

to the nation at large. In the military conduct of Lord Wellington, the lord mayor and common council added, they did not recognise any claims to national remuneration; and they conceived it to be a high aggravation of the misconduct of his majesty's unprincipled and incapable advisers, that they had, in contempt and defiance of public opinion, recommended this grant to parliament. There was neither reason nor justice in making it, and therefore they prayed that it might not pass into a law. When the second reading was moved, Mr. Whitbread said he trusted that as this petition had been presented, the minister would not press it that day. Mr. Perceval replied he saw no necessity for any such forbearance, and the bill passed by a great majority, 106 dividing against 36.

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In these debates ministers were completely triumphant. Some of their opponents accused them of having done too much, others of having done too little, and some would fain have persuaded the people of Great Britain, that our army had obtained no victory at Talavera. The charge of having taken no measures for conciliating the Spaniards, by obtaining for them a restoration of those political rights which had been so long withheld, was abundantly disproved by the papers laid before parliament. There it appeared that Mr. Stuart, Mr. Frere, and Marquis Wellesley, had each pressed upon the existing government the necessity of convoking the Cortes. The great error which the ministry had committed, was in their neglect of Catalonia. In the commencement of the struggle this fault was not imputable to them, but to the general, who disobeyed his instructions to convey his army to that most important scene of operations: the effects of that fatal error were to a certain extent irremediable; but no subsequent attempt was made, and the French were suffered to take fortress after fortress, without an effort on our part to relieve them. Still the conduct of admini-

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 XXVII. than of censure; if not without error, if not always successful,
 1810. it had uniformly been brave and generous: we had every motive
 of policy for assisting the Spaniards in their struggle, but the
 assistance was given in a manner worthy of the nation which
 gave, and of the noble people who received it.

*Marquis of
 Lansdown.
 June 2.*

The result of any discussion upon this subject was anticipated by the public; they, in spite of the efforts of factious news-writers, and journalists of higher pretensions, whose want of feeling was more disgraceful even than their want of foresight, continued to feel concerning Spain like freemen and like Englishmen. Nor was Mr. Windham the only member of opposition who expressed this sentiment. When in the course of the session the Marquis of Lansdown moved for a vote of censure upon ministers for rashness and ignorance, the strong bias of party spirit did not prevent him from rendering justice, in some respects, both to his own countrymen and to Spain. "Whatever he might think of the policy which led to the battle of Talavera," he said, "or of its consequences, he should ever contemplate the action itself as a proud monument of glory to the general who commanded, and to the army who won that ever-memorable day. No success, he affirmed, could be expected in Spain under such a government, or with armies so constituted and commanded as the Spanish armies, or where supplies could not be procured; these things ought to have been known; but these things were no reflection on the Spanish national character. The Spaniards had displayed acts of the most splendid heroism which had ever been recorded; they had converted the walls of Zaragoza and Gerona into fortifications almost impregnable. Their disasters were imputable, not to the people, but to those who could suppose that a junta of persons put together in any manner composed a government, and that a crowd of men col-

lected in any way was an army. Still he was ready to confide in the Spanish people, and to believe that much might yet be done by their efforts; and he cherished the hope, and would cherish it to the last, that if ever Europe was saved, our own country would be an important agent in that great event. But it was not by co-operating in rash expeditions with such armies as that of Cuesta."

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Lord Holland spoke to the same purport, while the intent of his speech was to fix a censure on the ministers. He condemned them for having sent out Mr. Stuart and Mr. Frere without adequate instructions, particularly with regard to the most important point, the arrangement of a system for redressing the grievances of the Spanish people and restoring their rights. But on that point the British government was fully justified. He condemned them also for neither having sent an adequate force, nor given proper instructions, nor made adequate provision for that force which they did send: but the event had shown, that a larger force had been sent than could be provided, in the inexperienced state of our own commissariat, and in the disordered state of Spain. He said that ministers ought equally to be condemned by those who disapproved of our interposing at all in the affairs of Spain, and by those who were most interested in the success of the Spaniards: if, indeed, there was any difference, the friends of Spain must condemn them most, because they were peculiarly mortified by the disappointment of their wishes, a disappointment which the misjudging policy of these ministers had produced. He was one who had felt this mortification, for no event had ever excited a livelier interest in his mind, not even the dawn of the French revolution. But having thus spoken to justify the vote of censure which he was about to give, Lord Holland argued in defence of the principle which his own party vehemently and even virulently opposed. He dwelt upon the

Lord Hol-
land.

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importance of supporting Spain to the utmost, and upon the perilous facilities which Cadiz and Lisbon would afford for the invasion of Ireland, if those ports were suffered to fall into the hands of the French. If, after all efforts, he said, Spain should ultimately be subdued, his advice was, that we should promote the establishment of such a system of government in the Spanish colonies as good statesmen could approve, the only system which ought to be approved in any country, a system founded upon the opinions and wishes of the people.

*Marquis
Wellesley.*

Marquis Wellesley replied to the general attack which was made upon ministers, in a manner worthy of his reputation as a statesman. He pointed out the solid advantages which had been gained during the last campaign, by securing Portugal, and giving time for the Portuguese to form an army, which was now in a state to co-operate with the British troops; he showed also what advantages had been gained to the Spaniards, had the Junta known how to profit by them, or followed the advice which both he himself and Lord Wellington had pressed upon them in vain. Then, in a clear and masterly manner, he enforced the duty and necessity of supporting the cause of Spain. "Justly," he said, "had it been stated by the noble Marquis, that if ever Europe was to be delivered, England must be the great agent in her deliverance; and justly he might have added, that the fairest opportunity for effecting that deliverance opened, when Spain magnanimously rose to resist the most flagrant usurpation of which history records an example. Not only were we called upon by the splendour, the glory, the majesty of the Spanish cause, to lend our aid; a principle of self-preservation called upon us also: these efforts on the part of Spain afforded us the best chance of providing for our own security, by keeping out of the hands of France the naval means of Spain, which Buona-
parte was so eager to grasp, knowing they were the most effectual

weapons he could wield against the prosperity and the power of Great Britain. The views of Buonaparte, in his endeavours to subjugate Spain, were obvious, even to superficial observers. The old government had placed at his disposal the resources of that country, but the old government was feeble and effete; and, however subservient to his will, he knew it was an instrument which he could not pitch to the tone of his designs. He therefore resolved to seize upon the whole Peninsula, and to establish in it a government of his own. He may have been prompted to this partly by his hatred to the Bourbon race, partly by the cravings of an insatiable ambition, partly by the vain desire of spreading his dynasty over Europe, partly by mere vanity: but his main object was, that he might wield with new vigour the naval and colonial resources of Spain, to the detriment of Great Britain. This alone could suit the vastness of his designs; this alone could promise to gratify his mortal hatred of the British name. By the entire subjugation of the Peninsula, and the full possession of its resources, he knew that he should be best enabled to sap the fundamental security of these kingdoms. Therefore, how highly important was it to keep alive there a spirit of resistance to France! There were no means, however unprincipled, which Buonaparte would scruple to employ for the attainment of his ends. To him force and fraud were alike, . . . force, that would stoop to all the base artifices of fraud, . . . fraud, that would come armed with all the fierce violence of force. Every thing which the head of such a man could contrive, or the arm execute, would be combined and concentrated into one vast effort, and that effort would be strained for the humiliation and destruction of this country. Universal dominion is, and will continue to be, the aim of all French governments; but it is pre-eminently the object to which such a mind as Buonaparte's will aspire. England alone stands in the way of the accom-

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plishment of that design, and England he has therefore resolved to strike down and extirpate. How then were these daring projects to be met? How, but by cherishing, wherever it may be found, but particularly in the Peninsula, the spirit of resistance to the usurpations of France? If we have saved the navy of Portugal; if we have saved the Spanish ships at Ferrol; if we have enabled the Portuguese government to migrate to their colonies; if we have succeeded in yet securing the naval and colonial resources both of Portugal and Spain; how have these important objects been achieved, but by fomenting in both these kingdoms a spirit of resistance to the overwhelming ambition of Buonaparte? To this end must all our efforts be now directed. This is the only engine which now remains for us to work in opposition to Buonaparte's gigantic designs. Why then should we depart from that salutary line of policy? what is there to dissuade or discourage us from adhering to it? I can discover nothing in the aspect of Spanish affairs that wears any thing like the hue and complexion of despair. If, indeed, it had appeared that this spirit began to languish in the breast of the Spaniards, if miscarriages, disasters, and defeats had been observed to damp the ardour and break down the energies of the Spanish mind, then might it be believed that further assistance to the Spanish cause would prove unavailing. But, fortunately for this country, not only is there life still in Spain, but her patriotic heart still continues to beat high: the generous and exalted sentiment, which first prompted us to lend our aid to the cause of Spain, should therefore be still maintained in full force, and should still inspire us to continue that aid to the last moment of her resistance. The struggle in which Spain is now engaged is not merely a Spanish struggle. In that struggle are committed the best, the very vital interests of England. With the fate of Spain the fate of England is now inseparably blended. Should

we not therefore stand by her to the last? For my part, my lords, as an adviser of the crown, I shall not cease to recommend to my sovereign to continue to assist Spain to the latest moment of her resistance. It should not dishearten us that Spain appears to be in the very crisis of her fate; we should, on the contrary, extend a more anxious care over her at a moment so critical. For in nations, and above all in Spain, how often have the apparent symptoms of dissolution been the presages of new life, and of renovated vigour? Therefore, I would cling to Spain in her last struggle; therefore, I would watch her last agonies, I would wash and heal her wounds, I would receive her parting breath, I would catch and cherish the last vital spark of her expiring patriotism. Nor let this be deemed a mere office of pious charity; nor an exaggerated representation of my feelings; nor an overcharged picture of the circumstances that call them forth. In the cause of Spain, the cause of honour and of interest is equally involved and inseparably allied. It is a cause in favour of which the finest feelings of the heart unite with the soundest dictates of the understanding.”

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Full use was made of these debates by the French government, which was at this time employing every artifice for making the people believe that Great Britain was on the brink of ruin. The King's speech, as usual, was falsified, and sent abroad. There it was said, that whatever temporary and partial inconveniences might have resulted from the measures which were directed by France against our trade and revenue, the great source of our prosperity and strength, those measures had wholly failed of producing any general effect. The official French paper substituted for these words a sentence, in which the King was made to tell his parliament, they must be aware that the measures adopted by France to dry up the great sources of our

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prosperity had been to a certain degree efficient. It was said that we were not merely on the verge of national bankruptcy, but actually suffering under all the horrors of famine; that our crops of every kind had failed; we were obliged to feed our cattle with sugar and molasses, and had nothing but sugar, cocoa, and coffee, and the skin and bones of these cattle for ourselves. To a certain degree, Buonaparte and his journalists may have perhaps believed the falsehoods which they circulated; they read in our factious newspapers of decaying trade, diminished resources, and starving manufacturers; and the opposition told them, that France was certain of success in whatever she attempted on the Continent; that the cause of Spain was hopeless; that it was impossible for us to carry on the war; that if we did not grant the Roman-Catholics all that they demanded, Ireland would be lost, and the loss of Ireland would draw after it the downfall of the British empire. Speeches of this tenour were carefully translated for the use of the Emperor's subjects, and circulated throughout the Continent: but when the French saw it asserted, upon the authority of English members of parliament, that the Spaniards and Portuguese had nothing worth fighting for; that they were inimical in their hearts to England; that Buonaparte was reforming the abuses of their old government, and redressing their grievances; when they saw it affirmed in the English House of Commons, that the people of Spain must know Marquis Wellesley would, if opportunity should offer, take both Spain and Portugal as Buonaparte had done; when they saw the same persons who represented Sir John Moore as a consummate general vilify the talents of Lord Wellington, deny his merits, oppose the rewards which were so justly conferred on him, and maintain, in the face of their insulted country, that the British army had gained no

victory at Talavera; it appeared to them impossible that language, at once so false, so absurd, and so co-operative with the designs of France, could have been uttered by an English tongue; such speeches were supposed to have been invented in France, and they attributed to the artifices of their own government what were in reality the genuine effusions of perverse minds, irritable tempers, and disappointed faction.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FRENCH ENTER ANDALUSIA. DISSOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL JUNTA AND APPOINTMENT OF A REGENCY. ALBUQUERQUE'S RETREAT.

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*Supineness
of the Cen-
tral Junta.*

THE Central Junta manifested none of that energy after the rout at Ocaña which they had so successfully exerted after the battle of Medellin. The whole extent, not of the loss alone, but of the danger also, had then been fairly stated, and bravely regarded. The danger was more immediate now; so imminent indeed, that it was scarcely possible they should have deceived themselves with any expectation of seeing it averted; but they did not venture to proclaim the whole truth, and call forth in the southern provinces a spirit like that which the Catalans displayed, and which might have made their cities and strong places emulate Zaragoza and Gerona. Instead of this, they suffered a fallacious hope to be held out, that if the enemy should enter the kingdoms of the south, the passes would be occupied behind them; . . the Dukes of Parque and Albuquerque would hasten to the scene of action, and another day like that of Baylen might be expected. Fuller accounts were given in the official gazette of an affair of guerillas than of the battle of Ocaña; and details were published of their victory at Tamames, after the army by which it was gained had been routed at Alba de Tormes.

*General dis-
content.*

They obtained a few addresses thanking them for having convoked the Cortes, which, it was said, would like an elixir of

life revivify the social body to its very extremities, and congratulating them upon their triumph over internal divisions, and over those who would hastily and inopportunately have established a regency. But their enemies were more active than their friends, or rather than their dependants, for other friends they had none; and their congratulations were as premature as their triumph was short-lived. Romana's declaration against them was not the only symptom that they had lost the confidence of the army as well as of the people. The Conde de Noroña being at this time removed from the command in Galicia, addressed a proclamation to the Galicians, telling them the country was in danger, and that for his part he had given up all dependence upon the existing government. His repeated applications for money and arms had never obtained the slightest notice, and seemed rather to have given offence. Under such circumstances it remained for them to act for themselves, and he advised them to form a separate Junta for their own kingdom, and be governed by it. A similar disposition prevailed in many of the provinces, and Spain seemed on the point of relapsing into that state from which the formation of the Central Junta had delivered it. They were saved from it only by the progress of the enemy.

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So effectually were the Junta humbled, that they requested Romana would repair to Carolina, where the wreck of Areizaga's army was collecting, and offered him full powers for whatever measures he might think necessary. But Romana was too much disgusted with the government to serve under them, and saw the consequences too clearly to place himself in a responsible situation where failure was certain. They then recalled Blake from Catalonia, where ill fortune had made him unpopular, appointing O'Donnell, in whom the soldiers and the people had great confidence, to succeed him; but this removal could not

Romana refuses the command.