

CHAP. and having chosen their part, adhered to it with miserable fidelity through all the odious and dreadful consequences in which
 VII. they were involved. These persons had hoped to form a social
 1808. contract with the new King; and to obtain for their country
 July. that regular and constitutional freedom, the want of which had drawn on its long degradation and decline. Of that hope they were speedily undeceived. The constitution which they sanctioned, and which was published to the Spaniards as their act and deed, was intended in all its parts and provisions to establish a government not less despotic than that which it was to supersede. By the composition of the Cortes two of the three estates of the realm retained the name indeed, and the semblance of honour, but were divested of any real power, their united members forming not a third part of the chamber. Spain was indeed in no condition to be trusted with a popular assembly; but a Cortes chosen and restricted like this of the Bayonne constitution, was obviously designed for no other purpose than to delude the people with a venerable name, and carry into effect, under a show of freedom, the will and pleasure of the Monarch. The regulations which pretended to provide for the liberty of the press were in like manner deceptive. All that they did was to afford some protection against the stupid bigotry of the Inquisition; such works as Fray Gerundio would not be proscribed while the author could appeal to a senatorial Junta; but nothing which distinguishes a free press, and which constitutes its value, . . . nothing which, as it were, embodies public opinion, and gives it its due and salutary weight, could have past the double ordeal to which it was subjected. The provisions in favour of the liberty of the subject bore about the same relation to our Habeas Corpus, as this superintended freedom of the press to its actual state in England. The Napoleon Habeas Corpus of the Bayonne constitution established in reality a perpetual suspension

for interests of state; and where it was to take effect, it was not as an absolute and fundamental law, but by a reference to the sovereign's discretion.

In the last sitting of the Notables a letter from Ferdinand was produced, written from Valençay to the intrusive King, congratulating him on his accession to the throne of Spain, and expressing a hope to see that country made happy under a Sovereign who had given so many shining proofs of wisdom at Naples; this, he said, could not be indifferent to him, who looked upon himself as a member of the Napoleon family, seeing that he had requested the Emperor to grant him one of his nieces in marriage, and hoped to obtain that favour. Whether Ferdinand had been compelled to this as to his former acts of degradation, or whether his poor mind had now been subdued to his fortune, mattered little; to the world, as well as to the Notables at Bayonne, his condition appeared hopeless at that time, nor could any possible event have seemed more beyond all human probability than his restoration.

The business of the twelfth and last sitting was to receive the Constitution from the hands of King Joseph, and swear to it. For this purpose the hall in which they held their meetings was fitted up with a throne, and a rich altar on its right. The Intruder having taken his seat, addressed them in the Spanish language. Their sentiments, he told them, had been those of the Emperor Napoleon, his august brother, in pursuance of whose measures, and in consequence of one of those extraordinary events to which all nations at particular conjunctures are subject in their turn, they were there convened. The Constitution which they were about to accept was the result; it would avert from Spain those long convulsions which might else have been foreseen in the suppressed disquietude of the nation. If all the Spaniards could have been assembled with them, they also,

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*Letter from
Ferdinand
to the In-
truder.*

*Joseph pre-
sents the
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tion to the
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having all but one interest, would have had but one opinion; “and then,” said he, “we should not have to bewail the misfortune of those persons who, being led astray by foreign suggestions, must be reduced by force of arms. The enemy of the Continent expects to despoil us of our colonies by taking advantage of the troubles which he excites in Spain. But every good Spaniard must open his eyes and rally round the throne. We carry with us the act which establishes the rights and reciprocal duties of the King and of the people. If they are disposed to make the same sacrifices as ourself, it will not be long before Spain will become tranquil and happy at home, just and powerful abroad. We pledge ourselves with confidence at the feet of that God who reads the hearts of men, who disposes them at his pleasure, and who never abandons him who loves his country and fears nothing but his conscience.”

*Ceremony
of accepting
it.*

The Constitutional Act was then read; the President Azanza demanded of the Notables if they accepted it; and they having replied affirmatively, he addressed the intrusive King, whose paternal language, he said, might have sufficed for ever to attach their hearts, if they had not already been entirely devoted to him. Every word had confirmed them in their confidence that they should see their country restored under his wise government, the evils and rooted abuses which had brought on her decay removed, and the miseries terminated which were at present caused by error, ignorance, and perfidious counsels. “Yes, Sir,” said he, “these miseries will cease when your subjects shall see your Majesty in the midst of them; when they shall be acquainted with that great charter of the constitution, the immovable basis of their future welfare, . . . that charter, the precious work of the earnest and beneficent care which the hero of our age, the great Napoleon, the Emperor of the French, takes for the glory of Spain. What auspices could be so fortunate for

the commencement of a reign and of a dynasty, as the renewal of the compact which is to unite the people to the sovereign, the family to its father; which determines the duties and respective rights of him who commands, and of those who have the happiness to obey!" The Archbishop of Burgos then, assisted by two canons, took from the altar a book containing the four Gospels, and brought it before the throne, and the Intruder, laying his hand upon the book, pronounced the following oath; "I swear upon the holy Gospels to respect our holy religion, and make it be respected; to observe the Constitution, and make it be observed; to maintain the integrity and independence of Spain and its possessions; to respect the liberty and property of individuals, and make them be respected; and to govern with a single view to the interest, the welfare, and the glory of the Spanish nation." The oath of fidelity and obedience to the King, the constitution, and the laws, was then taken by the Archbishop and the other clerical members of the Junta first, next by the President and other officers of the royal household, lastly by all the remaining deputies.

The ceremony being thus completed, the Junta attended Joseph to his carriage, then returned to the hall, and upon the motion of Azanza voted that two medals should be struck to perpetuate their gratitude to the Emperor Napoleon for the solicitude which he had bestowed upon the affairs of Spain, and to consecrate the solemn delivery of the Constitution. After this act of adulation they waited upon Buonaparte at the Palace of Marrac, to conclude their business and their servilities by expressing their gratitude for all that he had done for Spain. "Sire," said their President Azanza, "the Junta of Spain has accomplished the glorious task for which your Majesty convened it in this city. It has just accepted with as much eagerness as freedom the great charter which fixes upon a sure foundation

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*Medals
voted in
honour of
this event.*

*Address of
thanks to
Buona-
parte.*

CHAP. the happiness of Spain. Happily for our country, a preserving
 VII. Providence has employed your irresistible hand to snatch it
 1808. from the abyss into which it was about to be precipitated; it
 July. had need be irresistible, . . for, oh, blindness! they who ought to
 rejoice the most in this benefit are the first to misapprehend it!
 But all Spain, Sire, will open its eyes. It will see that it re-
 quired a total regeneration, and that from your Majesty alone
 it could be hoped for. This is an incontestable truth, and I
 appeal to the reflection of all those who may not yet be sincerely
 united to the authority which actually governs the kingdom: let
 them examine in their inmost conscience under what other rule
 they could promise themselves the inestimable benefits which
 they will henceforth enjoy; let them examine and answer in
 good faith. The evil was at its height; the agents of a feeble
 government concentrated its arbitrary power in their hands for
 the purpose of extending its limits more and more; the autho-
 rities under them, timid and debased, never knew what course
 they were to pursue, and if they did no harm, it was impossible
 for them to effect any good. The finances were a chaos, the
 public debt an abyss: all parts of the machine were deranged
 or broken, there was not one which performed its functions:
 where was the sensible Spaniard who did not perceive the im-
 possibility of its going on, and could not fix the near term of its
 total dissolution? To what other power than that of your Im-
 perial and Royal Majesty could it be reserved, in such a state of
 things, not merely to arrest the evil, for that would not have
 sufficed, but to remove it entirely, and to substitute order for
 disorder, law for caprice, justice for oppression, security for in-
 security? Such are the wonders, Sire, which your Imperial
 and Royal Majesty has worked in a few days, and which fill
 the world with astonishment. Your Majesty alone is not asto-
 nished, because you have conceived and wrought them without

effort. We however well perceive that the means which your Majesty has used were the only ones which could have been employed for the good of Spain. To give to our country a liberal constitution which restores its ancient Cortes, secures the property and liberty of individuals, breaks the fetters which were imposed upon genius, establishes a government, and fixes the national prosperity, . . . to place upon the throne of the Spaniards a just and amiable Prince who will govern by the laws, and will have no other happiness than that of his people, . . . such is the work of consummate wisdom for which the Junta offers to your Imperial and Royal Majesty its tribute of respect and gratitude. It would perpetuate that tribute by a durable monument voted in its own name and in the name of all the Spaniards of all climates, of all the individuals of a numerous family dispersed over a great portion of the globe; who will not delay with one accord to bless their generous benefactor, and who will transmit his august name to the remotest generations with the glorious appellation of the Restorer of the Spains."

The Deputies stood in a circle round Napoleon while their President delivered this base address. For the first, and perhaps the only time in his public life, Buonaparte was at a loss for a reply. He spake indeed more than three-quarters of an hour, but it was vaguely and hesitatingly, in confused and broken sentences, his head bending down, and when he raised it at times, it was only again to let it fall. None of those memorable expressions came from him which the hearers bear away, none of those sparkling sentiments and pointed sentences, . . . those coruscations which at other times characterized his discourse. It seemed as if the powers both of thought and of language had forsaken him. From one subject he passed to another unconnectedly, resuming them with as little reason as he had broken them off, and frequently repeating the same flat meaning in the

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*Buonaparte
is embar-
rassed in
replying to
it.*

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same cold and vapid words. His manifest embarrassment would have been ludicrous to all persons present, if the necessity of restraining themselves had not rendered it as painful to them as it was to himself. So strange and utter a destitution of his wonted talents astonished those who witnessed it. Perhaps Buonaparte was sickened with excess of adulation, and contemplating mournfully the condition to which men, once of proud intellect, patriotic hopes, and generous desires, had debased themselves in subservience to his purposes, regarded them with compassion rather than contempt. Perhaps he compared in sure anticipation the opinion which posterity would pronounce upon these transactions with the language which was now addressed to him. The cloud was not of the understanding alone, but of the heart. The work, he then believed, was done; this was the concluding scene of the drama, the plot had been fully developed, and the intended catastrophe was brought about; but in the hour of success it is scarcely possible that he should not have contrasted the reflections which then came upon him, with those emotions of proud and honourable triumph which he had felt at Lodi, at Marengo, and at Austerlitz, and that comparison may have made him stand amid the circle of his servile instruments humiliated and self-condemned.

De Pradt,
153.

Joseph
enters
Spain.

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On the second morning after this memorable scene the intrusive King entered Spain, as if to take quiet possession of a throne to which he had regularly and lawfully succeeded. Two decrees were issued from Tolosa, one enjoining that his accession should be proclaimed on the 25th, being Santiago's day, and that flags should every where be hoisted, and the other customary ceremonies observed; the other required prayers to be made in all churches and convents for a blessing upon his government. At Vitoria he altered the arms of Spain, directing that the shield should be divided into the six quarterings for Castille, Leon,

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Aragon, Navarre, Granada, and the Indies, and that in the centre of the shield the eagle which distinguished his Imperial and Royal Family should be borne. From Vitoria also he sent abroad a proclamation, in which, according to the superscription, he manifested to the Spanish nation his generous sentiments, and his desire that the kingdom should recover its pristine splendour. It spoke of the security which the new constitution afforded to religion, and to liberty both civil and political; of the revival and improvement of their Cortes; of the institution of a Senate to be at once the protection of individual liberty and the support of the throne, and in which they who should have rendered distinguished services to the state would find an honourable asylum, and an appropriate reward. It promised integrity and independence for the courts of justice; and that merit and virtue should be the only titles to public employment. "If his desires did not deceive him," he said, "their agriculture and commerce would quickly flourish, being set free for ever from the fiscal trammels which had destroyed them. I come among you," he said, "with the utmost confidence, surrounded by estimable men, who have not concealed from you any thing which they believed to be useful for your interests. Blind passions, deceitful voices, and the intrigues of the common enemy of the Continent, whose only view is to separate the Indies from Spain, have precipitated some among you into the most dreadful anarchy. My heart is rent at the thought. Yet this great evil may in a moment cease. Spaniards, unite yourselves! come around my throne! and do not suffer intestine divisions to rob me of the time and consume the means which I would fain employ solely for your happiness."

The Intruder and his ministers halted at Vitoria till the French, of whose speedy and complete success no doubt was entertained, should have chastised the insurgents, and opened

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Buonaparte returns to Paris.

CHAP. for them the way to Madrid. Buonaparte meantime returned
 VII. to Paris. In every place through which he passed he was re-
 1808. ceived with more than usual demonstrations of triumphant joy.
 July. The population of town and country gathered together to behold
 and to applaud him. Houses were hung with garlands, and the
 streets through which he rode were formed into parterres of
 flowers, and overbowered with shrubs. From Bayonne to Tou-
 louse and Bourdeaux, and from thence to Nantes and Tours and
 to the capital, it was one continued festival. It gratified the
 ambition of the French to know that their great Emperor had
 placed his brother upon the throne of Spain; this was another
 step toward that universal empire which they believed to be
 within their reach. They had been kept in ignorance of the
 nefarious artifices by which the usurpation had been brought
 about, and little did they apprehend that the consequences of
 this usurpation would carry tears and mourning into almost
 every family in France, and bring upon it the full and over-
 flowing measure of retribution.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROCEEDINGS IN ENGLAND. SUCCESSES OF THE FRENCH IN THE NORTH OF SPAIN: THEIR FAILURE IN CATALONIA. MONCEY REPULSED FROM VALENCIA. DUPONT ENTERS CORDOBA. BATTLE OF RIO SECO. THE INTRUDER ENTERS MADRID. SURRENDER OF DUPONT'S ARMY. THE FRENCH RETREAT FROM MADRID.

THE first news which reached England of the Spanish insurrection was brought by the Asturian deputies, and it was soon followed by dispatches from Coruña, Cadiz, and Gibraltar. Never was any intelligence received with more general joy. Notwithstanding the frequent hostilities in which Spain had been involved with this country, first, during the age of its power; then through its connexion with the Bourbons; and afterwards from the ascendancy which the Directory and Buonaparte had obtained over an infamous minister, an imbecile King, and a wretched government, the English had always regarded the Spaniards as the most honourable people with whom they were engaged either in commerce or in war; nor was there ever a war in which some new instance of honour and generosity on their part did not make us regret that they were our enemies. Hitherto the present contest had been carried on with little hope. No other sympathy than that of mere political interest had as yet been felt in our alliances with Austria or Russia; but, from the moment when the Spaniards called upon us for aid, we felt that we had obtained allies worthy of our own good cause, and the

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