

In Spain King Ferdinand VII. had fallen into the hands of the Liberals in his old age, and had changed the line of succession, so as to allow his daughter Isabella to reign instead of his bigoted and reactionary brother Don Carlos. In Portugal a civil war was raging, which ultimately terminated in the expulsion of the usurper Dom Miguel and the triumph of the constitutional Queen Maria. Her cause was successful mainly owing to English and French support, the turning-point of the war having been a naval battle off Cape St. Vincent, where the skill of Admiral Napier enabled the small fleet of Donna Maria to annihilate a Miguelite squadron of more than double his force. All Western Europe was, in 1833, more or less freed from the yoke of the alliance of the despotic monarchs, though in Spain the struggle was to linger on for more than seven years and to cause almost as much misery as the Peninsular War. The last partisans of Don Carlos did not lay down their arms till 1840, and the cruelties perpetrated on both sides had been worthy of Soudanese dervishes or Kurdish irregulars.

On the whole, the foreign policy of the Whig Government was very successful; the last fears of the domination of Europe by despotism passed away, and Lord Palmerston, the able Canningite convert who managed our external relations, won a reputation for skill and decision which was destined to make him the almost inevitable Foreign Secretary of all the Whig Governments of the next thirty years. He was, indeed, far the most capable of the Whig statesmen of his generation, and a much more notable figure than the four prime ministers under whom he served. A bluff, hearty man, full of a genial self-confidence, and always determined that England should have her say in any European question that was pending, he was looked upon by his contemporaries as the ideal exponent of a "spirited foreign policy." We shall see that sometimes, as his opponents sneered, "his bark was worse than his bite;" but on the whole

Spain and
Portugal.

Lord
Palmerston's
foreign
policy.