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1809.

February.

*Mr. Frere
requests
Cuesta's
opinion.*

fact was the case) were involved. But he advised them to consider whether the responsibility to which they exposed themselves in the other alternative was not equally dangerous, and whether their enemies would not be as ready and as able to make a handle of the rejection of British assistance as of its acceptance.

Mr. Frere was aware that the uppermost feeling in the minds of some of the Junta was an apprehension of the resentment which Cuesta might entertain against them, convinced as that general must have been of their weakness by the manner of his appointment. Being desirous, therefore, of obtaining his opinion in favour of the measure which the British government proposed, or at least in such terms as would remove all fear of his declaring himself in opposition to it, he wrote to him, explaining what Great Britain was willing to do in aid of Spain, and what condition was required. That condition, he said, was to be considered as indispensable, not only in the opinion of government, but in that of the nation, the individuals of which did not at that moment consider Cadiz as sufficiently secure even for a place of disposal for their merchandize, so that they were daily soliciting permission to re-export it; and it might easily be judged whether the nation would risk its army upon an assurance which individuals did not consider sufficient for their woollen and cotton. Lisbon had twice been garrisoned by British troops, without the smallest inconvenience to the Portugueze government. Madeira had in like manner been garrisoned: the Portugueze knew us by long experience; they knew also the internal state of England; knew that the English government never entertained a thought of abusing the confidence of its allies; and the state of public opinion was such in England, that it could not do this, even though it wished it. Under the present circumstances, the political question came before General Cuesta, both as a commander and

a patriot, who, as he must be interested in any thing that might appear to injure the honour and independence of his country, so also he could not regard with indifference any thing that might derange the military plans of his government, and perhaps its political relations, by repeated acts of mistrust and mutual displeasure. 4300 good British troops might at this time march to co-operate with him upon the frontier of Extremadura, they would be followed by 1500 more as soon as General Sherbrooke arrived, and the auxiliary army would be delayed no longer than was necessary to dispose of its wounded and prisoners, and to be re-equipped. The question therefore was, whether General Cuesta could dispense with the present reinforcement, and Spain with the aid of an auxiliary army; for these were the points to be decided by the resolution of admitting or sending back the British troops, such being the alternative in which those troops were placed by the orders under which they left Lisbon.

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Cuesta returned a reply in terms of proper respect, both for the British government and his own. He did not, he said, discover any difficulty which should prevent the British troops from garrisoning Cadiz; but he was far from supposing that the Central Junta could be without good ground for their objections, and that they should have objections was sufficient to prevent him from giving any opinion unless they consulted him. With regard to the 4300 men, there could be no doubt but that he stood in need of them; and he hoped that England would lend him much greater assistance, particularly if from any change of circumstances the Central Junta should no longer appear repugnant to the condition which the British government required. This reply did not alter the determination which Mr. Frere had made, of sending the troops back to Lisbon, considering Seville as comparatively safe, and conceiving that the principle which the English ministry had originally laid down, of not attaching

Cuesta's reply.

CHAP. XVII. 1809. small corps of British troops to a Spanish army, was one he should not be justified in departing from, for any object less important than the security of Cadiz or the capital. He communicated this determination to Don Martin de Garay, alleging that the information which he had lately received from Lisbon rendered such a measure necessary.

Close of the discussion.

Garay's answer closed the discussion. It was meant to be at the same time conciliatory, and capable of being produced for the exculpation of the Junta. He represented, "that if any immediate attack upon Cadiz was to be feared, . . . if the Spanish forces were incapable of defending that point, . . . if there were no others of the greatest importance where the enemy might be opposed with advantage, the Junta would not fear to hurt the public feeling by admitting foreign troops into that fortress, because public feeling would then be actuated by the existing state of things. But no such emergency existed; the armies were strengthening themselves in points very distant from Cadiz; the enemy had much ground to pass, and many difficulties to conquer, before he could threaten it; time could never be wanted for falling back upon that fortress; it was easy to be defended, . . . it was to be considered as a last point of retreat, and extreme points ought to be defended in advance, never in themselves, except in cases of extreme urgency. The army of Extremadura defended Andalusia on that side, those of the centre and La Carolina at the Sierra Morena; the enemy for some time past had not been able to make any progress; and there if superior forces could be collected against him, a decisive blow might be struck. Catalonia too was bravely defending itself, and Zaragoza still resisted the repeated attacks of an obstinate and persevering besieger. Either in Extremadura, or with the central army or in Catalonia, the assistance of Great Britain would be of infinite service. This was the opinion of the Junta; this was the

opinion of the whole nation, and would doubtless be that of every one who contemplated the true state of things. If the auxiliary troops already in the bay, or on their passage, should disembark in the neighbourhood of Cadiz, and proceed to reinforce General Cuesta, they would always find a safe retreat in Cadiz in case of any reverse; but should a body of troops, already very small, leave part of its force in Cadiz, in order to secure a retreat at such a distance, the English ambassador himself must acknowledge that such assistance could inspire the Spaniards with very little confidence, particularly after the events in Galicia. But it appeared to Mr. Frere that the presence of these troops was necessary at Lisbon, and therefore he had given orders for their return. Of this measure the same might be said as of the proposed one for securing Cadiz. Lisbon was not the point where Portugal could be defended; the greatest possible number of troops ought to be employed in those advanced lines where the enemy was posted, and where he might be routed decisively. For all these reasons the Supreme Junta were persuaded, that if the British government should determine that its troops should not act in union with theirs, except on the expressed condition, this non-co-operation could never be imputed to them. The Junta must act in such a manner, that if it should be necessary to manifest to the nation, and to all Europe, the motives of their conduct, it might be done with that security, and with that foundation, that should conciliate to them the public opinion, which was the first and main spring of their power."

Thus terminated the discussion concerning the admission of English troops into Cadiz. Mr. Frere warned the Junta of the ill consequences which must result to Spain, if it should appear that the efforts and offers which the King of England had made should have the effect of producing embarrassment to his government at home. It appears, indeed, as if both governments

CHAP. acted more with reference to their enemies at home, than from
 XVII. any real importance which they could attach to the point in dis-
 1809. pute. With the Spanish government this was confessedly the
 case; they did not, and could not, possibly suspect the good
 faith of England: . . . between Spain and England, the honourable
 character of one country was sufficient security for the other;
 but they stood equally in fear of a set of men who criticised all
 their measures with factious acrimony, because their own en-
 thusiastic hopes of complete triumph and thorough reformation
 had not been fulfilled; and of Morla and the other traitors,
 whose aim was to excite suspicion of Great Britain. Under the
 influence of this feeling, they opposed a measure which they did
 not think otherwise objectionable, but which they opposed the
 more firmly because they did not perceive that it was necessary.
 The English ministry on their part wanted a point of defence
 against the opposition, who, as they omitted no means of wound-
 ing the pride and calumniating the character of the Spaniards,
 were continually saying that they did not desire our assistance,
 and that they had no confidence in us. It was against this
 party at home that Cadiz was wanted as a point of defence, . .
 not as a point of retreat upon a coast where we possessed Gib-
 raltar, and where also we were sure of the disposition of the
 people in Cadiz itself, whatever might be the conduct of its
 governor. The governor at Coruña had failed in his duty,
 but still the embarkation of the English was protected by that
 fortress.

Mr. Frere concluded this unpleasant transaction according
 to his own judgement. He had the satisfaction of finding that
 the ministry perfectly accorded with him. They sent him Sir
 George Smith's instructions, authorising him, if he thought pro-
 per, to communicate them to the Supreme Junta. They recalled
 Sir George, and assured the Junta that no such separate or secret

commission, as they apprehended to have been given to him, ever had been, or ever would be, entrusted to any officer or other person; and that it never could be in the contemplation of the English government to select any other channel of communication than the King's accredited minister, in a transaction of such importance, much less to engage in such a transaction without the entire consent and concurrence of the Spanish government. They dispatched orders after General Sherbrooke, directing him to proceed to Lisbon instead of Cadiz. Nevertheless, if at any time the Junta should require a British force for the actual garrison of Cadiz, Mr. Frere was authorized to send to Lisbon for that purpose, and the commanding officer there was ordered to comply with his requisition.

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Papers relating to Spain and Portugal, C.

While this question was discussed at Seville, Cadiz itself became the scene of an insurrection, in which the popular feeling in favour of the English was unequivocally expressed. The people of that city were dissatisfied with the Central Junta; they complained that, instead of informing them of the true state of affairs, their government kept them in ignorance; and having been deceived by Morla, the slightest circumstance sufficed to make them suspect any one who had the means of betraying them. A corps of foreigners had been raised from the prisoners taken at Baylen; they consisted chiefly of Poles and Germans, who might have fought with a better will against Buonaparte than for him, but who were less to be relied on than deserters, because they had enlisted to escape confinement. This corps was ordered to do garrison duty at Cadiz; while the volunteers of that city and of Port St. Mary's were drafted to other parts. But the people, thinking that if Cadiz wanted defenders, it could by none be so faithfully defended as by its own children, determined to oppose both measures, and on the morning of the 22d of February they broke out in insurrection. Their first act of

Insurrection at Cadiz.

CHAP. violence was to seize a courier charged with dispatches from the
 XVII. Junta to the Marquis of Villel, a member of that body, and its
 1809. representative in this important fortress. The Marquis had rendered himself suspected by setting persons at liberty who were confined for their supposed attachment to the French, and by imposing restrictions upon the public amusements. A report that he had committed women of respectable rank to the house of industry, and threatened others with the same scandalous punishment, excited indignation in the rabble; they seized and were dragging him to the public jail, where, if he had arrived alive, it is little probable that he could long have been protected from popular fury. But P. Moguer, a capuchin friar, persuaded them to commit him to the capuchin convent, and pledged himself to produce his person, that he might suffer condign punishment, if his treason should be proved.

Luckily the confidence of the people was possessed by the governor, Don Felix Jones, and in a still greater degree by the guardian of the Capuchins, Fr. Mariano de Sevilla. The former represented to General Mackenzie, that it would tend to re-establish tranquillity if an assurance were given that the English would take no part in the tumult; for they had been called upon to land and assist against the traitors. Accordingly the British General sent some officers who could speak the Spanish language, and they, in the presence of the governor and the principal capuchin friars, distinctly declared, that the British troops would by no means interfere in any thing relating to the internal concerns of the people, but that they were ready to assist in defending the town to the last extremity. This seemed for a time to allay their agitation. In the course of a few hours they again became tumultuous; still an opinion prevailed that they were betrayed, and that measures were arranged for delivering up Cadiz to the French. They called for the dismissal of those whom they sus-

pected, and they required that two British officers should be appointed to inspect the fortifications, jointly with two Spanish officers, and to direct the preparations for defence. General Mackenzie deputed two officers for that purpose; and all those of his staff accompanied the most active and popular of the friars to a balcony, from whence these orators harangued the people, assuring them of the co-operation of the British troops and the support of the British nation, and frequently appealing to the British officers to confirm by their own voices the pledges given in their name and in their presence. This satisfied the populace, and they dispersed with loud huzzas, in honour of King George and King Ferdinand.

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*Confidence
of the people
in the En-
glish.*

On the following morning the governor issued a proclamation, in which, considering the discontent which had been manifested, "and keeping in mind," he said, "the loyalty of the inhabitants at all times, but particularly under the present circumstances, and the good and signal services which they had done, and daily were doing, he dismissed from office four persons whose discharge had been loudly demanded; and declared also, that if the people wished to have the Junta of Cadiz suppressed, their desire should be fulfilled. He assured them that no foreign troops should be admitted; but that officers of their faithful ally the British nation were invited to examine the posts and works of the city and its dependencies, and that every thing necessary for its defence should be concerted with them. He promised that the papers of the Marquis should be examined without delay; that there should be no longer any cause of complaint respecting the ignorance in which the people were kept of public affairs, for that whatever occurred should punctually and faithfully be made public; that the enlistment of the inhabitants for the provincial regiment of Ciudad Rodrigo should cease till further consideration; and that no part of the volunteers, the

*Proclama-
tion of the
governor.*

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*Murder of
D. J. de Heredia.*

light troops, and companies of artillery should be ordered away." Notwithstanding the popularity of Don Felix Jones, it was thought advisable that this proclamation should be countersigned by the guardian of the Capuchins.

Still the tumult continued. Caraffa, who had been second in command of the Spanish troops in Portugal, was confined in the Castle of Catalina, under a charge of misconduct or treachery, with the viceroy of Mexico and other prisoners, who had been sent home from New Spain. The mob proceeded thither, and demanded the prisoners, that they might put them to death. Colonel Roche, who had just arrived from Seville with another English officer, interposed, addressed the people, and succeeded in dissuading them from their purpose. But shortly afterwards they fell in with Don Joseph de Heredia, a particular object of their suspicion, who that very day had at their demand been dismissed from his office of collector of the public rents. He was stepping into a boat to make his escape to Port St. Mary's: the attempt cost him his life, and he was murdered upon the spot. The popular fury seemed now to have spent itself, and the clergy and friars, who throughout the whole insurrection had exerted themselves to pacify the people, and protect the threatened victims, succeeded in restoring peace. To have attempted to quell the mob by force would have occasioned great bloodshed, for they had got possession of arms and of the park of artillery.

*The tumult
subsides.*

*Proclamation
of the
Central
Junta.*

Fifty of the rabble, who had been most conspicuous for violence, were seized by the volunteers of Cadiz, and imprisoned. The Central Junta addressed a proclamation to the people of that city, reprehending them with dignified severity for their conduct. "It was absurd," they said, "to apprehend danger in so populous and so brave a city from a single battalion of foreigners, even if there could be any reason to doubt the fidelity

of Poles and Germans, who had been forcibly dragged into Spain, and were in every quarter deserting from the flag under which they had been compelled to march. As little reason was there for their suspicion of the Marquis. His papers were now before the Junta, and nothing was expressed in them but zeal for the country, and diligence to promote all means for the security of Cadiz. Let the state of those means before his arrival be compared with the works projected and executed since. And had the people no other way of manifesting their disapprobation than by tumult? No one came to the Junta to complain of the Marquis's conduct; no one informed them that their commissioner at Cadiz had lost the confidence of the people. Some anonymous letters only had reached the government, some on one side, some on the other, but all contemptible in the eye of equity. But what was the course which would have become the open and generous character of the Spaniards? To have made their complaint frankly and nobly, and the government would have done them justice."

The Junta then warned them to beware of the insidious arts of the enemy. "It is not," said they, "the traitors who fled with the French and returned with them who do most injury to their country; but it is the obscure agitators, hired by them or by the tyrant, who abuse the confidence and mislead the patriotism of the people. It is they who, disseminating distrust and suspicion, lead you through crooked and guilty paths to the precipice, and to subjugation; it is they who convert loyalty into rage, and zeal into sedition. The Junta have proofs enough of these infernal machinations in the intelligence which they receive every day, and in the correspondence which they intercept." But, notwithstanding the government declared its persuasion of Villel's innocence, it was not thought proper completely to exculpate him without such farther inquiry as might

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