

CHAP.

III.

1808.

*March.**Hopes of  
the Prince's  
party.*

which they had been instructed to do; and the troops obeying their orders left Madrid before a reply from Aranjuez could be received, and without any attempt being made to calm or to deceive the populace.

These movements revived the hopes of the Prince's party, who were also strengthened by the natural course of events, for men who had hitherto fawned on the favourite were now ready to forsake him, and imagining that the Prince's rise would be the consequence of Godoy's fall, hastened to offer their servilities and services to the rising sun. They remonstrated with the King upon the extreme impolicy of his intentions; and observing to him that Buonaparte had left even his greatest enemies, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, upon their thrones, they represented how impossible it was to believe that he would think of dethroning a sovereign with whom he was in alliance, and with whose family he was about to connect his own by marriage.

*Vacillation  
of the King.*

With such men as Charles IV. the last counsellor will always have the most weight; yielding to arguments which might have staggered a stronger mind, he suddenly changed his purpose, and issued a proclamation to tranquillize the people, and to disclaim any intention of leaving the country. The army of his dear ally, he said, was traversing his kingdom in peace and friendship toward those points which were menaced by the enemy: and the junction of his life-guards was not to protect his person, nor to accompany him upon a journey, which had been mischievously represented to be necessary. Surrounded by his loyal and beloved vassals, what had he to fear? or if it were required, could he doubt of the strength which their generous hearts would offer him? But they had only to remain quiet, and conduct themselves still as they had hitherto done towards the troops of their good King's ally. This paper was read by the people with delight; they crowded to the palace and to the

*Mar. 16.*

gardens to manifest their joy: their loyal acclamations brought the King and his family to the balcony, and it is said that Charles was evidently affected by the marks of enthusiastic attachment which his subjects expressed, believing as they did, and as undoubtedly it was intended they should \* believe, that he engaged himself by this declaration, not to forsake the country. But the paper was hardly dry upon the walls of Aranjuez where it was posted up, before some fresh alarm produced a second change in this poor, perplexed, intimidated sovereign. On the morning of the 17th of March the emigration was finally resolved upon, and the hour of eleven that night was fixed for commencing their flight.

Ferdinand and his brother, the Infante D. Carlos, opposed this resolution, and entreated their parents to desist from what they called so rash and perilous a project. It is affirmed, that the former took an opportunity of saying to one of the body guards, the journey was to be that night, and that he was resolved not to go. His partizans meantime were not idle. Notwithstanding the proclamation of the preceding day, the people of Madrid were not satisfied; the proofs of the court's intention were unequivocal; carriages and horses had been embargoed; loaded carts had set off; and relays of horses were stationed on the road to Seville. From the metropolis the populace flocked to Aranjuez; there the baggage was packed up for removal, and it was now beyond a doubt that their government was on the point of abandoning them. Godoy relied upon the soldiers; he had

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Insurrec-  
tion at  
Aranjuez.

\* The authors of the official Spanish history excuse the King from the charge of putting forth a false declaration, upon the plea that no promise of remaining was expressed in it. But certainly this was implied, and it is less discreditable to Charles, and more consistent with his character, to suppose that he was sincere when he issued it, and changed his mind when the next tidings brought on a fresh access of fear.

CHAP. been accustomed to defy the opinion of the people, and it has  
 III. been said, at this critical moment, when Ferdinand, trusting to  
 1808. his interest with Buonaparte, and perhaps still more to his favour  
March. with the mob, opposed with more vehemence his father's inten-  
 tions, that the favourite with a threatening gesture told him, if  
 he would not go voluntarily he should be carried in bonds. But  
 insolent as the favourite was, it is not credible that at such a  
 time he should have dared to insult the Prince with such a  
 menace; his wish would rather have been to get rid of Ferdi-  
 nand by leaving him in Spain. Indeed these transactions are  
 perplexed with various and contradictory relations, which it is  
 impossible to reconcile; many persons had an interest in mis-  
 representing them; the circumstances themselves were confused  
 and tumultuous, and the event resulted perhaps more from  
 accident, than from any preconcerted scheme or intended pur-  
 pose. An alarm was given late at night, whether wantonly or  
 in design, by one\* of the body guards, who fired a pistol:  
 others instantly assembled, and the mob gathered round Godoy's

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\* The Marquis de Caballero says, there was no intention of removal that night; that the Prince of the Peace was amusing himself, according to his custom, *tête-à-tête* with one of his numerous mistresses; that the lady left his apartment under an escort of his guards of honour; that the patrole chose to see who she was, she resisted, her escort fired in the air, the trumpet on guard took this for the signal of departure, he put his troop in motion, and then the populace assembled. Godoy must have possessed much more courage in critical circumstances than he has obtained credit for, if he could amuse himself with a mistress at such a moment as this!

Caballero says, that he proposed to the commanders of the body guards to disperse the rabble with twenty horsemen, if they could answer for their fidelity; and if they could not, that they should recal six hundred men from Ocaña, who certainly had not been corrupted, with whom and with the artillery he would undertake for the safety of the royal family, but he was told that no person except the Prince could appease the agitation. He affirms that the people would have suffered the King and Queen to depart, and even Godoy also, but that they would have stopped the Prince. The Conde

house, and endeavoured to force their way in. His own soldiers were faithful to him, and some of the life-guards fell in this attempt. Don Diego Godoy, brother to the favourite, came with the regiment which he commanded to his assistance, and ordered them to fire upon the people; they refused to obey, and suffered their commander to be disarmed and bound hand and foot. The tumult increased, and some cries were uttered, by which it appeared that the dethronement of Charles was desired as well as the death of Godoy. Ferdinand was at that hour the idol of the unreflecting multitude, and not a thought was expressed or felt of effecting any other change than that of removing the one king to make room for another. When the house of the favourite was at length forced, he himself was not to be found. In their indignation the people committed his furniture to the flames; many valuable ornaments were destroyed, but nothing was pilfered; and the insignia of his various orders, rich with gold and jewels, were carefully preserved and delivered to the King. In the height of their fury also they had compassion upon the wife and daughter of Godoy, the former perhaps had been made an object of popular favour because of the scandalous life of her husband, and they were conducted safely to the palace with a kind of triumph, but in a state of feeling which may well be conceived. The uproar continued through the night. At the earliest break of day Ferdinand appeared in the balcony, and by his presence some degree of order was restored. The populace were weary, if they were not satisfied; the

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de Montijo claims the merit of having directed the popular feeling on the occasion. Except a generous feeling on the part of the people, who knew not what they were doing, there is nothing in these whole transactions creditable to any of the parties concerned.

CHAP. troops ranged themselves under their respective banners, guards  
 III. were posted at the door of the house which had been ransacked,  
 1808. and quiet was apparently re-established. At seven in the morn-  
March. ing the King issued a decree, saying, that as he intended to  
 command his army and navy in person, he dismissed the Prince  
 of the Peace from his rank of generalissimo and chief admiral,  
 and permitted him to withdraw whithersoever he pleased. He  
 also notified this in a letter to Buonaparte, wherein, as if the  
 real cause of the dismissal could possibly be concealed, it was  
 said that leave had been granted to the minister to resign  
 these offices because he had long and repeatedly requested it:  
 “but,” the King added, “as I cannot forget the services the Prince  
 has rendered me, and particularly that of having co-operated  
 with my invariable desire to maintain the alliance and intimate  
 friendship that unite me to your imperial and royal Majesty, I  
 shall preserve my esteem for him.”

*Abdication  
 of Charles  
 IV.*

The people were not to be appeased by a measure so ob-  
 viously designed to save the favourite from their hatred, and  
 give him an opportunity of effecting his escape. There were  
 no seditious movements during that day and the ensuing night;  
 but the cause of alarm and agitation continued. Godoy, in the  
 first moment of danger, had taken shelter in a garret, among a  
 heap of mats, in one of which he wrapt himself. There he re-  
 mained about two and thirty hours; till, unable longer to endure  
 the intolerable thirst produced by the feverishness of fear, on the  
 morning of the 19th he left his hiding-place, and came forth to  
 meet his fate, whatever it might be. It would have been a dread-  
 ful one, if the soldiers had not first perceived him, and afforded  
 him some protection against an infuriated populace. Notwith-  
 standing the guard under which he was immediately placed, the  
 raging mob fell upon him, and he was led away prisoner. He had

pistols when he had hid himself, and he has been reproached for not using them either against himself or his assailants; but though at such a time he could have little hope of life, he had a Catholic sense of the value of what little interval might be granted him, and he cried out for a confessor when death appeared to be at hand. That cry may sometimes avail with a Catholic mob, when it would be vain to entreat for any other mercy. He was, however, beaten \* and wounded, and his escort would hardly have been able to have saved his life, if the King had not sent Ferdinand to save him. Under his protection—under the protection of the man whom he had most injured, and whom he justly regarded as his greatest enemy, he was deposited safely in the guard-house; and the Prince then in the name of his father satisfied the people, by assuring them that the fallen minister should be brought to condign punishment, according to the laws. The hope of seeing him publicly executed induced them to forego the immediate fulfilment of their vengeance, which would have been an inferior gratification. They dispersed accordingly, and there was another interval in the storm.

It broke out with renewed violence about middle day, when a carriage with six mules drew up to the guard-house. A report immediately spread that the culprit was to be removed to Granada, for the purpose of screening him from justice: the mob

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\* *No se pudo evitar que le dieran algunas bofetadas y algunos palos, que algo le desfiguraron aquel rostro bello con que hizo su fortuna y la ruina de la nacion.* This is the sort of feeling with which the Spaniards relate the manner of Godoy's fall. In the same tract, "Manifiesto Imparcial y Exacto," it is said, that when he secreted himself he took with him some jewels, *de que su alma codiciosa pudo ocuparse en momento tan critico*; and that he was discovered at last, because he could no longer endure hunger and thirst.

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presently collected ; they cut the traces and broke the carriage to pieces. They were once more quieted by the presence of Ferdinand, who repeated in his father's name a solemn promise that Godoy should be punished in due course of justice. How far these repeated commotions arose naturally from the strange circumstances of the kingdom and the court, or how far they may have been excited by intriguing men, who hoped for employment under a new reign, and by those who with warm hearts and heated imaginations promoted the work of revolution for its own sake, it is impossible to ascertain ; even those who were present have not known what opinion to form. But whatever the moving causes of these tumults may have been, the effect was, that on the evening of that day Charles, in the presence of Ferdinand, his ministers, and the principal officers of the court, resigned the throne. One of the guards immediately spread the news, and never was any intelligence more rapidly diffused. The abdication was publicly announced by a proclamation from Charles, stating that the infirmities under which he laboured (for he suffered much from rheumatic pains) would not permit him longer to support the burthen of public affairs ; and that as it was necessary for the recovery of his health that he should enjoy the tranquillity of a private life in a more temperate climate, he had, after the most serious deliberation, determined to abdicate the crown in favour of his very dear son. He therefore by this decree of "free and voluntary abdication" made known his royal will, that the Prince of Asturias should be acknowledged and obeyed as king and natural lord of all his kingdoms and dominions. The news of these events was received throughout the kingdom with the most enthusiastic delight. At Madrid the rabble manifested their joy by entirely destroying the houses of Godoy, of his brother, his mother, and his more conspicuous adherents ;

his portraits and his escutcheons were burnt wherever they could be found. In many places Te Deum was performed as a thanksgiving for the favourite's fall; in others, bull-fights were given with all the barbarity of the Spanish custom, horses always, and men oftentimes, being sacrificed in those abominable pastimes. At Salamanca the monks and students danced in the market-place.

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The first act of Ferdinand VII. evinced either his delusion with respect to the designs of Buonaparte, or his fear of offending him; it was to dispatch instructions that Solano's troops which were on their march to Talavera, should remain under Solano's orders; and that the French, who were approaching Madrid, should be received as friends and allies. The new king reappointed the five Secretaries of State, whose offices terminated with the former reign. D. Pedro Cevallos, who was one, sent in his resignation: perhaps he wished to withdraw as much as possible from increasing difficulties and dangers, against which there appeared no remedy; and he was conscious that some degree of unpopularity attached to him because of his connection with Godoy. Ferdinand however, by a public decree, refused to accept his resignation; it had been proved to him, he said, that though Cevallos had married a cousin of the Prince of the Peace, he never participated in the projects of which that man was accused; and he was therefore a servant of whom the King would not deprive himself. It was affirmed by the Prince and his friends that Godoy had actually aspired to the throne; an accusation too absurd for any but the vilest credulity of an inflamed people. This wretched opinion now felt that there are times when despotism itself proves even-handed as justice. He was sent prisoner to the Castle of Villa Viciosa: with that



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## CHAPTER IV.

MURAT ENTERS MADRID. THE ROYAL FAMILY INVEIGLED TO BAYONNE. TRANSACTIONS AT THAT PLACE.

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*March.*

*Ministry  
formed by  
Ferdinand.*

THE first act of Ferdinand VII. evinced either his delusion with respect to the designs of Buonaparte, or his fear of offending him; it was to dispatch instructions that Solano's troops, which were on their march to Talavera, should remain under Junot's orders; and that the French, who were approaching Madrid, should be received as friends and allies. The new King reappointed the five Secretaries of State, whose offices terminated with the former reign. D. Pedro Cevallos, who was one, sent in his resignation; perhaps he wished to withdraw as much as possible from increasing difficulties and dangers, against which there appeared no remedy; and he was conscious that some degree of unpopularity attached to him because of his connexion with Godoy. Ferdinand, however, by a public decree, refused to accept his resignation: it had been proved to him, he said, that though Cevallos had married a cousin of the Prince of the Peace, he never participated in the projects of which that man was accused; and he was therefore a servant of whom the King would not deprive himself. It was affirmed by the Prince and his friends that Godoy had actually aspired to the throne; an accusation too absurd for any but the vulgarest credulity of an inflamed people. This wretched minion now felt that there are times when despotism itself proves even-handed as justice. He was sent prisoner to the Castle of Villa Viciosa: with that

measure wherewith he had dealt to others, it was now meted to him; a judicial inquiry into his conduct was ordered, and before any trial, . . . before any inquiry, the whole of his property was confiscated. Processes were also instituted against his brother, and many of his creatures. The decree which announced this declared Ferdinand's intention of speedily coming to the capital to be proclaimed; expressing however his wish that the inhabitants would previously give him proofs of their tranquillity, since he had communicated to them his efficient edict against the late favourite. By the same proclamation the Duque del Infantado, a nobleman of the highest character, was appointed to the command of the Royal Spanish Guards, and to the presidency of Castille. All those persons who were confined in consequence of the affair which happened at the Escorial (thus the conspiracy was spoken of) were recalled near his royal person. D. Miguel Jose de Azanza, a man of high character, who had held the important office of viceroy of Mexico, was made minister of finance; D. Gonzalo de O'Farrel, who had recently returned from a military command in Tuscany, was first appointed director general of the artillery, and presently afterwards minister of war. The Marquis Caballero was retained in the council; and, true to the maxims and spirit of the vile system which he had so long supported, he contrived to give a character of ungraciousness to the best act of the new government. Next to the punishment of Godoy, what all men most desired was the release of Jovellanos; an order was immediately issued for this, but it passed through Caballero's hand, and he, instead of wording it in those honourable terms which were designed by the new King, expected by the people, and required by the case, expressed the royal pleasure as if it were an act of grace conferred upon a pardoned criminal, not an act of justice to an irreproachable and injured man. The

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*Godoy's  
property  
confiscated  
without a  
trial.*