

CHAP. struggle assumed a higher and holier character. It became,
 VIII. avowedly and plainly to every man's understanding, a war for
 1808. all good principles; and we looked on to the end with faith as
 June. well as hope. Never since the glorious morning of the French
 revolution, before one bloody cloud had risen to overcast the
 deceitful promise of its beauty, had the heart of England been
 affected with so generous and universal a joy. They who had
 been panic-stricken by the atrocities of the French demagogues,
 rejoiced to perceive the uniform and dignified order which the
 Spaniards observed in their proceedings, and their adherence
 to existing establishments; . . firmer minds, in whom the love of
 liberty had not been weakened by the horrors which a licentious
 and unprincipled people committed under that sacred name, were
 delighted that the Spaniards recurred with one accord to those
 legitimate forms of freedom, which a paralyzing despotism
 had so long suspended; the people universally longed to assist
 a nation who had risen in defence of their native land; and
 professional politicians, not having time to consider, nor being
 able to foresee, in what manner these great events would affect
 their own party purposes, partook of the popular feeling.

Proceedings
 in parlia-
 ment.

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The first parliamentary notice of these proceedings was by
 a speech of Mr. Sheridan's, made by him for the purpose of
 stimulating the ministry to a vigorous co-operation with the
 Spaniards. "There had never," he said, "existed so happy an
 opportunity for Great Britain to strike a bold stroke for the
 rescue of the world. Hitherto, Buonaparte had run a victorious
 race, because he had contended against princes without dignity,
 ministers without wisdom, and countries where the people were
 indifferent as to his success; he had yet to learn what it was to
 fight against a people who were animated with one spirit against
 him. Now was the time to stand up, fully and fairly, for the
 deliverance of Europe; and, if the ministry would co-operate

effectually with the Spanish patriots, they should receive from him as cordial and as sincere a support, as if the man whom he most loved were restored to life and power. Will not (said he) the animation of the Spanish mind be excited by the knowledge that their cause is espoused, not by ministers alone, but by the parliament and the people of England? If there be a disposition in Spain to resent the insults and injuries, too enormous to be described by language, which they have endured from the tyrant of the earth, will not that disposition be roused to the most sublime exertion by the assurance that their efforts will be cordially aided by a great and powerful nation? Never was any thing so brave, so generous, so noble, as the conduct of the Spaniards! Never was there a more important crisis than that which their patriotism had thus occasioned in the state of Europe!"

Mr. Canning replied, that his Majesty's ministers saw, with the most deep and lively interest, this noble struggle against the unexampled atrocity of France; and that there was the strongest disposition on the part of government to afford every practicable aid in a contest so magnanimous. In endeavouring to afford this aid, he said, it would never occur to them that a state of war existed between Spain and Great Britain. They should proceed upon the principle, that any nation who started up with a determination to oppose a power, which, whether professing insidious peace, or declaring open war, was the common enemy of all nations, . . . whatever might be the existing political relations of that nation with Great Britain, became instantly our essential ally. As for what were called peculiarly British interests, he disclaimed them as any part of the considerations which influenced government. In this contest, wherein Spain had embarked, no interest could be so purely British as Spanish success; no conquest so advantageous for Great Britain as con-

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Mr. Whitbread proposes to negotiate with France.*

quering from France the complete integrity of the Spanish dominions in every quarter of the world. This declaration satisfied Mr. Whitbread; but that gentleman thought proper to deprecate the tone in which the Emperor Napoleon was spoken of, saying, that, when he heard him called despot, tyrant, plunderer, and common enemy of mankind, he wished from his heart England could come into the cause with clean hands.

A few days after this debate, Mr. Whitbread, in a speech upon the state of the empire, took occasion to refer to an opinion concerning peace, which he had delivered early in the session. "I then stated," said he, "that it did not appear to me degrading for this country to propose a negotiation for peace with France: at no period of the interval which has elapsed, has it appeared to me that such a proposition would be degrading; nor can I anticipate, during the recess which is about to take place, any circumstance, the occurrence of which can, by possibility, render it unexpedient or degrading to open such a negotiation." The common feeling and common sense of the country were shocked at the mention of negotiating with Buonaparte, just at the moment when his unexampled treachery towards an ally was the theme of universal execration; and when a whole nation had just arisen against his insolent aggression. Mr. Whitbread felt that he had injured himself in the opinion of the people, and therefore, on the last day of the session, took occasion to express his admiration of the Spanish patriots; and to regret that ministers had not applied for a vote of credit, which would enable them more effectually to second the wishes of all ranks of Englishmen, by aiding and assisting the Spaniards. "Had such a message," he said, "been sent down, it would have been met with unanimous concurrence; and that concurrence would have been echoed throughout the country. The Spanish nation was now committed with France: never were a people engaged in a more

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Mr. Whitbread speaks in favour of the Spaniards.*

arduous and honourable struggle ; and he earnestly prayed God to crown their efforts with a success as signal as those efforts were glorious. He could not help thinking, that it would have been well to have given an opportunity of manifesting to them the sympathy which glowed in every British heart, through the proper channel, the legitimate organ of the British people. For himself, from the bottom of his soul, he wished success to the patriotic efforts of the Spaniards ; and that their present struggle might be crowned with the recovery of their liberty as a people, and the assertion of their independence."

As a farther avowal of these sentiments, Mr. Whitbread addressed a letter, on the situation of Spain, to Lord Holland ; " the subject," he said, " being peculiarly interesting to that distinguished nobleman, from the attachment he had formed to a people, the grandeur of whose character he had had the opportunity to estimate, and to which he had always done justice, even when that character was obscured by the faults of a bad government." Having repeated his professions of ardent sympathy with the Spaniards, he recurred to his proposal for negotiating. " It has been falsely and basely stated," said he, " that I advised the purchase of peace by the abandonment of the heroic Spaniards to their fate. God forbid ! A notion so detestable never entered my imagination. Perish the man who could entertain it ! Perish this country, rather than its safety should be owing to a compromise so horridly iniquitous ! My feelings, at the time I spoke, ran in a direction totally opposite to any thing so disgusting and abominable. I am not, however," he pursued, " afraid to say, that the present is a moment in which I think negotiation might be proposed to the Emperor of the French by Great Britain, with the certainty of this great advantage, that if the negotiation should be refused, we should be at least sure of being *right* in the eyes of God and man ; an

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Mr. Whitbread's letter to Lord Holland.

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advantage which, in my opinion, we have never yet possessed, from the commencement of the contest to the present hour ; and the value of which is far beyond all calculation.”

In vindicating himself from the imputation of regarding the cause of the Spaniards with indifference, Mr. Whitbread succeeded for the time ; but, in other respects, this letter lowered him in the opinion of judicious minds. The folly of wasting time in a farce of negotiation ; the certainty that such delay would injure the Spaniards, and the probability that it might induce them to regard us with a suspicion, which such conduct would render reasonable ; above all, the absurdity of proposing to treat with the tyrant at the very time when he was perpetrating the most flagrant breach of treaties ; when he had proved in the eyes of all Europe, that no treaties, no alliances, no ties of public faith, or individual honour, could restrain him, . . . were so glaring to every man's understanding, that Mr. Whitbread's advice appeared like absolute infatuation. So far, indeed, from opening a negotiation at that time, and on these grounds, with the Corsican, it behoved the British Government then to have made the war a personal war against him, . . . to have proclaimed loudly before God and the world, that this country never would treat with a man who had avowed his contempt for the laws of nations ; and given open proof that he made treaties only for the purpose of more securely effecting the destruction of those who were credulous enough to rely upon his faith. Then was the time to have appealed to the French people themselves. . . . The Spanish war was a war of the Buonaparte family, not of France. Hitherto, Buonaparte and his immediate agents were the only persons implicated in the infamy of this unexampled treachery and usurpation. Would France appropriate that infamy to herself ? Would she, for the sake of this foreign family, entail upon herself the privations, the sacrifices, and the hazards of interminable war ?

To France we offered peace, under any other ruler ; we reclaimed none of her conquests ; we asked nothing from her, . . . we were ready to restore prosperity to her merchants, her citizens, and her peasantry ; and to open her ports to the commerce of the world. But peace with Buonaparte was impossible. How could England, so long the object of his avowed and inveterate hatred, trust him, when his insatiable ambition did not spare the oldest, the most faithful, the most serviceable, the most submissive of his allies and friends ! If proclamations to this tenor had been scattered over the whole coast of France, Buonaparte might have been endangered by the British press and the force of truth, when he stood in no fear of any other force. The importance of communicating true intelligence to the French was manifested by the care with which he kept them in ignorance, and the shameless falsehoods which continually appeared in his official papers.

Arms, ammunition, and clothing were dispatched to the northern provinces, immediately upon the arrival of the Deputies : men, they said, they did not want. Colonel Sir Thomas Dyer, Major Roche, and Captain Patrick, were sent at the same time on a military mission to Asturias, and Lieut.-Colonel Doyle, Captain Carroll, and Captain Kennedy, to Galicia. The Spanish prisoners were released and sent home ; and, in the King's speech, at the close of the session, Spain was recognised as a natural friend and ally. It was there declared, " that the British government would make every exertion for the support of a people thus nobly struggling against the tyranny and usurpation of France ; that it would be guided in the choice and direction of its exertions by the wishes of those in whose behalf they were employed ; and that, in contributing to the success of this just and glorious cause, England had no other object than that of preserving unimpaired the integrity and independence of the

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*Measures of
the British
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*Movements
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French in
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and Old
Castile.*

*Torque-
mada burnt.*

*G. Cuesta
attempts at
first to quiet
the people.*

Spanish monarchy." An order of council appeared on the same day, announcing that hostilities against Spain had ceased. Nor was Portugal overlooked by the British government. Lieut.-Colonel Brown, Colonel Trant, and Captain Preval, were sent to obtain intelligence of the state of affairs in the northern provinces, and preparations were made for sending an expedition under Sir Arthur Wellesley, to free that kingdom from the French; and in thus delivering an old and faithful ally, to operate a powerful diversion in aid of the Spaniards.

The French in Spain, meantime, had acted with their wonted celerity, and, for the most part, at first, with their wonted success. General Verdier having routed the people who had assembled at Logroño, entered that town, and put the leaders of the people to death as rioters. General Frère defeated a body of 5000 men at Segovia, and reduced the city to submission. Lasalle marched from Burgos upon the little town of Torquemada, where Queen Juana, in former times, watched during so many weeks the body of her husband, as jealously as if he had been living; suffered no woman to approach the church wherein his bier was placed; and listened eagerly to the knave who flattered her insane affliction with a tale, that a certain King fourteen years after his death had been restored to life, and why might not a like miracle be vouchsafed in compassion to her grief, and in answer to her prayers? Some 6000 Spaniards had gathered together there: he dispersed them with great slaughter, and burnt the place; then marched upon Palencia, disarmed the inhabitants of that city and the vicinity, and being joined at Duenas by General Merle, proceeded against Valladolid, which had declared for the national cause.

D. Gregorio de la Cuesta, whom Ferdinand had appointed Captain-General of Castille and Leon, had endeavoured to suppress the spirit of resistance when it first manifested itself in

those kingdoms. He was in correspondence with Urquijo; and the leaders of that party, who were considered as the *Liberales* of Spain before they attached themselves to the service of the Intruder, reckoned upon his co-operation, and had already nominated him to the Vice-royalty of Mexico. Cuesta was an old brave man, energetic, hasty, and headstrong: in the better ages of Spain he would have been capable of great and terrible actions; and the strong elements of the Spanish character were strongly marked in his resolute, untractable, and decided temper. Yet the national spirit was dormant within him till it was awakened by the voice of the nation. He published a proclamation at Valladolid, exhorting the people to remain tranquil, and accept the powerful protection which was offered to the kingdom, and threatening with punishment all who should attempt to raise disturbances, or take part in them. And when the *Ayuntamiento* of Leon applied to him for advice how to act upon the abdication of the Bourbons, he resented their application as implying a doubt of his own sentiments; and replied, that nothing ought to be attempted against the determination of the Supreme Junta who governed in the Emperor's name; that the nation ought peaceably to wait for the King whom Napoleon should appoint; that a struggle without arms, ammunition, or union, must needs be hopeless; and that even if any successes were obtained, the leaders would quarrel among themselves for command, and a civil war must arise, which would end in the destruction of the kingdom. But when Cuesta saw how strong the tide of popular feeling had set in, and that what he had looked upon at first merely as a seditious movement, had assumed the sacred and indubitable character of a national cause, perceiving then that the choice was not between subordination and anarchy, but between France and Spain, he chose the better part, and entered into it heartily, and exerted himself

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Nellerto,
t. 2. p. 203.

Impugnacion al Manifiesto del G. Cuesta,
p. 8. 9.
He takes the national side.

CHAP. VIII. to embody and discipline the impatient volunteers, who, in their honest hatred of the French, would have hurried to their own destruction.

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Evil of his hesitation.

But great evil arose from the resistance which he had opposed to the patriotic cause. Where the principal persons and constituted authorities declared themselves frankly and freely at first, the zeal of the people was easily restrained within due bounds, and no excesses were committed; but wherever the higher orders acted manifestly in deference to the multitude, and in fear of them, the mob knew that they were masters, and always abused their power. Thus it was at Valladolid. General Miguel Cevallos was imprisoned there by Cuesta, as the only means of preserving him: the ferocious rabble broke in, dragged him out, and murdered him, and paraded with his head and lacerated limbs in bloody and abominable triumph through the streets. Nor was this the only ill consequence: while he advised submission, and endeavoured to enforce it, time, which should have been employed in uniting, arming, and training the willing people, was irrecoverably lost; and when the French approached Valladolid, they found Cuesta at the head of an undisciplined assemblage numerous enough and brave enough to raise a vain and unreasonable confidence in themselves, and perhaps in him. They had taken post at Cabezon, a village surrounded with vineyards, two leagues from the city. Lasalle having reconnoitred their position, ordered General Sabatier to charge them, while Merle cut off their retreat from Valladolid. According to the French account they stood the enemy's fire half an hour, then took to flight, leaving upon the ground a thousand dead (the seventh part of their number), and 4000 muskets. Cuesta, with the remains of his army, retired to the borders of Leon, defeated, but not discouraged. Valladolid was now at the conqueror's mercy; and the Bishop, with the other heads of the clergy,

Impugnacion, p. 13.

He is defeated at Cabezon.

The French enter Valladolid.