the mass of the Spanish people, which he himself described to me as apathetic and behind the times, with the instinctive qualities of races upon whom modern civilization has not yet encroached. What does the loss of those liberties, which so upset my Liberal interlocutor, matter to this world of Spanish rustics, who have preserved the mentality of the fourteenth and fifteenth century? I was given an account the other day of the demonstrations that had recently taken place in Madrid on the occasion of the King's birthday. More than a hundred thousand delegates from all the provinces of Spain marched past the palace to show their loyalty to H.M. Alfonso XIII. Five thousand of them were received in the palace. Their procession lasted four hours. I am quite aware that

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in such ceremonies one must attribute a large share to officialism and to conventional usage, but there are some traits that elude all convention. One of our fellow-countrymen who was present has described to me the profound impression made upon him by seeing the ecstatic glances that were raised towards the King, and his equal astonishment on seeing a large number of these men, at a loss how to express their loyalty to their sovereign, fall upon their knees before him and make the sign of the cross. And yet the moujiks, too, on the eve of the revolution, manifested the same sort of adoration for their Czar, in spite of what was immediately to follow. . . . I do in fact believe that the same tragic adventure, the same prodigious turn of the wheel, might come about in Spain. We are here in the presence of instinct and of obscure forces. But is it wisdom for the government of a country to make appeal to these dark forces ?

I went out with M. de Romanonès; he took me to see an exhibition that was going to be opened the following day and of which he was president of the committee. It was an exhibition of all the costumes that one sees, or used to see only a few years back, in the Spanish provinces. A show of the greatest interest, first because of its picturesqueness, for the costumes were charming, and also because of its variety, for it certainly contained four or five hundred regional costumes, of which no two were alike. Was it

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necessary for Spain to have been divided into separate cantons by nature to be able to produce this marvellous variety of dress? Of dress and of soul? I had there before my eyes so many representations in colour of Spanish particularism. It is only the Crown that has been able to create the unity of this country, and the Crown alone that still maintains it. With the most transparent honesty, M. de Romanonès and his political friends imagine that outside the pale of Parliamentary government there is no salvation for a country. That may very well be an illusion. As I glanced at this little Liberal *grand-seigneur* walking at my side, I placed him, not very respectfully I must admit, among these delightful little Spaniards of wood and cardboard, satisfied in my own mind that he would merely add one more costume to the collection—the top hat and frock coat of the British M.P.

## V

MOULAY HAFID:  
OR PARADISE LOST

*Madrid, 24th April.*

IN Madrid, where recent happenings in Morocco have upset so many things, there has been living for the last ten years a singular character. How often had I heard people in Fez talking about this Moulay Hafid, the former Sultan of Morocco. It is more than twelve years since he left his capital to make room for his brother, Moulay Yussef, the present reigning monarch of the Fortunate Empire. He had reigned barely five years; but the deeds that had carried him to power, the great historical events with which he is connected and his very person itself, have left an ineffaceable memory in the minds of the people of Fez. He had dethroned his brother, Abd el Aziz, and made himself the champion of Moroccan independence in opposition to France. A few years later, in spite of the fact that Germany was actively supporting him, he found himself obliged to sign the Act by which he recognized our protectorate. He signed most unwillingly, and only after scenes of unheard of violence, scenes that soon convinced General Lyautey that collaboration with a man of so little self-control could not last very long. Hafid, on his side, felt that he could never accommodate himself to the exigences of a protectorate; and after a few months' trial, he brought it to an end by abdicating and retiring to Tangier, where the former Sultan, Abd el

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Aziz, had already taken up his abode. The estates that Hafid retained in Morocco, and the pension that our Government allowed him, enabled him still to play the part of a *grand-seigneur*. His first care was to build himself an immense palace of very ugly architecture, and the baths and kitchen-ranges were about to be installed when the Great War broke out. General Lyautey had just then invited Abd el Aziz to visit him at Rabat, a civility that filled Hafid with uneasiness lest the General, whom he feared as the Devil fears holy water, should invite him too, and keep him there. So he hastened to apply to the authorities at Tangier for a permit to go to Spain. Hardly had he crossed the Straits when the invitation that he had foreseen arrived. He never answered it, being fully persuaded that the Germans were going to win and that they would restore to him the powers of which France had dispossessed him.

He lived for some time rather luxuriously in Madrid, well received by the King and by Spanish society. Then the German subsidies became few and far between, and finally ceased abruptly. Hafid fell upon evil days, was reduced to mean shifts, and became the prey of sharpers. In these later days, I was told, being tired of Madrid, where he had no longer any friends but only creditors—a million of debts and almost all his more valuable possessions pledged at the pawnshop—he turned to France and sued for pardon, *Aman*, as they say in his country.

Matters were in that position when I arrived

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in Spain. One of the first people I met in Madrid was my friend, Si Kaddour ben Ghabrit, Chamberlain to His Sherifian Majesty, Moulay Youssef. He knew Hafid very well from having lived near him in the times of his splendour, and he had come to negotiate the conditions of his return to France.

“Take me to see Hafid,” I asked him. A call on the telephone, and the ex-Sultan of Morocco, who formerly used to make one wait days and days for an audience, replied that he would be delighted to receive me in an hour’s time.

I was certainly curious to see him: this man of whom, barely two months ago, the people at Fez had talked to me with feelings of mingled admiration and terror.

The admiration was a tribute to his erudite gifts as poet and grammarian, which are very highly regarded in the literary circles of Fez, for Hafid, it would appear, passed on his merits as one of the most cultivated *littérateurs* in Morocco. But the terror! The terror, I am bound to say, greatly exceeded the admiration. To be sure of that, one had only to hear the whispering, terrified tone (as if the former Sultan still might be spying on them) in which they spoke of his rages, of his fantastic cruelty, and of his frightful sensuality. Among these peaceful bourgeois he has left the memory of a *shitan*, that is to say, of a devil.

The car pulled up. We had arrived at the Majestic Hotel, where the man of terror had

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his abode. In spite of its pompous name, the hotel was not of the first class. We mounted, over a worn carpet, to the third floor. A negro ushered us into a room papered entirely with postcards. In the middle was a table covered with American cloth. It was the dining-room, where the negro and a vague sort of secretary slept, did the cooking, and served his meals to their master. A double door into another room stood open, and framed in the opening was a tall, powerful fellow, of some forty years of age, still very young in bearing, dressed in a black jacket and striped trousers, his face the colour of tobacco, with a curved nose and thick lips (a heritage from his negress mother), superb teeth, and very fine, intelligent black eyes. Even in his jacket, into which he was stuffed rather like a sausage, the man was not wanting in a certain dignity of bearing. It was the *shitan*, in flesh and blood, quite capable, I should imagine, of resuming his former follies if circumstances were favourable, but at that moment a poor devil terribly tamed by life. And in this modest room, with its brass bedstead, its dressing-gear and worn armchair, it was in truth not the *shitan* that I had before me, but rather a man who had been at close and sometimes painful grips with life, the *littérateur* admired by the Fez people, seeking consolation for his misfortunes in the compilation of his memoirs. An accumulation of red books, bound in Arab style, on a table, at once furnished us with a subject of conversation. Then we spoke of his

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return. The business is not quite settled yet. He is in great hopes that it will go through. Any further stay in Madrid, where he has experienced the ups and downs of fortune, has become insupportable to him. He longs to come back to us, to live far from adventures, to set up a homely household at Versailles and to devote himself to the pleasures of the chase, which, he informed me, after poetry, is his favourite diversion.

After the discussion of these peaceful visions we parted on the threshold of the dining-room, which was papered with Spanish beauties and sporting dogs pointing at pheasants and hares. As I went down the wretched staircase, I pondered on the destiny of this man who had held the lives of so many men in his hand, and whose ambitions were now limited to the rôle of a modest *pensionnaire*. Would it not be good policy to satisfy this desire? I am aware that the accusation of having prompted the massacres at Fez in 1912 is still hanging over him, but his complicity has never been proved, and old Moroccans, officers who were present during those tragic days, have assured me only recently that he had nothing to do with the business. It is true that during the war he intrigued against France, but, as he says himself acutely enough, when they are granting amnesties to everybody, why should he be the only one to be refused pardon? Finally, and this is, without any doubt, the strongest argument in his favour, it was he who signed the acknow-

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ledgement of our protectorate—unwillingly, it is true, but it must be admitted that for once his ill-humour was only natural. And surely it would be hardly decent to allow a man to sink little by little into sordid poverty, whose name figures on one of the most important acts signed by the Republic before 1914.

Two or three days after my visit, I met Hafid again at a tea-party at our Ambassador's. I said good-bye to him, for I was leaving that evening. "I, too," he said, beaming; "we are going by the same train." But that evening, at the station, I found only Si Kaddour, Hafid's secretary, and his negro. Hafid himself was not there. In order to avoid the journalists, they had sent him off in a motor-car and he was to join us two or three stations further on, a little before Segovia.

I even think that he would have greatly preferred not to join the train until it got to Segovia, so as to avoid the tunnel, for he has a wholesome dread of these dark passages. . . . As a matter of fact, about eleven p.m., at the little station of Alba, two men, lighted by a lantern, crossed the platform and climbed into a carriage. They were Moulay Hafid and our assistant consul, who was accompanying him. The former Sultan was very pale and agitated. Was it at leaving Spain, where he left behind him nothing but sad memories? Or was it apprehension of what might be awaiting him in France? He is no stranger to the gruesome fancies that torment the imagination of the mighty.

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He is happy and timid at once, both grateful and suspicious, in short, as the Arab proverb says, rather like a cat that receives a leg of mutton on her head. . . . But it may have been simply the fear of the tunnel. However, we emerged safe, driven by the Duke of Saragossa, engine-driver to the King of Spain, who was getting his hand in on the locomotive, and whose presence added just that touch of the odd and unexpected to the adventure of this fallen monarch, on his way to Versailles to cultivate the garden of Candide.

## VI A MONTH LATER

15th May 1925.

It transpires that Primo de Rivera was too optimistic when he told me, a month ago, that the Spanish withdrawal would not have any unpleasant consequences for us, that the Rifi were beginning to be weary and that their ammunition was running short.

At Fez, where I spent the winter, they were not so optimistic. When I was there, nobody seemed to have any doubt that we should have a fuss with Abd el Krim in the Spring. But generally it was thought that the Riff leader would not venture to engage in a direct struggle with us; for he was perfectly aware that he would meet with a very different resistance from any he had experienced in Spanish Morocco. And so we expected not a full-dress attack *en masse*, but simply those sudden dashes that he contented himself with instigating, free to disavow them if they were not successful.

I ought to say that this was not the opinion of Maréchal Lyautey. A man of his stamp is always inclined to endow his adversary with something of his own temperament. The Maréchal attributed great designs to Abd el Krim, and I remember how one night, when I was dining with him at Fez, in the palace of Bou-Jeloud, he said to me most seriously: "If we don't at once take the necessary measures, in two years from now, we might quite possibly be driven out of Morocco." The necessary

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measures to which he alluded were the reinforcements which from that time onward he was imploring the Government to send him as soon as possible.

The Maréchal judged correctly; once more he foresaw clearly what would happen. Abd el Krim certainly cherished the designs attributed to him. He advanced openly against us, and with all his forces.

What were the motives that decided him? Why had he not preferred to fall upon the Spaniards and finish with them once for all? Many reasons that elude us may have influenced him, and among these hidden reasons must be reckoned the character and the will of the tribes, to which a Morocco war-lord has always to pay great attention. The reasons at any rate are obvious. The Rifi cannot live without the valley of the Wergha. For them it is a question of life and death to be able to obtain their provisions freely by that route. Abd el Krim has decided against the glory of driving the Spaniard into the sea (which would not have given him anything to eat, except perhaps the cases of jam that the soldiers abandoned), and has preferred the very different and more nutritive conquest of a land of wheat and barley. Then, as a second reason, he was tempted by the immense prestige that the possession of the capital, Fez, would give him in the Moroccan world. To cross the eighty kilometres and find himself at one stroke in the city of the Sultans—what a fabulous dream! To go and pray at the tomb of Mulay

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Idris, in the heart of the sacred city! Lukewarm Moslem that he is, the religious satisfaction he would have gained in so doing might not have been great; but his glory, in the eyes of all Islam, would have been immeasurable! He would cease to be a petty mountain chief, and become at a stroke one who speaks as the Sultan of Fez, in the name of Mulay Idris. This result attained, the whole of Morocco might rise at his call. He would stand out as the Mahdi, the Messiah, the Master of the Hour, he who brings with him the blessing of Allah.

It was this stroke of fortune, this prodigious success that evidently fascinated him. At one bound he got within thirty kilometres of Fez. But thirty kilometres still separated him from his dream. And those thirty kilometres were defended by our officers and our soldiers.

The method he has employed against us is exactly the one he found so successful against the Spaniards. He raised all the tribes in the rear of our positions in the plain of the Wergha, conquered by us barely a year ago.\* He has even succeeded in raising other tribes who had been faithful to us for more than ten years. His emissaries went secretly among these

\* In establishing ourselves in this valley and on the mountains that bound it to the north, we sought to give ourselves some elbow-room and to increase by twenty kilometres or so the distance between Fez and the Riff. Moreover, we thought that by denying the Rifi access to this Wergha granary, we should perhaps compel them to come to terms with us. But Abd el Krim has preferred war to diplomacy.

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agricultural people and told them that Abd el Krim was certain to win, and that if they didn't want to be exterminated, they should take up arms against the French. What arms? Of course we had not left them any. But Abd el Krim managed to get them through; they were the Mausers and cartridges taken from the Spaniards in Primo de Rivera's great retreat.

So we came to the early days of April. At a signal from Abd el Krim, the insurrection broke out, and our advanced posts suddenly found themselves surrounded by the revolted tribes, staffed by Riff regulars. This is exactly what happened to the Spaniards at Anual. But there the resemblance ceases.

If, as a matter of fact, some few tribes of the Wergha have been disloyal, all the rest of the population of Morocco has shown an exemplary loyalty to us in these difficult circumstances. At our first muster, the Kaid of the Middle Atlas, the Kaid of Sefru, of Azru, of Ain Leuh in particular, hurried up with their horsemen. These *harkas* have given powerful assistance to our troops in sustaining the first shock, and afterwards in relieving our outposts. Not only have these natives brought us an invaluable material support (their charges terrified the Rifi who have not many horses and fight almost exclusively on foot), but there can be no doubt that their intervention has had a powerful moral effect. Their presence among our troops, a visible testimony to their loyalty, proved to the people of the Wergha and the Rifi that they must

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not expect to see in the French Protectorate a repetition of what happened in Spanish Morocco—a general revolt of all the tribes. We have been able to grasp *sur le vif* the satisfactory results of the policy with regard to the natives, that Maréchal Lyautey has followed without variation for the last fifteen years. We have always treated our tribes and their Kaid with justice and kindness. We are to-day reaping the harvest of this prudence, and these fights on the Wergha are going to create new bonds of friendship between us and the population of the interior of Morocco.

I have heard more than once, at Casablanca and elsewhere, our colonists murmuring against the Philo-Arabism of the Maréchal and his fellow-workers. It was considered that he showed too much respect for native customs, rights, and property; that he was inclined to sacrifice the French colonist to the Berber agriculturist. Amazingly stupid criticism; for, after all, what are we in Morocco? Protectors and not spoliators. What would have happened if we had followed the policy of these malcontents; if we had irritated the people entrusted to us? We should have met the fate of Spain. The whole of Morocco would have been ready to rise against us, and then what would have become of these discontented colonists? Instead of that, what do we see? Some tribes fighting side by side with us, others perfectly quiet, and the greatest Kaid of the South, the Pasha of Marrakesh, calmly sending his horse, "Ascalonite,"

## SPAIN AND THE RIFF

this very week, to run in the Grand Prix at Paris. This splendid calm, that does not figure in the *communiqués*, is nevertheless a daily victory gained by ten years of an administration based upon wisdom and affection for the native. It was not in the Maréchal's power to prevent Abd el Krim from attacking us, but it is his political genius that has prevented this aggression from having fatal consequences.

And all this brings to my mind a certain regretful remark made to me the other day by the King of Spain: "You see what we Spaniards need is a Lyautey of our own!"



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