

CHAP. son, without any such testimonials, began, on the morning of  
 IV. the 11th of April, his ill-omened journey. Savary, affecting  
 1808. the most assiduous attention, solicited the honour of accompany-  
 April. ing him; . . he had just, he said, received information of the  
 Emperor's approach, and it was not possible that they should  
 proceed farther than Burgos before they met him. They reached  
 Burgos, and Buonaparte was not there, neither were there any  
 tidings of his drawing near. Savary, who had followed the  
 young King in a separate carriage, urged him to proceed to  
 Vittoria. Ferdinand hesitated; but the same protestations and  
 urgent entreaties on the part of the French envoy, and the same  
 anxiety and secret fear which had induced him to come thus far,  
 made him again consent; yet so reluctantly, that the French-  
 man, on their arrival at Vittoria, thinking it would be useless to  
 renew his solicitations, left him there, and continued his jour-  
 ney to Bayonne, there to arrange matters with his master for  
 securing the prey, who was now already in the toils. At Vit-  
 toria, Ferdinand received intelligence that Buonaparte had  
 reached Bourdeaux, and was on his way to Bayonne. In con-  
 sequence of this advice, the Infante Don Carlos, who had been  
 waiting at Tolosa, proceeded to the latter place, whither the  
 Emperor had invited him: he reached that city some days  
 before him; and when this modern Cæsar Borgia arrived there,  
 he found one victim in his power. It is said that Don Carlos  
 soon discovered the views of Buonaparte; and, having com-  
 municated his fears to one on whom he relied as a Spaniard,  
 and a man of honour, drew up, with his advice, a letter to Fer-  
 dinand, beseeching him, as he valued the independence of his  
 country and his personal safety, not to proceed to Bayonne;  
 but this person was in the tyrant's interest, and intercepted the  
 messenger.

While Ferdinand, meantime, was chewing the cud of re-

flection at Vittoria, without those opiates of falsehood and flattery which Savary had continually administered, D. Mariano Luis de Urquijo waited upon him: one of the persons who had suffered under Godoy's administration, and who had hitherto been regarded as one of the most enlightened Spaniards, and truest friends of his country. The new King had annulled the proceedings against him, and he now came to offer his homage and his thanks, and his advice in this critical position of affairs. He told the King's counsellors that Buonaparte certainly intended to extinguish the dynasty of the Spanish Bourbons; that the language of the *Moniteur* concerning the tumults at Aranjuez, the movement of his troops, the seizure of the fortresses, and the whole scheme of his policy, made this evident. Fearing and believing this, he asked them what they could propose to themselves from this journey? how they could suffer a king of Spain thus publicly to degrade himself by going towards a foreign state without any formal invitation, without any preparations, without any of the etiquette which ought in such cases to be observed, and without having been recognized as King, for the French studiously called him still Prince of Asturias? To these reasonable questions the poor perplexed ministers could only reply, that they should satisfy the ambition of the Emperor by some cessions of territory, and some commercial advantages. He made answer, that perhaps they might give him all Spain. The Duke del Infantado appeared to feel the force of Urquijo's remonstrances, but asked if it were possible that a hero like Napoleon could disgrace himself by such an action as this apprehended treachery. Urquijo answered, that both in ancient history and in their own they might find that great men had never scrupled at committing great crimes for great purposes, and posterity nevertheless accounted them heroes. The Duke observed, that all Europe, even France itself, would be shocked

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advice to  
Ferdinand  
at Vittoria.*

CHAP. at such an act ; and that Spain, with the help of England, might  
IV. prove a formidable enemy. To this Urquijo replied, that Europe  
1808. was too much exhausted to engage in new wars ; and that the  
April. separate interests and ambitious views of the different powers  
prevailed with each of them more than a sense of the necessity  
of making great sacrifices in order to destroy the system which  
France had adopted since her fatal revolution. Austria was at  
this time the only power capable of opposing Buonaparte, if  
Spain should rise against him ; but if Russia and Germany and  
the rest of Europe were on the opposite side, Austria would be  
vanquished ; the Spanish navy would be destroyed, and Spain  
would become nothing more than a theatre of war for the English  
against the French ; in which, moreover, the English would  
never expose themselves unless they had something to gain, for  
England was not capable of making head against France in a  
continental war : the end would be the desolation of Spain and  
its conquest. As little reason was there to rely upon any dis-  
gust which might be felt in France at the injustice of its Em-  
peror. In France there was no other public spirit but what  
received its impulse from the government. The French would  
be flattered if their Emperor placed a member of his family on  
the throne of Spain ; they would perceive in such a change  
great political and commercial advantages to themselves ; and  
the numerous classes who had a deep interest in the revolution,  
all who had taken part in it, all who had grown up in its prin-  
ciples, . . . the men of letters, the Jews, and the protestants, would  
regard with satisfaction an event which, by completing the de-  
struction of the house of Bourbon, gave them a farther security  
against the dreaded possibility of its restoration in France.  
What then, he asked, was to be done ? Nothing could be hoped  
from arming the nation ; the internal state of Spain rendered it  
impossible to form a government capable of directing its force,

and popular commotions must in their nature be of short duration: an attempt of this kind would produce ruinous consequences in the Americas, where the inhabitants would wish to throw off a heavy yoke, and where England would assist in just revenge for the imprudence with which Spain had promoted the insurrection in her colonies. He advised therefore, as the only means which offered any hope of extricating the new King from the danger which awaited him, that he should escape from the French, in whose hands he already was in fact a prisoner. This might be done at midnight, through the window of one of the adjoining houses; the Alcaide of the city would provide means for conducting him into Aragon. Meantime Urquijo offered to go to Bayonne as ambassador, and make the best terms he could with the Emperor: a business so ill begun, so ill directed, and in every way so inauspicious, could not end well; but it might be expected, that when Napoleon saw the King had escaped the snare, and was in a situation where he could act for himself, he would find it prudent to change his plans.

These forcible representations were strengthened by D. Joseph Hervas, son of the Marquis de Almenara; he was the brother-in-law of General Duroc, and the intimate friend of Savary, with whom he had travelled from Paris. Through these connexions he had obtained, if not a certain knowledge of Buonaparte's intentions, such strong reasons for suspecting them, as amounted to little less; and he communicated his fears to Ferdinand's counsellors, and besought them, while it was yet possible, to save him from the snare. These warnings were in vain. But though Ferdinand's counsellors could not be made to apprehend the real danger, that poor Prince felt his first apprehensions return upon him with additional force; disappointed of seeing Buonaparte, disappointed of hearing from him, he compared this mortifying neglect with the conduct of Murat

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*Apri.*

*Ferdinand  
writes to  
Buonaparte  
from Vitoria.*

CHAP. and the ambassador, and as if to relieve his mind by complain-  
IV. ing, wrote to the tyrant in a tone which confessed how entirely  
1808. he was at his mercy. Elevated to the throne, he said, by the  
April. free and spontaneous abdication of his august father, he could  
Apr. 14. not see without real regret that the Grand Duke of Berg and  
the French ambassador had not thought proper to felicitate him  
as King of Spain, though the representatives of other courts  
with which he had neither such intimate nor such dear relations,  
had hastened so to do. Unable to attribute this to any thing  
but the want of positive orders from his Imperial Majesty, he  
now represented with all the sincerity of his heart, that from the  
first moment of his reign he had never ceased to give the Em-  
peror the most marked and unequivocal proofs of attachment  
to his person ; that his first order had been to send back to the  
army of Portugal the troops which had left it to approach Ma-  
drid ; and his first care, notwithstanding the extreme penury of  
the finances, to supply the French troops, making room for them  
by withdrawing his own from the capital. . . He spoke of the  
letters he had written, the protestations he had made, the de-  
putations he had sent. "To this simple statement of facts," said  
he, "your Majesty will permit me to add an expression of the  
lively regret I feel in seeing myself deprived of any letters from  
you, particularly after the frank and loyal answer which I gave  
to the demand that General Savary came to make of me at  
Madrid in your Majesty's name. That general assured me that  
your Majesty only desired to know if my accession to the throne  
would make any change in our political relations. I answered  
by reiterating what I had already written, and willingly yielding  
to this general's intreaties that I should come to meet your Ma-  
jesty to accelerate the satisfaction of being personally acquainted  
with you, I have in consequence come to my town of Vittoria,  
without regarding the cares indispensable from a new reign,

which required my residence in the centre of my states. I therefore urgently intreat your Majesty to put an end to the painful situation to which I am reduced by your silence, and to relieve by a favourable answer the disquietude which too long an uncertainty may occasion in my faithful subjects.”

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From this time Ferdinand had no longer to complain of Buonaparte's silence: an answer was brought to Vittoria by Savary. It began by acknowledging the receipt of that letter which the Prince had written respecting the projected marriage before the affair of the Escorial, and the receipt of which Buonaparte had formerly denied. “Your Highness,” said he, (for the title of King was carefully withheld,) “will permit me, under the present circumstances, to address you with frankness and sincerity. I expected that, on my arrival at Madrid, I should have persuaded my illustrious friend to make some necessary reforms in his dominions, which would give considerable satisfaction to the public feeling. The removal of the Prince of the Peace appeared to me indispensable to his happiness and the interests of his people. I have frequently expressed my wishes that he should be removed; and, if I did not persevere in the application, it was on account of my friendship for King Charles, and a wish, if possible, not to see the weakness of his attachments. O wretchedness of human nature! imbecility and error! such is our lot. The events of the North retarded my journey, and the occurrences at Aranjuez supervened. I do not constitute myself judge of those events: but it is very dangerous for Kings to accustom their subjects to shed blood, and to take the administration of justice into their own hands. I pray God that your Highness may not one day find it so. It would not be conformable to the interests of Spain to proceed severely against a Prince who is united to one of the Royal Family, and has so long governed the kingdom. He has no longer any

*Buona-  
parte's re-  
ply.*

CHAP. friends ; as little will your Royal Highness find any, should you  
 IV. cease to be fortunate. . . The people eagerly avenge themselves  
 1808. for the homage which they pay us.”

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This was the language of one who felt that he held his power by no other tenure than that of force, and reconciled himself to that tenure by a base philosophy, . . . thinking ill of human nature because he could not think well of himself. What followed was more remarkable. “How,” said he, “could the Prince of the Peace be brought to trial without implicating the King and Queen in the process of exciting seditious passions, the result of which might be fatal to your crown? Your Royal Highness has no other right to it than what you derive from your mother. If the cause injures her honour, you destroy your own claims. Do not give ear to weak and perfidious counsels. You have no right to try the Prince; his crimes, if any are imputed to him, merge in the prerogative of the crown. He may be banished from Spain, and I may offer him an asylum in France.”

With respect to the abdication, Buonaparte said, that, as that event had taken place when his armies were in Spain, it might appear in the eyes of Europe and of posterity as if he had sent them for the purpose of expelling a friend and ally from his throne. As a neighbouring sovereign, it became him, therefore, to inform himself of all the circumstances before he acknowledged the abdication. He added, “I declare to your Royal Highness, to the Spaniards, and to the whole world, that, if the abdication of King Charles be voluntary, and has not been forced upon him by the insurrection and tumults at Aranjuez, I have no difficulty in acknowledging your Royal Highness as King of Spain. I am therefore anxious to have some conversation with you on this subject. The circumspection which I have observed on this point ought to convince you of the sup-

port you will find in me, were it ever to happen that factions of any kind should disturb you on your throne. When King Charles informed me of the affair of the Escorial, it gave me the greatest pain, and I flatter myself that I contributed to its happy termination. Your Royal Highness is not altogether free from blame; of this the letter which you wrote to me, and which I have always wished to forget, is a sufficient proof. When you are King, you will know how sacred are the rights of the throne. Every application of an hereditary prince to a foreign sovereign is criminal." The proposed marriage, Buonaparte said, accorded, in his opinion, with the interests of his people; and he regarded it as a circumstance which would unite him by new ties to a house whose conduct he had had every reason to praise since he ascended the throne.

A threat was then held out. . . "Your Highness ought to dread the consequences of popular commotions. It is possible that assassinations may be committed upon some stragglers of my army, but they would only lead to the ruin of Spain. I have learnt, with regret, that certain letters of the Captain-General of Catalonia have been circulated at Madrid, and that they have had the effect of exciting some irritation." After this menace, Buonaparte assured the young King that he had laid open the inmost sentiments of his heart, and that, under all circumstances, he should conduct himself towards him in the same manner as he had done towards the King his father; and he concluded with this hypocritical form, . . . "My Cousin, I pray God to take you into his high and holy keeping."

This letter might well have alarmed Ferdinand and his counsellors; but there came at the same time letters from the persons who had been sent forward to Bayonne, urging him to show no distrust of Buonaparte, but to hasten forward and meet him, as the sure and only means of averting the fatal effects of

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his displeasure, and securing his friendship. They had now indeed advanced too far to recede ; and their thoughts were rather exercised in seeking to justify to themselves the imprudence which they had already committed, than in devising how to remedy it. They persuaded themselves that Buonaparte was not ambitious of adding territory to the French empire ; that his conduct, even toward hostile powers, was marked by generosity and moderation ; and that his leading maxims of policy were, not wholly to despoil his enemies, but to aggrandize and reward his allies at their expense, and with what he took from them to form states more or less considerable for his relations, whose interest it would be to observe his system and support his empire. The instances of Holland and Naples might indeed seem not very well to agree with this view of his conduct ; but it was obvious, they said, that while Holland remained under a republican form it would unavoidably connive with England, and the Dutch themselves were desirous of the change ; and with regard to Naples, Napoleon could not possibly act otherwise than he had done, after the conduct of that court. Such was the miserable reasoning with which Ferdinand's advisers flattered themselves at the time, and which they have since offered to the world as their justification ; instead of fairly confessing, that in consequence of the events at Aranjuez they had placed themselves in a situation in which there was no alternative for men of their pitch of mind but to surrender at discretion to Buonaparte.

*Escoiquiz.  
Idea Sen-  
cilla, c. 3.*

*Promises of  
Savary, and  
prepara-  
tions for  
seizing  
Ferdinand.*

All of them were not thus deluded. Cevallos would fain have gone no farther ; and the people of Vittoria, more quick-sighted than their Prince, besought him not to proceed. On the other hand, General Savary assured him with the most vehement protestations, as Murat had done before, that the Emperor did not wish to dismember Spain of a single village ; and he offered to pledge his life, that within a few minutes after his arrival at Bayonne