premiership; he took over Señor Echeray’s budget, while General Weyler was replaced at the war office by General Luque.

The great constitutional parties had broken up into quarrelling groups just at the time when, as it seemed, the parties of reaction were concentrating their forces. Not the. least ominous symptom was the attitude of the officers, who, irritated by newspaper attacks on their conduct in Catalonia more especially, demanded that all crimes against the army should be tried by the councils of war. The prolonged controversies to which this gave rise were settled on the 18th of March by a compromise passed by the Cortes; under this act all cases of press attacks on officers were to be tried by the courts martial, while those against the army generally and the national flag were still to be reserved for the civil courts. The singular weakness of the govern­ment revealed by this abdication of part of the essential functions of the civil power would have led to its speedy downfall, but for the truce cried during the festivities con- nected with the marriage of the king with Princess Victoria Eugénie Ena of Battenberg, which took place on the 31st of May.

The king’s marriage was in many respects significant. In spite of the young queen’s “ conversion ” and the singular distinction conferred on her by the papal gift of the golden rose, the “ Protestant ” alliance marked a further stage in Alphonso XIII.’s emancipation from the tutelage of the Clerical-Conservative court. He was, indeed, increasingly displaying a tendency to think and act for himself which, though never over-stepping the bounds of the constitution, was some- what disconcerting to all parties. His personal popularity, too, due partly to his youth and genial manners, was at this time greatly increased by the cool courage he had shown after the dastardly bomb attack made upon him and his young wife, during the wedding procession at Madrid, by the anarchist Matteo Morales.@@1 Whatever his qualities, the growing entanglement of parliamentary affairs was soon to put them to the test. For the coronation was hardly over when Señor Moret resigned, and on the 6th of July Captain-General Lopez- Dominguez became head of a cabinet with a frankly anti-clerical programme, including complete liberty of worship, the secularization of education, and the drastic regulation of the right of association. The signature by the king of an ordinance giving legal validity to the civil marriages of Catholics aroused a furious agitation among the clergy, to which bounds were only set by the threat of the government to prosecute the bishop of Tuy and the chapter of Cordova. In the session 1906- 1907 the most burning subject of debate was the new Associa­tions Law, drawn up by Señor Davila. Even in the Liberal ranks the question aroused furious differences of opinion; Señor Montero Rios, the president of the senate, denounced the “ infamous attacks on the church ”; the government itself showed a wavering temper in entering on long and futile negotiations with the Vatican; while in January 1907 the cardinal archbishop of Toledo presented a united protest of the Spanish episcopate against the proposed law. This and other issues produced complete disunion in the Liberal party. Already, on the 27th of November, Lopez-Dominguez had resigned; his successor, Moret, had at once suffered defeat in the house and been succeeded in his turn, on the 4th of December, by marquis de la Vega de Armijo. The question was now mooted in the cabinet of dropping the Associations Law; but on the 21st of January Señor Canalejas, president of the lower house, who was credited with having inspired the bill, publicly declared that in that event he would cease to support the government. By the 24th the cabinet had resigned, and a Conservative government was in office under Señor Maura as premier.

The administration of Señor Maura, which lasted till the 21st of October 1900 marks an important epoch in the history of

modern Spain. The new premier was no mere party politician, but a statesman who saw the need of his country, on the one hand for effective government, on the other hand for education, so as to enable it ultimately to govern itself. Though a sincere Catholic, he was no Clerical, as was proved by his refusal to withdraw the ordinance on civil marriage. The main objects that he set before himself were, firstly, the maintenance of order; secondly, the reform of local government, so as to destroy the power of the *Caciques* and educate the people in their privileges and responsibilities. The dissolution of the Cortes produced a cer­tain rearrangement of parties. The Liberal groups, as usual when in opposition, coalesced. The Republicans, on the other hand, split into sections; in Barcelona, Tarragona and Gerona they were Separatists, while a new party appeared under the name of Solidarists, consisting of Separatists, Carlists and Social- ists. The elections in April resulted in a sweeping Conservative victory—the government secured a majority in the lower house of 88 over all other groups combined. As for the “ dynastic opposition,” it was reduced to a rump of 66 members, a result so unsatisfactory from the point of view of the monarchy that the government offered to quash certain Conservative returns in order to provide it with more seats. The dynastic opposition, however, considered that it had been unfairly dealt with in the conduct of the elections; and though, out of consideration for the dynasty (an heir to the throne having been born on the 10th of May), they attended the opening of the Cortes on the 13th of May, the Liberals refused to take part in the session that followed, which lasted till the 29th of July. When, however, the Cortes reopened on the 10th of October, the dynastic opposition was once more in its place. It was now that Señor Maura brought in his Local Administration Bill, a measure containing 429 clauses, the main features of which were that it largely increased the responsibility of the local elected bodies, made it compulsory for every elector to vote, and did away with official interference at the polls. The bill met with strenuous opposition, and on the 23rd of December 1907 the Cortes adjourned without its having been advanced.

At the close of the year an Anarchist outrage gave the excuse for the proclamation of martial law in Barcelona, and after the opening of the new session of the Cortes (January 23, 1908) a bill was introduced into the senate giving to the government the most drastic powers for the suppression of Anarchism. Its provisions practically amounted to a complete suspension of the guarantees for civil liberty, it met with the most strenuous opposition, and its final passing by the Senate (May 9) was fol­lowed by a serious crisis. Two months before (March 10-13) King Alphonso, with characteristic courage, had paid a surprise visit to Barcelona, and the general enthusiasm of his reception seemed to prove that the disaffection was less widespread or deep than had been supposed. In the circumstances, Señor Maura dropped the Suppression Bill, and the king issued an ordinance re-establishing constitutional guarantees in Catalonia.

This good feeling was unfortunately not destined to be of long duration; and in the following year the struggle between the antagonistic forces in Spain once more produced a perilous crisis. The Local Administration Bill, after being debated for two sessions, passed the lower house on the 13th of February 1909, having at the last moment received the support of the Liberal Señor Moret, though the Radicals as a whole opposed it as gratifying to Señor Cambò, the Regionalist leader, and there- fore as tending to disintegration. Though ruling in the spirit of an enlightened despotism rather than in that of a constitutional government, Señor Maura had succeeded in doing a notable work for Spain. It was inevitable that in doing so he should incur unpopularity in many quarters. His efforts to recon- struct the Spanish navy were attacked both by the apostles of retrenchment and by those who saw in the shipbuilding contracts an undue favouring of the foreigner; the Marine Industries Protection Act was denounced as favouring the large ship­owners and exporters at the expense of the smaller men; the

@@@1 The. king’s reckless daring was destined later to impair his popularity, for in an enthusiastic motorist blind courage is a quality apt to be exercised at the expense of others.