looked upon the rights of Spain over the Caroline Islands in the Pacific as so shadowy that he sent some German war-ships to take possession of a port in the largest island of the group. The action of Germany caused great indignation in Spain, which led, in Madrid, to imposing demonstrations. The government got alarmed when the mob one night attacked the German embassy, tore the arms of the empire from the door of the consulate, and dragged the escutcheon to the Puerto del Sol, where it was burnt amid much uproar. The troops had to be called out to restore order. Alphonso alone remained cool, and would not listen to those who clamoured for a rupture with Germany. He elected to trust to diplomacy; and Spain made out such a good case for arbitration, on the ground of her ancient rights of discovery and early colonization, that the German emperor, who had no desire to imperil the dynasty and monarchy in Spain, agreed to submit the whole affair to the pope, who gave judgment in favour of Spain.

After his return to Madrid the king showed himself in public less than usuaI, but it was clear to all who came in contact with him that he was dying. Nevertheless, in Madrid, Canovas would not allow the press to say a word. Indeed, in the ten months before the death of Alphonso XII. the Conservative cabinet displayed unprecedented rigour against the newspapers of every shade. The Dynastic, Liberal and Independent press, the illustrated papers and the satirical weeklies fared no better than the Republicans, Socialists and Carlists, and in 60 days 1260 prosecutions were ordered against Madrid and provincial papers. At last, on the 24th of November 1885, the truth had to be admitted and on the morning of the 25th the end came.

It was no wonder that the death of a king who had shown so much capacity for rule, so much unselfish energy and courage, and so many amiable personal qualities, should have made Spaniards and foreigners extremely anxious about the prospects of the monarchy. Alphonso XII. left no male issue. He had two daughters, the princess of the Asturias, born in 1880, and the Infanta Maria Theresa, born in 1882. At the time of his death it had not been officially intimated that the queen was *enceinte.* The *Official Gazette* did not announce that fact until three months after the demise of the sovereign. On the 17th of May 1886, six months after the death of Alphonso XII., his posthumous son, Alphonso XIII., was born at the palace of Madrid. Six months before this event definitely settled the question of the succession to the throne, the royal family and its councillors assembled to take very important decisions. There could be no doubt that under the constitution of 1876 the widowed queen was entitled to the regency. Doña Maria Christina calmly presided over this solemn council, listening to the advice of Marshal Campos, always consulted in every great crisis; of Captain-General Pavia, who answered for the loyalty of the capital and of its garrison; of the duke de Sexto, the chief of the household; of Marshal Blanco, the chief of the military household; and of all the members of the cabinet and the presidents of the Senate and Congress assembled in the presence of the queen, the ex-queen Isabella, and the Infanta Isabella. All looked chiefly to Marshal Campos and Canovas del Castillo for statesmanlike and disinterested advice. The question was whether it would be expedient to continue the policy of the late king and of his last cabinet. Canovas assured the queen- regent that he was ready to undertake the task of protecting the new state of things if it was thought wise to continue the Conservative policy of the late king, but in the circumstances created by his death, he must frankly say that he considered it advisable to send for Señor Sagasta and ask him to take the reins of government, with a view to inaugurate the regency under progressive and conciliatory policy.

Sagasta was summoned to El Pardo, and the result of his interview with the queen-regent, Canovas and the generals, was the understanding ever afterwards known as the pact of El Pardo, the corner-stone of the whole policy of the regency, and of the two great statesmen who so long led the great dynastic parties and the governments of Doña Christina. It was agreed that during the first years of the regency, Canovas and Sagasta would assist each other in defending the institutions and the dynasty. Sagasta made no secret of the fact that it was his intention to alter the laws and the constitution of the monarchy so as to make them very much resemble the constitution of the Revolution of 1868, but he undertook to carry out his reform policy by stages, and without making too many concessions to radicalism and democracy, so that Canovas and his Conservative and Catholic followers might bow to the necessities of modern times after a respectable show of criticism and resistance. The generals assured the queen-regent and the leaders of the dynastic parties that the army might be counted upon to stand by any govern­ment which was sincerely determined to uphold the Restoration against Republicans and Carlists. Sagasta left the palace to form the first of several cabinets over which he presided continuously for five years. He took for colleagues some of the strongest and most popular statesmen of the Liberal party, virtually representing the three important groups of men of the Revolution united under his leadership—veteran Liberals like Camacho and Venancio Gonzalez; Moderates like Alonzo Martinez, Gamazo and Marshal Jovellar; and Democrats like Moret, Montero Rios and Admiral Beranger. The new cabinet convoked the Cortes elected under the administration of Canovas in 1884, and the Conservative majorities of both houses, at the request of Canovas, behaved very loyally, voting supplies and other bills necessary to enable the government to be carried on until another parliament could be elected in the following year, 1886.

Pending the dissolution and general election, Sagasta and his colleagues paid most attention to public peace and foreign affairs. A sharp look-out was kept on the doings of the Republicans, whose arch-agitator, Ruiz Zorilla, in Paris displayed unusual activity in his endeavours to persuade the Federals, the Intransigeants, and even the Opportunists of Democracy that the times were ripe for a venture. Ruiz Zorilla found no response from the Republican masses, who looked to Pi y Margall for their watchword, nor from the Republican middle classes, who shared the views of Salmeron, Azcarate and Pedregal as to the inex­pediency of revolutionary methods. Castelar, too, raised his eloquent protest against popular risings and barrack conspiracies. The Carlists showed equal activity in propaganda and intrigues. Sagasta derived much benefit from the divisions which made democracy powerless; and he was able to cope with Carlism chiefly because the efforts of the pretender himself abroad, and of his partisans in Spain, were first restrained and then decisively paralysed by the influence of foreign courts and governments, above all by the direct interference of the Vatican in favour of the Spanish regency and of the successor of Alphonso XII. The young and most impatient adherents of Carlism vainly pleaded that such an opportunity would not soon be found again, and threatened to take the law into their own hands and unfurl the flag of *Dios, Patria, y Rey* in northern and central Spain. Don Carlos once more showed his well- known lack of decision and dash, and the Carlist scare passed away. Pope Leo XIII. went even further in his patronage, for he consented to be the godfather of the posthumous son of Alphonso XII., and he never afterwards wavered in the steady sympathy he showed to Alphonso XIII. He was too well acquainted with the domestic politics of the Peninsula to suppose that Carlism could ever do more than disturb for a while the tranquillity of Spain. He did not wish to stake the interests of the Church on a cause which could only revive against her the old animosities of Spanish liberalism and democracy, so roughly displayed in the years 1836 and 1868. Doña Christina, apart from the dictates of gratitude towards the head of her Church for the kindness shown to her son and government, was a zealous Catholic. She proved all through her regency that she not only relied upon the support of the Vatican and of the prelates, but that she was determined to favour the Church