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# **Spain and Portugal, Volume 5**

**Dunham Samuel Astley**

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**Author: Dunham Samuel Astley**

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IN closing the present compendium with the French Revolution, the author and editor have been actuated by two considerations: — 1. The number of volumes which it already comprises exceeds the just scale of proportion in regard to the historic part of the Cabinet Cyclopædia. 2. The most heart-stirring events since that period — those connected with the Peninsular war — have been so ably and so fully recorded in works accessible to every one, that the subject is no longer novel, perhaps no longer susceptible of interest. The author has, assuredly, no wish to follow such men as Southey and Napier.

Throughout these volumes it has been the author's wish to do justice to a noble people, to their institutions and character, of which neither is much understood in this country. Had, however, his limits been less circumscribed, he could have executed his task with more satisfaction to himself and the reader. As he intimated in the preface to Volume I., he has encountered difficulties enough. Of these, the greatest is that of imparting interest to a subject which has no unity. Down to

the sixteenth century, owing to the multiplicity of kingdoms consequent on the simultaneous efforts of the people to throw off the Mohammedan yoke, the history of Spain diverges into as many streams as our own under the Saxons; and since that time it is the history of all Europe. That the subject is an unmanageable one for a general history was the conviction of the most eminent writer now living, who, for that reason alone, declined the present undertaking. That undertaking, had this reason been known to the author, he would not, assuredly, have been so presumptuous as to accept. This explanation is due to himself: where a want of interest is perceptible — and he knows that it is frequently so — it is right that the reader should be acquainted with the true cause.

After all, he who adds something to the stock of popular knowledge does not labour in vain. That the present work is original; that it contains much that is novel, and something that may be found useful, must be known to every one who has taken the trouble to compare it with preceding histories of Spain. To this fact abundant testimony has been voluntarily given to the author by some of the most learned men whom Spain can rank among her living children, — men who have cheered him in his progress, and, by their unbiassed approbation, crowned the completion. He need scarcely add, that this is his proudest satisfaction.