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IV.

1808.

April.

Apr. 2.

*Ferdinand
is urged to
go and meet
the Em-
peror.*

was carefully spread abroad ; fresh couriers were said to have arrived : . . the Emperor had left Paris, and might speedily be expected in Madrid. Packages came marked as his, his hat and his boots were shown, Murat gave minute directions concerning the Emperor's bath, and accepted a table of twenty covers for him, and another for his suite. Preparations were made for processions to do honour to the august visitor, and for balls at the Palace of the Buen Retiro. The soldiers were told that he would lose no time in putting himself at the head of his armies in Spain ; they were ordered to put themselves in a state to appear before him ; and in this proclamation, which appeared in a Madrid gazette extraordinary, the ominous notice was given, that they would immediately be supplied with cartridge. It was hinted that it would be a delicate compliment to the Emperor, if the Infante, Don Carlos, (Ferdinand's next brother,) would set off to receive him on the way. His highness, Murat said, could not fail to meet him before he had proceeded two days upon his road. This was readily agreed to, and the Infante, accompanied by the Duke del Infantado, departed upon this fatal journey. Having secured this victim, Murat endeavoured to entice Ferdinand himself into the snare : what had at first been hinted at, and advised as a mark of attentive consideration, was now pressed upon him as a thing of importance ; a measure which would be attended with the happiest consequences to himself and the kingdom. The young King hesitated ; it was more than courtesy required, more than an ally was entitled to expect, and perhaps he felt that it was more than a King of Spain ought to perform. Cevallos constantly advised him not to leave his capital till he had received certain intelligence that Buonaparte had passed the Pyrenees, and was approaching Madrid ; and even then he urged him to proceed so short a way, that it should not be necessary for him to sleep out of his capital more than a

single night. His advice prevailed for a time against the repeated solicitations of Murat and the ambassador Beauharnois. It became necessary, therefore, to introduce a new actor in this detestable plot.

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During the interval which elapsed before another agent could appear, Murat informed Cevallos, that the Emperor would be gratified if the sword of Francis I. were presented to him; and he desired that this might be intimated to the new King. It might be supposed that this was designed not merely to gratify the French nation, but also to lower Ferdinand in the opinion of the Spaniards, if Buonaparte and his agents had ever taken the nobler feelings of our nature into their calculation. But it was a mere trick for the Parisians; and neither they nor the tyrant himself felt that France was far more dishonoured by the circumstances under which the sword was recovered, than by the manner in which it had been lost. Accordingly this trophy of Pescara's victory, which had lain since the year 1525 in the royal armoury at Madrid, was carried in a silver basin, under a silken cloth laced and fringed with gold, to Murat's headquarters, in a coach and six, preceded by six running footmen, and under the charge of the superintendent of the arsenal; the grand equerry and the Duke del Parque following in a second equipage with the same state. A detachment of the guards escorted them, and the sword was presented by the Marquis of Astorga to Murat; he, it was said, having been brought up by the side of the Emperor, and in the same school, and illustrious for his military talents, was more worthy than any other person could be to be charged with so precious a deposit, and to transmit it into the hands of his Imperial Majesty. The people of Madrid passively beheld the surrender of this trophy; it was the act, however compulsory, of their lawful king, the king of their choice; the compulsion was neither avowed on the one

*The sword
of Francis
I. restored
to the
French.*

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*April.**Alarm of
the people.**Apr. 3.*

side, nor confessed on the other; from the imputation of beholding it with indifference, they amply redeemed themselves. Murat, upon receiving it, pronounced a flattering eulogium upon the Spanish nation, . . . that nation which he was in the act of plundering, and which he came to betray and to enslave.

In spite of the patrols and rounds, and military government, the suspicions of the people began to manifest themselves more and more, and their poor Prince was compelled, while he concealed his own fears, to exert his authority for suppressing theirs. By a new edict, it was enacted, that no liquors should be sold after eight in the evening; master-manufacturers and tradesmen were ordered to give notice to the police if any of their workmen or apprentices absented themselves from their work; fathers of families were enjoined to keep their children and domestics from mixing with seditious assemblies, and to restrain them by good example, good advice, and the fear of punishment. The King, it was said, was grieved to perceive that the imprudence or malevolence of a few individuals attempted to disturb the good understanding between the people of Madrid and the troops of his intimate and august ally; and, as this conduct arose, perhaps, from a ridiculous and groundless misapprehension of the intention of those troops who were quartered in that city, and in other parts of the kingdom, he affirmed, that his subjects ought to set aside every fear of that nature, for the intention of the French government accorded with his own; and so far from concealing any hostile prospects, or the slightest invasion, had no other object than the great measures requisite against their common enemy. If, however, any person, after this declaration, should be rash enough, either by words or actions, to aim at disturbing the friendship between the two nations, the guilty would be most rigorously punished, without remission and without delay.

In thus attempting to quiet the just alarm of the people, Ferdinand's ministers affected a security which they were far from feeling. Murat had fixed his head-quarters in Godoy's house, within two hundred steps of the palace; not like a visitor or the representative of a friendly power, but as the general of an army with his staff, a numerous guard, and pieces of field artillery, evidently brought there rather for use than for parade. He had ten thousand men in the city, and forty thousand surrounding it, horse and foot, in perfect discipline, and provided with every thing, as if they were the next hour to take the field. Their communication with Bayonne was kept open by thirty thousand more, all of whom, if they were needed, might within a few days arrive to support the main body of the army: there was Junot with a force estimated at thirty thousand men in Portugal, ready to co-operate; while of the Spanish army the flower had been sent under Romana to the North, some were under the French orders in Italy; the rest under their power in Portugal; there remained three thousand troops in Madrid, and a single Swiss regiment in Toledo, of which the fidelity was suspected. The privy council, rather than that it might be said they had made the inquiry than for any hope of profiting by it, demanded from the minister of war, Olaguer Feliu, an account of the number of troops in Spain, and their present situation. His answer was, that neither he, nor those in his department, had been permitted to meddle with these things; Godoy was the only person who knew; but that he believed, according to the general opinion, that except the scanty garrisons in the sea-ports and at S. Roque, the few troops which remained in the Peninsula were in Portugal under Junot.

A thought of the safest course in this exigence seems to have passed across the mind of Escoiquiz, .. that Ferdinand should escape from Madrid to Algeziras, where there were more troops

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*Perplexity
of Fer-
dinand and
his mini-
sters.*

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*Dispatches
from Izquierdo.*

than in any other part of his dominions, and from whence he could always command a sure retreat to Gibraltar. But this thought was speedily dismissed; resistance was never seriously contemplated: perplexed and helpless as Ferdinand and his counsellors were, they willingly deceived themselves as to the impending danger, and there came at this time dispatches from Izquierdo, the favourite's agent at Paris, which contributed greatly to deceive them. These letters stated the result of his conferences since he returned from Aranjuez, with Duroc, the grand marshal of the imperial palace, and with Talleyrand. An arrangement, they said, between the French and Spanish governments, might arrest the course of events, and lead to a solemn and definitive treaty upon these bases: 1st, That there should be a perfect reciprocity of free commerce for French and Spaniards in their respective colonies; each granting to the other this privilege, to the exclusion of all other nations. 2ndly, Portugal being possessed by France, France necessarily required a military road to that country; and the continual passage of troops through Spain, to garrison it and defend it against England, would be a constant occasion of expense, of disputes, and unpleasant consequences, which might all be avoided, France giving the whole of Portugal to Spain, and receiving an equivalent in the Spanish provinces adjacent to her own empire. 3rdly, The succession of the throne must be regulated once for all: and, lastly, there must be an offensive and defensive alliance. Upon these grounds, the French negotiators said, an arrangement might be concluded which would terminate happily the actual crisis between France and Spain. Izquierdo remarked, in transmitting these propositions, that when the existence and honour of the state and the government were thus matter of discussion, the decision must come from the Sovereign and his council; nevertheless, that his ardent love for his country had

compelled him to make some observations to Talleyrand upon each of these points. Upon the first he had observed, that to open the commerce of the Spanish Americas to France was in reality to divide them with that power; and, moreover, that unless the pride of England were effectually beaten down, such a measure would render peace more distant than ever, while till peace was made, the communications of both countries with those colonies would be cut off. He added, that even if French commerce were permitted, French subjects could not be allowed to settle there in derogation of the fundamental laws. With regard to Portugal, he reminded Talleyrand of the secret treaty of Fontainebleau, the sacrifice of the King of Etruria, the little that Portugal was worth, if separated from its colonies, and its utter uselessness to Spain: then for the cession of the Pyrenean provinces, he had dwelt upon the horror which the loss of their laws, liberties, privileges, and language, would excite in the people, and their abhorrence at being transferred to a foreign power; adding, that as a Navarrese himself he never could sign a treaty for ceding Navarre to France, and by such an act draw upon himself the execration of his countrymen. But Izquierdo, who was but too well assured that the French government demanded in such negotiations as these nothing which it was not determined to obtain, qualified his objections by hinting, that if there were no other remedy, a new kingdom or viceroyalty of Iberia might be erected, and given to the King of Etruria, or some other Infante of Castille. In reply to the point of succession, he stated what the King had commanded him to say, and in a manner which he supposed would counteract whatever calumnies had been invented by the malignant in one country, and infected public opinion in the other: . . . these expressions probably allude to Charles's intention of withdrawing from the government, and to the reports that Godoy was seeking to set

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 IV. of a Spaniard's feeling, he asked Talleyrand if it was expected
 1808. that Spain must be put upon a footing with the states of the Con-
 April. federacy of the Rhine, and obliged to furnish her contingent,
 covering this tribute with the decorous name of a treaty offensive
 and defensive? Being at peace with France, she needed not
 the help of France against any other enemy, as Teneriffe,
 and Ferrol, and Buenos Ayres, might bear witness. Izquierdo
 added, in his dispatch, that the marriage was a thing determined;
 that there would be no difficulty as to the title of Emperor, which
 the King was to take; that he had been asked whether the royal
 family were going to Andalusia, and replied according to the
 truth, that he knew nothing of their intentions. He had in vain
 solicited that the French troops should evacuate Castille, and he
 requested that not a moment might be lost in replying to this
 communication, for the least delay in concluding an arrange-
 ment might produce fatal consequences.

*The mini-
 sters de-
 ceived by
 these dis-
 patches.*

If these dispatches had been written for the purpose of de-
 ceiving those into whose hands they fell, they could not have
 been better adapted to that intent. Under Godoy the foreign
 minister knew as little concerning the state of foreign negotia-
 tions, as the minister at war knew of the state of the army; and
 when the bearer of these papers, finding the favourite in prison,
 delivered them to the new ministers, they thought they had now
 obtained an insight into the real cause of all the alarming move-
 ments of the French. Well might France think that demands
 so extravagant as these could only be obtained by force; and this
 would explain the seizure of the fortresses, and the advance of
 an army to Madrid. To men who had feared the whole evil
 which was intended, it was a relief to imagine that Buonaparte
 designed to take only the provinces beyond the Ebro, or perhaps
 only Navarre; propositions which would have roused the nation

to arms, were yet so far short of the danger they apprehended, that they contemplated the required cessions with something like complacency, and flattered themselves, that by a constant friendship toward France, and the feeling which the marriage would produce between the two courts, the terms might possibly be mitigated; . . . at all events, that by yielding for the present they should obtain the restitution of Barcelona and the other fortresses; and that what with the war which ere long must be renewed in the north, and the thousand chances to which the game of politics is subject, they should find opportunity when they had recovered strength, to throw off this temporary yoke.

Such were their dreams when General Savary was announced as envoy from the Emperor, and demanded audience in that capacity. Of course it was immediately granted. At this audience he professed that he was sent merely to compliment Ferdinand, and to know whether his sentiments with respect to France were conformable to those of the King his father; if it were so, the Emperor would forego all consideration of what had passed; would in no degree interfere with the interior concerns of the kingdom; and would immediately recognize him as King of Spain and of the Indies. To this the most satisfactory answer was given. It neither was, nor could have been the intention of the Prince's party to offend France; the only hope which they had hitherto entertained of regenerating their government, had been by allying themselves with Buonaparte, and availing themselves of his power. One of the charges which were current against Godoy among the people, was that of a secret understanding with the English, and that he intended to deliver Ceuta into their hands, and fly with all his treasures under their protection. Nothing could be desired more flattering than the language of Savary during this audience; and he concluded it by asserting that the Emperor was already near

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*Arrival of
General
Savary at
Madrid.*

CHAP. Bayonne, and on his way to Madrid. No sooner, however, had
 IV. this envoy left the audience-chamber, than he began, as if in his
 1808. individual capacity, to execute the real object of his mission. It
 April. would be highly grateful and flattering to his Imperial Majesty,
 he said, if the King would meet him on the road; and he asserted
 repeatedly, and in the most positive terms, that his arrival might
 be expected every hour.

*Ferdinand
 persuaded
 to go and
 meet Bu-
 naparte.*

The pressing instances of Savary upon this subject, while he repeatedly and positively asserted this falsehood, were accompanied with such intermixture of flattery and intimidating hints, as might best operate upon a man like Ferdinand placed in such circumstances. Murat failed not to enforce the same assurances, the same falsehoods, and the same menaces; and the ministers therefore determined upon consenting to what they dared not refuse. The immediate fear before their eyes was that Buonaparte might espouse the cause of the father against the son, in which case the least evils to be apprehended were the renovation of the Escorial-cause, the disinheritance of the Prince, and for themselves that condign punishment which in that case they would not only suffer, but be thought to have deserved. They knew how vain it was to rely upon the popular favour, even if the people of Madrid had not been under the French bayonets; it was but for Buonaparte to prevent the Queen from taking part in public business, and to remove Godoy from the government. Charles was not personally disliked, and his restoration would then be hailed with as much apparent joy as had lately been manifested for his deposal.

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This resolution was made public by Ferdinand in the form of a communication to the president of the council. "He had received," he said, "certain intelligence, that his faithful friend and mighty ally, the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, was already arrived at Bayonne, with the joyful and salutary

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purpose of passing through this kingdom, to the great satisfaction of himself (the King), and to the great profit and advantage of his beloved subjects. It was becoming the close friendship between the two crowns, and the great character of the Emperor, that he should go to meet him; thus giving the most sure and sincere proofs of his sentiments, in order to preserve and renew the good harmony, confidential friendship, and salutary alliance which so happily subsisted, and ought to subsist between them. His absence could last only a few days, during which he expected, from the love and fidelity of his dear subjects, who had hitherto conducted themselves in so praiseworthy a manner, that they would continue to remain tranquil; that the good harmony between them and the French troops would still be maintained; and that those troops should be punctually supplied with every thing necessary for their maintenance." On the same day he appointed his uncle, the Infante Don Antonio, president of the high council of government, as well, it was said, on account of the ties of blood, as because of the distinguished qualities with which he was endowed, to transact all pressing and necessary business which might occur during his absence. In this decree he stated, that he should go to Burgos, evidently implying an intention at that time of not proceeding farther.

Deceived, or fain to act as if he were deceived himself, Ferdinand thought to deceive his father. He wrote to him, saying, that a good understanding subsisted between the Emperor and himself, as General Savary had testified; and for this reason he thought it fit that his father should give him a letter for the Emperor, to congratulate him on his arrival, and assure him that Ferdinand's sentiments toward him were the same as his own. Charles, in reply, ordered the messenger to be told, that he was gone to bed, . . . being determined not to write such a letter unless he were compelled to it, as he had been to the abdication. The

*Ferdinand
sets out
from Ma-
drid.*