

In the mean time, every shadow of hope to preserve peace was put an end to. Sir W. A'Court had been requested to present some modified propositions from France, which were certainly less objectionable than any former ones, viz.—That the Spanish government should engage at a *future period* to modify its Constitution; and in the mean while prove its good faith, by restoring the king to his physical liberty, and allowing him to frequent the country palaces and watering places; by a general amnesty; by the establishment of laws to regulate the press; and by a change of ministry. Some expectations were formed, that these propositions would be listened to, in the distracted state of the country. But on the 11th of March, they were all totally extinguished by a declaration from M. San Miguel, that the Spanish government would not negotiate with France upon a basis which would seem to admit her pretensions to interfere in the internal affairs of the Peninsula. Thus terminated all diplomatic communications between France and Spain, directly or indirectly.

Ferdinand's physicians still continued to report his majesty's indisposition as incapacitating him from undertaking a journey; when four new physicians were called in, three of whom declared their opinions to be, that the exercise of travelling would tend to alleviate his majesty's disease. On the 12th, the cortes ordered the certificates of the different physicians to be referred to a special commission; and upon its report it was agreed, that a deputation should be sent to the king, to request him to fix some day before the 18th for his removal from the capital. The king's answer was, that he would be ready to leave Madrid on the 17th, if circumstances should render it necessary; but if the cortes should not think that any imperative necessity arose before the 20th, he would be glad if his departure could be deferred to that day. He added, that if, however, an occasion should arise, which should render his departure expedient, he would be ready to go on any day, even before the 17th.

The cortes signified their acquiescence in the wishes expressed by his majesty, and accordingly the 20th was fixed for the departure of the government, with this reservation, that if an urgent necessity should occur, that departure should be accelerated. At this period no intelligence had been received



of the entry of the French within the Spanish frontier, though the news of that event was daily expected. Madrid, with the surrounding district, was declared in a state of war, and Count Abisbal, on account of the services he had performed in pursuing Bessieres, was appointed to the commandancy-general of the district, and named political chief of the province. By the removal of the government, it was known that the inhabitants of Madrid would suffer the most serious injuries, and, with a view of engaging them in opposition to the measure, a proclamation, without any date or signature, was circulated through the capital; but it produced no effect. The propriety of the removal was generally admitted, although they were well aware that they must suffer in their different interests. To shew the unprepared state of the government to meet the impending dangers of the country, it is sufficient to say, that the most formidable difficulties arose in carrying into effect the proposed measure within the prescribed period; and in order to procure supplies, it became necessary to have recourse to proceedings of an extraordinary character. They were obliged to melt down the king's plate, and to seize on all deposits of money which were in the hands of the junta of public credit,—making the treasury, however, responsible, in both cases, for repayment. They went further, and invaded the private property of a kind of incorporated body of merchants, owners of sheep, who every year sent their flocks for pasturage to Estremadura, for their general benefit. This society had a fund, about a hundred thousand dollars, lodged in the hands of the bankers in Madrid, and this sum was also forcibly seized to supply the present emergency, under the same precarious security.

The government, by these and such like expedients, at length succeeded in collecting a sufficient sum for the expenses of the journey; and it was definitively arranged, that the king and royal family should leave Madrid on the morning of the 20th, at eight o'clock, and proceed by short stages to Seville. It might have been expected, that so unusual an occurrence would have excited a strong feeling of interest in the capital. This, however, was not the case: although this arrangement was generally known, the concourse of spectators on that morning, in the square of the palace, was far from



being numerous. An eye-witness, whose authority is most respectable, thus relates the occurrence:—There was a considerable crowd at the gate of Toledo, which leads directly to the Andalusian road, and through which it was generally understood the cavalcade would pass. This belief was confirmed by the guards, who attended at the gate from an early hour. Amongst the crowd, there were of course persons of a thousand different sentiments, but all seemed dejected. They were mostly of the class of artists, tradesmen, shop-keepers, and of those citizens who were likely to suffer severely in their different individual interests, by the removal of the government. Several also of the families of those of the local militia, who volunteered to go with the king to Seville, were present, to take a final farewell of their husbands, fathers, and other relations, as they passed through the gate to join the escort, which was stationed at some distance from the road. In front of the palace, which looks toward the country, there is a private road, appropriated solely to the use of the royal family, which opens at a short distance from the palace, on the public way. At a quarter before eight, the king and queen were removed from the palace, in sedan chairs, through the private road to the gate which opened to the high road, where their carriage was waiting. The rest of the royal family followed in the same direction, their carriages being also in waiting. A slight escort was stationed at the gate; the main body, consisting of about 4000 men, infantry and cavalry, was stationed on the road leading to Andalusia. They then drove rapidly round to the Andalusian road, attended by the great officers of state, and thus avoided passing through the gate of Toledo, where the crowd waited until nine o'clock, when they were informed that the king had left Madrid an hour before, and they dispersed quietly, though evidently disappointed.

Four days after the king's departure from Madrid, the cortes, with their president and secretaries, together with the ministers of state and finance, set forward in the direction taken by his majesty. Five or six hundred infantry, and a small body of cavalry, formed their escort; very little bustle was manifested in the capital on their departure, and but few persons were collected at the gate of Toledo, to witness the procession.



It has already been noted, that Abisbal had been appointed to the chief command at Madrid, where he had under his command a force of about 4000 men: his personal ambition was gratified by this distinction, but subsequent events soon made it appear, that the confidence reposed in him by the constitutional government was ill-placed. It is not likely, indeed, if he had remained faithful to the constitutional cause, that the most zealous and discreet exercise of his authority could have presented a successful resistance to the arms of France; but a conduct, the reverse of that which he pursued, would at least have been more creditable to his personal character. The intelligence also received at this time, from most of the provinces, gave inauspicious presages of the final result of the struggle upon which the nation was now entering. A conscription had been decreed, which, if promptly executed, might have furnished a respectable force; but it went on in the most torpid manner, and out of every hundred horses seized, for the use of the cavalry, not more than ten were found fit for service. For each horse, the small sum of five or six pounds was allowed by the government, that is, a treasury order was given to that amount. Valuable horses were removed by their owners, and broken-down defective animals were substituted, not worth a dollar; and thus were the government carrying on a traffic, in which they were always the losers.

The youths, called out for the conscription in Galicia, absolutely refused to march to their destinations; and a spirit of insubordination to the constitutional authorities prevailed, which Quiroga, with all the forces under his command, was quite unable to suppress. In the province of Bilbao, equal resistance was experienced by the civil and military power. The conscription, as well as the requisition for horses, was evaded, in order to which, the peasantry abandoned their houses and fields; agriculture was totally neglected, industry paralyzed, and commerce inactive. Even in the province of Asturias, which had scarcely been heard of amidst the general agitations of the country, the most decided opposition was manifested against the constitutional system; and at Oviedo, the capital of the province, the inhabitants rose against the authorities, while there was no military force to act against them. The removal of the government from Madrid also



tended to cast a gloom over the country, especially in the northern provinces; and the public spirit in the capital, which had so generally prevailed in favour of the Constitution, immediately began to decline.

It is a proud and consistent boast for England, that while there remained the smallest hope for Spanish freedom, our government countenanced, by all the official forms of friendly intercourse, the patriotic struggle, as far as this could be shewn without involving Europe in a general warfare. Instructions, it appears, had been transmitted to our minister at Madrid, to attend the Spanish government, in case it should be removed; and accordingly, Sir W. A'Court left Madrid shortly after the king's departure, and arrived at Seville on the 5th of April, a few days before the arrival of his majesty. Of the progress of his excellency's journey, and the flattering reception he met with from all ranks among the people, there is no account so circumstantial and satisfactory, as that published in the journal to which I have before made allusion; and for this reason I shall give it entire, as well as the public entry of the king into Seville.

“His excellency's journey was a kind of triumph all the way. In several of the towns, where he stopped for the night, the authorities presented themselves to pay their respects. In one place, a large crowd assembled before the windows of the house where he was lodged, and sent in a deputation to present their respects, and request that he would shew himself in the balcony. He complied with their desire, and they hailed him with repeated shouts of “*Viva el ministro Inglis!*” “*Viva la Constitucion!*” In another place he was addressed by the title of “your majesty!” and almost every where he stopped he was serenaded with music. He had an order for private lodgings at every stage of his route, and nothing could exceed the attention with which the proprietors of the different houses designated for his residence, received him and Lady A'Court. They brought with them their own provisions, and were anxious to give as little trouble as possible. But their hosts, generally persons of rank, were prodigal of their civilities, and expressed themselves particularly favoured by having the English minister under their roof. They were attended by an escort of cuirassiers all the way, who conducted themselves with marked



respect and attention. At one of the towns through which they passed, the intendant said, he had orders to escort the English minister to the borders of the province with the whole troop of local cavalry. This was unnecessary, and of course declined. But the intendant said, his orders were positive,—that the cavalry were anxious to discharge the honourable service appointed for them, and, if the attendance of the whole corps were not deemed necessary, he would take it as a particular favour, if six were allowed to proceed with the minister to the precincts of the province. This compromise was accepted, for it was in vain to refuse such hospitable entreaties. In more than one of the houses where they rested, a splendid dinner was provided for the whole party; an extraordinary instance of civility, for it is generally one of the last things they offer in Spain. But this was exceeded by another of Sir William's hosts, who offered him money, to any amount, which he might think to take. This was the most superfluous compliment of all to a minister of England, though probably the intention was sincere, as it was undoubtedly respectful. The house in which Sir William A'Court resides in Seville, belongs to the family of Saavedra, and was handsomely offered, free of expense, for his use. Of course this civility was not accepted.

“I do not know, however, how far the Spaniards would have been likely to pursue the same course of attention and hospitality to the minister of England, if they had known of Mr. Canning's declaration of neutrality, with respect to the approaching contest between France and the Peninsula. Indeed, of all engagements in the cause of liberty, that of England in favour of Spain would be the most quixotic. The Constitution, no matter what may be its excellence or imperfection, has certainly not succeeded in gathering around it the sentiments and good wishes of a majority of the people of that country. I have already given some idea of the state of public feeling in Seville. The same state of apathy, to use the mildest expression, prevailed in all the towns through which we passed, after leaving Madrid. From my own observations, and those of others, I can safely state, that the great majority of the people, on the line of that route, desired nothing so much as peace. They have been vexed and injured by repeated



contributions and conscriptions, and latterly, by anticipations of the current year's taxes, their means of complying with them being extremely limited. The agitations prevailing the last two years in Spain have, in a great measure, suspended the usual internal trade of the provinces, and the people were called upon to make fresh sacrifices—one day to the factious, the next day to the constitutionalists, at a time when they were impoverished beyond all precedent. These are facts, and not speculations. However ardent may be an Englishman's wish, that Spain may enjoy liberal institutions, (and if he were without a wish of this nature, he would be undeserving of his country,) still, when he saw that the idea of civil liberty was carried in that nation to an extreme which promised no durability, and that this extreme, supported only by bayonets and by official *employes*, was the inviolable system which England was called upon to assist with her mighty arm, he cannot but rejoice, that that assistance was refused, and that the strength of his country was reserved for more worthy purposes.

In saying thus much, however, I would not be understood as discouraging, in any degree, those exertions which Englishmen have made, or may hereafter make, as individuals, for assisting the Spaniards to sustain the independence of their country against the unprincipled aggression of France. God forbid that Englishmen should ever take any other part than that of countenancing the cause of freedom, assisting it with their money, and cheering it through the desperate struggle! But the government, I trust, will stand aloof, and let the dictator and allies of Russia waste their strength on the air. England will continue to husband her resources, while the despots of the continent are squandering their's in contests which will every day thicken upon them.

“Public notice was given, that the king would arrive in Seville on the 10th. An announcement to this effect was posted in all the public places, and orders were issued to the inhabitants in the streets through which the royal cavalcade was to pass, to decorate the fronts of their houses. Illuminations were also enjoined for three ensuing nights. Another edict was issued, rather of a peculiar nature, directing that all taverns should be shut after three o'clock on the day of his



majesty's entry; the reason assigned for this measure being, that such disorders as had occurred on former occasions of public rejoicings were caused by the operation of a little too much wine. In the northern provinces I have had occasion to observe, that the Spaniards drink little, but in Andalusia they are fond of wine, and not unfrequently commit excesses; nor is it much to be wondered at, considering that their climate is rather humid, and their wines most delicious. The red wine in common use in Seville, is as fine as old port, to the strength of which it adds the flavour of Burgundy.

"The morning of the 10th looked unfavourable for the display of any pageant, as a slight rain was falling, and the skies were charged with threatening clouds. At noon it continued to rain. Several of the balconies in the streets leading to the palace from the gate of Triana, through which the king was to enter, were hung with counterpanes, most of them of purple silk. The streets near the gate of Triana was lined on one side with soldiers. The Plaza, or square, of the Constitution, looked very handsome. The house of the chief magistrate was hung with purple tapestry, and the pillars of its large balcony were entwined with wreaths of artificial roses. The interior of the balcony, which perhaps ought rather to be called an open gallery, was decorated with eight or ten glass lustres; and in front of two of the pillars was placed the representation of a coat of mail and helmet, surmounted in the usual manner by the national ensigns. A considerable crowd of people was collected in the Plaza, and the balconies of the house were all filled with spectators, chiefly females, well dressed, and their hair ornamented with natural flowers. As there are balconies to each of the stories, the lower ones were sheltered from the rain, which now began to fall heavily. A large body of troops was assembled in the Plaza, with a band.

"From the Plaza to the gate of Triana, there is a long line of narrow streets. The balconies here were also crowded, and as soon as the first guns were fired, at five minutes before one, announcing that the royal cavalcade was within a quarter of a league of the capital, every balcony, without exception, was hung with counterpanes; some of very old patterns of flowered silk, some yellow chintz, some of damask, but the generality of purple silk. The soldiers were all at their posts. Some of



the churches were fronted with old tapestry, and the monks belonging to the convents on the line of route, were all drawn out at the side of the street opposite to them.

“A second royal salute, of fifteen guns, announced the entry of the king within the gate of Triana, at a quarter past one. The royal carriages were preceded and followed by a strong escort of cavalry; and as soon as they entered the streets, a few of them began to shout ‘*Viva Riego.*’ This cry was not answered, and it was not repeated by the cavalry. An officer of infantry ran immediately before the king’s carriage, crying out “*viva*” as he passed. Even this was but faintly re-echoed from the balconies. I followed the royal cavalcade, in the midst of a heavy shower of rain, from the gate of Triana to the Plaza de la Constitucion; and until it arrived at the latter place, I never saw any thing more like a funeral procession. No waving of handkerchiefs from the fair sex, no *vivas* or shouts of any sort from the men, though the balconies were crowded.

“When the cavalcade arrived in the Plaza de la Constitucion, there was something like a general shout of *vivas*, without any other addition, except from the soldiers collected in the square, a few of whom added ‘*La Constitucion,*’ and some, “*El Rey Constitucional.*” The band played the hymn of Riego, but the shout was neither sustained nor enthusiastic; and certainly the people in the balconies took no conspicuous share in it. In fact, they did not seem to know that the king and queen were in the first carriage, and they were still looking on to the end of the cavalcade, where the more gaudy carriages of the officers of the household followed. I never witnessed in so large a concourse of people such complete apathy; they seemed to be present merely because there was something to see; but the spectacle appeared to have disappointed them, probably because the carriages, horses, and men, all dripping wet, presented no emblems of festive gaiety. The side windows of all the carriages were open. The king was dressed in blue uniform, with a star on his left breast, and sat forward in the carriage. He bowed slightly as he passed, and did not appear much fatigued after his journey. The queen sat back, and was scarcely visible. The *infantas*, and their servants, were received without much notice.



“The cavalcade passed on through several other streets, and a third royal salute announced its arrival at the palace, at a few minutes before two. The bells of all the steeples were rung during the procession; the twenty bells of the cathedral thundered forth all their deafening sounds. Doubtless, if the day had been fine, the entry of the king might have presented a much more festive spectacle. But what with the torrents of rain, the splashing of cavalry, the mud of the streets, the clouds of umbrellas, and the apathy of the people, I do not remember to have ever witnessed a public exhibition so uninteresting, and, I may add, so melancholy.

“At night there were illuminations, the signal for commencing which was given by the illumination of the spire of the cathedral tower; this assemblage of blazing torches in the sky had a very striking effect. The faces of the men employed in kindling the torches looked ghastly in their light. A vast number of birds, who had been disturbed from their airy nests, were hovering in alarm around the Giralda, and in the reflection of the torches they appeared all white.”

Such is the narrative given by a gentleman, an Englishman of credit, who was an eye-witness of the facts related. In concluding this chapter, and before I enter upon the military operations which immediately followed, I shall transcribe from the same authority, a view of the civil and political state of that part of the country where the government may be supposed to have had the strongest influence. Speaking of the city of Seville, in the month of April, when the seat of government was about to be established there, our author makes the subjoined observations:—

“I made some inquiries into the feelings of the Sevillians, with regard to the Constitution; and the answers which I received from persons resident here for some years, were shortly to this effect:—That when the Constitution was first proclaimed, a number of rich proprietors, and of steady commercial men, embarked ardently in the cause, under the hope that liberal institutions would tend greatly to the amelioration of their different interests. Within the last year, however, the frequent changes of ministry produced corresponding alterations in all the offices within the reach of their power; and the displacements and successions directed by the actual



ministry, soon after they came into office, were particularly peremptory and extensive. The new *employes*, it was said, consisted mostly of that half-educated gentry, who, after leaving school, had spent the greatest part of their lives in the coffee-houses, and billiard and gambling rooms; and when they found themselves invested with authority, they exercised it in a rude, and sometimes oppressive manner, assuming to themselves the character of exclusive and ultra-zealous constitutionalists. The early and rational friends of the Constitution frequently experienced causes of disgust in the conduct of these new men; and they found, according to their views and feelings, fifty petty tyrants, where only the influence of one had been formerly felt. They in consequence retired from the scene of public affairs altogether, and yielded it to the *exaltadaes*—for so the new men were here, as elsewhere, styled. The result of these proceedings, upon the general spirit of Seville, was to render it exceedingly indifferent towards the Constitution.

“One might suspect, that this view of the matter had come from interested, and therefore questionable sources; but though I made many inquiries, I could hear no representation differing essentially from what is above stated. The frequent and ineffectual applications which the authorities were making every day for money, legally due from the inhabitants, in order to enable them to prepare for the reception of the government, tended rather to corroborate this statement. Besides these, an ‘allocation,’ as it is called, addressed to the inhabitants of Seville, was published by the political chief, in which he began by saying, that although he had witnessed reiterated proofs of the constitutional spirit of the inhabitants of this province, nevertheless, he issued to them fresh injunctions to receive the king, on his arrival, as a ‘constitutional sovereign,’ that they might do away those suspicions which the enemies of liberty entertained of their fidelity to the established system. He then went on to state, that the removal of the government had stricken terror into the hearts of the foreigner; and in a comparison which he drew between the state of France and Spain, he assured them, that anarchy was reigning in the former country, which was on the eve of another revolution, in order to break her chains. ‘While the French,’ he con-



tinued, 'are in hourly fear of an explosion, which may lead them back to the times of Robespierre or Buonaparte, Spain, always grand and generous, calmly observes the results of those causes, and supports, and contemplates with pleasure, the resolution of her constitutional king to remove his government to a secure place, whence he can dictate the measures most expedient in our present political situation. Union and harmony, this is my only injunction; circumspection and reflection, in the midst of the most animated actions, are necessary, that the scenes may not be changed; let there be nothing but rejoicings and gladness amongst all, but with *uniformity*, and without going beyond the limits which reason and policy require. '*Viva la Nacion!—Viva la Constitucion!—Viva el Rey Constitucional!—Viva el Congreso sobrano!*' These are the *vivas* which it becomes patriots to shout in the ears of his majesty on his arrival; any other shout, of whatever sort it may be, cannot fulfil the object of such demonstrations of joy; nor can they have any other effect than that of subverting the good order of things. I hope that the inhabitants of this capital and province will follow those principles, it being understood that if it should not so happen, with pain I say it, the weight of my authority shall fall on him who commits any infractions in this respect; but I hope that this case will not arise, and, above all, that nothing will remain to be desired by your fellow-citizen, and superior political chief,—SEBASTIAN JARCHIA DE OCHOA.

"A stranger, knowing no more of the inhabitants of Seville than he might infer from this allocution, would be apt to suspect, that they were animated by sentiments in some respects differing from those of the political chief. It was the first proclamation I had seen, ordering a people to be merry by rule and with *uniformity*, and not to say or shout either too much or too little, lest 'the scenes should be changed.' The *vivas* which they were to utter were already prepared for their lips. '*Dulce est despice in loco,*' says Horace. 'No,' says the superior political chief, 'in the midst of your joy you must have *circumspection* and *reflection*, otherwise, it is with grief I say it, I must let all the weight of my authority fall upon you.'"

Of the state and condition of Cadiz, at this period, our author gives the following statement:—"If the political feel-



ing of Cadiz were to be judged of from external appearances, it must be considered as eminently constitutional. Over the door of almost every house, an article of the Constitution, such as the proprietor selects, as appertaining to his trade or profession, or expressive of a favourite principle, is affixed, written in large letters of gold on a wooden tablet. I observed, without meaning any disrespect to the Constitution, that the tailors and barbers particularly signalized their ardour for the system by large tablets and letters, and more than one article of the code. Cadiz is surrounded by strong ramparts, which, together with its harbour, which is dangerous to large vessels, render it almost as impregnable by sea as it is by land. There were not many guns mounted; but I reckoned about a hundred pieces of cannon, of all weights, lying on the ground, which might be rendered available to the exigencies of defence. I observed, also, several guns which had been left behind by the French, the mouths of which were injured by being fired at. This was an effectual expedient which the French adopted in the latter part of the war, in order to prevent our artillery from turning against them their own batteries. It had been previously the custom to spike abandoned guns; but the British engineers bored out the spikes without injuring the touch-hole, and thus, in many cases, rendered the spiked guns useful.

“ Since the separation of the South American colonies from the mother country, the commerce of Cadiz has declined very materially; indeed, speaking in comparison with its former activity, it may be said to have perished. I saw no more than fifty vessels in her bay, which, in the days of her commercial greatness, was seldom beheld without a thousand or fifteen hundred. The population is lessening every day; for as trade is almost extinct, families give up their establishments, and betake themselves to Port St. Mary's, Puerta Real, and other small towns on the coast, where they may live at a greatly reduced expense. In consequence of this emigration, Port St. Mary's and San Lucar are improving. Their trade, as well as that which remains to Cadiz, is chiefly in the exportation of sherry, which is produced a short distance in the interior from this coast.”