

## Our Foreign Letter.



Oporto,  
Portugal.  
DEAR EDITOR,  
This morning I went with Francisca to hear High Mass celebrated for the late

King and Crown Prince. As Francisca has little English and I have less Portuguese, our conversation was limited.

"The people do not seem to be wearing mourning, Francisca," I remarked.

"No, Senora. Not want to."

"They are not sorry for the King?"

"Very sorry for Maria Pia."

"Not for the King?"

"The King do nothing for us."

This saying of Francisca's explains their indifference. Years ago there was a terrible fire here, and the Queen Maria Pia came at once and visited the people who were in trouble. She went unattended to see one poor girl who was living with a noted Republican; and as the girl had lost all her relations the Queen paid for her to be brought up and educated. The people remember these things, and are sorry for her now that she has lost her son and grandson.

But they seem to have no love for their late King. No one here was much surprised when the news of his tragic death came. It was known that there had been several attempts on his life. What did surprise some people was that Senhor Franco was still alive, and that the Crown Prince had been killed.

There are two things that stand out from the events of that wretched Saturday as worthy of honour and remembrance. One is the bravery of Queen Amelia in trying to defend the King and Prince from an armed assassin. Then a lady of high rank, upon hearing the news, drove at once unattended to the Queen, although most people were flying from Lisbon, fearing a revolution. This lady went afterwards to the Palace and stayed all night, knowing that if there should be a revolution she would certainly be in the danger spot. I like the spirit of that lady. I cannot tell you her name, for I cannot spell it; but when I was out here before she sent to ask me how her daughter should be nursed (she was suffering from typhoid), because, she said, "The English understand nursing so well; and we, alas! do not."

To go on with my story—when we arrived at the church we found it nearly filled with soldiers. We got a very good place in the gallery, where we could look down and see all that was going on below. The chancel was nearly filled with officers, and the people crowded close up to the chancel railings. There was no formality, as there would be in an English church at such a ceremony. A general had to push his way through the crowd

to reach his place in the chancel; officers who arrived late had to stay at the back altogether; and after the service the general was preceded to the door by a woman with a bright green handkerchief over her head. The church was draped in black, and there were more candles burning than I could count. There was a military band present. There were no seats in the church, so, except in the parts of the service where all knelt, every one stood the whole time. There seem to be two advantages about having no seats in a church—it holds more people, and it is easier for them to get out quickly.

The scene in the church was very brilliant, for there was little mourning worn. The poor, of course, wore their brightly coloured shawls and headkerchiefs. Some women were bareheaded, a very few had black mantillas. The rest of the women were dressed "Paris fashion"; some of them in black, but just as many in colours. A white satin hat could be seen beside one of flaming scarlet.

After the service we found a shady spot in the big square outside the church, to watch the great ones pass by in their handsome uniforms. When they had gone, Francisca said:—

"Like to wait for 'bang'?"

Not knowing what "bang" in Portuguese might mean, I said yes. The square was lined with soldiers, and a motley crowd filled up the centre.

Presently the great bell swung once, whereupon the soldiers fired a volley. Then I understood what "bang" meant. We had three volleys in quick succession, then the soldiers marched off headed by the band.

On our way home we met a troop of soldiers coming along in fine style, four abreast. The road was narrow, and they met a bullock wagon. Now, a bullock wagon either cannot or will not pull to one side quickly; so that nice company of soldiers had to break up and get round in single file.

We went into another church on our way back. The chancel there was filled up with an erection in ivory and gold, draped in crape. It was meant to represent a grand tomb; on the top was a crown, and in front, in letters of gold, the word "Finis."

We saw several people with pictures of the young Queen. She has made a great impression on the people by her heroism in placing her own body between the assassin and her son. Had the latter not been such an excellent shot she must have been killed.

It seems a little strange for the Post Office to go into mourning, but all letters sent from the Post office have a wide border of black. It is the custom here for business houses to go into mourning; if a member of the firm dies, you get your bills sent in deep black borders.

Yours sincerely,

M. H.

In New Zealand the Government has set aside seven millions of acres to provide for old-age pensions. Men and women are to receive an equal sum. Women have votes in New Zealand.

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