

sincerest wish for their improvement and their prosperity could have desired for them. But when the last communication from Valençay was read in the Cortes, conciliatory as it was intended to be, and satisfactory as it ought to have been deemed, one member took a sudden exception to the word *subjects*: “ We are not subjects !” he exclaimed. And another member, expressing his assent to the absurd exception, said, that the Spanish people were subjects of the law alone ; but that the use of a word which he erroneously represented as being peculiar to the ancient despotism was accounted for by Ferdinand’s long imprisonment, and his consequent ignorance of the new political phraseology of Spain ! Meantime the most preposterous projects were started by those who saw that such language and such opinions were likely to occasion a struggle, and who saw no farther. Some were for assembling an army to defend the Cortes against the King ; others were for setting him aside, and appointing his brother, the Infante Don Carlos, to reign in his stead : and it is said that there was a party in the Cortes who dreamed of offering the crown to Lord Wellington !

Some of the Guerrilla chiefs are said at this time to have tendered their services to the Cortes ; and this is rendered probable by their subsequent conduct. The Cortes is supposed to have reckoned, also, upon Lacy’s attachment to the constitution ; but the enthusiasm with which Ferdinand was received by the troops might have shown them how little they could expect from any declarations of the military in their favour. When it was expected that he would proceed from Barcelona to Valencia, Elio, with the double purpose of rendering most honour to the King and affording most gratification to the soldiers, proposed a truce to General Robert, in order that the troops employed

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in the blockade of Tortosa might join their comrades, who were assembled at Amposta, to receive him on his way. When Ferdinand apprized them that he had changed his route, he assigned as a reason his desire of viewing the ruins of Zaragoza, and showing a mark of respect to that faithful city. But the season of festivity at Valencia was rather prolonged than retarded by this deviation; for the Infante Don Antonio proceeded immediately thither, and his arrival kept the inhabitants in a jubilant state till the King himself arrived. Ferdinand may have intended to gain time by this delay for making himself acquainted with the real state of public opinion; but the visit was probably suggested by Palafox, without any such view: he knew that it would be creditable to the King's feelings, and honourable to the Zaragozans; and what could be so gratifying to himself as to return under such circumstances to Zaragoza, where, with a devoted heroism which had never been surpassed, he had performed his duty to the uttermost, and won for himself a glorious name not to be stained by calumny, and not to be obscured by lapse of ages, while any remembrance of these times shall endure.

*Cardinal
Bourbon's
reception by
Ferdinand.*

After tarrying some twelve days at Zaragoza, Ferdinand set out for Valencia. On the way he was met by his uncle, Cardinal Bourbon, whom, as President of the Regency, the Cortes had sent to meet the King, but with a strict injunction that he was not to kiss the King's hand, because they deemed any such mark of homage inconsistent with their dignity. Ferdinand had been apprized of this; and, as a first and easy trial of his strength, when the Cardinal accosted him, he presented his hand, and commanded him to kiss it. The old prelate, who had weakly promised to obey the orders of the Cortes, which in his heart he disapproved, obeyed the King with better will than grace,

after he had shown a wish to avoid the ceremony ; but Ferdinand, having thus humbled him, turned his back upon him in displeasure, and presently deprived him of his archbishopric.

The objection to the word subjects might have been imputed to the folly of the individuals who started and supported it ; . . . but this refusal of a ceremony which was as old as the monarchy itself, was the act of the Cortes as a body, and might well be considered as one more proof that they, who had so preposterously assumed the title of Majesty for themselves, were resolved to leave the sovereign little but his bare title. But Ferdinand had seen the disposition of the people at Zaragoza ; he had seen that all classes heartily united in reprobating the measures of the Cortes, and that the re-establishment of the Inquisition was one of the blessings which they expected from his return ! The disposition of the army was distinctly declared by Elio, who met him at Jaquesa, on the frontiers of Aragon and Valencia, and addressed him in the name of the second army, that army, he said, which had shed most blood, and made most sacrifices for the deliverance of their country and their King. “ Your Majesty,” said he, “ arrived in a happy hour to occupy the throne of your fathers ; and the God of Hosts, who by such strange and wonderful ways has brought your Majesty hither to restore the monarchy of the Spains, which Nature has given you, may He give you all the strength of mind and body that are required for governing it worthily : then, Sire, you will not forget the armies which have deserved so well, those armies who, having moistened with their blood the land which they have delivered, find themselves at this day in want, neglected, and what is worse, outraged ; but they trust that you, Sire, will do them justice !” Elio then offered to resign his General’s staff ; and upon Ferdinand’s declining to receive it, and saying it was well placed in his hand, the General, with ready adulation, said,

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*Elio meets
the King.
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1814. King took the staff accordingly, and instantly returned it.

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Elio then requested permission to kiss his royal hand, and in a short but studied speech which concluded this ominous scene, he pledged himself that 40,000 strong right arms should be as they had been in the worst times, the support of his throne.

*Ferdinand
enters Va-
lencia.*

Ferdinand entered Valencia on the following evening, drawn into the city as he had been into every place upon the road by the joyous people who yoked themselves to his carriage, and who testified by every possible expression of word and deed their desire of taking the old yoke upon themselves and upon their children. An English traveller, who had the good fortune to be present on this memorable day, describes their enthusiasm as bordering upon madness; he had seen before the King's deliverance the extreme unpopularity of the Cortes throughout Spain, but the feeling which was now manifested surprized him by its intensity and its eagerness, and by the sudden conversion of those who but a few days before professed fidelity to the new constitution; those very persons were now ready to shed their blood in Ferdinand's cause, that he might be restored, they said, to the full enjoyment of all the rights which his fathers had possessed. "Long live the Absolute King!" was the cry, "and down with the Constitution!"

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On the morrow the King went on foot to the cathedral, to be present at a thanksgiving service for his restoration. The streets were lined with soldiers; the colours of the crown regiment were lowered as he passed, so as to be spread before him, that he might see they were stained with blood; and Elio, who had prepared this scene, said, "I have detained you for a sight worthy of you! The stains which you see upon this flag are of the blood of the officer who now holds it, and who, when covered with wounds,

saved it from the enemy at Castalla. The crown which this blood has died seems to say that the blood which the loyal Spanish army has shed is that which has recovered for you your crown ; and the blood which remains in all the Spanish armies they are ready to shed for securing you upon the throne in the plenitude of those rights which Nature has made your portion !” Ferdinand could not have performed his part better at that moment if he had studied it ; he stooped and kissed the flag, and announced to the standard-bearer, who had before received no promotion for his services, that he was now promoted. In the afternoon after the officers had been presented, and had kissed hands, Elio, in their name and presence, renewed for the army under his command the oath which the whole loyal Spanish nation had taken in the year 1808, when Ferdinand was acknowledged King : the constitution was not mentioned in his address, nor the Cortes ; “ this oath,” said he, “ they renew by me as their organ upon your royal hand (and he knelt and kissed the hand at this part of his speech), and they promise your Majesty that at the price of their blood they will preserve the throne for you with all those rights to which the heroic Spanish nation at that time swore.” Turning then to the officers, he asked whether these were the sentiments which animated them ? He was answered by a general acclamation of assent : many of them burst into tears in the strength of their emotion, and some cries were heard of death to those who did not hold such sentiments, and would not maintain them ! The time came when General Elio paid with his own life’s blood for this and other services to the absolute cause.

He was indeed an evil counsellor now, acting honestly and bravely, but upon an erring judgement. Unhappily there never was a time in which wise counsel was more needed ; for if the blind, unreflecting, generous loyalty of the nation had been rightly estimated, so as to call forth a generous but thoughtful feeling

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*April.**The officers
swear fidelity
to him.*

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in return, it would be rash and presumptuous to say that things might have been settled upon a sure foundation, but certainly much evil might have been averted, much wickedness might have been prevented, and blood, and tears, and misery, might have been spared. General Whittingham, who commanded the cavalry and artillery in Aragon when the King arrived at Zaragoza, and who accompanied him by his express orders to Valencia, was asked in that city his opinion whether the King should swear to the constitution or not? He replied, that the constitution was too democratic to be in accord either with the habits and opinions of the Spanish people, or with the laws and customs of the Spanish monarchy; it must be modified therefore in many parts, or there could be no hope of its duration. Yet one of its articles forbade the slightest alteration during the space of eight years; and thus the King, if he swore to it, must either deprive himself of all possibility of amending it during that time, or be guilty of predetermined perjury. He delivered it therefore as his opinion, that the King under these circumstances could not swear to the constitution as it then existed; but, he added, that the Cortes had deserved well both of the King and of the country; that the King, unaccompanied by a single soldier, should in person dissolve the Cortes, should thank them for the service they had rendered the state, and say that it would gratify him to see them re-elected by their constituents as members of the Cortes which he was about to summon.

The British ambassador, Sir Henry Wellesley, had gone to Valencia to meet the King, and the advice which he gave was to the same effect, that he should modify the constitution, but not annul it. This indeed was the opinion which any Englishman who regarded the situation of Spain with a sincere wish for the peace and prosperity and improvement of a great and noble nation would then have formed; for this was the straight for-

*General
Whitting-
ham's ad-
vice.*

ward course which at that golden opportunity it behoved the King to take. But there were few Spaniards who saw this, few who were in a state of sufficient equanimity to see it: inflamed by strong passions, or settled in strong prepossessions which no force of reason, no lessons of experience could shake, a small minority were bent upon violent change, a much more powerful and now more active party were resolved to resist all alteration, even such as was most needed; while the great majority of the people, looking back upon the tranquillity they had enjoyed before the war as to a golden age, desired nothing but to return to their old habits and their old pursuits, and relapse into their former state of happy indifference to all political affairs. The care of the nation they were for leaving to the government, the care of religion to the Holy Office, and the care of their individual consciences to the priest, as implicitly as they relied on Providence for the due return of the seasons; and it was with these who were the great body of his subjects, that Ferdinand, who would have been just such a subject himself, was in perfect sympathy. It is often seen that circumstances awaken dormant genius, and bring latent qualities into strong action: but no circumstances can raise an ordinary man to the level of extraordinary times, no circumstances can give strength to a weak mind; nor can any thing but the special grace of God call forth in the heart a virtue which is not innate in it.

The Cortes at this time repeated their solicitations that the King would proceed to Madrid, and establish the happiness of Spain; but they made a show of military preparations to support their own authority; and they took upon themselves, with singular indiscretion, to regulate the establishment of his household. But every day now diminished their numbers as well as their strength; and more than seventy of the members sent a deputation to Valencia to present a memorial, in which

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*Memorial
of the
Serviles.*

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 XLVI. been carried by force and intimidation, and professed for them-
 1814. selves and for the provinces which they represented fidelity to
 their ancient laws and institutions. Beyond all doubt they
 spoke the sense of the provinces. In most of the large towns,
 the *Plaza Mayor*, or Great Square, had been new named *Plaza
 de la Constitucion*, and a stone with these words engraven on it
 erected there; at Valencia this was removed one night, and in
 the morning what is absurdly called a provisional stone of wood,
 was set up in its place, with the words *Real Plaza de Fernando
 VII.*: this was publicly done; and the provisional stone was first
 borne under Ferdinand's window with military honours, in a long
 procession formed by the populace, with officers intermixed,
 carrying drawn swords, and bearing the royal flag. A stanza,
 composed* and printed for the occasion, was soon affixed to it,
 denouncing, in a ferocious spirit, vengeance upon any one who
 should profane it, and upon the liberal party.

April.

Stone of the
 constitution
 removed.

The news of Buonaparte's deposition, and the consequent
 termination of hostilities, reached Ferdinand during his tar-
 riance at Valencia. Any perplexity which he might have felt
 (if he could be supposed to have felt any) concerning the
 treaty of Valençay was thus removed, and there was nothing to
 withdraw his attention from the immediate object of resuming

* Piedra immortal, que en gloria de Fernando

Hoy el brazo del justo aqui coloca,

En ti se estrelle el enemigo bando,

Qual se estrella la nave en dura roca:

Y si algun vil ideas abrigando

Contra el Rey, te profana ó te provoca,

Que muera; y que á cenizas reducido

Sirva de exemplo al liberal partido,

his absolute authority, and suppressing what he now regarded as a mere revolutionary faction. He was delayed a week by indisposition, which confined him to his apartment. The first thing he did, when he was sufficiently recovered to leave the house, was to visit all the nunneries, that the nuns might not be disappointed in their ardent desire of seeing him; and in these visits part of two days was employed much to the increase of his popularity, this being at the same time an evidence, it was thought, of goodness, and of devout respect to the superstition of the country. When these visits were concluded, he attended an evening *Te Deum* in the cathedral, performed by the light of 20,000 tapers; after which he and the Infantes adored a chalice of legendary reputation which is venerated there. Hitherto there had been no avowal of the course which he intended to pursue; but on this day a declaration appeared, signed by the King and by Macanaz, as Secretary of State, with special powers for this peculiar occasion. In this memorable paper, Ferdinand, speaking in his own person, began by briefly touching upon his accession to the throne, and his imprisonment, at the commencement of which he had issued, he said, as well as he could while surrounded by force, a decree addressed to the Council of Castille, or, in defect of it, to any other chancellery or audience that might be at liberty, requiring them to convoke a Cortes which should employ itself solely on the immediate business of taking measures and raising supplies for the defence of the kingdom, and remain permanent for other emergencies. This decree had arrived too late; and when the Cortes of 1810 was assembled, the states of the nobility and clergy were not summoned to it, although the Central Junta had so directed; and the members, after taking the oaths, "whereby," said he, "they bound themselves to preserve to me, as their sovereign, all my dominions, on the very day of their installation, and for a commence-

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Breve Relación de los sucesos en Valencia.

Ferdinand's declaration.
May 4.