

purpose ; for in fact, so far were the Spanish people from regarding the interference of Great Britain with jealousy, that they were disappointed because their ally did not interfere more frequently, and with more effect. Marquis Wellesley, of whom it had been said by Mr. Whitbread that he would, if opportunity should offer, take Spain and Portugal as Buonaparte had done, had now an opportunity of showing in what manner he thought himself bound to act by a government, which he knew to be weak, and suspected to be treacherous. At the very time when this foul imputation was brought against him in parliament, he gave to that government just so much information of its danger, as, without compromising the safety of any persons concerned, enabled the Junta to prevent the intended insurrection.

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The general wish was less for the convocation of the Cortes, than for the establishment of a regency, from which more unanimity and more vigour was expected, than from the present divided council. The people of Cadiz said the fate of Spain was in Marquis Wellesley's hands, that he ought to remove the Junta, and establish an energetic government. Those persons who respected hereditary claims would have had the Archbishop of Toledo appointed regent, as being the only Bourbon in the country : but he was young ; and what weighed against him more than the want of either talents or character, was, that he was believed to be governed by his sister, the wife of Godoy. Others looked to Romana, knowing his dislike to the Junta, and hoping that he would assume the government himself, or intrust it to able hands. Another project was to appoint both these personages regents, with the Duke del Infantado, and two other colleagues. It was thought that the army would gladly have seen the supreme authority vested in one of their own body, either Romana or Infantado. But both these noblemen were free from any such ambition ; and Montijo, who was always

CHAP. intriguing for power, was so well known, that he was the last  
 XXV. person whom any party would have trusted.

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*Commission  
 appointed by  
 the Junta.*

The warning which had thus been given was not lost upon the Junta, and they attended to the representations which accompanied it; they knew their weakness, and perceived their danger; admitted that the existing government was not suited to the state of affairs, and nominated a commission for the purpose of inquiring in what manner it might best be replaced. Romana was included in the commission, and upon this occasion he delivered in a paper, which, if they had required additional proof of his hostility, and their own unstable tenure, would amply have afforded it. "There were three cases," he said, "either of which ought to produce a change in the system of a government: When a nation, which ought only to obey, doubts the legitimacy of the authority to which it is to submit; when such authority begins to lose its influence; when it is not only prejudicial to the public weal, but contrary to the principles of the constitution. The existing government was objectionable upon all these grounds: it was founded upon a democratic principle of representation, inconsistent with the pure monarchical system of Spain, and with the heroic loyalty of the Spaniards, and which, if it continued, would subvert the monarchy. As often as he meditated upon this subject, he doubted the lawfulness of the existing government; and this opinion was general in the provinces through which he had passed. Among the services which he had endeavoured to perform for his king and country, it was not the least that he had yielded obedience to the orders of this government, and made the constituted authorities in Leon, Asturias, and Galicia do the same; considering this absolutely necessary to preserve the nation from anarchy. A government, though illegal, might secure the happiness of the people, if it deserved their confidence, and they respected its authority; but the exist-

*Romana's  
 address.  
 Oct. 4.*

ing government had lost its authority. The people, who judge of measures by the effects which they see produced, complain that our armies are weak for want of energy in the government; that no care has been taken for supplying them; that they have not seen the promised accounts of the public expenditure, and how the sums which have arrived from America, those which our generous allies have given, the rents of the crown, and the voluntary contributions, have been expended: they look in vain for necessary reforms; they see that employments are not given to men of true merit, and true lovers of their country; that some members, instead of manifesting their desire of the public good, by disinterestedness, seek to preserve their authority for their own advantage; that others confer lucrative and honourable employments on their own dependents and countrymen; that for this sole reason ecclesiastical offices have been filled up, the rents of which ought to have been applied to the necessities of the state; that that unity which is necessary in the government, is not to be found, many of the Junta caring only for the interests of their particular provinces, as if they were members of some body different from that of the Spanish monarchy; that they had not only confirmed the military appointments made by the provincial Juntas, without examining the merits of the persons appointed, but had even assigned recompences to many who were destitute of all military knowledge, having never seen service, nor performed any of those duties which were confided to them; that the Junta, divided into sections, dispatched business in matters altogether foreign to their profession, and in which they were utterly unversed, instead of referring them to the competent and appropriate ministers; that horses taken from their owners, instead of being sent to the armies, were dying for hunger on the dry sea-marshes; finally, that many of the most important branches of administration were in the hands of men, suspicious, because of their conduct from the commence-

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CHAP. ment of the public misfortunes, and because they were the  
 XXV. creatures of that infamous favourite, who had been the author  
 1809. of all the general misery. Such," said Romana, "are the com-  
 plaints of the people: there is but one step to disobedience;  
 the enemy will profit by the first convulsion, and anarchy or  
 servitude will then be the alternative."

The Marquis then stated, that the time for which some provinces had appointed their representatives to the Junta was expired; that others had empowered them not to exercise the sovereign authority, but to constitute a government which might represent the monarch: in neither case could these provinces be expected to acknowledge an authority which they had never conferred. The commission, he proceeded to say, had proposed that the Junta should reduce itself to five persons, in whom the executive power should be vested; and that in rotation each member of the existing body should enter into this supreme executive council, which should also preside over the Cortes when it was assembled. This project discovered the love of power in the Junta more unequivocally than any other part of their conduct. What Romana proposed in its stead was as prudent in itself as it was inconsistent with his previous positions. After maintaining that the powers of the existing government were from the first illegal, and that even such as they were, they had, for part of the members, expired, he recommended nevertheless that this government should, as representing legitimately or illegitimately the Cortes, appoint a regent, or a council of regency, consisting of three or of five persons, especially advising, as a proof of generosity and patriotism, that they should nominate none of their own body. A Junta should be formed, under the title of the Permanent Deputation of the Realm, to represent the Cortes till the Cortes should be assembled; it should consist of five members and a procurador-general, and one of these members should always be chosen from their Ame-

rican brethren, as forming an integral part of the nation. But the Cortes should be assembled with as little delay as circumstances would permit, and then no laws should be passed, or contributions imposed, without its consent. "If," said he, "I have in some cases connected the supreme power with the nation, I have done no more than revive the constitutional principles of the Spanish monarchy, which have been stifled by the despotism of its kings and their ministers." However hostile to the principles of civil liberty the first positions of Romana appeared, the most zealous friends of freedom might have been contented with his conclusions.

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"Ought we," said he, "to fear that an adventurer, who usurps the throne of Ferdinand, should appear among us, if we had a government like this, emanating from the consent of the people, from submission to the true God, and from the necessity of our mournful and perilous situation? Would our armies then be defective in numbers, and in subordination and discipline? would they be so filled with ignorant and cowardly officers, so unprovided with food, so irregularly paid, and so destitute of all equipments? would men be appointed generals, because they would support the persons who appointed them, or because they knew how to command an army and how to save the country? With such a government, the nation would have invincible armies, the armies would have generals, the troops would be officered, and the soldiers would learn subordination and discipline. When Spain shall see that auspicious day, I shall think it the first day of her hope, and the most happy of her glorious revolution. Such," he continued, "is my opinion; but I ought not to forget that I have publicly controverted it by my actions. For who sustained your sovereign authority in the army and province which I governed? Gallicia, whom didst thou obey? Didst thou respect in me any power but that of the Central Junta, or did I consent that thou shouldst separate thyself from

CHAP. a government which I was sanctioning by my own obedience?  
XXV. Asturias, didst not thou see the powerful arm upraised which  
1809. thou hadst implored so earnestly, and the blow of its power fall  
upon a Junta, which, after having acknowledged the sovereignty  
of the Central, and received from it succours, of which my  
soldiers, naked and exhausted, were in want, domineered like a  
despot, and had even disobeyed the express will of our King,  
D. Ferdinand? Nevertheless," said he, addressing the Central  
Junta, "you rewarded this scandalous disobedience; and re-  
moved me covertly from the command, in order that guilty  
Spaniards might be honoured with the greater distinction. My  
opinions were the same then that they are now; but circumstances  
imperiously required a government, and any government is better  
than none. Then it was my duty to obey; now I should not  
perform what is due to my character, if I did not declare what  
I believe to be required for the salvation of my country. How  
indeed should I be silent; how should I suffer the fire of pa-  
triotism to be extinguished, seeing the sacrifice of so many vic-  
tims in our glorious cause; faithful wives murdered with their  
daughters, after the most foul and unutterable outrages; nuns  
driven from their cloisters, some wandering about, many more  
the prey of lustful impiety; ministers of the altar forced from the  
sanctuary; temples turned into stables and dens of uncleanness;  
towns reduced to servitude; opulence to squalid beggary; armies  
composed of the bravest spirits of the nation, which have dis-  
appeared in the hottest struggles of their native land, consumed  
by hunger, naked, and destitute; seeing, in fine, that such re-  
venues and the liberal donations of Spain and America have  
not even supplied the first necessities of the soldier? How could  
I remain a tranquil spectator of such great and mournful ob-  
jects, and not think them superior to the nearest personal in-  
terest, to our self-love, and to our very existence? As a Span-  
iard," he concluded, "I am ready to suffer a thousand deaths

in defence of our liberty ; and in my rank I have rendered homage to the descendant of the Pelayos, the Jaymes, and the Garcias. As a general, I will join myself to the last soldier who shall have resolution to revenge his country in the last period of her independence ; but as a representative of the nation, I must be excused from occupying that distinguished place, unless a legitimate government be immediately established, which foreign powers will not hesitate to acknowledge, which will represent our sovereign, and which will save a people who are resolved to die for their God, for their king, and for the happiness of their posterity."

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It is proof of full political freedom in the Spanish press at this juncture, that this paper should have appeared, being little short of a declaration of hostility against the existing government. But though the high monarchical principles with which Romana began his manifesto displeased the democratic party, and the glaring inconsistency of his proposal weakened the effect which his authority might otherwise have produced, the government felt the necessity of doing something to conciliate the nation ; they determined to convoke the Cortes, and announced the resolution in a paper which may be considered as their official apology. In this paper, without directly referring to Romana's charges, they replied to them. "Spaniards," said they, "it has seemed good to Providence that in this terrible crisis you should not be able to advance one step towards independence, without advancing one likewise toward liberty. An imbecile and decrepit despotism prepared the way for French tyranny. Political impostors then thought to deceive you by promising reforms, and announcing, in a constitution framed at their pleasure, the empire of the laws, . . . a barbarous contradiction, worthy of their insolence. But the Spanish people, that people which before any other enjoyed the prerogatives and advantages of civil

*Reply of the  
Junta.*

*Oct. 28.*

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liberty, and opposed to arbitrary power the barrier which justice has appointed, need borrow from no other nation the maxims of political prudence, and told these impudent legislators, that the artifices of intriguers and the mandates of tyrants are not laws for them. You ran to arms; and fortune rendered homage to you, and bestowed victory in reward for your ardour. The immediate effect was the reunion of the state, which was at that time divided into as many factions as provinces. Our enemies thought they had sown among us the deadly seed of anarchy, and did not remember that Spanish judgement and circumspection are always superior to French intrigue. A supreme authority was established without contradiction and without violence; and the people, after having astonished the world with the spectacle of their sublime exaltation and their victories, filled it with admiration and respect by their moderation and discretion.

“ The Central Junta was installed, and its first care was to announce, that if the expulsion of the enemy was the first object of its attention in point of time, the permanent welfare of the state was the principal in importance; for to leave it sunk in the sea of old abuses, would be a crime as enormous as to deliver you into the hands of Buonaparte; therefore, as soon as the whirlwind of war permitted, it resounded in your ears the name of the Cortes, which has ever been the bulwark of civil freedom: a name heretofore pronounced with mystery by the learned, with distrust by politicians, and with horror by tyrants; but which henceforth in Spain will be the indestructible basis of the monarchy, the most secure support of the rights of Ferdinand and his family, a right for the people, and an obligation for the government. That moral resistance, which has reduced our enemies to confusion and despair in the midst of their victories, must not receive a less reward. Those battles which are lost,



those armies which are destroyed ; those soldiers who, dispersed in one action, return to offer themselves for another ; that populace which, despoiled of almost all they possessed, returned to their homes to share the wretched remains of their property with the defenders of their country ; that struggle of barbarity on the one hand, and of invincible constancy on the other, present a whole as terrible as magnificent, which Europe contemplates with astonishment, and which history will one day record, for the admiration and example of posterity. A people so generous ought only to be governed by laws which bear the great character of public consent and common utility, . . . a character which they can only receive by emanating from the august assembly which has been announced to you."

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The Junta now betrayed that undue desire of retaining their power, which, though not their only error, was the only one which proceeded from selfish considerations. "It had been recommended," they said, "that the existing government should be converted into a regency of three or of five persons, and this opinion was supported by the application of an ancient law to our present situation ; but a political position which is entirely new, occasions political forms and principles absolutely new also. To expel the French, to restore to his liberty and his throne our adored King, and to establish a solid and permanent foundation of good government, are the maxims which gave the impulse to our revolution, are those which support and direct it ; and that government will be the best which shall best promote these wishes of the Spanish nation. Does a regency promise this security ? What inconveniences, what dangers, how many divisions, how many parties, how many ambitious pretensions within and without the kingdom ; how much, and how just, discontent in our Americas, now called to have a share in the present government ! What would become of our Cortes, our

CHAP. liberty, the cheering prospects of future welfare and glory which  
XXV. present themselves? What would become of the object most  
1809. valuable and dear to the Spanish nation . . . the rights of Fer-  
dinand? The advocates for this institution ought to shudder at  
the danger to which they expose them, and to bear in mind  
that they afford to the tyrant a new opportunity of buying and  
selling them. Let us bow with reverence to the venerable an-  
tiquity of the law ; but let us profit by the experience of ages.  
Let us open our annals and trace the history of our regencies.  
What shall we find? . . . a picture of desolation, of civil war, of  
rapine, and of human degradation, in unfortunate Castille.”

The weakness of this reasoning proved how the love of power had blinded those from whom it proceeded. The Junta wished to evade the law of the Partidas, because it did not specify a case which it could not possibly have contemplated, though the law itself was perfectly and directly relevant. They assumed it as a certain consequence of a regency, that the colonies would be disgusted ; that the Cortes would not be convoked ; that the rights of Ferdinand would be disregarded ; and that new opportunities of corruption would be afforded to France ; and they forgot to ask themselves what reason there could be for apprehending all or any of these dangers, more from a council of regency than from their own body. Romana's manifesto contained nothing more flagrantly illogical than this. Having thus endeavoured to set aside this project by alarming the nation, they admitted that the executive power ought to be lodged in fewer hands, and said, that with that circumspection, which neither exposed the state to the oscillations consequent upon every change of government, nor sensibly altered the unity of the body which it was intrusted with, they had concentrated their own authority ; and that from this time those measures which required dispatch, secrecy, and energy, would be directed

by a section formed of six members, holding their office for a time.

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The remainder of the manifesto was in a worthier strain. "Another opinion," they said, "which objected to a regency, objected also to the Cortes as an insufficient representation, if convoked according to the ancient forms; as ill-timed, and perhaps perilous in the existing circumstances; and in fine as useless, because the provincial Juntas, which had been immediately erected by the people, were their true representatives; but as the government had already publicly declared that it would adapt the Cortes, in its numbers, forms, and classes, to the present state of things, any objection drawn from the inadequacy of the ancient forms was malicious, as well as inapplicable. Yes, Spaniards," said they, "you are about to have your Cortes, and the national representation will be as perfect and full as it can and ought to be, in an assembly of such importance and eminent dignity. You are about to have your Cortes; and at what time, gracious God! can the nation adopt this measure better than at present? when war has exhausted all the ordinary means, when the selfishness of some, and the ambition of others, debilitate and paralyse the efforts of government; when they seek to destroy from its foundations the essential principle of the monarchy, which is union; when the hydra of federalism, so happily silenced the preceding year by the creation of the central power, dares again to raise its heads, and endeavour to precipitate us into anarchy; when the subtlety of our enemies is watching the moment of our divisions to destroy the state; this is the time, then, to collect in one point the national dignity and power, where the Spanish people may vote and call forth the extraordinary resources which a powerful nation ever has within it for its salvation. That alone can put them in motion; that alone can encourage the timidity of some, and restrain the ambition of