

countenance and assistance she should require; the cause for such assistance, and the period and mode of giving it, being reserved to be specified in a treaty. January.

The British minister, in his answer, energetically recommended to the allies to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of Spain, and stated the decided opinion of his government, that any amelioration which might be desired in the Spanish system ought to be sought for in measures to be adopted in Spain, rather than abroad.

Upon the delivery of these answers, it was agreed\* by the four continental courts, that they should write despatches to their respective ministers at Madrid, in which they would express their wishes and intentions. When the drafts of their despatches were prepared, they were communicated to the Duke of Wellington, that his Grace might, upon seeing them, make known the line which his Court would take; it being understood that copies of those despatches would be presented to the Spanish government by the foreign ministers at Madrid, to whom they were to be respectively addressed.

No account of the discussions which took place at this Congress has been published; but from the documents laid before parliament it may be inferred, that M. de Montmorency solicited the general co-operation of all the allies—morally in the first instance, and effectively, if necessary, against the revolution of Spain. It was evidently his object to make it a European question, in which the personal irritations, if I may be allowed the expression, existing between France and Spain, should be merged and lost.

The Duke of Wellington was aware that the origin, progress, and results of the Spanish revolution had long excited uneasiness in the cabinets of Austria, Russia, and Prussia; and he saw it would be useless to attempt to dissuade them

\* 31st October.

January. from that expression of their sentiments upon this subject, which they had disclosed in the drafts of their despatches. His Grace, therefore, seems to have addressed himself, in the discussions which took place, to separate the general anti-revolutionary views of the three Courts just mentioned, from the individual causes of irritation against Spain, which appertained to France. In the answer\* which he sent to the ministers of the Allies, after perusing the drafts of their despatches, he contemplated the possibility of a suspension of diplomatic relations between the three Allied Courts and Spain, whatever might be the state of the questions between France and the Peninsula. He thus sought to reduce the cause of war, if it should take place, to a personal and local quarrel between France and Spain, and to prevent that close union from taking place between the four Courts, which would give to the proceedings of France the appearance of being European. If he succeeded in this point, his next hope appeared to be, that England should stand in the character of a mediator between France and Spain, and might, by her good offices, the more easily prevent a war, the consequences of which to herself, as well as to the whole continent, it was impossible to calculate.

At the dissolution of the Congress, it appeared that the Duke of Wellington did succeed in his views to this extent, that no general declaration of the four Powers was issued, though there is little doubt that such a measure was originally intended. A marked difference of principle and language, between England and the other Powers, had shown itself throughout the discussions; and it was no slight advantage gained, that, by the suppression of such a general declaration, the secession of England from the Alliance stopped at a point compatible with the continuance of those friendly relations, which it is her interest to preserve with all

\* 20th November.

the world. The cause of war was evidently reduced\* from January. a general European question to a local quarrel between France and Spain; although the two French plenipotentiaries, M. de Montmorency and M. de Chateaubriand, left Verona with a different impression.

The British government has been blamed for not having instructed the Duke of Wellington to use strong language of remonstrance against the principles put forth by the continental Powers, in the first instance; and against the determination of France to invade Spain, in the second. With respect to the first, it appears to me that the British government, as well as their representative at Congress, took every occasion, and indeed sought for frequent opportunities, to protest generally against the principle of foreign interference in the internal affairs of independent states; and specifically as applied to the case of Spain. They pursued this principle through its consequences, by censuring even the animadversions of foreign Powers upon the internal transactions of an independent country, when the effect of those transactions did not extend beyond the precincts of the state in which they took place. The language used on these occasions was clear, decided, and expressive, such as a complete dissent of principle and opinion required. If England were desirous of forcing her political doctrines on the continental Powers by the instrumentality of the sword, it would have been necessary for her to have indicated her intentions by addressing her allies in the language of vituperation. But having predetermined to preserve peace for the world if she could, and peace for herself at all events, she would have compromised her dignity, in my opinion, if in the warmth of

\* See M. de Montmorency's note of the 26th of December, addressed to the Duke of Wellington; Mr. Canning's note in answer of the 10th of January; M. de Chateaubriand's note of the 23d; and Mr. Canning's of the 28th.

January. discussion she had allowed herself to be led into intemperate or menacing language.

With respect to the other point, namely, the opposition given by the British plenipotentiary to the intended invasion of Spain by France, it is equally apparent that mere words would have had little effect, unless we were prepared to send out armies and fleets to support them. There never was a second opinion in the cabinet, or in the country, upon the impolicy of such a measure; but many have thought that England ought to have unfolded, in a solemn document, her reprobation of this most unjust and indefensible aggression of France against Spain. Perhaps at the moment when this audacious violation of international law was on the eve of taking place, such a document might have contributed to encourage the weak, and rouse the indifferent of Spain, to present a manly front to the invader. But on the other hand, it must be recollected, that in that moment of importance England stood in the capacity of a friend to both parties; and without being invested with the formal character of a mediator, she was requested by both sides to exert her good offices for the prevention of war. In these circumstances a public and solemn declaration of her sentiments would have only embarrassed her mediatorial proceedings; though possibly an occasion may arise hereafter, in which she may send forth such a document, and heal, as far as in her lies, the wound that has been inflicted on public liberty and the rights of nations by the lawless ambition of France.

It remains, therefore, to examine the proceedings which the British government thought proper to adopt for the preservation of peace, after the Congress of Verona was dissolved. Previous to that event, M. de Villele had taken several opportunities\* of expressing to Sir Charles Stuart,

\* See Mr. Canning's letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated December 6.

the British ambassador at Paris, his own earnest desire January. for the preservation of peace; and his wish to receive not only the support, but the advice of the British government, in his endeavours to preserve it. A similar wish had been communicated to Mr. Canning by the government of Spain\*. The Duke of Wellington was accordingly instructed, upon his return to Paris from Verona, to offer to M. de Villele the mediation of his majesty between their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties †. In the first interview ‡ which his Grace had upon this occasion with the French minister, he prevailed upon him to send orders to Verona, to express the desire of the French government that the transmission of the despatches to Madrid by the three courts should be suspended. This was a proof that the French government reconsidered the measure to which its plenipotentiaries had agreed at Verona; and it was for some time hoped that this reconsideration might prevent a recourse to arms. In the interval, whilst the question was referred back to Verona, and it was doubtful what might be the result, the Duke of Wellington § acquainted the French government with the readiness of his majesty to accept the office of mediator between France and Spain, and to employ his most strenuous endeavours for the adjustment of their differences.

The formal mediation of England was declined || by the

\* See extract of a despatch addressed by San Miguel to M. de Colomb, dated November 15, 1822.

† See Mr. Canning's letter just cited.

‡ See the Duke of Wellington's despatch to Mr. Canning, dated Paris, December 9.

§ 17th December.

|| The Duke de Montmorency's note to the Duke of Wellington, Paris, 26th December.

January. French government, on the grounds that no difference existed between France and Spain; no specific point of discussion, by the arrangement of which their relations might be placed on the footing on which they ought to stand. A wish, however, was more than implied, that the British government might succeed in her endeavours to preserve the peace of Europe, which was sufficient to encourage it to renew to Spain\* the expression of its unabated desire to employ its good offices in whatever way might be most useful to that country for averting the dangers with which she was threatened. To this state had matters arrived when that conversation occurred between Sir William A'Court and M. San Miguel, which has been referred to in a previous part of this chapter, and from which it appears that the Spanish government did not then intend to solicit the mediation of this country. An understanding at the same time existed on all sides, that England, though not invested with the attributes of a mediator, would continue her best exertions for the prevention of war.

The delay caused in the transmission of the despatches from Verona, through the interposition of the French government, was but of short duration. In that interval M. de Montmorency, who was just created a duke for his exertions at Verona, resigned his seat in the cabinet. As soon as this circumstance was known, it produced a very general impression that the councils of France had undergone a total change, and that henceforth her policy would be purely pacific. But it soon appeared that the resignation of this minister arose from a feeling of delicacy upon his part, because he could not carry into effect his favourite doctrine of proceeding with the war as a European measure. Perhaps,

\* Mr. Canning's despatch to Sir William A'Court, 29th December.

also, he was a little piqued by M. de Chateaubriand having January. been sent to Congress, the mission seeming to belong exclusively to the office of Foreign Affairs, over which M. de Montmorency presided. It was, moreover, understood that M. de Chateaubriand had been received by high personages at the Congress with a marked distinction that touched the pride of his noble colleague. To the seat of that colleague M. de Chateaubriand succeeded, with a determination to pursue exactly the same line of policy; but he affected to make a shadow of distinction between his views and those of his predecessor in office, by calling the great question in agitation one that was at the same time "wholly French and wholly European;" a distinction that left the matter where it was. Whether the new minister was or was not guilty of duplicity in order to get into the cabinet, is an inquiry into which it is unnecessary for me to enter. That there was vacillation, a wish to recede from positive engagements, and to avoid the war, on the part of M. de Villele, seems highly probable from his declarations in the Chambers. It seems equally probable that he was at last decided to take a step by the advice of Russia; but that he wished to remove the appearance of her dictation, by submitting to strip the question as much as possible of its European character.

In these circumstances M. de Villele penned, or at least signed, that despatch to M. La Garde, which arrived in Madrid two days before the despatches from the courts of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. A copy of the French despatch was published in the *Moniteur*, which arrived by the same courier who conveyed the original to M. La Garde. It was immediately copied into the *Espectador*, the semi-official journal of the Spanish government; and the first impression which it made on the public mind was, that the cabinet of France had separated itself, to a certain extent,

January. from the views to which its plenipotentiary had agreed at Verona, in concert with the three other powers. Some even flattered themselves with the hope that it was of a pacific tendency; but, for my part, I could not perceive in the despatch any grounds upon which that hope was rested.

4th. The French minister, Count La Garde, lost no time in communicating to the cabinet of Madrid a copy of his despatch, and at the same time he endeavoured to give a favourable impression of the intentions of his government\*. The ambiguous tone of the despatch was interpreted in such a manner by the French minister, that the Spanish cabinet appears to have been for a while lulled by it into a consciousness of perfect security, and was prepared to pay no very great attention to the despatches of the three other powers.

5th. The day after the latter documents arrived, copies of them  
6th. were presented to the government. A written answer was promised to the several communications, and there was reason to believe that the departure of the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian representatives would follow. Indeed, it was first intended to send them their passports unasked; but Sir William A'Court prevailed on the foreign minister to take a more moderate course, and wait until they should apply for them. M. La Garde was to remain.

Although the Spanish government was thus set comparatively at ease (delusively, indeed, as will hereafter appear) with respect to France, was sure of the neutrality of England, and had little to apprehend from the vague suggestions of three distant powers, yet it did not exhibit any improper manner upon this occasion. M. San Miguel, in his conversations with the English minister † subsequently

\* See Sir W. A'Court's despatch to Mr. Canning, Madrid, Jan. 7.

† Ibid.

to the arrival of the despatches above mentioned, spoke in a January. tone of much greater moderation, and held out more favourable hopes for the future, than he ever ventured to express before: he more than insinuated that modifications might be effected, whenever the country should be relieved from the danger of foreign interference.

## CHAPTER X.

## DEBATES IN CORTES ON THE FOREIGN DESPATCHES.—PROSPECTS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

January 9. THE government having taken some days to consider the foreign despatches, which had been communicated to it, and of the answers proper to be returned to them, resolved on laying the whole of the documents before Cortes in a solemn public sitting. This was not one of those points which necessarily required the cognizance of Cortes; but the ministers believed they should be wanting to those fraternal sentiments which united them with the Congress, if they did not place the matter before them. Besides, the government of France had taken care to publish the instructions which it had transmitted to the Count La Garde, and the government of Spain thought they could do no less than follow its example.

It was not generally known that these important documents would be read to the Cortes; and, in consequence, the public galleries were not crowded, though rather well attended. Sir William A'Court was in the ambassador's tribune, to which also several English gentlemen were by his politeness admitted. The attendance of the deputies was full.

The Cortes had been previously engaged upon a question relating to ecclesiastical property; but from the manner in which it was treated, it was easy to perceive that the minds of the deputies were full of anxiety and fervour upon another subject. Now and then this sentiment broke out, and there was a partial cheer, when Senor Velasco, a clergyman, said, "I have learned to suffer privations, but there is no

sacrifice which I can deem too great for the benefit of Spain ; January. and even though I were about to become the victim of indigence, still my last resources should be exhausted for the Constitution and the liberty of the nation." This discussion was suspended when the secretaries of state entered the hall of the Cortes, about two o'clock in the afternoon, and M. San Miguel appeared in the rostrum. Upon the instant every person present was breathless with attention, and the silence that pervaded the hall, the tribunes, and galleries, was as profound as if it were a desert.

After a short preface, he proceeded to read the note transmitted by the French government to Count La Garde, which having been already familiar to the deputies and strangers, excited little attention. San Miguel's enunciation is bad. He read in a dull monotonous voice, as if he were a school-boy conning over his lesson before a severe master. He gave no emphasis to those sentences even in the answer to the French note, which was understood to be from his own pen. Yet no aid of elocution was necessary to render every word that fell from him impressive in the highest degree. When he came to that passage of his answer which says that Spain was indifferent as to the results of the Congress of Verona, because "secure of its principles, and firm in the determination of defending, at every hazard, its present political system and national independence," there was a general burst of enthusiasm, many of the deputies and the spectators clapping their hands. These applauses were renewed at the close of almost every subsequent paragraph; and when this paper was concluded, they were continued for several minutes.

The Austrian note was heard in silence until the minister came to the words, "and a *military rebellion* never can form the basis of an auspicious and permanent government;" there was a short murmur of indignation, which would have

January.

been louder but for the intense desire that was felt to hear distinctly what followed. The assembly, taking it altogether, seemed struck with surprise at the light in which this note represented the history of the Spanish revolution. When they heard it said that the principal instruments of the Spanish revolution had excited Naples and Piedmont to follow the example of the Peninsula; Riego, Galiano, Arguelles, and others, smiled at the assertion, wondering at the hardihood of Metternich, who could put forth such a falsehood. Yet it was soon evident that this note, the result of Metternich's experienced wisdom, was drawn up with tact, and a knowledge of human nature; for before the general indignation was raised to its height, it was wonderfully softened by that appeal to national pride which was so artfully wrought up in the allusion to the peculiar position of Austria. "The house of Austria, looking to its own history, cannot but find in it the most powerful motives of friendship, solicitude, and sympathy for a nation which is able to record with just pride ages of glorious recollections, during which the sun never set upon her dominions; and which, possessing respectable institutions, hereditary virtues, religious sentiments, and love for her kings, has distinguished herself in every age by a patriotism always faithful, always generous, and very frequently heroic." This just and eloquent passage had an electric effect: you saw that the men were for a moment subdued; for flattery, so finely covered and directed, could not fail to touch every chord of national feeling. But this result was only for the moment; for, although the remainder of the note was framed in language alternately soothing and severe, the terms in which the king was spoken of, as a captive deprived of his liberty, and the authors of the Constitution represented as acknowledging its impracticability, excited unqualified hostility. When the note was concluded, however, there was no very general expression of indignation,

as its effect was in some measure qualified by the friendly January and admonitory tone in which it ended.

After pausing a few minutes, San Miguel proceeded to read the note from Prussia. Every thing depends chiefly upon the manner in which it is done. There was a great deal of flattery in the commencement of the Prussian note; but it sounded hollow, and evidently appeared as if thrown in by a command which said, "Put down something in the beginning to cajole them." The consequence was, it was laughed at. The dignity of the assembly could scarcely be preserved when that passage was read, which stated that the Cortes "presented nothing more than a conflict of opinions and objects, and a struggle of interests and passions, in the midst of which the most foolish resolutions and propositions have been constantly crossed, combated, or neutralized." This picture of the Cortes and its debates, if not false, was at least well calculated to excite laughter by the zeal which it professed to entertain for those propositions which it terms "the most foolish." The remainder of the note, which is full of invectives against the Constitution, was received with indignation, not unfrequently interrupted by strong expressions of contempt.

But all the rage of the Cortes—or rather, I might say, of the general assembly, for the spectators in the galleries seemed to form an integral part of the meeting—all the rage of this anxious assembly appeared to be reserved for the Russian communication. The sentence commencing the second paragraph, "when in the month of March, 1820, some *perjured* soldiers turned their arms against their sovereign and their country," &c. was frequently interrupted by murmurs from the galleries and the deputies, and amidst these the former exclaimed more than once, "*Abaxo el tirano!*" (down with the tyrant) uttered with a fierceness of tone peculiarly Spanish.

January.

During the time the minister was reading this paper, the agitation among the deputies was extreme. Some turning from one side to the other in a state of painful suffering; some raising their hands on high, in astonishment; some looking intently on the minister, their faces fired with vengeance; some, the elders of the senate, fixed like rocks, against which the waves and storms of ages have toiled in vain. In every man's countenance you might read a different mode of expression; but in all, the thing expressed was the same—horror at the violent misrepresentations which they believed these notes contained, and a burning desire, not only to resist the aggressions which menaced their Spain; but to rush forth to avenge the insults which were flung upon her liberty and honour.

It was observable, that frequently the deputies fixed their eyes attentively on the ambassador's tribune, in which Sir William A'Court and several English gentlemen were seated. They looked on this tribune as representing that great and free country from which they had as yet experienced nothing but friendship, and from which they ardently hoped to meet with assistance. When in the notes a sentence of peculiar despotism was read, many an eye was raised to that box, to read the impression which it made there. Sir William A'Court's countenance gave them neither hope nor despair; but several of his countrymen took very few pains to restrain that abhorrence which these documents must ever excite in the breasts of men who know what freedom is, and are resolved to maintain it. These expressions of sympathy were anxiously looked for by the deputies, and afforded them evidently great satisfaction. They remarked upon them one to the other, and occasionally smiled.

San Miguel concluded with reading the copy of a circular note, which was to be sent to the Spanish ministers at each of the three northern courts, and in which it was stated that the

despatches transmitted by those courts were so full of distorted facts, injurious suppositions, unjust and calumnious criminations, and vague demands, that they required no formal answer: but that the government would take a more convenient opportunity for publishing to the nations its sentiments, principles, and resolutions. January.

As soon as the reading of these documents was over, the president of Cortes said, "The Cortes have heard the communication which the government of his majesty has just made. Faithful to their oath, and worthy of the people whom they represent, they will not permit that any alterations or modifications shall be made in the Constitution by which they exist, except by the will of the nation, and in the manner which the laws prescribe. The Cortes will give to the government of his majesty every means for repelling the aggression of those powers who may dare to attack the liberty, the independence, and the glory of the heroic Spanish nation, and the dignity and splendour of the king's Constitutional throne."

This well-timed reply was received with a peal of *vivas* that lasted for several minutes. The deputies all rose in a confused manner, and shouted *viva la Constitucion, viva la soberania nacional*, in which they were enthusiastically joined by the people in the galleries.

As soon as order was in some measure restored, Senor Galiano moved that a message should be sent to the king, to assure him of the determination of the Cortes to "sustain the lustre and independence of the constitutional throne, the sovereignty and rights of the nation, and the Constitution by which they exist; and that for the attainment of such sacred objects there were no sacrifices which they would not decree, convinced that they would be made with enthusiastic readiness by all Spaniards, who would subject themselves to endure the whole catalogue of evils, rather than

January. bargain with those who would attempt to defile their honour, or to attack their liberties.”

The greater number of the deputies rose in a body to approve this proposition by acclamation; whilst others, as well as the mover, were attempting at the same time to speak in support of it. Some cried out that the proposition was unanimously agreed to; others, that no vote was required, that Senor Galiano's voice was that of the National Congress. In the midst of this enthusiastic confusion, Senor Sanchez was heard to say, that “Europe and the whole world ought to know, that the Spanish nation desired peace, but refuses not war; and that it is determined to repeat even to excess its former sacrifices rather than suffer an attempt upon its independence, or recede one step in its Constitutional system.”

The motion was then carried by acclamation; after which, upon the suggestion of Senor Arguelles, it was referred to the diplomatic committee to draw up a minute of the proposed message to the king, and to present it to Cortes at the expiration of forty-eight hours. This distance of time was named in order to allow the minds of the deputies to cool before they delivered their opinions upon the notes which had been read. For, as Senor Galiano observed, “to-day this discussion would be violent, tempestuous, and agitated, and another day it will be temperate, calm, and majestic, such as becomes the Spanish nation, always grander when dangers become greater, moderate and dignified even when it sees itself attacked by means the most villanous and base\*.” When this debate, if such it might

\* The sentence in the original is no bad specimen of the aptitude of the Spanish language for oratory. “En efecto, hoy dia esta discusion deberia ser violenta, tempestuosa y agitada, y otro dia sera reposada, tranquila y magestuosa, cual conviene a la nacion Espanola, siempre