‘COURT LIFE

FROM WITHIN’

# BY H. R. H. THE INFANTA EULALIA OF SPAIN

Once, when I was making an official visit to the South of Spain with my brother (who was then King), we were told of a gentleman of the Province of Sevilla who had had a talking parrot sent to him from South America; and this parrot had been taught to say “*Viva la Reina!*”—that is, “Long live the Queen!” But soon after its arrival in Sevilla there was a revolution, and Spain became a republic; and it was not at all comfortable for the gentleman to have a parrot screaming “Long live the Queen!” So he shut it up in a room in his house and set himself to teach it to cry “*Viva la Republica!*”—“Long live the Republic!” It was a very intelligent parrot, and he easily taught it to say “*Viva la Republica!*”; but it had a tenacious memory, and it took him a long time before he could be sure that it would always say “*Viva la Republica!*” and never forget its change of politics and cry out, inopportunely, in a voice to be heard by the neighbours, “*Viva la Reina!*” Then there was another revolution, and Spain became a monarchy again, and every one shouted “*Viva el Rey!*”—“Long live the King!” And the gentleman carried his parrot back to the closed room, and after many days spent in trying to teach it to cry “*Viva el Rey!*” he eventually died.

It was a very valuable parrot, and most intelligent, but it was not sufficiently facile to take a speaking part in Spanish politics in those days.

I have remembered this sad story of the parrot because the events of its life were so important to my own. The Queen whom it first supported was my mother, Isabella II. The King on whose account it lost its life was my brother, Alfonso XII. And the Republic (which lasted from 1868 to 1874) was the one that made it possible for me to escape, at least mentally and spiritually, from the prison—very gilded, very luxurious, but more guarded than a Bastille—in which Royalty is compelled to live.

Such an escape, I think, is more difficult than any of Baron Trenck’s. It is one that leaves, as you might say, the impediment of fetters [[1]](#footnote-0)on the mind, even when the body has gone free. And I have long been curious to consider what it was in me that made me struggle out of this splendid confinement, in which one is so envied and so many are so content.

When the revolution of ’68 first disturbed my life—and the parrot’s—I was too young to know it. The intelligence was still unformed, the body infantile. But both the body and the mind had been born of a race so old and in traditions so established that it would seem no revolution could affect them. For many hundreds of years a few families of human beings had been inheriting the thrones of Europe, generation after generation, as families inherit property, from parents to children, by the consent of society and under the protection of law. They were by birth “Royal,” as persons may be, in democracies, by birth wealthy. And they were born to rule as unquestionably as the children of the poor to-day are born to poverty. They were spoken of as “Blood Royal,” as if they were of special flesh, and they intermarried only with Blood Royal, because the people whom they governed demanded children of this special flesh to sit on the thrones of their countries. A king here or a queen there might lose a crown by bad management, or misfortune, or the ill-will of subjects, as a man might lose an inherited estate by similar causes; but he could not lose his place among the families of Royalty (with whom he and his children had intermarried) nor the honours of Courts and the respect of peoples who still obeyed members of the ruling families into which he had been born. So, since I had been born into one of these families—the Bourbon—the essentials of my life were as little changed by the revolution of ’68 as the parrot’s were. We both remained in our cages.

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C, c, a, d

B, b, d, a

D, a, a, c

d

|  | **questions** | **evidence** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Who did the narrator go to the south of Spain with?   1. Her brother and the parrot 2. Her brother and a gentleman from Sevilla 3. **Only her brother** 4. Her brother and her mother | “official visit to the South of Spain with my brother” |
| 2 | Where did the Parrot originally come from?   1. Sevilla 2. South of Spain 3. **South America** 4. Republica | “talking parrot sent to him from South America’ |
| 3 | What causes Spain to become a republic?   1. **There was a revolution** 2. The parrot caused great anger in the public 3. The family had come from South America 4. The Spanish weren’t fond of South American rulers | “here was a revolution, and Spain became a republic;” |
| 4 | Which word best describes the parrot?   1. Uncaring 2. Sarcastic 3. Ignorant 4. **Smart** | “It was a very intelligent parrot,” |
| 5 | Even after learning to say, “*Viva la Republica!*” what was one of the issues it had?   1. It would occasionally fly away 2. **It would infrequently say the wrong thing** 3. It would unintentionally hurt the owner 4. It would accidentally make a political mistake | ‘a tenacious memory,’  ‘inopportunely, in a voice to be heard by the neighbours, “*Viva la Reina!*” ‘ |
| 6 | Based on the information in the text, when did the King begin his reign?   1. 1868 2. **1874** 3. 1869 4. 1876 | And the Republic (which lasted from 1868 to 1874) |
| 7 | Why does the narrator describe her life as a prison?   1. It is luxurious 2. The conditions are very strict 3. It is gilded 4. **Leaving is restricted** | “ me struggle out of this splendid confinement,”  “but more guarded than a Bastille” |
| 8 | What writing technique is the“impediment of fetters on the mind,” ?   1. **Metaphor** 2. Simile 3. Personification 4. Onomatopoeia |  |
| 9 | What is the effect of the writing technique, “impediment of fetters on the mind,”?   1. It shows how the narrator was a prisoner 2. It demonstrates how she physically could not leave 3. It highlights how she was unable to do anything 4. **It showcases how her thoughts and feelings were never free** |  |
| 10 | What does ‘the body infantile’ mean?   1. **She was still a child** 2. She was acting young 3. Her body was frail and weak 4. Her body was beginning to grow | Infantile comes from infant which means child. |
| 11 | What reason was provided by the narrator as for why a revolution may not affect her?   1. **Her ancestors and culture** 2. Her intelligence and youth 3. Her vigour and spirit 4. Her beliefs and desire | Heritage refers to family  Culture refers to traditions  ‘of a race so old and in traditions so established’ |
| 12 | Which line from the text means that royalty have existed because the people want them and also they are defended   1. ‘Race so old and traditions so established’ 2. Born to rule as unquestionably 3. **By the consent of society and under the protection of the law** 4. a few families of human beings had been inheriting the thrones of Europe |  |
| 13 | which one of these options was not given as a reason for a king or queen to lose their crown?   1. bad management 2. Ill will 3. Misfortune 4. **Inheritance** |  |
| 14 |  |  |

1. A type of chain or shackle to restrict prisoners [↑](#footnote-ref-0)