

M. Jourdan. That General, distinguished for his signal successes in the revolutionary war, held the high situation of Major-General of the army of Spain; and he preferring what seemed the surer though the slower course, resolved implicitly to follow the Emperor Napoleon's instructions, and undertake no offensive operation for the present. A plan, he said, had been laid down for invading Portugal, and would be executed in the month of February. It was their intention to subjugate the south of Spain before this should be undertaken; and if the British Commander had possessed as little foresight as appeared in the conduct of the Spanish government, or if the British army had not derived better support from the Portuguese than from the Spaniards, the French might have succeeded in both parts of their intended operations.

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The Central Junta expressed its sense of Sir Arthur Wellesley's services, by nominating him one of the Captain-generals of the army (a rank nearly equivalent to that of our field-marshal), and presenting him, in the name of Ferdinand, with some horses selected from the best breeds of Andalusia. "This tribute," they said, "was of small value in comparison with the services which he had rendered to Spain, and still less in proportion to the wishes of those who offered it: but, for hearts like his, the satisfaction resulting from great achievements was their best recompense; nor was it in the power of man to bestow any reward which could equal the glory of being one of the principal deliverers of a great and generous people, of listening to their blessings, and of deserving their gratitude." Sir Arthur accepted the horses, and the appointment also, provided he should receive permission from his own sovereign; but he declined the pay attached to it, not thinking it becoming that he should burthen the finances of Spain during such a contest. In England, also, he was recompensed with new honours. As soon as the

Sir A. Wellesley raised to the peerage.

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XXV. titles of Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of
1809. Talavera, and of Wellington in the county of Somerset.

August.

Aug. 1.

*Marquis
Wellesley
arrives in
Spain.*

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-ing 20 of
1802*

*Distress of
the army
for provi-
sions.*

On the fourth morning after the battle, while the bells of Cadiz were ringing, the cannon firing, and the people rejoicing with higher hopes than had been felt since the surrender of Dupont, Marquis Wellesley landed in that harbour to supersede Mr. Frere. A great concourse assembled to see him land, and as he set foot on shore, a French flag was spread before him, that he might tread upon it in honour of his brother's victory. The people drew his carriage, which in that country is an unusual mark of respect. The Marquis gave one of them a purse of gold to distribute among his comrades; but the man returned it, and, in the name of the people, assured him they desired no reward, being happy that they had this opportunity of expressing the sentiments of the whole nation. Both at Cadiz and at Seville the Marquis was received with every mark of public honour, and with the most enthusiastic expressions of attachment and gratitude to the British nation. But the first dispatches from Sir Arthur opened upon him a disheartening prospect. The combined armies, amounting to not less than 60,000 men, and 16,000 or 18,000 horse, were depending entirely for their daily supply upon the country, which did not contain a population in many square miles equal to the number of the army, and could not of course produce a sufficiency for its sustenance. Extremadura indeed is the worst peopled and least cultivated province of the whole Peninsula. It was necessary to send to a great distance for supplies, which, scanty as they were, could not be procured regularly, nor without great difficulty. The troops were ill fed, and frequently received no rations whatever. Effectual measures, Sir Arthur said, must be taken, and that speedily. No army could serve to any purpose unless

it were properly fed; and it was absurd to suppose that a Spaniard, or a man or animal of any country, could make exertions without a due supply of food; in fact the Spaniards were more clamorous, and more exhausted, if they did not receive it regularly, than the English. The English, however, were in a state of great distress; from the 3d till the 7th they had had no bread; then about 4000 pounds of biscuit were divided among 30,000 mouths, and the whole supply was exhausted. "The army," said Sir Arthur, "will be entirely lost, if this treatment continues. If efficient measures had been adopted by the government when the distress of the British troops was first represented to them, the benefit must ere this have been experienced. There had been no neglect on the part of Mr. Frere: the evil was owing to the poverty and exhausted state of the country; to the inactivity of the magistrates and people; to their disinclination to taking any trouble, except that of packing up their property, and removing when they heard of the approach of a French patrol; to their habits of insubordination and disobedience, and to the want of power in the government and their officers."

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Cuesta's unaccommodating temper aggravated the evil. He was applied to after the battle for ninety mules to draw the British artillery in place of those lost in the action; there were at that time hundreds in his army employed in drawing empty carts, and yet he refused to part with any. Five guns belonging to Albuquerque's division having been taken at Arzobispo, the Duke endeavoured to make over to the British army the mules attached to them; but Cuesta took them for himself. His own cavalry were plentifully supplied with barley, while hundreds of the British horses died for want of it. In other respects, his men suffered as many privations as the English; and vexation at this and at the untoward issue of the campaign, combined

*Disputes
with Cuesta
concerning
supplies.*

CHAP. with bodily infirmity, seems to have bewildered him: he lent
XXV. ear to every complaint against the allies; and at a time when
1809. they were literally starving, both men and horses, he wrote to their
August. General, stating that his own troops were in want of necessary
food, because all that he ordered for their use was intercepted
by the British and their commissaries. The English, he said,
actually sold biscuit and meat; and he heard continual com-
plaints and saw continual traces that they plundered all the
places through which they passed, and even followed the pea-
santry to the mountains, for the purpose of stripping them even
to the shirt. Sir Arthur positively denied that any thing going
to the Spanish army had been stopped by the British; as for the
tale of his soldiers selling provisions, he observed, that it was
beneath the dignity of his Excellency's situation and character
to notice such things, and beneath his own to reply to them.
He was concerned that General Cuesta should conceive there
was any reason for complaining of the British troops; but, con-
tinued he, "when troops are starving, which those under my com-
mand have been, as I have repeatedly told your Excellency
since I joined you, and particularly when they had no bread
from the 3d to the 7th, it is not astonishing that they should go
to the villages and even to the mountains to look for food where
they think they can get it. The complaints of the inhabitants,
however, should not have been confined to the conduct of the
British; here in Deleytosa I have seen Spanish soldiers, who
ought to have been elsewhere, take off the doors of the houses
which were locked up, in order that they might plunder the
houses; and they afterwards burnt the doors."

To preserve discipline among starving troops is indeed im-
possible, and neither Cuesta nor Sir Arthur could be responsible
for their men under such circumstances; but the letter of the
former brought the question respecting provisions to a point,

and Sir Arthur called upon him to state distinctly whether he understood that the Spanish army was to have not only all the provisions which the country could afford, but all those also which were sent from Seville; whether any magazines had been formed, and from whence the troops were to draw provisions? "I hope," said he, "that I shall receive satisfactory answers to these questions to-morrow morning; if not, I beg that your Excellency will be prepared to occupy the posts opposite Almaraz, as it will be impossible for me to remain any longer in a country in which no arrangement is made for provisioning my troops, and in which it is understood that all the provisions which are either found in the country, or are sent from Seville (as I have been informed, for the use of the British army) are to be applied solely and exclusively to the Spanish troops." On the day that this correspondence took place, an English commissary arriving from Truxillo with bread and barley for the British army, was stopped on the way, and deprived of all his barley and part of his bread by a detachment of Spanish horse. Whatever momentary irritation might be occasioned by circumstances like these, Sir Arthur commiserated the sufferings of the Spanish army too sincerely to harbour any resentment; but he perceived the absolute necessity of withdrawing. "It is useless," he said to the British ambassador, "to complain; but we are not treated as friends, much less as the only prop on which the cause of Spain can depend. But, besides this want of goodwill, which can easily be traced to the temper of the General, there is such a want of resources in the country, and so little exertion in bringing forward what is to be found; that if the army were to remain here much longer, it would become totally useless. The daily and increasing loss of horses from deficiency of food, and from the badness of what there is, is really alarming." Ney's return to Old Castille strengthened him in this resolution;

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CHAP. it satisfied him that no serious attack upon Andalusia was in-
 XXV. tended for the present, and he thought it not unlikely that this
 1809. corps of the enemy was about to invade Portugal, for the sake
 August. of drawing him out of Spain.

*Mr. Frere
 requires the
 removal of
 Cuesta.*

Aug. 9.

The necessity of removing Cuesta from the command appeared so urgent to Mr. Frere, that he deemed it his duty to present a memorial upon the subject, though Marquis Wellesley was expected two days afterward at Seville. He dwelt upon his abandonment of the wounded at Talavera, and upon the imminent danger to which he had exposed Venegas by concealing from him, as well as from his government, the true state of the combined armies, and the inability of the English to proceed. The dismissal of Cuesta, he said, could not long be delayed, and it was important that it should take place instantly, and another commander appointed : either the choice being left to Sir Arthur, or the Junta itself appointing the Duke of Alburquerque, who possessed his confidence and that of the army, and whose abilities had been tried and approved. This was the only satisfaction which could be given to the British General and his army, and even this would be little : “ the wound,” said Mr. Frere, “ is very deep, and the English nation could not have received one more difficult to heal than the abandonment of their wounded at Talavera.” This was the last act of Mr. Frere in his public capacity ; and it was consistent with the whole conduct of that minister, who, during his mission, never shrunk from any responsibility, nor ever, from the fear of it, omitted any effort which he thought requisite for the common welfare of his own country and of Spain. In presenting such a memorial, while his successor was, as it were, at the door, he was conscious that he might appear to be acting irregularly in his public character ; and in his private one, that it might alter the feelings with which he could have wished to take leave of his friends in

Spain; but, in addition to the urgency of the case, he considered also that it would be peculiarly unpleasant for Marquis Wellesley to begin his mission with an altercation in which his brother was concerned. Mr. Frere's situation had been unfavourable to any thing like a controlling influence; the intelligence which announced the intended assistance of a British force had been accompanied with an intimation of his recall, and for some months he had, as he expressed himself, literally been a minister only from day to day, looking for the arrival of his successor by the first fair wind. The Junta expressed their sense of his zealous services by conferring upon him the Castillian title of *Marquez de la Union* (which he received permission from his own government to retain); and, in reply to the momentary outcry which misrepresentation and party spirit had raised against him in England, they represented his conduct such as they conceived it to be, and as it truly was. This had never prevented him from using the strongest language and taking the highest tone toward the very persons who had been foremost in this friendly act; but he felt how unfavourable his situation was, and, knowing that that of Marquis Wellesley would in all respects be very different, he hoped the Marquis might be able to remedy the existing evils as far as they were capable of being remedied. The task, however, was no easy one. "It might seem," he said, "that a British minister ought before that time to have established a regular system for securing the subsistence of the armies; but the evil lay deep; it arose from an old despotic government, and from eighteen years of the basest corruption, intrigue, and public pillage. The effects of all this still continued, the system itself was not wholly done away, and even a sovereign in ordinary times would find it difficult to remedy it."

Marquis Wellesley, on his arrival, did not think it expedient to insist on Cuesta's removal. That General, he observed, was

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Cuesta resigns the command.

CHAP. XXV. said to be deficient in every quality necessary for an extensive command, except courage; his temper rendered him peculiarly unfit for acting with an allied army, and it was scarcely possible that another officer with equal disqualifications should be found in the Spanish service. But the government was under some apprehension of his influence, which was supposed to be extensive and dangerous, though it rested on no other foundation than the precarious one of undeserved popularity. The Marquis, therefore, limited his interference to a strong expression of his sense of the General's misconduct, being of opinion that his removal might be effected more willingly and with less danger if it appeared to be the consequence of his own actions, rather than the result of a direct application from the British ambassador. The Junta, however, were desirous that such a direct application should be made; and Marquis Wellesley then addressed a note to Garay, stating that it was impossible to hope for any degree of co-operation, or even for any aid from the troops of Spain to the British army, if the chief command remained in the hands of General Cuesta. Cuesta had wisely anticipated such a measure. Two days after the date of that letter to Sir Arthur, in which he complained so preposterously of the British troops, a paralytic stroke deprived him of the use of one leg; feeling himself then completely incapacitated, he delivered over the army to the second in command, D. Francisco de Eguia, and requested permission to resign, that he might go to the baths of Alhama. When, therefore, the Marquis delivered in his note, he was informed that Cuesta's resignation had been accepted.

Eguia succeeds ad interim to the command.

Eguia was well acquainted with the military topography of Spain, but had no other qualification for the command of an army: at the battle of Medellin he did not venture to depart from his orders without receiving fresh ones from Cuesta, at a

time when it was impossible for Cuesta to communicate with him, and by this imbecility he completed the destruction of the army that day. Mr. Frere, knowing that the military Junta would be most likely to confirm him in the command, because he was one of the old school, wrote a private note to Garay, deprecating such an appointment. Alburquerque was the proper person for the command; but the Junta were jealous of his rank, his popularity, his talents, and his enlightened views; and Marquis Wellesley soon discovered that, if he were named to the command, the army under him would certainly be reduced. Till, however, a successor to Cuesta should be chosen, the command devolved upon Eguia; and when that General notified this to the British Commander, he accompanied the intelligence with the fairest professions, desiring him to depute a confidential officer, who, with another appointed on the part of the Spaniards, might regulate the distribution of provisions in such a manner that the English army should be supplied in preference to the Spaniards. Lord Wellington expressed, in reply, his perfect confidence in the intentions of Eguia, and sent some officers to Truxillo, there to meet any whom Eguia might appoint, and settle some practicable arrangement: a preference like that which was spoken of he well perceived was impossible.

When first the Junta were informed of the distress of the British army, nothing appeared to hurt them so much as that their own troops should have been supplied while their allies were in want, and they ordered Cuesta, in every instance, to supply the British troops in preference to his own. They directed the Junta of Badajoz to send two members of their body into the vale of Plasencia, and secure the persons of those magistrates who, having engaged to furnish means for the British army, had failed in their engagement; to supersede them also, and place at the disposal of the British commissary every thing

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*Calvo sent
to see to the
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Lord Wellington declares his intention of falling back.

But neither Eguia's professions, nor the measures of the government, nor the presence of one of its members, produced any relief to the British army. Had it been in a condition for service, and provided with means of transport, Lord Wellington had it in view to act against the French at Plasencia, for which purpose he ordered materials to be collected for repairing the Puente de Cardinal; but his cavalry had now consumed all the forage within reach; they were obliged to go from twenty to thirty miles to procure it, and frequently when they had gone so far, the Spaniards, being themselves in equal want, deprived them of it on their return. The horses were at length so much reduced that they were scarcely able to relieve the outposts. More than a month had now elapsed since the British General informed Cuesta that, if he were not supplied, he could not