

remain in Spain. In the course of that time, if proper measures had been taken, supplies might have been forwarded from the farthest part of Andalusia; but not a mule or cart, or article of provision of any kind had been obtained under any order from, or arrangement made by, the government. Lord Wellington applied for a remount of only an hundred mares, which could not be used in the Spanish cavalry, because they used stallions; even these he could not procure, nor did he receive an answer to his application. It was now become absolutely necessary to withdraw, and on the 18th of August, he requested Marquis Wellesley to give notice to the government that he was about so to do. "Since the 22d of last month," said he, "the horses have not received their regular deliveries of barley, and the infantry not ten days bread. I have no doubt the government have given orders that we should be provided as we ought to be, but orders are not sufficient. To carry on the contest to any purpose, the labour and service of every man and of every beast in the country should be employed in the support of the armies; and these should be so classed and arranged as not only to secure obedience to the orders of the government, but regularity and efficiency in the performance of the service. Magazines might then with ease be formed, and transported wherever the armies should be stationed. But as we are now situated, 50,000 men are collected upon a spot which cannot afford subsistence for 10,000, and there are no means of sending to a distance to make good the deficiency: the Junta have issued orders, which, for want of arrangement, there are no persons to obey; and the army would perish here, if I were to remain, before the supplies could arrive."

Prepared as both the Spanish government and general ought to have been for such a determination, both manifested the greatest astonishment when it was announced. Eguia wrote to

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Correspondence with Eguia and Calvo.

CHAP. Lord Wellington, repeating his protestations, that he should have
XXV. every thing which he required, and that the Spaniards should go
1809. without any thing, rather than the British should be in want.
August. “An English commissary,” he said, “should reside at Truxillo,
who should have a key of the magazines, and take the proportion
for the British army, though his own should perish. If,” he con-
tinued, “notwithstanding these conclusive protestations, the Bri-
tish General persisted in marching into Portugal, it would be ap-
parent that other causes induced him to take that step, and not the
want of subsistence.” Upon this insulting assertion, Lord Wel-
lington informed Eguia that any farther correspondence between
them was unnecessary. He entered, nevertheless, into a sufficient
explanation of the real state of affairs. The magazines of Trux-
illo, according to a return sent by Eguia himself, did not contain
a sufficiency to feed the British army alone for one day. No
doubt was entertained of the exertions of the Spanish General,
nor of his sincerity. “The deficiencies,” said Lord Wellington,
“arise not from want of orders of your Excellency, but from the
want of means in the country, from the want of arrangement in the
government, and from the neglect of timely measures to supply
the wants which were complained of long ago.” A letter from
Calvo to Lord Wellington implied the same suspicion concerning
the motives of his retreat as Eguia had done, though in more
qualified terms. This member of the Junta came forward with
something more specious than vague promises and protestations.
“He bound himself,” he said, “to provide the army, within three
days, with all the rations which it might require; and within fif-
teen days to have magazines formed in places appointed by the
British General, containing all the articles which the army could
consume in one or two months; and to provide also carts and
mules, both of draft and burthen, sufficient for the transport of
these magazines.” He then protested that 7000 rations of bread,

50,000 pounds of flour, 250 *fanegas* of barley, 50 of rye, 100 of wheat, and 60 *arrobas* of rice were ready, with means of transport for them, and before the morrow noon would reach the British army in their present position. “My activity,” said Calvo, “shall not rest until continual remittances of the same articles prove that my promises deserve to be confided in; and if there were in your Excellency’s intention any disposition to alter your purpose of retreat, I am certain I should obtain the satisfaction of hearing your Excellency yourself confess that I had surpassed your hopes.” At the time when Lord Wellington received this letter, he had in his possession an order dated only five days back, and signed by this very member of the Supreme Junta, ordering to the Spanish head-quarters, for the use of the Spanish army, all the provisions which the British commissary had provided in the town of Guadalupe and its neighbourhood. Well, therefore, might he reply to him, that he could have no confidence in his assurances. “As for the promise,” said he, “of giving provisions to the British army to the exclusion of the Spanish troops, such a proposal can only have been made as an extreme and desperate measure to induce me to remain in Spain; and were it practicable, I could not give my consent to it. The Spanish army must be fed as well as the British. I am fully aware,” he continued, “of the consequences which may follow my departure, though there is now no enemy in our front; but I am not responsible for them, whatever they may be. They are responsible who, having been made acquainted with the wants of this army more than a month ago, have taken no effectual means to relieve them; who allowed a brave army, which was rendering gratuitous services to Spain, and which was able and willing to pay for every thing it received, to starve in the midst of their country, and be reduced by want to a state of inefficiency; who refused or neglected to find carriages for

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CHAP. removing the officers and soldiers who had been wounded in their
 XXV. service, and obliged me to give up the equipment of the army
 1809. for the performance of this necessary act of humanity." On the
 August. following day Lord Wellington began his retreat in the direction
 Aug. 20. of Badajos.

*Marquis
 Wellesley
 proposes a
 plan for
 supplying
 the armies.*

He halted at Merida, and eight days after his departure, being then four marches from Xaraicejo, he found none of the supplies on the road which had so confidently been promised. Having, however, been able to separate his troops, and being out of reach of Eguia's army, he now procured regular supplies. Marquis Wellesley meantime had been indefatigable in pressing upon the government the necessity of a regular plan for provisioning the armies; and he found, upon investigation, that orders enough had been issued, but no means had been employed either to enforce the execution of those orders, or to ascertain in what respects they had failed, or what were the causes either of their total failure or of their partial success. No magazines or regular depots had been established, no regular means of transport provided, nor any persons regularly appointed to conduct and superintend convoys, under the direction of the general commanding the army; nor had any system been adopted for drawing from the more fertile provinces, by a connected chain of magazines, resources to supply the deficiency of those poorer countries in which the army might be acting. At the solicitation of the Junta, Marquis Wellesley delivered in a plan for remedying these evils. It was less easy of execution in Spain than it would have been in England, where the system of our stage-coaches and waggons has disciplined a great number of persons in the detail of such arrangements; yet, with due exertions on the part of government, it might speedily have been established. Two days elapsed, and no notice was taken of the proposal; he requested a reply, and after two days more

Garay put into his hand a long string of regulations for the internal management of the magazines when they should have been formed. Marquis Wellesley again anxiously inquired whether the Junta were disposed to adopt the plan which he had formed at their request, and whether any steps had been taken for carrying it into effect? At length, after it had been nine days in their hands, he was informed that they assented to it, . . . but this was all; it was a mere verbal assent, and no measures whatever were taken for beginning arrangements of such urgent necessity. The government at the same time expressed its confidence that the British army would now rejoin the Spaniards, and make a forward movement against the enemy. Marquis Wellesley suspected some of the Junta of treason. "This proposition," said he to his government, "accords with the general tenor of those professions of zeal for active war, which have particularly characterized the declarations of the Junta since the army has been deprived of the means of movement and supply. Far from affording any just foundation of confidence in their intentions, such declarations of activity and enterprise, unaccompanied by any provident or regular attention to the means and objects of the war, serve only to create additional suspicions of ignorance, weakness, or insincerity. No person acquainted with the real condition of the British and Spanish forces at this time, could reasonably advise a forward movement against the enemy, with any other view than the certain destruction of the allied armies."

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The conduct of the Junta gave strong grounds for such a suspicion. The real cause which had checked the progress of a victorious army, and finally reduced it to a state unfit for service, could not be concealed; public opinion loudly imputed this evil to the negligence of government, and the government endeavoured, by ungenerous artifices, to divert the general in-

His ill opinion of the Spanish government.

CHAP. XXV. dignation. Rumours were set afloat that the real cause of the retreat of the British army was very different from the assigned one; they had not fallen back upon Portugal because there had been any deficiency either in their means of supply or of transport, but because of certain political considerations, inconsistent with the security and honour of Spain, and with the good faith of Great Britain. Demands, it was whispered, had been made in the King of England's name, for the cession of Cadiz, of the Havannah, and even of the whole island of Cuba; changes had been required in the form of the Spanish government, as preliminary conditions to the farther operations of the British troops in Spain, and Lord Wellington had retreated only because these demands were refused. These reports, which, if not invented by the government, certainly were not discountenanced by them, were absolutely and entirely false; nothing had been asked from Spain except subsistence for the army employed in her defence. Marquis Wellesley, however, though he perceived the criminal misconduct of the government, and though he affirmed that in the last campaign no rational motives could be imagined for the conduct of some of the generals and officers, unless it were supposed that they concerted their operations with the French instead of the British general, did justice to the people of Spain. "Whatever insincerity or jealousy towards England existed, was to be found," he said, "in the government, its officers, and adherents; no such unworthy sentiment prevailed among the people." They had done their duty, and were still ready to do it; and, notwithstanding the vexations which he experienced, and the alarm and even ill-will which the retreat of the British excited, he remembered, as became him, that the cause of Spain and England was the same: while, therefore, he expressed his opinion that the Cortes ought to be assembled, and a more efficient government formed than that of so ill-constituted and

anomalous a body as the Junta, he listened willingly to every suggestion for employing the British troops in any practicable manner. Might it not be possible, it was said, for them to take up a position on the left bank of the Guadiana, occupying Merida as an advanced post, their right at Almendralejo, and their left extending toward Badajoz? Portugal might be covered by this position; Seville protected at the same time, and a point of support given to the left of the Spanish army, which should in that case be cantoned in Medellin, Don Benito, and Villa Nueva de la Serena.

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This plan the Marquis proposed to his brother; but that able general was of opinion that the Guadiana was not defensible by a weaker against a stronger army, being fordable in very many places, and affording no position. The Spanish army, he thought, was at that time in the best position in that part of the country, one which they ought to hold against any force that could be brought against them, if they could hold any thing; while they held it they covered the Guadiana effectually, and their retreat from it was always secure. He, therefore, recommended that they should send away the bridge of boats which was still opposite Almaraz, and remain where they were as long as possible. For the British army, Lord Wellington said, he saw no chance at present of its resuming offensive operations; and he desired that no hopes might be held out to the Junta of any farther co-operation on his part with the Spanish troops, which in their present state were by no means to be depended on. He saw the difficulty to which this determination might reduce the Spanish government; their army might be seized with a panic, run off, and leave every thing exposed to instant loss. All he could say to this was, that he was in no hurry to withdraw from Spain; he wanted to refresh his troops; he should not enter Portugal till he had heard Marquis Wellesley's sentiments; if he did enter it he should go

Lord Wellington objects to taking a position on the Guadiana.

CHAP. no farther than the frontier, where he should be so near, that the
 XXV. enemy, unless in very great force, would not venture across the
 1809. Guadiana, leaving the British army upon their flank and rear ;
 August. in fact, therefore, he should be as useful to Spain within the Por-
 tugueze frontier as upon the Guadiana, and even more so, because
 the nearer he went to Portugal, the more efficient he should be-
 come. The best way to cover the Guadiana and Seville, was by a
 position on the enemy's flank.

*Alburquer-
 que appoint-
 ed to the
 command in
 Extrema-
 dura.*

As an inducement to Lord Wellington to remain, and co-
 operate with the Spanish army, the Junta proposed to place the
 corps which they designed to leave in Extremadura under his
 command. This was to consist of 12,000 men, a number in-
 adequate to the service for which they were required ; but the
 true reason was perceived by the British General ; he had by
 this time had ample opportunities of discovering that the Junta,
 in the distribution of their force, did not consider military de-
 fence and military operations so much as political intrigues
 and the attainment of trifling political objects. The Junta of
 Extremadura had insisted that Alburquerque should have the
 command in their province ; the government was weak enough
 in authority to be obliged to yield this, and weak enough in
 judgement to diminish as far as possible the army which they
 unwillingly entrusted to this envied and most ill-treated noble-
 man. Lord Wellington, who could not have accepted the com-
 mand unconditionally without permission from his own court,
 declined it altogether under present circumstances, as being in-
 consistent with those operations which he foresaw would soon
 become necessary for the British army. He had intelligence
 that a council of war held at Salamanca had recommended an
 attack upon Ciudad Rodrigo : the loss of that place would cut
 off the only communication which the Spanish government had
 with the northern provinces, and would give the French secure

possession of Old Castille, and probably draw after it the loss of Almeida. It would, therefore, be incumbent upon him to make exertions for relieving Ciudad Rodrigo. The cabildo of that city, just at this time when Lord Wellington was contemplating their approaching danger, and how best to succour them, gave an example of the spirit which too many of these provincial authorities displayed toward the British army. 100,000 pounds of biscuit had been ordered there, and paid for by a British commissary; and when Marshal Beresford sent for it, that it might be deposited in the magazines at Almeida, the cabildo seized 30,000 pounds of this quantity, upon the ground that debts due to that city by Sir John Moore's army had not been paid, . . . although part of the business of the commissary who was sent to Ciudad Rodrigo was to settle these accounts, and discharge the debts in question.

This was a specimen of that ill-will towards England which prevailed in many places among persons of this rank; and Marquis Wellesley perceived that such persons, if not favoured by the government, were certainly not discountenanced. The same spirit was manifested but too plainly by the persons employed about Cuesta's army. While they were professing that the English army should be served in preference to their own people (even to the exclusion of them, if needful), they never offered to supply a single cart or mule, or any means of transport from their own abundance. Lord Wellington, for want of such means, was compelled to leave his ammunition behind him, and then no difficulty was found in transporting it to the Spanish stores. No difficulty was found in transporting the bridge of boats from Almaraz to Badajoz; yet if these means of transport, with which the Spanish army was always abundantly provided, had been shared with the British army, many of the difficulties under which it suffered would have been relieved, and its separation, says Lord Wellington, certainly would not

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*Lord Wel-
linton
withdraws
to Badajoz.*

CHAP. have taken place when it did. The distress which his men
 XXV. suffered would not have been felt in an equal degree by the
 1809. French, or by any people who understood how to manage their
August. food. Meat they had always in sufficiency, and their chief want
 was of bread, . . they were not ingenious enough to make a com-
 comfortable meal without it, though flour or rice was served out in
 its stead. But the want of food for the cavalry, and of means
 of transport, which actually rendered the British army inefficient,
 could not be remedied by any dexterity of the men, or any fore-
 sight of the general, and is wholly imputable to the conduct of
 the Spanish generals and the Spanish government. Spain was
 grievously injured by this unpardonable misconduct. The En-
 glish ministry were at this very time proposing to increase Lord
 Wellington's force to 30,000 men, provided the supreme com-
 mand were vested in the British general, and effectual arrange-
 ments made for their supply. But in the present state of things,
 both the Marquis and his brother perceived that any co-operation
 with the Spanish armies would only draw on a repetition of the
 same disasters. The intent was therefore abandoned, and Lord
 Wellington at the beginning of September proceeded to Badajoz,
 stationing his army, part within the Portugueze frontier, and
 part on the Spanish territory, in a position which would menace
 the flank and rear of the French if they advanced toward An-
 dalusia.

*Expedition
 to Walche-
 ren.*

While the allied armies were thus rendered inefficient, not
 by the skill or strength of the enemy, but by the inexperience
 and incapacity of the Spanish authorities, the mightiest force
 that had ever left the British shores was wasted in a miserable
 expedition to the Scheldt, and upon objects so insulated, and
 unimportant at that crisis, that if they had been completely
 attained, success would have been nugatory. Had that force
 been landed in the north of Germany, as the Austrian govern-