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XLVI.
1814.

April.
Sir J. Hope
taken
prisoner.

quently the last in retiring; and before they could get out of this hollow way, the French came up within a few yards, and began firing. Sir John's horse was struck with three balls, and falling dead, brought his rider to the ground. Captain Herries and Lieutenant Moore dismounted to assist him, for his foot was under the dead horse; but the first of these officers was instantly brought down himself severely wounded, and the latter had his right arm shattered; the General was also wounded in the arm; and the French coming immediately up, made them all three prisoners. As they were carrying them to Bayonne, Sir John received a second and severe wound in the foot, from a ball which was supposed to come from his own piquets. Major-General Hay was in command of the outposts for the night; and, having just given directions that the church of S. Etienne should be defended till the last, he was killed shortly after the attack commenced. The enemy, having here a great superiority of numbers, got into the village toward the left, and obtained possession of the whole, except one house which Captain Foster of the 38th occupied with a piquet, and bravely maintained, though the greater part of his men were killed or wounded, till a brigade of the German Legion retook the village.

It had been supposed that the French would make it their main object to destroy the bridge, which would have been the only reasonable or justifiable object of such a sortie in that stage of the siege, when neither stores nor artillery were on the ground, nor the works commenced. To guard against this, Lord Saltoun had intrenched the convent of St. Bernard, and with great ability converted it into a respectable little fortress; and Colonel Maitland now formed the first brigade of guards on the heights above it, to charge the enemy in flank, should he advance toward the bridge. But, though their gun-boats came

down the river, and opened a heavy flanking cannonade, no attempt was made on the bridge by water; and it was soon perceived that they had as little intention of attacking it by land, their efforts being wholly directed against the centre of the countervallation opposite to the citadel. Major-General Howard now directed Maitland to support the right flank, and Major-General Stopford, with the 2d brigade of guards, to co-operate in recovering the ground between that flank and S. Etienne; that officer was soon after wounded, and the command of the brigade fell to General Guise.

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The night was very dark; but the French from time to time sent up blue lights from the citadel, obtaining light enough thereby to direct their guns, of which nearly 70 were constantly firing to support their attack. Some of their shells and fire-balls fell upon the depôt of fascines, and several houses also were set on fire by the same means. These partial illuminations made the darkness deeper in those places to which the light did not extend; and the guards when they approached the French line, could distinguish it only by the fire of musquetry from behind the hedges and walls. They were directed to lie down and wait till orders could be communicated to the Coldstream guards, under Lieutenant-Colonel Woodford, who were to charge simultaneously for recovering the old position in the hollow road. Meanwhile they kept close to the ground, for the eminence on which they were was so exposed to the citadel, that had they stood up for a few minutes they must have been nearly destroyed: but when the signal was given they rose and rushed forward; the Coldstream charged on the opposite flank at the same moment, and the contest on this part of the line was decided by this well combined attack: the French ran with all speed lest their retreat should be intercepted; and they suffered from a most destructive fire which both battalions poured upon them as they retired

*The French
repulsed.*

CHAP. over the glacis of the citadel. When also they were driven out of
 XLVI. St. Etienne by the German legion, a field-piece was brought to
 1814. bear on their columns, and thirteen rounds of grape and canister
 April. were fired at them with dreadful effect as they retreated down
 the great road into St. Esprit. The moon rose toward the close
 of the action; and, as day broke, French and English were seen
 lying on all sides, killed or wounded, and so intermixed, that
 there seemed to have been no distinct line belonging to either
 party. The loss was severe on both sides: on the part of the
 allies 143 were killed, 452 wounded, and 231 made prisoners;
 the loss of the French amounted to 913, of whom only twenty
 were prisoners.

During the short truce which took place on the outposts
 when the engagement was over, the British officers expressed
 their regret that so many brave men should thus uselessly have
 been sacrificed; and they were justly disgusted at the heartless
 levity with which the French officers affected to treat the affair,
 saying it had been nothing more than a *petite promenade militaire!*
 Under all circumstances it seemed indeed to have been planned
 less in a military spirit than with a feeling of bitter enmity;
 made as it was when the French had reason to know that the
 war was at an end, . . . and when, if it had been otherwise, no object
 but that of the immediate slaughter could be effected, there
 being no works to be destroyed, no cannon to be spiked; and
 when whatever loss might have been inflicted could not have
 been so great as to prevent or delay the operations of the siege.
 Major-General Colville, on whom the command devolved,
 landed his guns, and made preparations upon a scale, which, if
 hostilities had been renewed, would, in all human probability,
 in the course of a very few weeks have added Bayonne to the
 British conquests. But no new conquest, no farther victories
 were needed for the honour of the British name. The reputation

of the English soldiers had not been higher in the days of the Black Prince, nor that of a British commander in the days of Marlborough.

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Colonels Cooke and S. Simon made no tarriance in Toulouse, but hastened on to inform Marshal Soult of Buonaparte's deposition, and the consequent termination of the war. The Marshal discovered no willingness to acquiesce in the new order of things ; the information, he said, came to him without any character of authenticity, nevertheless, inasmuch as Lord Wellington seemed persuaded of its truth, he proposed an armistice, that he might have time to receive from the Emperor's government official advices, which might direct him how to act. When Colonel Cooke returned to Toulouse with this reply, Lord Wellington dispatched a second letter to Marshal Soult, saying, it appeared to him, that Colonel Simon had been sent to the French Marshal by the Provisional Government of France, just as Colonel Cooke had been to him by the British minister who was with the King of Prussia, both bearers of official intelligence ; nor could the truth of that intelligence be doubted, nor did it require proof. Without requiring his Excellency to come to a decision, whatever that might be, he himself, he added, must not depart from the line of conduct which the allied sovereigns had pursued in their negotiations at Paris ; but were he to consent to an armistice before his Excellency should have followed the example of his companions in arms, and declared his adhesion to the Provisional Government, he should be sacrificing the interest not only of the allies, but of France itself, whom it concerned so much to be saved from a civil war. Meantime Colonel S. Simon proceeded to Marshal Suchet, whom he found at Narbonne with about 12,000 men, all whom he could bring out of Spain. His last act in Catalonia had been to demolish the fortifications of Rosas ; Denia and Morella had capitulated ; he left

April.
Suchet and
Soult ac-
knowledge
the new go-
vernment.

CHAP. garrisons blockaded in Figueras, Hostalric, Barcelona, Tortosa,
 XLVI. Murviedro, and Peñiscola, in which latter place the governor
 1814. with his staff, and many others, perished by the explosion of a
 magazine. Marshal Suchet was far from approving the latter
 movements of Marshal Soult, and from his own dispatches had
 been led to believe that he could surely have maintained him-
 self at Toulouse. Upon Colonel S. Simon's arrival, he assembled
 his superior officers, laid the information before them, and with
 their unanimous consent sent in the adhesion of the army of
 Aragon and Catalonia. Soult had now no choice; the allies
 were moving against him ready to have acted if he had hesitated
 longer; yielding an unwilling consent, he then acknowledged the
 Provisional Government, and a convention for the suspension of
 April. hostilities was arranged.

April 19.

Thus was the war concluded, happily for all parties, even for the French, whom nothing but such a series of defeats could have delivered from the tyranny which their former victories had brought upon themselves. It was by the national spirit which had first shown itself in the Peninsula, by the persevering efforts of Great Britain in the peninsular war, the courage of her troops, and the skill of her great commander, that Buonaparte's fortune had been checked at its height, and succesfully resisted, till other governments were encouraged, and other nations roused by the example; and that power, the most formidable which had ever been known in the civilized world was then beaten down. The independence of Spain and Portugal had been triumphantly vindicated and secured; and if the civil liberties of both countries were not restored, and firmly established upon a sure foundation, the cause is to be found, not in any foreign influence exercised ill, nor in the perverse disposition, nor malignant designs of any individual or set of men, but in old evils which time had rendered inveterate,

for which there is no sudden cure, and which when it is attempted to remove them by the knife and the cautery must ever be rendered worse.

Ferdinand had returned from captivity with the belief in which he had been trained up, that by right of birth, and by the laws and customs of his country, he was an absolute King; and in this the great majority of the nation entirely agreed with him. But he had been accustomed to yield to circumstances which he could not control, feeling in himself neither the wish nor the strength to struggle against them; and had the general opinion been in favour of the new constitution, he would have submitted to it, as he had to his detention at Valençay, if with no better will, with the same apparent contentment, and the same convenient insensibility. Certain it is that he had no intention of overthrowing it when he arrived at Zaragoza: . . . “there are many parts of it,” said he, “which I do not approve; but if any opposition on my part were likely to cause the shedding of one drop of Spanish blood, I would swear to it immediately.” He soon found that this was not the national wish; that the people cared for the constitution as little as they understood it, that they execrated the *Liberales*, and hated the Cortes for their sake. That assembly, indeed, had acted toward all classes with such strange impolicy as to offend or injure all. The nobles, though the constitution gave them not that weight in the political scale, without which there can be no well-balanced monarchy, might nevertheless have submitted to it without repugnance, because they possessed no authority as an order under the old government: but their property had been attacked; and a sweeping decree had abolished those feudal rights and customs from which a large portion of their hereditary revenues was derived. The clergy might have acquiesced in the suppression of the Inquisition, if they had

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*Disposition
of Ferdi-
nand on his
return.*

*Impolitic
measures of
the Cortes.*

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not been required to proclaim the triumph of the *Liberales*, . . . a triumph whereby nothing was gained for toleration, death being still the punishment for any one who should dare dissent from the Roman Catholic faith. The monasteries might have been quietly reduced, as Pombal had begun to reduce them, without wrong to the existing communities, and without offence to the feelings or prejudices of the nation, simply by forbidding the admittance of new members: by suppressing them the Cortes not only made the monks and friars their enemies, but the people also, among whom the revenues of the former were expended, and over whom the latter exercised far greater influence than either the gospel or the laws. This measure, indeed, would have been impolitic, even if the whole expected profit to the treasury had accrued from it; but as a measure of finance it was worse than a failure. Purchasers could not be found for church property thus confiscated, in a country where the people revolted at this species of sacrilege; the estates, therefore, were administered for the government; and what with the excuses and opportunities which were afforded for mal-administration and speculation, it was generally found that the costs of management consumed the whole proceeds; whereas a regular impost might always have been levied upon the former possessors. The necessity of raising money to support the war was the plea for this suppression; yet the pay of the armies was always greatly in arrear; and it has been seen how much they suffered for want of proper clothing, and of sufficient food: such evils are always imputed to the government under which they exist; and as the Cortes had, in fact, assumed the government, the Cortes were as unpopular with the soldiers as with the great body of the people. Nothing but the army could support them if the King should refuse to take upon himself the yoke which they had prepared for him;

yet such was the infatuation of the *Liberales*, that one of their most influential members said the liberties of the country could never be safe if there were even four paid soldiers and a corporal in it; and another described the army as composed of privileged mercenaries and hired assassins.

Yet this party courted popularity; and while they declaimed in the hall of the Cortes fancied that they enjoyed it. The galleries were filled with their admirers; and they had active partizans who could at any time raise tumult enough out of doors to carry violent measures by intimidation. The *Serviles*, as they contemptuously called those who disapproved the new constitution, either wholly, or in any of its parts, were kept silent, some by prudence, others by this system of terror. One deputy ventured to say that Ferdinand, as soon as he arrived, ought to be acknowledged as being born to all the rights and privileges of an absolute King, and that the constitution ought therefore to be annulled. The indignation of the *Liberales* burst forth at this, and of the galleries also, for the persons who attended there had always a potential voice; the president thought it prudent to close the doors, lest the liberal mob should be brought in to take summary vengeance upon the indiscreet member: a vote for expelling him was passed, and orders given for commencing a process against him, upon a law passed in the preceding summer, by which any person who should affirm, either by word of mouth or by writing, that the constitution ought not to be observed, was to be punished with perpetual banishment, and the deprivation of all offices, pay, and honours. Another law had been passed, on the same day, declaring, that whoever should conspire to establish any other religion in Spain than the Catholic-Apostolic-Roman religion, or to make the Spanish nation cease to profess it, should be prosecuted as a traitor, and suffer death, the established law con-

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CHAP. cerning offences against the faith remaining in full force. It was
 XLVI. only by thus consenting to the persecution of religious opinions
 1814. that the *Liberales* could make the *Serviles* concur in a law which
 gave them authority to persecute for political ones!

“Happy,” said a journalist who spoke the sentiments of the ruling party, “happy will be the day when Ferdinand, having been restored to his faithful subjects, may be thus addressed: Here is your throne, preserved by the loyalty of your subjects; here is your crown, repurchased for you by the blood of Spaniards; here is your sceptre, which Spanish constancy replaces in your hands; here is your royal robe, purpled with the blood of thousands who have fallen that you might wear it! Peruse our history; inform yourself of all that the Spaniards have done for you, and never forget that to the Spanish people you owe every thing. Never forget that you are come to be the chief of a nation, the monarch of subjects who have abolished the vestiges of despotism! It is the law which orders; . . . the King is the executive magistrate. . . . But, that such a day of jubilee may arrive, King Ferdinand must return absolutely free, neither influenced by the tyrant of France, nor by Spaniards who are ignorant of the state of Spain, or who regard our institutions with dislike.” This was written before the overthrow of Buonaparte, and before Ferdinand’s enlargement, and perhaps before the *Liberales* themselves apprehended the consequence in which their own rashness must inevitably involve them. Indifferent spectators saw clearly that either the constitution must be modified, or that the King would make himself absolute again: and even now, if the *Liberales* had not been possessed with an overweening opinion of their own strength, such a modification might have been effected as would have given the Spaniards all the liberty which they were willing to receive, and, indeed, all the political freedom which those who had the