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hazards. Jovellanos held with his favourite author Cicero that friendship was to be preferred to every thing except honour and virtue ; he had given proof of this by his former conduct toward some of these friends, and they found now, as they had then, that no considerations could ever prevail in him over the sense of duty. It gave him no little pain that his name should be published in the Madrid gazette as one of Joseph's ministers ; thus to appear a traitor even for a few days to those who knew him not, or knew not how decidedly he had refused the appointment, was an injury which he felt severely. This was one of Buonaparte's insolent acts ; fallen as Urquijo and his colleagues were, they would not have thus outraged the feelings of a man whom it was not possible that they could ever cease to respect and admire. At length, the Intrusive Government having ascertained that he was really suffering under severe bodily infirmities, forbore to molest him with further solicitations. He was gradually recovering when news of the battle of Baylen refreshed his heart, and seemed to give him new life as well as hope. And when his appointment to the Central Junta was announced, though his first thought was of the ravages which age and affliction had made upon his debilitated frame, the sense of duty overcame all personal considerations, and he notified his acceptance without delay, at the same time declining a salary of 4000 ducats which had been assigned him.

*Jovellanos
a sus Com-
patriotas,
p. ii. art. i.
18—25.*

*Aranjuez
chosen for
the place of
meeting.*

In little more than a week he joined the deputies for Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, at Madrid ; and then two difficulties, which had not been anticipated, occurred. The first related to the instructions with which the Junta of Seville had fettered their members ; instructions wholly repugnant to the principle upon which the provisional government was formed. The inconsistency and the evils of this measure were represented to Castaños, who was then in Madrid with his army ; that General's

influence was never exercised unworthily, nor withheld when it might be useful; and in consequence of his remonstrance the obnoxious instructions were withdrawn, though it appeared afterwards that secret ones to the same tenour had been substituted. The other difficulty was concerning the place of meeting. Jovellanos thought that no place could be so proper as the metropolis: there, in the palace of their kings, the Central Junta would derive consequence and respect from the place; they would appear at the head of the first tribunals and chief magistracy; the public documents were upon the spot, and any advice or assistance which they might require at hand. The members who were at Madrid agreed in this opinion, which was supported also by Castaños: but the Junta of Seville were averse to any measure which might lessen their authority, and in this instance they were well served by Tilly for reasons which nearly concerned himself. He had stopped at Aranjuez, and succeeded in persuading Florida-Blanca, who was decidedly for fixing the government at Madrid, that it would be convenient to hold their first sittings where they were, and determine there upon the forms which they should observe in the capital. He gained time by this... always a great object for one who trusts to intrigue and fortune. So fully persuaded however were Jovellanos and his colleagues when they went to Aranjuez that they should speedily adjourn to Madrid, that they left orders for forming an establishment there.

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The greater part of the deputies having arrived, their installation was performed with as much ceremony as the place and circumstances would permit. The Archbishop of Laodicea performed mass, and administered an oath to his colleagues, first taking it himself, that they would preserve and extend the holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, defend their Sovereign Ferdinand, their rights, privileges, laws, and usages,

*Installation
of the Cen-
tral Junta.
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 XI. family, promote every thing conducive to the welfare and im-
 1808. provement of the kingdom, keep secret every thing which ought
September. not to be divulged, maintain the laws, and resist the enemies of
 the country at all hazards. The oath having been taken, Te
 Deum was sung by the barefooted friars of St. Pasqual, and the
 assembly then adjourned to the hall chosen for their sittings.
 Florida-Blanca was appointed president, and his first act was to
 proclaim King Ferdinand from the great gallery of the principal
 front of the palace. The gates of the palace had not been
 opened till now since the departure of Charles for Bayonne;
 and the ceremony of thus proclaiming Ferdinand in the favourite
 residence of his ancestors, . . the scene of his own childhood, . . the
 spot where, six months ago, he had been acclaimed King, . . he
 who was now prisoner in a foreign land, and in the power of the
 perfidious tyrant who had ensnared him, . . moved the venerable
 statesman to tears when he pronounced his name, and excited
 feelings of grief and indignation in the multitude, which height-
 ened and hallowed the enthusiasm wherewith they repeated it.

*Conduct of
 the Council
 of Castille.*

The Junta dispatched copies of the act and oath of installa-
 tion to the different councils and tribunals, requiring their mem-
 bers to take the same oath, and issue orders to all the sub-
 ordinate Juntas, provinces, magistrates, governors, and viceroys,
 for obeying the new government, as holding in deposit the sove-
 reign authority for Ferdinand, the councils continuing in the
 exercise of their ordinary functions, but referring to the Central
 Junta all matters exceeding their powers, and upon which the
 Sovereign ought to be consulted. Other tribunals immediately
 signified their prompt and unreserved obedience; the Council of
 Castille alone delayed their answer. The mortification which
 they felt at not being incorporated with the provisional govern-
 ment, as they had proposed, was embittered by a consciousness

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that they had forfeited all claim to the confidence of the nation. Having, however, almost by accident, recovered so much authority, they strove to extend it, and after five days returned an answer, saying that, having given the subject their most serious consideration, they had resolved to take the oath, and circulate the necessary orders that the Central Junta should be obeyed in whatever was for the service of the King and of the public cause. But they added, that in discharge of their indispensable duty, they would hereafter communicate to the Junta the result of their consultations for the observance and maintenance of the laws. The reservation implied in this reply offended the Junta, and more especially the President Florida-Blanca, who had not been accustomed to tolerate delay or demur under his administration; and an answer was returned conveying reproof in the form of admonition, which reduced the Council of Castille to a quiet but malevolent submission.

The Leonese deputies had been seized by General Cuesta on their way. One of them, the Bayley Valdes, notified his arrest to Florida-Blanca, who instantly perceiving what fatal consequences must arise from any serious dispute between the civil and military authorities, wrote mildly to Cuesta, requesting that he would release the deputies, prefer his charges against them to the Junta, and leave the decision to that body. At the same time Castaños, to whom the judicious part of the people in Madrid looked for some interference in their fear at this unexpected act of military violence, addressed a letter to the Castillian general, representing to him calmly, but forcibly, the surprise and alarm which this arrest had occasioned, at a time when the great object of forming a provisional government was on the point of being happily effected; and asking what offence the deputies had committed, men as they were of high character, and the Bayley Valdes distinguished for the services which he had per-

*The Leonese
deputies ar-
rested by
Cuesta.*

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*Cuesta's
vindication
of his con-
duct.*

formed? what authority was competent to arrest and detain them? why, if they were delinquents, they had not been denounced to the Juntas of their respective provinces? why their crimes were not published in the face of the nation, and themselves accused before the Central Junta, then about to assemble?

In his answer to Castaños, Cuesta declared, that as principal and sole chief of the provinces of Castille and Leon, he was not bound to give an account of his conduct to any other provincial authority, being independent of all till a general government or regency should be established; nevertheless, as his Excellency apprehended some uneasiness in the people of Madrid, and in the whole nation, concerning this transaction, he deemed it proper to satisfy his doubts. The Junta of Castille having been dissolved by the entrance of the enemy into Valladolid, he had increased the Junta of Leon by adding to it a deputy for every intendency or province of Castille, and had confirmed Valdes as their president, Valdes having promised to obey his orders in all things, without consideration of his own rank. But after the battle of Rio Seco, a few members of this Junta, seeing him pursued by the French, and forsaken by the Galician army, retired to Ponferrada, instead of Astorga, whither he had directed them to repair: and there, under the influence of Valdes, treated clandestinely with the Junta of Coruña, to unite with them at Lugo, and from thence govern both Castille and Leon, independently of the captain-general, who, indeed, was to become subordinate to them. The Bayley had notified this to him, and at the same time ordered him to deliver up his cavalry to General Blake. Instead of obeying such orders, he had immediately annulled this fugitive Junta, and commanded the inferior Juntas to break off all communication with it, which they had accordingly done, except in those parts of Leon which were under the immediate power of the Galician general. The fugitive Junta

persisted in its pretensions, and had elected Valdes and the Vizconde de Quintanilla as its representatives in the Central Junta. Let any impartial person then say whether he had not good reason to arrest them for insubordination! Not having been elected by any competent authority, they were not members of the Central Junta, and therefore no offence had been offered to that body in arresting them. Whenever that body should be assembled, he would be the first person to obey it, and submit to its high consideration the cause of Valdes and his accomplices: till then neither the rank of the Bayley, nor his assumed quality of member of the Central Junta, for the provinces of Castille and Leon, shall suffice, said the old General, to exempt him from my jurisdiction. The same answer he returned to Florida-Blanca, and sent back the letter which that nobleman had addressed to Valdes, saying that the prisoner was in strict confinement, deprived of all communication.

Castaños, not receiving a reply as soon as he had expected, called upon the Council of Castille to interfere; and that tribunal, well pleased that its authority should be appealed to on so important an occasion in such times, wrote in consequence to Cuesta, remonstrating on the dangerous tendency of his conduct. But he returned for answer, that the imprisonment of these persons was the best means of preventing danger, as it would effectually preclude the contentions which might arise if a double set of representatives for Castille and Leon should present themselves; that neither prudence nor justice permitted him to overlook the infidelity, insurrection, and insubordination of a Junta which he had created; and that for these offences, as Valdes was a general, he would deliver him over to be tried by a council of war, composed of generals, unless a sovereign regency should first be established; in which case he would submit the whole proceeding to their judgement, and his own

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The Council of Castille interfere.

CHAP. powers also, . . . powers which till then he considered independent
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1808. Upon this principle, and an assumption that the Juntas in
September. Castille and Leon derived their authority from him and not
Cuesta is summoned before the Central Junta. from the people, Cuesta made the Junta of Valladolid, who had
assembled in Leon, send a representative to the Central Junta.
The assembly refused to admit him, and ordering Cuesta to set
his prisoners at liberty, summoned him also to Aranjuez, that
all parties might be heard. This was in effect removing him
from the command of his army. Such an assertion of their
power was well-timed, for Cuesta, making no secret of his
hostile intentions against them, had declared to the British
agent, Mr. Stuart, that two measures were necessary for the
public good ; first, the restoration of the authority of the Cap-
tains General and of the Royal Audiencias, (which would have
ensured to him the continuance of his command); and, secondly,
the exercise of military influence over the Junta, to make them
elect an Executive Council, of three or five members, each of
whom should be placed at the head of one branch of the
government, and responsible to the nation only. But Cuesta,
intemperate as he was, sincerely desired to serve his country;
and he obeyed the summons without hesitation. Mutual ac-
cusations were made. The Junta of Leon reproached the Ge-
neral with his attempts to maintain order at the commence-
ment of the insurrection, and thereby serving the Intrusive
Government. They injured themselves more than Cuesta by
this disingenuous attack ; for his defence upon that point was
full and satisfactory: what persons in authority were there
throughout Spain, he asked, who had not endeavoured to sup-
press the first popular movement, knowing how great a force
the enemy had in the heart of the country, ready to act any
where, and not knowing that the spirit of resistance was uni-

versal? As soon as that spirit was fairly manifested, he had taken the national side, had brought armies into the field, and had done his duty faithfully, if not fortunately. It was base indeed in the Junta to bring against him this accusation, which, if it had been taken up by the populace, or his own soldiers, might so easily have occasioned his murder. On the other hand, it was found, that in the affair of the deputies Cuesta's conduct had not been distinguished by that honest obstinacy which appeared in his own account, and which characterized his general conduct. He had not disapproved of the Junta's measures till they ordered him to send his cavalry to Blake, a measure which all the military men in Madrid considered of the utmost importance at the time. His opinion of the Bayley Valdes had been so favourable, that he had made known his intention to have him elected as his own colleague; and the immediate cause of this rash and intemperate proceeding was anger that he himself had not been chosen. So completely had this feeling mastered him, that instead of advancing with his army to Burgo del Osuma, (as had been resolved in a council of war at Madrid at which he was present,) he had actually fallen back to Segovia to gratify his resentment by seizing Valdes. Valdes would now have terminated the dispute by giving in his resignation: this it was not thought proper to accept; the validity of his election was admitted, and the other points were referred to a competent tribunal, but the course of events soon put an end to all further proceedings.

The Central Junta, thus peaceably established, and unanimously recognized by the nation, began their administration with the fairest promises. They acknowledged the national debt, and took upon themselves the obligations contracted by the crown, which formed the patrimony of many families; and which they pledged themselves punctually to pay. That portion of the revenue which had formerly been swallowed up in the

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enormous expenses of the royal household, or engrossed by the favourite, would, they trusted, enable them to diminish the imposts laid upon the towns and villages; and great resources would be found in the property forfeited by those who had betrayed their country. The sum total of the funds arising from these sources, from the regular revenues, and from the donatives and contributions of Spain and the Indies, they promised annually to publish, with an account of its expenditure. They would simplify, as far as possible, the revenue system, gradually suppress useless offices, establish economy in all the branches of financial administration, and remove the abuses introduced into it by the old government.

The duties which they proposed to themselves, and the benefits which they promised the people, were farther explained in an address to the nation; for they affirmed, it became them to inform the people of their situation, with a dignity becoming the Spanish character; and to establish, in a frank and generous manner, those relations of reciprocal confidence which ought to be the basis of every just and wise administration. A tyranny of twenty years, exercised by the most incapable hands, had brought them to the very brink of perdition: the nation was alienated from its government by hatred or contempt: every thing favoured the perfidious plot which Buonaparte had formed against them, when they rose to vindicate their rights, and became at once the admiration of Europe. Their situation was unexampled in their history, unforeseen by their laws, and, as it were, opposed to their habits. Great and wonderful things they had accomplished; but all their enthusiasm and all their virtue were required for what remained to be done. Their armies were naked and unprovided with every thing. The French, collected behind the Ebro, were expecting reinforcements, and ravaging Upper Castille, Rioja, and the provinces of Biscay; Navarre and Catalonia were almost wholly in their