

the restoration of the equipage, money, and effects of every kind belonging to himself and the other superior officers; invoking the principle of honour and probity, and saying, that jealous as he was for the glory of the Spaniards, the horrible excesses of the Spanish mob had made him groan. Undoubtedly, replied Morla, the conduct of the people has grieved me greatly; not that the act itself was wrong, but because it manifested a distrust of their government; because they took the administration of justice into their own hands; because it might have happened that in their fury they might have performed the vile and horrid office of the executioner, and have stained themselves and their compatriots by shedding that blood which had been spared on the field of battle. This is the cause of my concern, and on this account I proposed, as a thing expedient for the safety of your excellency and of those who accompanied you, that your equipages should undergo a prudent examination before they left Lebrixa, and advised you that nothing but submission and a discreet demeanour could save you from the indignation of the people. But it never was my intention, and still less the Supreme Junta's, that your excellency and your army should carry out of Spain the fruit of your rapacity, cruelty, and impiety. How could you conceive this possible? How could you suppose us to be so stupid and insensible? Could a capitulation which speaks only of your equipage, give you the property of the treasures which your army has accumulated by means of murders, profanation of all sacred things, cruelties and violence of every kind, in Cordoba and in other cities? Is there any reason, law, or principle which enjoins that faith, or even humanity should be observed towards an army which entered an allied and friendly kingdom under false pretences, seized its innocent and beloved King with all his family by fraud and treachery; extorted from him a renunciation in favour of their

CHAP.  
VIII.

1808.

August.*August 14.*

CHAP.  
VIII.

1808.

*August.*

own sovereign, . . . a renunciation impossible in itself, . . . and because the nation would not submit to this forced and invalid transfer, proceeded to plunder palaces and towns, to profane and sack the churches, murdering the ministers of the altar, violating nuns, carrying rape every where, seizing every thing of value which they could transport, and destroying what they were not able to bring away! Is it possible that such persons as these, when deprived of a booty, the very sight of which ought to fill them with compunction and horror, should have the effrontery to appeal to the principles of honour and probity! My natural moderation has made me hitherto write to your excellency with a certain degree of respect; but I could not refrain from tracing a slight sketch of your conduct, in reply to your extraordinary demands, . . . demands which amount to this, . . . do you plunder the temples and houses of Cadiz to reimburse me for what the people of the Puerto have taken from me, and what I took from Cordoba, with every circumstance of atrocity, violence, and brutality. Let your excellency lay aside such expectations, and be contented that the noble character of the Spanish nation withholds it from performing the vile office of the executioner. He concluded by saying, that every attention should be paid to the personal safety and convenience of the French general; and that he would use all endeavours in his power to have him sent to France with the least possible delay.

*Treatment  
of the pri-  
soners.*

Dupont, when the first danger from the populace was over, had reason for his own sake to rejoice that the capitulation was not carried into effect. Enraged as Buonaparte was at the first signal defeat which his armies had sustained, he well knew that no opportunity of vindicating himself would be allowed him, and Admiral Villeneuve's example was before his eyes. Most of the Swiss in his army, the officers excepted, entered the Spanish service; the more willingly, because General Reding,

who had borne so conspicuous a part in the victory, was their countryman. But, in truth, it was to them a matter of indifference on which side they were engaged, and in whatever action they were present the victor was sure to find recruits. Many, however, as well as many of the Germans who were taken at the same time, were allowed to engage as agricultural labourers. But toward the French the vindictive feeling of the people was never mitigated. The troops who escorted them with difficulty saved them from being torn to pieces by the peasantry; the murder of a Frenchman, so strong a hatred had their atrocities excited, was regarded as a meritorious act; untold numbers disappeared in consequence of this persuasion; and at Lebrixa a whole detachment, eighty in number, were massacred at one time, upon a cry of danger, absurd indeed, but sufficient to give the cowardly rabble a plea for gratifying that cruelty which is every where the characteristic of depraved and brutalized man. Letters were addressed to Morla from Madrid and various parts of Spain, some requiring that Dupont and the other French generals should be put to death, others that the whole of the prisoners should suffer, as an example which the public good demanded, and which justice called for. Some of these letters, by their ill writing and incorrect language, indicated from what base hands they came; others were the elaborate composition of men whom the very hatred of cruelty had made cruel, and who pleaded for a massacre in the same spirit of perverted zeal which had produced the Inquisition and the horrors of St. Bartholomew's day. These letters were so numerous that Morla thought proper publicly to reply to them, representing that such an act would not only bring on reprisals, but would fix a lasting stain upon the Spaniards. He took that opportunity of excusing himself from any concern in the breach of the capitulation, desiring it might be understood that he neither executed, nor

CHAP.  
VIII.

1808.

August.

CHAP. desired to execute the supreme power ; but that it was the Junta  
 VIII. of Seville, which, for weighty reasons, not fit to be made public,  
 1808. had delayed the transportation of Dupont and the other French  
August. generals. “ I,” said he, “ had only to obey ; for it is not in my  
 character or manner of thinking ever to resist a constituted  
 authority ; such resistance can only occasion civil dissensions,  
 which are the greatest evil a nation can suffer, and which I shall  
 never spare any sacrifice to avoid.”

*Rejoicings  
 for the  
 victory at  
 Baylen.*

By the battle of Baylen Andalusia was left in peace. Castaños had made a vow to dedicate the victory to King St. Ferdinand, who won Seville from the Moors, and lying inshrined in the magnificent mosque of that city, which he converted to a Christian church, is venerated there with especial devotion. The ceremony was performed with great pomp, and the French eagles were offered at the shrine of the canonized King and conqueror, as trophies of the most signal victory which had been achieved in Andalusia since his time.

*Movements  
 of Bessieres  
 after the  
 battle of Rio  
 Seco.*

Among the papers which fell into the hands of the Spaniards were despatches from Madrid, recalling Dupont to protect the capital against the army of Galicia and Castille and Leon, then advancing against it. These despatches were written before the battle of Rio Seco, where Cuesta's fatal rashness exposed that army to destruction. The Spanish generals separated after their defeat, and Cuesta complained that he was abandoned by the Galician force. He retired with his part of the army to Leon, and knowing that that city could not be defended, instructed the Leonese Junta to remove to Astorga ; but Astorga itself was not more secure, and they withdrew across the mountains to Ponferrada. Cuesta then dispersed his infantry on the frontiers of Asturias, and retreated with the cavalry into Castille, cutting his way through the enemy's rear guard. Marshal Bessieres meantime reaped the fruits of his victory by seizing arms and stores which,

in consequence of this rash action, were only brought from England to fall into the enemy's hands. He found large depôts at Villalpando and Benevente; then turning southward to Zamora, was informed there that Cuesta had ordered his troops to rendezvous at Mayorga. Deceived by this information, to Mayorga he went, and there a deputation from Leon waited upon him to solicit his clemency. At Leon also he found arms and ammunition to a great amount, which, if not imprudently accumulated there, were carelessly abandoned.

Blake was thought to have given proof of great military talents both in the action and in the retreat; and Marshal Bessieres, hoping that so severe a defeat would convince him all farther resistance must be ineffectual, endeavoured to win him over to the Intruder's service. For this purpose he wrote to him, under the pretext of assuring him that the prisoners should be well treated; and he took that opportunity for urging him to obey the act of abdication, and acknowledge King Joseph Napoleon. The Spanish general made answer, he acknowledged no other sovereign than Ferdinand of Bourbon, or his legitimate heirs; and if that unfortunate family should be altogether extinguished, his allegiance would then be due to the people of Spain, lawfully represented in a general Cortes. These, he said, were the sentiments of the whole army and of the whole nation; and he warned Bessieres against the error of mistaking the forced submission of towns which were occupied by French troops, for a real change of opinion in the inhabitants. "Undeceive therefore," said he, "your Emperor; and if it be true that he has a philanthropic mind, he will renounce the project of subduing Spain. Whatever partial successes he may obtain, it is evident that his brother never can reign in this country; unless he reign over a desert, covered with the blood of the Spaniards, and of the troops employed on this unjust enterprise."

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1808.  
*August.*

*Correspondence between Bessieres and Blake.*

*July 24.*

CHAP.  
VIII.

1808.

July.

This answer did not satisfy the Frenchman, who, in a second letter, told Blake it was his duty to avoid the effusion of blood ; for while France, and the greatest part of Europe, continued in their present state, it was impossible that the Bourbons could reign. He accompanied this reasoning by proposing a conference with him upon the subject, . . a proposal which, Blake replied, it was not fitting that he should address to a man of honour. Bessieres had set at liberty four or five hundred prisoners, under the title of peasants ; this title the Spanish general disclaimed for them, maintaining that they were regular soldiers, incorporated with the troops of the line, though not wearing the uniform. In explaining this, he said, “ his intention was not to release himself from acknowledging the generous conduct of the Marshal towards them, . . but to prevent the possibility of their receiving, upon any occasion, in consequence of any misconception, a treatment which they did not deserve ; and which, he was sure, from the sentiments that his excellency had manifested, could not but be painful to his own feelings.” This answer was in a lower tone than the occasion required ; it admitted a distinction between the peasant and the soldier : but it became him to have proclaimed, that Spain was in circumstances when, by the first principles of law in all countries, every man is called upon to defend his country, and, becoming a soldier by necessity and duty, is to be accounted such in virtue of the cause for which he is in arms.

*The French  
leave  
Madrid and  
retire to  
Vitoria.*

Bessieres might now have sent a reinforcement to Junot, who had to contend against a spreading insurrection, while he was threatened with the more serious danger of an English expedition ; but as that danger had prevented Junot from succouring Dupont, so the destruction of Dupont’s army cut off his hopes of assistance from Bessieres, who was then summoned in all haste to protect the flight of the Intruder from Madrid. There

is some reason to believe that the news of the battle of Baylen reached the capital some days before it was known to Joseph and his ministers, that this knowledge emboldened the Council of Castille to make their resolute stand against taking the oath of fidelity, and that it was concealed as long as possible in the hope of preventing or intercepting the Intruder's retreat. He was not apprised of it till eight or nine days after the event; and no time was then lost in providing for his safety by retiring to Vitoria, with the intention of concentrating the French force in that part of the country, and remaining there under their protection till reinforcements from France should arrive, numerous enough to effect the subjugation of Spain. Till this time, hope had been entertained by his adherents, that the opposition of the Spaniards, unexpected and violent as it was, would soon be quelled: but now it was apparent that what had hitherto been regarded as an insurrection, had assumed the serious form of war; and it is said that Joseph, considering that this extremity had not been contemplated by the Spaniards who had entered into his service, left them now at liberty to choose their part, for or against him, in the ensuing contest. In so doing he may have acted from a generous feeling, of which he was not incapable when master of his own actions; but in reality it was not in his power to withhold the liberty which he offered. The Duke del Infantado had already escaped from Madrid, and travelling in the dress of a peasant, had joined one of the Spanish armies. The Duke del Parque also had taken the first opportunity to withdraw. Two of the Intruder's ministers, Cevallos and Pinuela, availed themselves of the liberty which was now within their choice, and remained at Madrid. Jovelanos, always true to himself and his country, had refused to obey his summons. The other five, Urquijo, Azanza, Mazarredo, O'Farrill, and Cabarrus, adhered to what they still believed to be the stronger part, and accompanied Joseph in his retreat.

CHAP.  
VIII.

1808.

July.

*Azanza y  
O'Farrill,  
p. 101.  
De Pradt,  
192.*



## CHAPTER IX.

## SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA.

1808.

June.

IMPORTANT as the battle of Baylen was in its direct and immediate consequences to the Spaniards, their cause derived greater celebrity and more permanent strength from the defence of Zaragoza.

*Preparations at Zaragoza.*

Order had been restored in that city from the hour when Palafox assumed the command. Implicit confidence in the commander produced implicit and alert obedience, and preparations were made with zeal and activity proportioned to the danger. When the new Captain-General declared war against the French, the troops which he mustered amounted only to 220 men, and the public treasury could furnish him with no more than an hundred dollars; sixteen ill-mounted guns were all the artillery in the place, and the arsenal contained but few muskets. Fowling-pieces were put in requisition, pikes were forged, powder was supplied from the mills at Villafeliche, which were some of the most considerable in Spain, . . . for every thing else Palafox trusted to his country and his cause. And his trust was not in vain; the Zaragozans were ready to endure any suffering and make any sacrifice in the discharge of their duty; the same spirit possessed the whole country, and from all those parts of Spain which were under the yoke of the enemy officers and soldiers repaired to Zaragoza as soon as it was seen that an army was collecting there; many came from Madrid and from Pampluna, and some officers of engineers from the

military academy at Alcala. And the spirits of the people were encouraged by the discovery of a depôt of fire arms walled up in the Aljafaria; they had probably been secreted there in the succession war, when one party resigned that city to its enemies, and their discovery in this time of need was regarded by the Zaragozans as a manifestation of divine Providence in their favour. The defeats which their undisciplined levies sustained at Tudela, Mallen, and Alagon abated not their resolution; and in the last of these actions a handful of regular troops protected their retreat with great steadiness. The French general, Lefebvre Desnouettes, pursuing his hitherto uninterrupted success, advanced, and took up a position very near the city, and covered by a rising ground planted with olive trees.

Zaragoza was not a \*fortified town; the brick wall which surrounded it was from ten to twelve feet high, and three feet thick, and in many places it was interrupted by houses, which formed part of the inclosure. The city had no advantages of situation for its defence, and would not have been considered capable of resistance by any men but those whose courage was sustained by a virtuous and holy principle of duty. It stands in an open plain, which was then covered with olive grounds, and is bounded on either hand by high and distant mountains; but it is commanded by some high ground called the Torrero, about a mile to the south-west, upon which there was a convent, with some smaller buildings. The canal of Aragon divides this elevation from another rising ground, where the Spaniards had erected a battery. The Ebro bathes the walls of the city, and

CHAP.  
IX.

1808.

June.

Description  
of the city.

---

\* “Elle est sans defense et sans fortification,” said Colmenar, writing a century ago, “fermée d’une simple muraille; *mais ce défaut est réparé par la bravoure des habitans.*” After the proofs which the inhabitants have given of their patriotism, this praise appears like prophecy.