

After these preliminary measures were completed, a proclamation was read to the troops, and posted up in the town. It congratulated the soldiery upon having formed the heroic resolution of breaking chains more galling than any which had been forged for centuries. There was no necessity for telling them what had been the policy pursued since the restoration of Ferdinand the Seventh to a throne which had cost so many lives, and such endless sacrifices. What had been their recompense? Poverty, contempt, and privations without number: to which might be added, a total disregard of the laws, persecution, imposts, forced loans, and feudal oppression; finally, the ruin of agriculture, and the annihilation of commerce! This concise and faithful exposition ended by stating, that the other provinces would not fail to follow the example of Galicia; where a supreme junta of government was to be formed, until the meeting of the cortes, to which the nation looked for its regeneration.

The above address was succeeded by an elaborate manifesto, remarkable for its perspicuity and eloquence. In this paper, evidently written by the hand of a master,\* the proceedings of the Servile faction, and general state of the nation, were detailed in language at once pathetic and argumentative. The views of the patriots being set forth, a retrospect is taken of what the cortes had done, and of the still greater improvements anticipated from the king's return. These are contrasted with the system of tyranny which succeeded; and the persons who surrounded Ferdinand are described in their true colours. The acquiescence of the monarch is attributed to the habitual influence exercised over him from infancy. It was owing to his listening to the counsellors of former days, that the cortes was destroyed: hence the renewal of public abuses, persecution of the patriots, disorder of the finances, and consequent misery of the army; hence, too, the venality of government,

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\* Porlier is said to have been assisted in preparing these spirited and well-written documents, by an auditor of military accounts, named Santario, a disciple of Jovellanos, who had been persecuted and thrown into prison at Corunna after the return of Ferdinand.

as shewn in the sale of places, bribery and corruption of its members, also the degradation of Spain, which, instead of being respected, was despised and contemned by all Europe. Yet had these evils been produced by men, who, but six years before, deserted their master, and betrayed their country! The arrest, trials, and condemnation of the members of the cortes, are characterized as proofs of unexampled cruelty and injustice. A proper tribute is then paid to the purity of their intentions, and irreproachable conduct as legislators. After alluding to the numerous benefits they had conferred on Spain, even during a period of war, an affecting contrast is drawn between the late and present state of the kingdom. "Notwithstanding a year of peace," says this important document, "our finances are more embarrassed than ever, and the public credit is extinct; while the brave defenders of their country are left naked, barefooted, and unpaid. As to the labourer, he is loaded with his former imposts; the artisan is impeded by new obstacles; and commercial men are paralyzed. Our colonies are more irritated than before; their deputies seized, and the promises made to them, broken. On one side, prisons; and on the other, vengeance!" The manifesto closes with an appeal to the nations of Europe, whose governments had not only recognized the legitimacy of the regency and the cortes during the war, but entered into solemn treaties with the former, and otherwise courted the alliance of Spain. England, Russia, Sweden, and Prussia, are more particularly mentioned. Alexander is called magnanimous; and England, rich and happy by its constitution, is represented as having witnessed with horror the destruction of the cortes, and the violence used towards its members. Under different circumstances, this appeal to the people of England would not have been made in vain: as it was, every generous mind glowed with sympathy; prayers were offered up for the success of Porlier; and but for the iniquitous intrigues which arrested his progress so soon, the circulation of a paper like the foregoing could not fail to have produced a powerful effect on the whole nation.

After collecting all the troops in the principal square, and proclaiming the Constitution of 1812, the whole, headed

by the general, and preceded by bands of music playing patriotic hymns, marched round Corunna, amidst cries of "*Viva el Rey par la Constitucion!*" and the liveliest demonstrations of joy on the part of the inhabitants, who fully participated in the feelings of the soldiery. The evening of the 19th closed with serenades and a brilliant illumination.

While the garrison of Ferrol, about 1500 in number, were on their march towards Corunna, and another detachment had set out from Vigo, to join the patriot standard, Porlier continued with unceasing activity to prepare for ulterior operations. Letters were addressed to the municipality and religious communities, stating what had occurred, explaining the motives for his conduct, and inviting them to concur in his views for the good of their common country. The replies were such as might be expected from persons whose existence depended on the continuance of tyranny and oppression: they excused themselves on pleas which are never wanting to men threatened with the loss of their pensions or places. But as the general knew the disposition of the parties, he felt the less disappointment at their refusal; nor did it move him in the least: on the contrary, every additional impediment only served to increase the confidence of Porlier, who continued to display a presence of mind, knowledge, and activity, fully equal to the arduous task he had undertaken. The remainder of the general's arrangements for securing the constitutional system, by restoring the municipality and other authorities displaced in 1814, being completed, a detachment of eight hundred men were selected to march towards Santiago, where the troops only awaited the appearance of Porlier to declare themselves.\* The command of this column was given to Colonel Arechabala, who set out from Corunna on the night of the 21st, with orders to halt at the small village of Carral, a distance of six leagues, and which he reached early on the following day. Porlier arrived soon after; and when

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\* It was concerted, that, in the event of the troops at Santiago being sent against the patriotic column, they were to join the ranks of the latter immediately on coming up with them.

the troops had been sufficiently refreshed, he led them on to Ordenes, another village within two leagues of Santiago, to which place an officer had been despatched with copies of the proclamation and manifesto, also a letter addressed to Ortega, colonel of the provincial grenadiers forming the garrison. No answer being received, it was decided that the column should sleep at Ordenes, and continue its march the next morning.—In order to account for the silence and inactivity of Ortega, it should be observed, that, from the first moment of the rising, the monks and clergy at Santiago left neither prayers, entreaties, nor bribery, untried, to dissuade the officers and men of the grenadier battalion from espousing the sacrilegious cause of the rebels. Where the threat of excommunication, and an assurance of eternal torments in the world to come, had not the desired effect, gold, a still more potent stimulus, was liberally applied; and funds which had been accumulated since the king's return, or only appropriated to the wants and luxuries of the priesthood, were now advanced for paying the troops. With so many weapons of intimidation and corruption, it cannot be matter of surprise, that the patriotic intentions of the soldiery were turned aside. While Peseé, the governor, also an alien, was occupied in cutting ditches at the entrance of the city, and adopting other means of defence, consecrated emissaries were sent to tamper with the troops at Ordenes. In addition to the means so successfully employed at Santiago by these persons, they persuaded the non-commissioned officers and part of the men, that Porlier really contemplated an attack on their fellow-soldiers of the grenadier battalion. They could not have touched on a more vulnerable point; and there being no means of contradicting this absurd calumny, it spread with rapidity through the whole column, and thus led to their betraying the cause of freedom. The sergeants having assembled secretly about eight o'clock, one of them, named Chacon, expatiated on the enormity of drawing their swords against countrymen and friends; dwelling with particular emphasis on the horrors of civil war, and those other phantoms with which the priests had filled his imagination. He concluded, by declaring, that the only way to avoid the threatened

dangers, was to arrest the officers, and give them up to justice. So well had their spiritual advisers prepared the minds of these infatuated men to violate the oaths and protestations of fidelity made only three days before, that the proposal of Chacon, monstrous as it was, met with little opposition, and, after some further deliberation, he was from his seniority appointed to direct the meditated treason. A watch-word being fixed on, it was decided that a cordon of sentinels should be placed round the village, to prevent escape. Matters were thus arranged by half-past ten; when the sergeants sallied forth, headed by Chacon, and rushing into the inn where Porlier and his companions were still at table, called upon them to surrender, in the king's name. As the cry of "*Viva el Rey, y a las Armes!*" was heard outside, some moments before the traitors entered, it gave several of the officers time to seize their swords, and put themselves in an attitude of defence: a violent struggle ensued, during which a few pistol-shots were exchanged; when the general, perceiving that none of the soldiers appeared, it occurred to him that they were not privy to the design; he therefore leaped from a window, calling upon those around to follow; but sentries had also been planted close to the house, so that either to rally the men, or escape, became impossible. There being no alternative, the patriot chief and his companions yielded to their fate: most of the sergeants having formed a guard to watch the prisoners during the night, they were handcuffed, and marched to the dungeon of the Inquisition at Santiago on the following day.

The astonishment of Porlier and his officers at this inexplicable and untoward event, could only be exceeded by the joy it created amongst the priesthood of all classes and colours at Santiago,\* where the first ebullitions of joy and

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\* Santiago is the capital of Galicia; and has long been a grand focus of bigotry, superstition, and priestcraft. Besides the Inquisition, and its train of attendants, there are not less than thirty convents here, though the population does not exceed 25,000 souls. The tutelar saint, better known in England by the name of St. James of Compostella, has the reputation of gaining the battle of Clairgo against the Moors, in the eighth century; he is also said to have occasionally appeared in the skies after his death, particularly whenever a victory was achieved over the

self-congratulation were followed by a solemn thanksgiving, and chanting *Te Deum* in full choir; after which ceremony, a sermon was preached on the inevitable damnation attendant on rebellion!

News like the above was not long in reaching Corunna; and though it produced a very different sensation there, thousands having expressed the sorrow and shame caused by such an unexampled piece of treachery, the troops left to occupy the town were insufficient to make a stand, if ever so well disposed. Previous, however, to the authorities being reinstated, Don Antonio Peon, captain of infantry, forming part of the detachment, determined not to expose himself unnecessarily to the consequences of an arrest, prevailed on a considerable number to join him, and seizing a standard, the whole party marched out of Corunna to the sound of drums, just as the captain-general and the other functionaries were liberated from San Anton.

Such was the termination of an enterprise, to which its authors were driven by motives the most irresistible. It deserved a better fate; and, if successful, would have saved years of anguish, slavery, and suffering, to a generous people. Had Porlier not partaken so much of the sanguine temperament of his countrymen, and confided less in promises of support from persons surrounded by men bred in all the arts of hypocrisy and deception, he would not have advanced towards Santiago, but maintained his position at Corunna; thus affording sufficient time for the other provinces to rise, of which no doubt could be entertained, had the patriots been assured of success in Galicia.

The failure of Porlier is not amongst the least instructive lessons to be gleaned from the history of the last six years; nor was it thrown away on Quiroga and his heroic companions: taught wisdom by experience, they secured an impenetrable asylum in La Isla, and their glorious efforts were crowned with success.

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Saracenic invaders of Spain. Hence the popularity of his shrine; which has, however, greatly diminished of late years, but it is still one of the richest in the Peninsula, which sufficiently accounts for the immense number of both sexes who embrace the religious and monastic life at this place.

Conducted to Corunna in chains, under a strong escort, on the 25th, and shut up in the common receptacle for malefactors, no time was lost in commencing the trial of the patriot officers. Although every rule of justice required that a special commission should be named on this occasion, the person who had been employed for the prosecution of the *Liberales* received orders from St. Mara to prepare the act of accusation. An order to the same effect reached Corunna two days after from the court. This directed, that Porlier, and those of superior rank who had acted with him, should be tried, and their sentence put into execution, within the time prescribed by martial law. As to the subalterns and others, their trial was also to proceed; but the sentences were not to be carried into effect until the royal pleasure was known.

With the exception of his proclamation, manifesto, and some letters intended for various public bodies and individuals, upon whose co-operation he calculated, no documents of any importance were found amongst the papers of Porlier.\*

Agreeable to the gothic mode of legal procedure in Spain, Hiremon, the fiscal, prepared several interrogatories, which he read to the general in prison. The first of these, after recapitulating the treasonable acts of the prisoner, in raising the garrison of Corunna, and placing the authorities under arrest, accused him of marching to Santiago at the

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\* Although so short a time at El Carral and Ordenes, a number of letters were despatched by the general from both the places, in every direction, calling upon the authorities in different towns to proclaim the Constitution. Amongst the papers seized at Corunna, was found a note to his wife, dated at Ordenes just after his arrival, and of which the following is a translation.—“My dearest wife, You are, I trust, already at Corunna; nor ought you to be absent from it for an instant. I have got thus far, and shall to-morrow present myself before Santiago, where I hope something will be done, although there is not complete security: what I chiefly observe, is the excellent disposition of the peasantry. I understand they are cutting ditches, and taking other steps, to prevent our entrance into Santiago: we shall soon see the result of these matters. But do not be apprehensive of danger, as I shall run no risk without great probability of success. Adieu, my beloved. Write often, as I am most anxious to know how you are.”

head of an armed force, with intention to attack the troops stationed there. The conclusion of this interrogatory is no bad illustration of what an attorney-general of those days could say to prove his loyalty. It states, that "if the culprit still retains a particle of gratitude for the best of kings, Ferdinand the Seventh, he will instantly disclose his plans, and name his accomplices, so as that the innocent nation may escape the perilous consequences arising from his silence!"

To the above, Porlier replied, that so far from having conspired against the king, every possible respect was shewn for his sacred person, not only in addressing the soldiery, and when referring to him in the proclamation, but by proclaiming his name throughout Corunna on the morning of the 19th. With respect to the conspiracy, he had taken no part in it, since an officer and guard were placed over him to watch his conduct. Entreated to assume the command, on reaching Corunna he found the garrison in a state of complete insurrection; so that all he did, in such a crisis, was to prevent disorder and the effusion of blood: for which purpose, he cautioned the troops to maintain fidelity to the king, and observe the most exact discipline. As to the arrests, if not sanctioned by him, they would have been effected by the soldiers tumultuously. The fiscal was reminded of the respect shewn to the authorities when arrested, and the humanity of their treatment. The assertion of his intention to attack the garrison at Santiago is positively denied; in proof of which, no order to that effect had been given: on the contrary, every hostile appearance was avoided, even to there being no ammunition supplied. There was nothing, in fact, to induce a belief that such a measure ever entered his thoughts. With regard to those who were privy to, or concerned in, the rising, he expressed a hope that his majesty would be pleased to appoint some person who could hear what he had to say on the subject generally. As the authorities by whom his trial was instituted were also in power when the events in question occurred, they could not interfere without a violation of justice; being no less responsible than himself, if not much more so, from their having had the manage-

ment and command of the military. It would therefore be impossible for government to obtain a thorough knowledge of the business, if his request was refused. Finally, it was incompatible with every rule of law, to be at once prosecutor, culprit, accuser, and judge. In reply to a subsequent interrogation, the general read an article from the military ordinances, which bore particularly on his case, and expressly forbade a sentence passed by those concerned in the charge advanced against any individual, and whose own conduct was thereby liable to be called in question.

Notwithstanding the formidable objections of Porlier, the fiscal, who communicated them to the commission, was desired to proceed. Another of the prisoner's replies stated, that when invited by Castanera to accompany him to Co-runna, all the officers of the Lugo regiment were assembled to receive him: on his appearance, they exclaimed with one voice, that such was the cruelty of their treatment, and the hardship of their condition, that they found it impossible any longer to bear up against it; they had therefore resolved on executing the arrests,—to which end, a general understanding had been established with the garrisons of Ferrol, Vigo, and other places.

Don Jose Paredes having excused himself from becoming counsel for Porlier, on the plea of his being a member of the commission, his refusal was admitted on the 29th, when the objections of the prisoner were also formally set aside, and a resolution made to conclude the trial without further delay. The general was, however, allowed to select another counsel; and the fiscal was sent to notify the indulgence. Porlier took this opportunity of stating,—that he was degraded before any judgment had been pronounced; alleging, that, though labouring under such ill health and extreme debility, he had been thrown into a dungeon hitherto reserved for assassins and highway robbers; that he had been stripped half naked, and loaded with above fifty pounds weight of irons;\* a proof that the fiscal and

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\* According to one of the innumerable barbarisms of the old Spanish law, those accused of treason, murder, &c. are obliged to take off their clothing from the waist downwards.

commission had overlooked the fact of his holding the rank of a general officer. Were it not for these illegal aggravations, Porlier would have chosen Miramon to defend him; but as it was, he begged to name an old friend, Colonel Miranda; and ended the conversation by expressing a hope that the commission would allow him the rights and privileges accorded by the ordinances. Notwithstanding this unanswerable appeal, all he could obtain was a truckle bedstead and a straw mattress.

There being no probability of granting the general's request relative to the appointment of a person from the court to hear what he wished to communicate, he added the following particulars to his previous declarations on the 29th.—To afford a clearer idea of the insurrection and its real authors, and at the same time justify my own conduct, it should be recollected, that all the troops received pay on the 19th, without any funds having been drawn from the royal treasury for that purpose: hence it must follow, that Don Andres Rojo,\* the person who issued it, knew by whom the money was advanced; and as these funds were provided before my arrival at Corunna, the parties who supplied them were doubtless the original promoters of the rising. It is also notorious, that for some time before this event, the officers of the garrison at Ferrol openly refused to perform the duty there, in consequence of which a trial had been instituted. This circumstance furnishes a strong presumptive proof that they had an interest, and were even concerned in, the general wish of restoring the Constitution.

The last declaration of Porlier was made on the 1st of October. Its chief object was to reiterate his former request, that some one in the confidence of his majesty might be named, to hear what he had to disclose for the general good of his country. But as the commission had

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\* Although there is no doubt but that a considerable part of the money thus provided came from the patriotic fund collected amongst the members of the secret societies, Rojo's name deserves to be mentioned in the proud list of Spanish citizens who have sacrificed their all in support of liberty.

not thought fit to consult the king, he was now prepared to impart his final wishes to Peseo, the governor of Santiago; this application being equally unsuccessful, a third was made with no better effect.

The unwillingness manifested by the judges, at a time when such requests are scarcely ever denied, was attributed to a consciousness that Porlier had it fully in his power to compromise the principal authorities, if not themselves, as already intimated. One of the motives alleged by the officers and soldiers, for throwing off the yoke, was the peculation and plunder of the funds destined by government for the support of the army. They who knew the generous nature of Porlier, could not suspect him of any disposition to injure even his enemies; and from some circumstances which transpired a few hours before his death, the communication he wanted to make, only related to the perturbed state of the kingdom, the extent of the association in favour of freedom, and the consequent danger to the monarchy, if timely reform did not emanate from the proper source.

Although the act of accusation was drawn out on the night of the 30th, the commission did not assemble to examine the cause, and hear the defence, before the 2d of October. The latter was extremely concise, and altogether inadequate to the importance of the cause, or the means of the counsel, who probably felt the inutility of a more elaborate appeal in favour of one whose destiny seemed to have been previously sealed. No attempt was made to exculpate the prisoners. After admitting that the circumstance of Porlier's being seduced to commit the alleged crime did not evade the law, Miranda grounded his prayer for mercy on the distinguished services of his client during the late war, and solicited that the sentence might not be put into execution before the pleasure of his majesty was known: above all, he insisted on the necessity of allowing the general an opportunity of declaring those particulars which he considered as essential to the interests of the nation. The defence being concluded, it only remained to confirm and pronounce the judgment of the court. It was accordingly read; and merely stated, that the charges of treason

and rebellion having been fully proved, the prisoner was liable to the pains and penalties awarded in such cases: he was therefore sentenced to be publicly degraded, and to suffer death by hanging.

There being no appeal from this sentence, it was carried into effect on the following day at half-past eleven o'clock. The last and only act of indulgence solicited by the unfortunate general, was a remission of that part of the judgment which related to his being degraded; so that the victim was suffered to ascend the scaffold in plain clothes.

The firmness and dignity shewn by Porlier, from the moment of his arrest to the hour of execution, cannot be too much admired; particularly when we reflect on the excessive fatigue and anxiety attendant on his exertions between the 18th and 22d, not to mention the debilitated state of his health previous to the rising. His declarations were delivered with the utmost perspicuity and calmness. That his characteristic strength of mind did not fail him even to the last, is proved by a circumstance which took place the day before his execution. When the fiscal came to that part of the sentence where the word traitor occurred, the countenance of Porlier became suddenly flushed, and, darting a look of fire at Miramon, he exclaimed, "*Traidor! Diga usted, El mas fiel servidor de la patria!*"\*

Though the condemned hero had sufficient fortitude to spare his wife and himself the agonizing pangs of a final separation, he wrote to her frequently during the trial, and twice on the day before his execution. These letters were such as might be expected from one who felt much more regret on account of a woman to whom he was tenderly attached, than for his own fate. The last letter which he wrote to his wife, a little after midnight before the day of his execution, is as much distinguished for heroism as for connubial attachment. It was couched in the following terms:—"My beloved wife, The Almighty, who disposes of men according to his will, has deigned to call me to himself, in order to give me, in eternal life, that tranquillity and ease which I have not enjoyed in this world. We are

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\* "Traitor! Rather say, The most faithful servant of his country!"

all subject to this necessary condition of nature; and therefore it is useless to grieve when this hour approaches. On this account, I most tenderly beseech you to receive this last blow of the ill fate which has persecuted us, with the same tranquillity and security as I retain while writing this to you. Be not afflicted at the kind of death they inflict upon me; since it can dishonour only the wicked, but covers the good with honour and glory. I repeat to you, that if I take with me any consolation to the world of truth, it is that of being persuaded, that, obeying me at this moment as you have always done hitherto, you will be consoled, and resigned to the will of God, which is the supreme law of all mortals. In the sequel, you will receive my last will, which you will endeavour to fulfil as far as possible. Father Sanchez, who will be the bearer, a monk of our patron St. Augustine, will deliver you this, and will communicate to you verbally other things which I confide to him under confession. I again recommend you to conform to what I desire; since the contrary, besides being prejudicial to your safety, will not tend to the good of your soul. Adieu! Receive the heart of your husband.—*October 2d, one o'clock at night.*"

Conducted to the chapel, in which it is customary for those condemned to death to pass the three days' grace allowed previous to their execution, at seven o'clock on the evening of the 2d, Porlier dictated his will to a notary, who attended for this purpose, and gave dying injunctions with as much composure as if they had related to the most ordinary concerns of life. Having bequeathed whatever he had to leave to his wife, Donna Josefa Queipo de Llano, daughter of the house of Toreno, and named several individuals to whom he was desirous of being affectionately remembered, he addressed the notary in the following words: "I also enjoin, that, when circumstances permit, my ashes may be removed from the spot they are laid when I am dead, to one more agreeable to my wife; and being deposited in a plain cenotaph, she will cause the following inscription to be engraved on it, together with my age, and day of my death.—'Within are contained the remains of Juan Diaz Porlier, formerly a general in the armies of Spain.