

He was always successful in whatever he undertook against the external enemies of his country, and died a victim to civil dissensions. Men alive to glory! respect the ashes of an unfortunate patriot.'” This act performed, he signed it with an untrembling hand, and directed, that the attested copy, and the key of the coffin containing his body, should be presented to his wife, as soon after the fatal hour as her frame of mind would bear such an offering.

The remainder of the night was passed in meditation and prayer. Alike a stranger to that bigotry and superstition which has been at once the curse and scourge of Spain, the prayers of Porlier were those of a man who had conformed to the tenets of Christianity, rather by acts of virtue and benevolence, than exploded rites and idle ceremonies: endowed with the most estimable qualities of the head and heart, this martyr to liberty could look back on his past life with complacency, and towards the future with confidence.

A friend of mine, who resided at Corunna, and saw the hero suffer, describes the day of his execution as one of general and heartfelt sorrow. There was something peculiarly affecting in the last scene of this mournful drama: impatient to reach the place of execution, Porlier walked much quicker than is usual on such solemn occasions, and was observed to mount the scaffolding erected under the gallows with great alacrity; when the final prayer ended, and just before the rope was affixed round his neck, he drew a white handkerchief from his breast, and holding it up to his face, as if to absorb a last tear, he consigned it to the priest, with a request that it might be given to his widow!

A part of the troops whom he had but a few days before led under the banner of freedom, were condemned to attend the execution, and thus experienced the double mortification of witnessing the effects of their treason, and an end of all present hope of liberty or improvement.

All the former actions of Porlier's life corresponded exactly with the last days of his earthly career. Though descended from an ancient family, of which a branch had for a long period settled in the Canaries, he was born at

Carthagena, in South America, where his father held a high public situation. Brought up under the auspices of his uncle, Antonio Porlier, marquis de Baxemar, and minister of justice under Charles the Fourth, he served as a midshipman at the battle of Trafalgar. When, however, the cry of independence spread through the Peninsula in 1808, our hero was amongst the first to obey the call of his country; and, having joined a regiment stationed at Valencia, his gallantry and enterprising spirit were first displayed in the vicinity of that city: an affair, in which he defeated a body of the enemy's troops with a very inferior force, took many prisoners, and led them in triumph to the junta of Asturias, obtained for him the rank of colonel.

Soon after this event, he formed a guerilla corps, of which he became the leader, and distinguished himself in a series of brilliant actions. It was during Porlier's exploits in Asturias, that he acquired the title of *el marquisito*, or, the little marquis, a surname by which he continued to be known ever after. His retreat from Santander, closely pursued by a corps four times more numerous than his own, excited great admiration, and placed the military reputation of Porlier on a level with that of his most popular competitors. So highly were his merits and services appreciated by the regency, that he was appointed captain-general of Asturias, where he remained until the return of Ferdinand.

With respect to the alleged crime for which Porlier was cut off in the prime of life, if the motives that impelled him to obey the impulse of patriotism, and the call of his suffering countrymen, are entitled to praise, the moderation with which he conducted the enterprise is no less worthy of applause. Notwithstanding those innumerable causes of irritation and revenge, which had been operating on the officers and soldiery ever since the return of Ferdinand, not a single excess was committed, from the beginning of the insurrection till its termination: as truly stated in the general's declaration, the arrest of the authorities only had the effect of preserving them from those insults which their administration had been but too well calculated to excite. So anxious was Porlier that the part taken by his

companions in the enterprise should be spontaneous, that, in the course of the deliberations which preceded the defection at Ordenes, he plainly intimated, that those who did not feel conscious they were acting rightly for the good of their country, had only to say so, and they should be at liberty to depart.

It is no trifling addition to the merits of this lamented chief, to say, that history scarcely furnishes an instance of forbearance and moderation equal to that displayed throughout this insurrection. The effects of such conduct have been most salutary in all the subsequent efforts of the patriots; and it will not be lost on posterity.

Although low in stature, Porlier was extremely well made, had fine dark eyes, and a most expressive countenance. He gave many proofs of great military talents; and his activity in the field was unequalled. He was remarkable for the vivacity of his manners, frankness,* and generosity. With him, patriotism was not an empty sound, or sterile profession; as a proof of which, nearly the whole of his limited fortune had been devoted to the relief of his persecuted and suffering countrymen, whether they languished in the prisons of Spain, or sought refuge abroad. One of the charges that led to his condemnation in 1814, was founded on the interception of a letter, in which he directed a merchant of Bilboa to supply the pecuniary wants of an exiled patriot who was expected there from France. But Porlier's liberality was not confined to Spaniards, it extended to the unfortunate of every country; and more than one Englishman was indebted to him for assistance in the hour of need. He was, in fact, warmly attached

* Porlier is said to have carried this rare virtue, on some occasions, rather too far. The marchioness de Matarosa, mother to his wife, a proud and haughty woman, who, like many of the Spanish aristocracy, saw no merit when unconnected with title-deeds and nobility, was very anxious to know what were his pretensions to the honour of an alliance with her family. "Tell the marchioness," said Porlier to the person employed to perform the office of negotiating this important point, "that I wish to be informed, whether her daughter is to be married to me, or my parchments? If to the latter, they may both go to the deuce; for the sooner I quit them the better."

to us as a nation; so that the sympathy excited by his melancholy fate was doubly merited. At Corunna, the feelings of the English residents were still more unequivocally evinced, the whole number having put on deep mourning an hour after his execution.

The bishop of Orense made an eloquent appeal to Ferdinand, in favour of Porlier's companions. However creditable this intercession may have been to the venerable prelate, it is supposed that the lenity shewn towards the offenders arose much more from fear than humanity. Aided by the kindness of their English friends, several of the officers were enabled to embark for the United Kingdom. Where the conduct of others tends to make us so unpopular abroad, it is extremely gratifying to be able to bring forward instances of this kind, which serve, in no inconsiderable degree, to retrieve the national character, and keep it from sinking altogether, in the eyes of foreign nations.

The spirit of persecution, which brought Porlier to a scaffold, did not end with the hero's death. Excluded from the rites of Christian sepulture, his body was buried in an obscure corner of the public cemetery.

The notary who drew up the will became an object of persecution; and after a process which continued six months, sentence was passed against him, annulling the instrument, which was represented as subversive of, and contrary to, the rights of the throne! In consideration, however, of the advanced age and the character of the culprit, he was only admonished, on pain of incurring the utmost rigour of the laws in case of a second offence.

Porlier was affectionately attached to his wife, and she was not less so to the best of husbands. I will not attempt to describe the harrowed feelings of a young desolate woman, bereft of her natural protector in the flower of life, while all the fervid sympathies of our nature are yet in full activity, and we still look forward with joy and hope to years of untasted felicity. As if, however, it was not enough to exercise every species of indignity towards her husband, the forlorn situation of Madame Porlier was greatly embittered by the cruel means adopted with regard to herself. After confiscating the whole of the general's property,

she was placed in a convent at Betanzos, and remained there, in a state of indirect imprisonment, till the re-establishment of freedom. Soon after this event, Madame Porlier was invited to abandon the cloister, and reside at Corunna; where she continues to receive all those attentions no less due to her misfortunes than to the eminent services of her late husband.

The final bequests of Porlier were fulfilled towards the end of August. A cenotaph being prepared, all the authorities of Corunna, civil and military, repaired to the spot where his remains had been laid. Disinterred, and placed in their new receptacle, the gallant Espinosa, who has been so highly distinguished during the recent events in Galicia, pronounced an eloquent and energetic panegyric on the virtues and talents of the fallen hero; pointing him out as a fit model for those who preferred the liberty of their country to tyranny and oppression. From this, the procession proceeded to the principal church, followed by the whole population. Here the service closed with a requiem, composed for the occasion; after which, the cavalcade, preceded by the cenotaph borne on a funeral car, was conducted in mournful triumph through all the streets in which the hero had proclaimed the constitution five years before. On reaching that part of the Campo Santo, on which a more conspicuous spot was chosen for depositing the urn, a second service and funeral oration was delivered by the officiating chaplain of the garrison; after which the ceremony ended.*

“However gratifying this testimony to departed worth may have been to the friends and admirers of the patriot chief, who witnessed the scene, and participated in the painful recollections and heartfelt sorrow it excited for his untimely fate, I am led to believe,” says Mr. Blaquiere, in concluding his lucid narrative, “it was only a prelude to still higher honours, which the national congress intends to confer on

* That two names, so dear to their countrymen, should be still further perpetuated, the principal square and public walk of Corunna have been named after Porlier and Acevedo, whose fate bears a sad analogy to that of his heroic predecessor.



those who, like the hero of Corunna, were sacrificed on the altar of their country's freedom. Yes! The statue of Juan Diaz Porlier deserves a pre-eminent niche in the projected pantheon; nor can Spain too highly prize, or too dearly cherish, the memory of a man, who, though branded with the epithet of traitor and rebel by her oppressors, yet knew how to brave an ignominious death with composure, rather than quietly live to see his fellow-citizens wear the chains of slavery.

CHAPTER VI.

Alarm of Ferdinand and his Court—Increasing Severity—Banishment and biographical Sketch of Ballasteros—Popular Ferment in Valencia—General Elio's ferocious Proclamation—Edict for the Suppression of Books—The Spanish Court's Confederacy with the Pope—Papal Bull to the Spanish Clergy—Conspiracy of Richart and Renovalles detected and suppressed—Failure of Lacy's patriotic Plan—His Trial and Execution—Decree in Reference to the Spanish Exiles—Death of Charles the Fourth—Conspiracy in Valencia, headed by Colonel Vidal—Its Suppression, and Execution of the Colonel and his Companions—Sanguinary Proclamation of Elio—Preparations for the South American Expedition—Revolt of the Troops at La Isla—The Patriots again betrayed—Biographical Sketch of Abisbal—The Plague in Andalusia—Ferdinand's Decree announcing his Marriage—Arrival of the new Queen at Madrid.

It is in the nature of profligacy and violence to tremble on the approach of danger. When the news of the bold attempt of Porlier reached the Spanish court, and especially when it was found that considerable portions of the military were imbued with the spirit which actuated this patriot, the utmost consternation prevailed in the government. It soon became apparent, that the rising at Corunna was viewed with rapture in other places, particularly at Cadiz, Barcelona, Valencia, and Saragossa, where active preparations immediately commenced, to second Porlier's enterprise; and it was not before its complete failure, and the fate of the general, were known, that the popular ferment was subdued. The oppressions of the government had cre-

ated so strong a feeling amongst all ranks of the community, that no doubt can be entertained, had the patriotic cause been sustained in Galicia but for a few days longer, the banner of freedom would have been unfurled throughout the whole Peninsula.

If the king and his abandoned counsellors had not been the subjects of blind infatuation, the unequivocal demonstration of the general sentiment would have taught them lessons of prudence, if it could not inspire them with principles of justice. In the moment of danger they felt alarm; but this was evidently excited more by the fear of meeting the just indignation of the people for their oppression, than by a compunctious feeling of the evils they had inflicted. For a moment, indeed, while the issue of the insurrection was yet doubtful, some slight disposition was manifested by the court to relax the severity of persecution; but it was a reluctant pause, only to be followed by still more rigorous acts of cruelty and injustice. No sooner were the apprehensions of the king allayed, than, instead of changing the system of terror, one of the first measures resorted to, after the execution of Porlier, was the dismissal and exile of the celebrated Ballasteros,* and the banishment

* No individual in the Peninsula has distinguished himself more, whether as a general or a patriot, either during the war of independence, or in the arduous struggles against domestic despotism, than Ballasteros. The following sketch of his character is taken from one of Count Pecchio's Letters, bearing the date of June 1821, and is worthy of preservation.—“Amongst the *seven hundred* generals of Spain, can you divine he whom I was most desirous of knowing? Ballasteros, the declared opponent of Lord Wellington. Of all the Spaniards I have met with, Ballasteros has received me with most cordiality, and that sympathy which can neither be simulated nor dissimulated. I never saw a member of the military profession tender his hand to a brother soldier with more warmth and cheerfulness than Ballasteros. His gait is always martial; and even when walking about his room, he appears to be at the head of a column marching against the enemy. He is an enthusiast on the score of valour, but never wishes to command any but Spaniards. His prejudices with regard to the British chief are still unabated: he continues to repeat, and with reason, that it is better to be beaten by enemies than commanded by foreigners; ‘Because,’ says he, ‘a defeat may be retrieved, but there is no remedy against humiliation.’ It was not, however, the preference shewn to Lord Wellington that irritates

of El Empecinado, who was living in the greatest retirement in Arragon, and whose spirited memorial to Ferdinand has been noticed in the preceding pages. The British residents at Corunna, also, who had felt a natural sympathy for the adherents of Porlier, and had actively aided them in their escape from the resentment of the government, were visited by its vengeance; and the reward of their generosity was an obligation to pay a forced loan levied upon them.

In Granada, a new insurrection was organized, upon principles which promised a more successful issue than that of Galicia. The captain-general of that province, Count Montigo, to whose zeal and patriotism was indebted the establishment of the secret associations, directed the proposed rising, which was to take place, on a fixed day and hour, in all the garrisons of the Peninsula. This plan, however, when just upon the point of being carried into execution, was unfortunately discovered and denounced by the priests, headed by the archbishop. Numerous arrests, and an extensive seizure of papers, followed this new triumph of the clergy: additional measures of coercion were adopted with regard to secret societies; and the aid of the Holy Office being required, the grand inquisitor readily acquiesced in the wishes of the court, so that this dreadful tribunal henceforth became, exclusively, an engine of political persecution.

him even to this day, but the affront thereby cast on the warriors of Spain. You will allow, that a rivalry thus frank and noble is altogether Homeric. Ballasteros has often been heard to express contempt of danger, but never of men. With so chivalric a mind, he could not bend to despotism; and was therefore exiled from the court to Valladolid, during the reign of terror. Recalled in 1820, it was he who presented the Constitution to the king for his signature. The soldiery who served under him during the war of independence, and with whom he partook of the same ration, are as warmly attached to their favourite chief as ever. With what pleasure have I heard him declare, in a tone of the firmest conviction, that we are no longer capable of effecting any thing really great, and have lost our energies, from the moment our conscience reproaches us with having committed a base action! "It is on this account," adds the general, "that tyrants study the means of inducing those officers who have most served them, to disgrace themselves, so that their ambition may be rendered abortive, as they are thenceforth unable to undertake any thing magnanimous."

In the province of Valencia, the flame of patriotism also burst forth, with strong effervescence, early in the year 1817. This tumult had its origin in a dispute about the tax on coals. The sanguinary General Elio, who had been the chief military instrument in forwarding the views of the Servile faction, and who subsequently fell a victim to popular indignation, had the chief command here, and found it necessary to exert all his authority against certain persons who called themselves the deputies of the people; and thus was kindled that fire, which had nearly involved in flame the whole capital of the province. The power of the populace rose to such a height, that the city was in their possession during the whole of the 17th; the cry of "The Constitution!" was raised; and a thousand insults were offered to the general and his troops: in the struggle, the former was wounded, but not dangerously. At last, however, the army triumphed; and the general proceeded, with his characteristic ferocity, to take vengeance on those who had dared to dispute his supreme authority. The following extract from a proclamation he issued on this occasion, will pretty strongly shew the temper of this miscreant, and that of the court by which he was employed: "After dark, and within the city, no person shall dare to go armed, except the patrole appointed to preserve the public peace, military officers, noblemen, and persons who are privileged by their rank of cavaliers *de espada*, or *sable*. If any other persons are found with arms, *defend themselves, or fly at the name of the king, the patrole shall be authorized to fire upon them, or to pursue and apprehend them.* If, when so apprehended and imprisoned, *it shall appear that they attempted to make resistance, they shall be hanged within twelve hours afterwards.* Against this sentence there shall be no appeal, whatever be their excuse or numbers."

The most formidable engine for the abrogation of tyranny is a free press; and the diffusion of knowledge is the most effectual mean of dissipating fanaticism and superstition. Of this fact, the abettors of political despotism, and the advocates of ecclesiastical domination, have always shewn themselves susceptible: and although there is a striking similarity of feature in these two classes of the

enemies of mankind, yet in no one point do they so exactly and cordially agree, as in that of repressing free discussion. The Inquisition and the crown of Spain proved themselves worthy coadjutors, in the state of the country I have been describing. On the 2d of March, 1817, an edict was published at Madrid, prohibiting the reading of certain books. These *contraband* books were divided into two principal classes: in the first were included those which were prohibited even to individuals to whom the *Holy Office* allowed particular licenses or permissions; the other class comprehended works which were forbidden only to those who had never obtained any license. The works of the first class were eight in number: they were prohibited as defamatory of the supreme authority of the Roman pontiff, and of the ecclesiastical authority; as containing propositions scandalous, impious, false, seditious, rash, erroneous, blasphemous, schismatic, heretical, and injurious to the Roman pontiff, to the bishops, and to the holy tribunal of the Inquisition, conducive to error, superstitious, ridiculous, contrary to the sacred canons, to the evangelical doctrine, and to the example of Jesus Christ. The prohibition of the second class falls on forty-seven works, and is described as containing a corrupt and revolutionary spirit, propositions injurious to the Holy Office and to the clergy, calumnious against true religion, blasphemous, tending to idolatry, injurious to Ferdinand the Seventh, subversive of the monarchical government, incentive of rebellion against *legitimate* sovereigns, injurious to the doctrine of the holy sacrament, and filled with satires against husbands fond of their wives. Then follows a list of the publications in which these *horrible* tenets are said to be contained; and the edict concludes as follows:—"The apostolic inquisitors of error, pravity, and apostasy, wishing, by virtue of the apostolic, royal, and ordinary authority, with which they are vested, to prevent the evil which might result from the reading of the works contained in this edict, hereby ordain their prohibition; and that those which are already distributed over the nation shall be collected: they are expressly forbid the reading, selling, or keeping in possession, these books."

Although one object of the above edict embraced subserviency to political rule, its principal design seems directed to the preservation of the *purity of the faith*; and it was probably issued at the instigation of the Roman pontiff, to strengthen the influence of the hierarchy. In this instance, no less than while he was employed at Valençay in embroidering petticoats for the Virgin Mary, Ferdinand proved himself to be a *faithful son of mother church*; and his Holiness now had the opportunity of rewarding the king's obedience, by interposing his supreme authority, to induce the Spanish clergy to assist him in his necessities. Accordingly, about the middle of April, the Roman pontiff issued a bull, addressed to the Spanish priesthood, calling upon them to appropriate a portion of their church property, for a limited time, to the service of his majesty. This curious document is subjoined, and is given, not only to shew the accumulation of wealth which the clergy had amassed, while every other class was reduced to beggary, but to illustrate the paramount authority the Pope assumed over the subjects of a foreign state, and the tremendous powers with which he considered himself invested.—

“Pius, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God.—The Roman pontiffs, incited by their paternal love for the whole Catholic flock, have never suffered the apostolic benignity to be accused of having refused, in seasons of distress, to furnish assistance to the necessities of the state, even from the patrimony of the church. Our dearly beloved son in Jesus Christ, Ferdinand, Catholic King of Spain, intimately united by bonds of love and veneration to us, and the holy apostolic see, in his present painful circumstances; being well persuaded that God has committed to the clergy alone the care of managing the property of the church, as had been clearly and unanimously published in the declaration of the fathers assembled in Roman council, under the pontiff Symmachus, this prince has solicited the necessary power, for the purpose of meeting the necessities of his treasury, occasioned by the general agitation of affairs. And as the means and fortunes of the laity are already oppressed with charges, by reason of which the said King Ferdinand has not ventured to make new demands, he has

thought proper to require an annual sum of 30,000,000 reals, money of that country, on ecclesiastical property, for only six years; in which time, the number of pensions will be diminished, and the value of the revenues augmented. In consequence, we, with the good-will wherewith we are animated in favour of the said King Ferdinand, have admitted the *supplications* he had addressed to us, and which have been presented to us by our *dear son* the Chevalier Antonio de Vargas y Laguna, his minister plenipotentiary: yielding to these *supplications*, and considering the enormous expenses, at the price of which we have had the satisfaction of seeing an extremely glorious victory obtained, as well for religion as the monarchy, and in regard to the calamity of the times, we have resolved, for the weighty causes now enumerated, to modify the dispositions of the holy canons. Thus, from our certain knowledge, and after mature consideration, making use of *the plenitude of the apostolic power with which we are invested*, we grant, by these presents, to the said King Ferdinand, an *indulto*, that validly, freely, and lawfully, he may, during the space of six years, exact, but only for the purpose of succouring the royal treasure, the extraordinary subsidy of 30,000,000 reals, from all the property, fruits, rents, and products, of the clergy, as well regular as secular. By these presents, we *commission and authorize* our dear sons the prelates, &c. Let no one *dare*, then, to oppose the execution of our present act of concession, power, *indulto*, commission, mandate, establishment, declaration, derogation, and will. And if any one have the *temerity* to commit such an attempt, *let him know, that he incurs the indignation of the Almighty God, and of the most blessed Saint Peter and Saint Paul, his apostles!!!* — Done at Rome, at St. Peter's, the 16th of April, in the year of the incarnation of our Saviour, 1817, and of our pontificate the 18th."

From the commencement of the Spanish struggle for independence, down to the present time, the court of Rome has zealously co-operated with King Ferdinand and his bigoted counsellors, in riveting the fetters of political and ecclesiastical thralldom upon the Spanish people. The mitre and the crown, the one sustained by deep-rooted super-

stitutions urged by the fanatical priesthood, and the other armed with the power of the sword, waged a war of extermination against the opposers of the dogmas of the papal church, and the advocates of those more liberal and enlightened principles, which had made considerable progress through every province of the Peninsula. Up to the time of which I now write, we have beheld nothing but ineffectual and fatal struggles of the friends of freedom against cruelty and oppression—the patriots, goaded to resistance by a series of unexampled persecutions, and then punished with exile or death for attempting to restore liberty to their country. Every noble endeavour for emancipation was followed by a more rigorous application of violence; and every accumulated act of severity on the part of the king was succeeded by renewed efforts, on the part of the people, to break asunder the bonds by which they were held. The patriots had sustained numerous overthrows, but their spirit was yet unsubdued; the court had gained many advantages, but their triumph was still incomplete.

It might be thought, that the fatal results which had followed every attempt to promote a rising of the people, would have operated as an effectual preventive to similar efforts; and yet there were two other instances, which occurred in the year 1817, illustrative of a brave and generous spirit of patriotism, but which were unfortunately defeated by the ruling power. The first was that of Don Vicente Richart, a lawyer and literary character, who had served in a guerilla corps. He succeeded in collecting and engaging in the enterprise a number of individuals; nor was he altogether unsuccessful in making proselytes among the soldiery. Independent of many others of inferior note, two general officers, O'Donoju* and Renovalles, were implicated in

* That both O'Donoju and Renovalles were connected with the affair of Richart, no doubt has ever been entertained, though the actual proofs were too vague for even the judges of Ferdinand to pronounce against them. The former, however, was indebted to his great interest at court, for an exemption from the evil consequences of suspicion. As to his colleague, after several ineffectual efforts to promote a rising in favour of the Constitution, he had the good fortune to escape to London, whence he proceeded to join the patriotic forces in the new world.