

CHAP. legislature, which contained a full vindication of his own con-
 XXIX. duct, and an exposure of Napoleon's traitorous policy, which,
 1810. given as it was in the most cautious language, and with a re-
 April. mainder of respect and even brotherly affection, might alone
 suffice to stamp the character* of that brother with lasting in-
 famy. During his short and miserable reign Louis had done
 what, considering in what manner he had been placed upon the
 throne, it might have seemed almost impossible that he should
 do, he had gained the affections of the Dutch people; not by any
 good which he did, for his tyrannical brother neither allowed him
 time nor means for effecting the benevolent measures which he
 designed, but by the interest which he took in their sufferings,
 and by his honest endeavours to prevent or mitigate those acts
 of tyranny which were intended to increase the distress of a ruined
 country, and prepare it for this catastrophe.

Buona-
 parte's in-
 tentions of
 establishing
 a Western
 Empire.

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The conquest of Holland had been an old object of French
 ambition; but wider views than Louis XIV. entertained during
 the spring-tide of his prosperity were at this time disclosed
 by Buonaparte. A *senatus consultum* appeared early in the

* Notwithstanding the facility with which, in many instances, Louis was deluded
 by his brother, and the curious simplicity of character which he exhibits, it is im-
 possible to peruse his *Documens Historiques et Reflexions sur le Gouvernement de la
 Hollande*, without feeling great respect for him. His conduct was irreproachable,
 his views benevolent even when erroneous, his intentions uniformly good; and ex-
 cellent indeed must that disposition have been, which in such trying circumstances
 always preserved its natural rectitude.

It appears by these documents that the throne of Spain was offered to him
 before Joseph was thought of, and that he rejected the proposal as at once impolitic
 and iniquitous. But it is curious to see how completely he had been deceived con-
 cerning the course of events in the Peninsula, and still more extraordinary that in
 the year 1820 (when his book was published) he appears to have obtained no better
 information upon that subject than was communicated in the *Moniteur* during his
 brother's reign.

year, decreeing that the Papal States should be united to, and form an integral part of the French empire. The city of Rome was declared to be the second in the empire (Amsterdam was named the third); the Prince Imperial was to take the title of King of Rome, and the Emperors, after having been crowned in the church of Notre Dame at Paris, were before the tenth year of their reign to be crowned in St. Peter's also. The measures that were designed to follow upon this decree were unequivocally intimated, in that semi-official manner by which Buonaparte's schemes of ambition were always first announced. "The Roman and German imperial dignity," it was said, "which, with regard to Rome, had long been an empty name, had ceased to exist upon the abdication of the Emperor Francis; from that time, therefore, the great Emperor of the French had a right to assume the title. Napoleon, who revoked the gifts which Charlemagne made to the bishops of Rome, might now, as legitimate lord paramount of Rome, like his illustrious predecessor, style himself Roman and French Emperor. He restores to the Romans the eagle which Charlemagne brought from them, and placed upon his palace at Aix la Chapelle; he makes them sharers in his empire and his glory; and a thousand years after the reign of Charlemagne, a new medal will be struck with the inscription *Renovatio Imperii*. After ages of oblivion, the Empire of the West reappears with renovated vigour; for Napoleon the Great must be looked on as the founder of a revived Western Empire, and in this character he will prove a blessing to civilized Europe. The peace of Europe will thus be completely re-established. The great number of well-meaning people, to whom Napoleon's power seemed oppressive, while they considered themselves as exempt from any engagement towards him, will fulfil their new duties with inviolable fidelity. Considered in this point of view, the re-establishment of the Western Empire

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CHAP. is a duty which Napoleon owes not less to the law of self-pre-
 XXIX. servation, than to the repose of Europe."

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No opposition to this project could have been offered by the continental princes; the yoke was upon their necks: it only remained for him to complete the subjugation of the Peninsula, and this appeared to him and his admirers an easy task, to be accomplished in one short campaign. There was no longer any Spanish force in the field capable of even momentarily diverting the French from their great object of destroying the English army, and obtaining possession of Portugal, and to that object Buonaparte might now direct his whole attention and his whole power.

Lord Wellington had foreseen this, and clearly perceiving also what would be the business of the ensuing campaign, had prepared for the defence of Portugal in time. It was necessary that we should carry on the war in that country as principals rather than as allies, and for this full power had been given by the Prince of Brazil. As yet little had been done toward the improvement of the Portuguese army; like the government it was in the worst possible condition; both were in the lowest state of degradation to which ignorance, and imbecility, and inveterate abuses could reduce them. Early in the session, parliament was informed that the King had authorized pecuniary advances to be made to Portugal, in support of its military exertions, and had made an arrangement for the maintenance of a body of troops not exceeding 30,000 men. Twenty thousand we already had in our pay, the sum for whom was estimated at 600,000*l.*; for the additional ten, it was stated at 250,000*l.* to which was to be added 130,000*l.* for the maintenance of officers to be employed in training these levies, and preparing them to act with the British troops. This led to a very interesting debate in the House of Lords. Marquis Wellesley affirmed, "that Portugal

*Money voted
for the Por-
tuguese
army.*

*Marquis
Wellesley.*

was the most material military position that could be occupied for the purpose of assisting Spain: great disasters, he admitted, had befallen the Spanish cause, still they were far from sinking his mind into despair, and still he would contend, it was neither politic nor just to manifest any intention of abandoning Portugal. What advantage could be derived from casting over our own councils, and over the hopes of Portugal and Spain, the hue and complexion of despair? To tell them that the hour of their fate was arrived, . . . that all attempts to assist, or even to inspirit their exertions in their own defence, were of no avail, . . . that they must bow the neck and submit to the yoke of a merciless invader, . . . this indeed would be to strew the conqueror's path with flowers, to prepare the way for his triumphal march to the throne of the two kingdoms! Was it then for this that so much treasure had been expended, . . . that so much of the blood had been shed of those gallant and loyal nations? Whatever disasters had befallen them, they were not imputable to the people of Spain. The spirit of the people was excellent, and he still ventured to hope that it would prove unconquerable. All their defeats and disasters were solely to be ascribed to the vices of their government. It was the imbecility, or treachery, of that vile and wretched government which first opened the breach through which the enemy entered into the heart of Spain; that delivered into hostile hands the fortresses of that country; and betrayed her people defenceless and unarmed into the power of a perfidious foe. Let us not contribute to accomplish what they have so inauspiciously begun! Let not their lordships come to any resolution that can justify Portugal in relaxing her exertions, or Spain in considering her cause as hopeless. Yet what other consequence would result from prematurely withdrawing the British troops from Portugal, or retracting the grounds upon which we had hitherto assisted her?"

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CHAP. Lord Grenville replied. "He felt it," he said, "an ungrate-
 XXIX. ful task, .. a painful duty, .. to recal the attention of their lordships
 1810. to his former predictions, which they had despised and rejected,
 February. but which were now, all of them, too fatally fulfilled. His ob-
 Lord Gren-
 ville. ject, however, was not a mere barren censure of past errors, but
 rather, from a consideration of those errors, to conjure them to
 rescue the country from a continuance of the same disasters, and
 to pay some regard to the lives of their fellow-citizens. Were
 they disposed to sit in that house day after day, and year after
 year, spectators of wasteful expenditure, and the useless effusion
 of so much of the best blood of the country, in hopeless, cala-
 mitous, and disgraceful efforts? It was a sacred duty imposed
 upon them to see that not one more life was wasted, not one
 more drop of blood shed unprofitably, where no thinking man
 could say that, by any human possibility, such dreadful sacrifices
 could be made with any prospect of advantage. Was there any
 man that heard him, who in his conscience believed that even
 the sacrifice of the whole of that brave British army would secure
 the kingdom of Portugal? If," said he, "I receive from any
 person an answer in the affirmative, I shall be able to judge by
 that answer of the capacity of such a person for the government
 of this country, or even for the transaction of public business in
 a deliberative assembly. By whatever circumstances, .. by what-
 ever kind of fate it was, I must say, that I always thought the
 object of the enterprise impossible; but now I believe it is known
 to all the people of this country, that it has become certainly
 impossible. Was it then too much to ask of their lordships that
 another million should not be wasted, when nothing short of a
 divine miracle could render it effectual to its proposed object?"
 In these strong and explicit terms did Lord Grenville declare
 his opinion, that it was impossible for a British army to secure
 Portugal; and thus distinctly did he affirm, that the opinion of

a statesman upon this single point was a sufficient test of his capacity for government.

After touching upon the convention of Cintra and Sir John Moore's retreat, he spoke of the impolicy of our conduct in Portugal. "If those," he said, "who had the management of public affairs had possessed any wisdom, any capacity for enlightened policy in the regulation of a nation's interests and constitution, any right or sound feelings with regard to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, here had been a wide field opening to them. They had got possession of the kingdom of our ally, with its government dissolved, and no means existing within it for the establishment of any regular authority or civil administration, but such as the British government alone should suggest. Here had been a glorious opportunity for raising the Portuguese nation from that wretched and degraded condition to which a lengthened succession of mental ignorance, civil oppression, and political tyranny and prostitution had reduced it. Was not that an opportunity, which any men capable of enlarged and liberal views of policy, and influenced by any just feelings for the interests of their fellow-creatures, would have eagerly availed themselves of? Would not such men have seized with avidity the favourable occasion to rescue the country from that ignorance and political debasement, which rendered the inhabitants incapable of any public spirit or national feeling? Here was a task worthy of the greatest statesmen; here was an object, in the accomplishment of which there were no talents so transcendent, no capacity so enlarged, no ability so comprehensive, that might not have been well, and beneficially, and gloriously employed. It was a work well suited to a wise and liberal policy, to an enlarged and generous spirit, to every just feeling and sound principle of national interest, . . . to impart the blessings of a free government to the inhabitants of a country so long op-

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CHAP. pressed and disgraced by the greatest tyranny that had ever
XXIX. existed in any nation of Europe."

1810. Then after arguing that time had been lost in arming and
February. disciplining the Portuguese, he relapsed into his strain of unhappy prophecy. "He did not," he said, "mean to undervalue the services or the character of the Portuguese soldiery, whom he considered as possessing qualities capable of being made useful, but he would never admit that they could form a force competent to the defence of the kingdom; they might be useful in desultory warfare, but must be wholly unfit for co-operation with a regular army. He was not afraid, therefore, of any responsibility that might be incurred by his stating, that if the safety of the British army was to be committed on the expectation of such co-operation, it would be exposed to most imminent and perhaps inevitable hazard. But if these 30,000 men were not composed of undisciplined peasants and raw recruits, but consisted of British troops, in addition to the British army already in Portugal, he should consider it nothing but infatuation to think of defending Portugal, even with such a force. Against a power possessing the whole means of Spain, as he must suppose the French to do at this moment, Portugal was the least defensible of any country in Europe. It had the longest line of frontier, compared with its actual extent, of any other nation; besides, from its narrowness, its line of defence would be more likely to be turned: and an invading enemy would derive great advantages from its local circumstances. As to the means of practical defence afforded by its mountains, he should only ask, whether the experience of the last seventeen years had taught the world nothing; whether its instructive lessons were wholly thrown away? Could it be supposed that a country so circumstanced, with a population without spirit, and a foreign general exercising little short of arbitrary power within it, was capable of any effectual

defence?" Lord Grenville concluded this memorable speech, by moving, as an amendment to the usual address, "that the house would without delay enter upon the consideration of these most important subjects, in the present difficult and alarming state of these realms."

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"It was not the fault of ministers," Lord Liverpool replied, "nor of the person whom they had sent thither as his majesty's representative, if the exertions of the Portuguese government were not correspondent to the dangers of the crisis. The state of the country must be recollected, which might truly be said to have been without a government; all the ancient and established authorities having disappeared with the Prince Regent. But, under these unpromising circumstances, every thing was done which could be done. There was no time lost; there was no exertion untried; there was no measure neglected. Never were greater exertions made to provide a sufficient force, and never were they more successful. The noble baron had triumphantly asked, what have we gained in the Peninsula? We have gained the hearts and affections of the whole population of Spain and Portugal; we have gained that of which no triumphs, no successes of the enemy could deprive us. In Portugal, such is the affection of the inhabitants, that there is no want of a British soldier that is not instantly and cheerfully supplied. Look to Spain! What is the feeling of the people, even in this awful moment of national convulsion and existing revolution? It is that of the most complete deference to the British minister and government; and so perfect is their confidence in both, that they have placed their fleet under the orders of the British admiral. Would a cold, cautious, and phlegmatic system of policy have ever produced such proofs of confidence? Would indifference have produced those strong and signal proofs of affection? Whatever might be the issue of the contest, to this

Earl of Liverpool.

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 XXIX. done its duty. He trusted we should never abandon Spain, so
 1810. long as any hope remained of the possibility of ultimate success.
 February. We were bound by every sentiment of honour and good faith to
 support a people who had given proofs of honour, of good faith,
 and of bravery, which have never been exceeded by any nation."

Earl Moira.

Earl Moira replied to this, by delivering opinions which, as a soldier, he would never have conceived, if he had not been possessed by party spirit. "Every thing which the ministers attempted," he said, "betrayed, as the universal opinion of the public pronounced, a total want of judgement, foresight, and vigour; and, as the climax of error, they now seemed resolved to defend Portugal, . . according to a plan of defence, too, which was perfectly impracticable. For it was utterly ridiculous to suppose, that the ideas of Count La Lippe, as to the practicability of defending Portugal from invasion, could now be relied upon. We should be allowed to retain Portugal, under our present system, just so long as Buonaparte thought proper. The administration of these men had been marked by the annihilation of every foreign hope, and the reduction of every domestic resource; they who vaunted of their resolution and power to protect and liberate the Continent, had only succeeded in bringing danger close to our own shores! And why? because they sacrificed the interests of the nation, and violated every principle of public duty, to gratify their personal ambition and personal cupidity. He was speaking the language of ninety men out of a hundred of the whole population of the country, when he asserted, that they deserved marked reprobation, and exemplary punishment."

Lord Sidmouth.

Viscount Sidmouth regretted the opportunities which had been lost, but, with his English feeling and his usual fairness, insisted that it was incumbent upon us to stand by our allies to

the uttermost. The Marquis of Lansdown objected to the measures of ministry more temperately than his colleagues in opposition, maintaining that it was bad policy to become a principal in a continental war. Lord Erskine spoke in a strain of acrimonious contempt, mingled with irrelevant accusations and unbecoming levity. "There really," said he, "seems to be a sort of predestination, which I will leave the reverend bench to explain, that whenever the French take any country, or any prisoners, they shall have some of our money also. I can hardly account for the infatuation which possesses those men, who suppose they can defend Portugal by sending a supply of British money there. It might as well be expected to accomplish that by sending over the woolsack, with my noble and learned friend upon it."

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Lord Erskine.

The ministers must have been well pleased with the conduct of their opponents; they could not have desired any thing more favourable to themselves than the intemperance which had been displayed, and the rash assertions, and more rash predictions, which had been so boldly hazarded against them. Lord Holland upon this occasion made a remarkable speech, observing, in allusion to Lords Sidmouth and Buckinghamshire, that "he could not understand how these lords could give their confidence to ministers without being assured that their confidence was deserved. We were obliged in honour," he said, "to do what we could for Portugal, without injury to ourselves, . . in honour, . . for that was the only motive that ought to interest the feelings, or excite the hearts of this or any other nation. But if we were to embark in the cause of that sinking people, we were not to load them with our imbecility, in addition to their own weakness. A great plan was necessary: nothing neutral or narrow, nothing minute, nothing temporary, could enter into it; but for this qualities were requisite which no man could hope for in the present

Lord Holland.