


ANNEX 5

RODNEY CARLISLE, PH. D.



THE STORY OF THE NATIONS

MODERN SPAIN

1788-1898

BY

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7

imagination of the world, no thought of the interests of Spain could be allowed to interfere. But at least this time the eyes even of Godoy were opened, and, though too late, he resisted to the extent of his power the further encroachment of the French.¹ Napoleon demanded an immediate declaration of war against England in compliance with the treaty of St. Ildefonso, and that 24,000 troops and the whole Spanish fleet should be placed at his disposal. Godoy in Madrid and Azara in Paris struggled hard to moderate the demands of their tyrant, who grew more haughty and exacting every day. A great subsidy (six million francs a month), freedom for French trade in Spain, and indemnities and privileges without number, might, he said, be substituted for a declaration of war against England, but in some form his pound of flesh he would have.

The peace of Amiens and the re-opening of commerce with England had brought some return of prosperity to Spain, the people hated the French and longed for peace, and Godoy dared not yield. Upon the favourite fell the wrath of Napoleon. A special messenger was sent to Madrid with an ultimatum to the King in Napoleon's own hand. Either Godoy, the dishonourer of his house and the corrupt curse of his kingdom, must be dismissed, or a French army would cross the Pyrenees within twenty-four hours and sweep all before it. But before

¹ He refused, amongst other things, to urge the French Bourbon princes to renounce their claims to the crown, and he also refused to suppress the publication in the Spanish press of extracts against France from the English papers.

this was handed to the unfortunate Charles, the messenger was to see Godoy himself and let him know the fate before him if he did not yield. The wretched favourite tried by evasion to delay the issue, but the French ambassador was immovable. He would have no more references to Azara in Paris. The terms of the First Consul must be complied with at once, or the damning letter would be handed to the King. Godoy and the Queen were at their wits' end. They had already authorised Azara to make the best terms possible with Napoleon, but to go to war with England now by their own act in Madrid at the bidding of the Frenchmen seemed to bode certain ruin to them. The course they adopted was to persuade the King to take the First Consul's letter, *but not to open it*. The simple-minded King did as he was bidden. "I have received the letter," he said to the French ambassador, "because I was obliged to do so, but I will return it to you unopened. You will soon learn that your action was unnecessary, as Azara has full authority to settle everything in Paris. I esteem the First Consul. I wish to be his faithful ally, and provide him with all the resources my realm will afford." But withal, Godoy, by authority of the King, was forced to sign a preliminary agreement, conceding in principle the shameful demands of France, before the matter could be remitted to be settled in Paris, and it needed another threat of instant war from Napoleon before Azara signed the cruel treaty of Paris (October 9, 1803), by which poverty-stricken Spain purchased her neutrality for a subsidy of six millions of francs

a month, and humiliating commercial concessions. It was not the fault of Azara, but it broke his heart, and to the weakness and unworthiness of Godoy and the Queen one more sacrifice was made by their unhappy country

In May, 1804, Napoleon assumed the imperial dignity, and almost the first Power to recognise his new rank was Spain. Pitt, now in office again, worked incessantly to draw Spain to the side of England, and to open the eyes of Spaniards to the fact that their country was being used by an ambitious tyrant for the subjugation of Europe to France. But Napoleon had his grip firmly fixed upon Godoy; and though Spain was utterly bankrupt and unable even to pay the whole of the subvention agreed upon and the country at large hated and feared the French, the feeling of loyalty to the Crown and affection for the King prevented the discontent of the people from going beyond murmurs against the *Choricero*. The nominal neutrality of Spain was a mere mask, whilst French cruisers were fitting out in Spanish ports, and every penny the country could spare was being sent to Napoleon for the invasion of England. England's ally, Portugal, too, at any critical moment was at the mercy of her neighbour, and Pitt at length determined to treat Spain as a belligerent. Sudden orders were given that Spanish ships on the high seas were to be attacked, and in October, 1804, four frigates on their way from Rio de la Plata, under Admiral Bustamente, with a cargo of six millions of dollars, were assailed by Moore with four English ships off Cape St. Mary. One of the