

eager to be led against the enemy, renewed the suspicions which his conduct on St. Ferdinand's day had excited; or whether private malice, as has been asserted, was at work for his destruction; he was murdered by some of his soldiers at Villa Franca, in the Bierzo, and the command of the Galician army then devolved upon D. Joaquin Blake, an officer of Irish parentage. Advancing to Benevente he formed a junction with the army of Castille and Leon, which Cuesta, with that characteristic energy which on such occasions he was capable of exerting, had collected after his defeat at Cabezon. The two generals disagreed in opinion; Blake dreaded the discipline of the French, and would therefore have avoided a general action; Cuesta relied upon the courage of his countrymen, and was eager to engage: he took the command, as being superior in rank, and they proceeded, in no good understanding with each other, in a direction which threatened Burgos. Nothing could have been more conformable to the wishes of the enemy; and Marshal Bessieres, in the expectation of sure victory, marched against them with the divisions of Generals Mouton and Merle, and General Lasalles' division of cavalry, in all 12,000 men.

He found them posted near Medina del Rio Seco, an ancient, and, in former days, a flourishing city, and containing now in its decay some 8000 inhabitants. The numbers of the Spanish army have been variously stated from 14,000 to 40,000. They attacked the enemy's infantry with such determined ardour that they forced them to give way; won four pieces of artillery, spiked them, and set up their shout of victory, . . . too soon; for the French cavalry charged their left wing, and by their great superiority decided the day, but not till after a most severe contest. Few bloodier battles have ever been fought in proportion to the numbers in the field, even if the force of the Spaniards be taken at its highest estimate: upon the best authority, that of the neigh-

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June.*M. Bessieres
defeats them
at Rio Seco.
July 14.*

CHAP. bouring priests, it is affirmed that 27,000 bodies were buried.
 VIII. The stores and artillery were taken, but the victors were not in
 1808. a condition to complete the rout of the defeated army, and take
 July. advantage of the dissention between the two generals.

*The way to
 Madrid
 opened by
 this victory.*

When Buonaparte received intelligence of this victory, he said, "it is the battle of Villa Viciosa. Bessieres has placed Joseph upon the throne:" and calculating with contempt the farther resistance which might be expected, he added, "Spain has now some 15,000 men left, and some old blockhead to command them." Little did he know of Spain and of the Spaniards. The battle of Rio Seco did not intimidate even the men who were defeated there; but the enormities which the French committed in the city increased, if that were possible, the hatred with which the whole nation regarded them. The people of that city, unsuspecting of the future, had illuminated their houses, when the French on their entrance into the country arrived there, and some of the troops had been quartered among them. This did not save them from the worst horrors of war.

*Joseph en-
 ters Madrid.*

The way to Madrid was now open, and the Intruder proceeded on his journey thither without molestation. He had been proclaimed in that city on Santiago's day, and the circumstances had been such as were little likely to encourage his partizans. The great standard-bearer and his son withdrew from the capital, rather than incur the guilt and contract the degradation of bearing part in the ceremony. Joseph and his train arrived on the evening of the 20th, . . . all the troops being under arms to receive him, a most necessary part of the parade. Nothing indeed could be more striking than the contrast between the popular feeling on this day, and on that when Ferdinand, only four months before, made his entrance as king! Then the streets swarmed with the population of the whole surrounding country, and all the power and exertions of the magistrates were

required to repress the general enthusiasm ; now what few demonstrations of joy were made were procured by the direct interference of authority, the officers going from door to door to call upon the inhabitants, and even with this interference the houses were but just sufficiently decorated to save the inhabitants from vexation which they would otherwise have incurred. The money which was scattered among the populace lay in the streets where it fell for the French themselves to pick up ; and the theatres, which were thrown open to the people, were left to be filled by Frenchmen.

Yet every possible means had been used to prepare the metropolis for his reception, and keep down the spirit of the inhabitants by fraud and force. The publication of news from the provinces was prevented by the severest measures, and if any of the patriots' manifestos found their way to Madrid, to print, copy, read, or listen to them, was declared and punished as high treason. A paper was forged in the Bishop of Santander's name, recommending the people to receive with gratitude the King and the army, who were come to regenerate them. Revolution, they were told, was one of those indispensable remedies which must be employed when abuses had proceeded to a length which could not be restricted by the ordinary resources of public law. It was a species of war declared by the people against their own government to remove the established authority, when, either from ignorance or disinclination, it was not exercised for the general advantage. Happily for Spain, it was spared the necessity of passing through the calamities which other countries had experienced in this inevitable process ; and it had only to receive a new government under the authority of the protector of the nations of Europe. In spite of these artifices and false representations, in spite also of all the measures taken to keep the inhabitants in ignorance of what was passing

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*Fears of the
intrusive
government.*

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*The Council
of Castille
demur at
the oath of
allegiance.*

in the provinces, the agitation of the public continued; and a new edict was issued, enacting, that all strangers arriving in the metropolis, should, within four and twenty hours, send in their names to the police, with an account of their occupations, the places from whence they came, and their motives for visiting Madrid.

The intrusive government had hoped that the battle of Rio Seco, and the terrible slaughter which had there been made of the Spaniards, would intimidate the nation, and convince them that all opposition to the new dynasty must be unavailing. In this expectation they were soon undeceived. The battle, bloody as it was, proved that the Spaniards were not to be discouraged by any defeat, however severe; and the Intruder, on his arrival in Madrid, experienced a resistance in a quarter where he looked only for pliancy and submission. The Council of Castille, when it was called upon to swear to the constitution, demurred; and avowed that it had not circulated the constitutional act, which it had been ordered to do by an edict from Vittoria; a transfer of the succession from one family to another, it maintained, could not be made without the authority and intervention of the nation: nor would the Members of the Council swear to the new constitution, because they were not the representatives of the nation; the Cortes were, and the Cortes had not accepted it. Now it would be a manifest infraction of the most sacred rights, if in a matter of such importance, relating not to the introduction of a new law, but to the extinction of all their former codes, and the formation of new ones in their stead, they should take an oath of observance before the nation should have signified its acceptance. The Junta of Bayonne had not been convoked to form codes and laws, but to treat of the advantages which they could obtain for the respective bodies or provinces by which they were deputed.

This was the point at which the Council had determined to make their stand. Many and great concessions they had previously made, yielding to compulsion, and trusting or hoping that political considerations, if worthier motives failed, might even yet prevent Buonaparte from effecting his designs of usurpation. But all temporizing was now at an end. The oath was to supply the invalidities of the forced abdications, to cover all the injustice and villainy by which the Royal Family had been ensnared, to sanction the insolent intrusion of a stranger upon the throne, and bind the nation in honour and in conscience to support him there. It had already been ordered that no person in any public employ should receive his salary, or enjoy any of the emoluments of his office, till he had taken the oath. The Council therefore resolved now to stand forward, and give an example to those, who, like themselves, were within the power of the intrusive government, of the resistance which it was their duty to oppose. Their written memorial was laid before Joseph Buonaparte, who, upon hearing that the oath had not been taken, refused to read it, and directed Azanza to demand of them an immediate compliance with his decree; requiring that if the Council would not unanimously obey, as many as were obedient, though they should be the minority, should, without delay, subscribe the written oath. This order was twice repeated on the following day; and on the day after, the Council returned a dilatory reply, stating that it was a matter of conscience, and advising that as such it should be propounded to the chief universities, or other bodies or communities, as the Kings of Spain were wont to do in arduous points, which were to be decided not upon legal reasons alone, but upon theological considerations also; or that a Junta of the most approved Canonists and Theologians should be appointed, before whom the Council would send ministers to dispute the case. When

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CHAP. VIII. this demand was delivered strong measures were meditated in
 1808. return: an example, it was said, must be made of the Council
 July. which might operate as a warning to all minor bodies and in-
 dividuals; and it was generally believed that they would not
 escape death or banishment into France. But the policy of
 gaining time and trusting to events proved fortunate in this in-
 stance; and they were delivered from danger when all further
 arts of procrastination would have failed, by the splendid success
 of their countrymen in Andalusia, which compelled the Intruder
 and his ministers to consult their own safety by immediate flight.

*G. Cassagne
 enters Jaen.*

July 1.

When Vedel and Gobert had effected their junction with
 Dupont it was thought proper, for the security of his position
 at Andujar, to occupy the old city of Jaen, the Aurigi, Oringe,
 or Oningis of the ancient Spaniards, in latter ages the capital of
 a Moorish kingdom, taken from the Mahommedans by King St.
 Ferdinand, famous afterwards for its silk manufactories; and
 still, though its trade and population had declined, containing
 some 12,000 inhabitants. It is situated on the skirts of the Sierra,
 and at the foot of Mount Jabaluez, in one of the happiest parts
 of a delightful country. The French had already made one of
 their plundering visits there; and when General Cassagne was
 now sent with a brigade consisting of 1300 men to take possession
 of the city and maintain it, a number of armed peasants awaited
 his approach among the fields and gardens without the walls.
 Their defence was ill planned and ill conducted; they fired their
 musquets repeatedly before the enemy were within shot, and
 took flight at the first discharge of the French artillery, many
 of them throwing away their cartridges to disencumber them-
 selves of any thing which might impede their escape. The city
 was entered without any resistance from the inhabitants; and
 while one party of the assailants, singing the song of Roland,
 scaled the heights to attack an old castle, the others found an

easier way to it through the town: it was abandoned at their approach, and they placed a garrison there.

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He is compelled to evacuate it, and returns to Baylen.

The French, conformably to the system upon which they began this wicked war, put to death the peasants who fell into their hands. One of these victims excited admiration even in his murderers; he asked for life in a manner not unbecoming a Spaniard in such a cause: finding that no mercy was to be expected, he wrapt his cloak around his head and began his prayers; and when the bullet cut them short, fell and expired without a cry, or groan, or struggle. These military murders were not unrevenged. On the first day after the arrival of the French, the Spaniards increased in number, regular troops came to their assistance, and some smart skirmishes took place at the outposts. Early on the ensuing morning they surprised the castle; most of the garrison chose rather to leap from a high crag, at the imminent hazard of life or limbs, than to fall into the hands of an enemy to whom they had given such provocation; the others were put to death, and some of them barbarously tortured before that relief was given. Encouraged by this success, the Spaniards entered the city; a terrible fire was kept up upon the enemy from roofs and windows; the French were driven out, they formed upon some level ground in front of the town, where the Spanish cavalry charged them, and their guns were taken and retaken. The French occupied the same ground from which they had first driven the peasantry, and which was covered with stubble and with sheaves of corn, for there had been no time to carry in the harvest when these invaders approached. The sheaves took fire during the action, the cartridges which had been left there by the Spaniards exploded, threw the French into disorder, and killed and scorched many of them; and the whole field was presently in flames, out of which the wounded in vain endeavoured to crawl upon their broken limbs.

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This action continued from an early hour in the morning till four or five in the afternoon, when the French again forced their way into the city; they pillaged it, they committed the foulest enormities upon the nuns and other women who had not taken flight in time; and in many places they set the houses and convents on fire. But the invaders had now learnt in what kind of war they were engaged; that they had provoked a national resistance, and that victory brought with it so little advantage, that when they had won the field, they were masters only of the ground on which they stood. The Spaniards were preparing for another attack, to avoid which General Cassagne ordered a retreat under cover of the night. The French families who resided in Jaen, suffering now for the crimes of their countrymen, abandoned their property and their homes to save their lives, and put themselves under the protection of the retreating troops. They had been thrown into prison on the morning when the invaders were first expelled, and that precautionary measure on the part of the magistrate might probably have failed to save them from the fury of an unreasoning multitude. As many of the wounded as could be carried by the dragoons' horses were removed, the rest were left to their fate, for the French had no other means of transport; but most of those who were removed died on the way from the heat of the ensuing day's journey and the pain of their wounds. Their whole loss, as stated by themselves, amounted to a fourth part of their number. They were not pursued, and they effected their retreat to Baylen.

*Mémoires
d'un Soldat,
t. i. 145—
168.*

*Prepara-
tions of G.
Castanos.*

*Comte de
Maule, t.
xiii. p. 9.*

Dupont's situation became now every day more insecure, for at this time neither men nor means were wanting to the Spaniards in Andalusia, nor prudence to direct their efforts in the wisest way. The city of Cadiz alone supplied a donative of more than a million dollars and 5000 men; and as the men were mostly employed in filling up old regiments, the army was not weakened

by having great part of its ostensible force consisting in raw levies. The general, Castaños, acted steadily upon the principles which the Junta of Seville had laid down; he harassed the enemy by detachments on all sides, cut them off from supplies, and allowed them no opportunity of coming to a regular engagement; and thus, while the difficulties and distresses of the French were continually increasing, the Spaniards acquired habits of discipline, and obtained confidence in themselves and in their officers. Castaños even attempted to reform the Spanish army, and introduce among them that moral and religious discipline by which Cromwell, and the great Gustavus before him, made their soldiers invincible. He issued an order for banishing all strumpets from the camp and sending them to a place of correction and penitence; he called upon the officers to set their men an example, by putting away the plague from themselves, and dismissing all suspicious persons; he charged the chaplains to do their duty zealously, and threatened condign punishment to any person of what rank soever, who should act in contempt of these orders. Such irregularities, he said, would draw down the divine anger, and make the soldiers resemble in licentiousness the French, who for their foul abominations were justly hated by God and man; and it would be in vain to gather together armies, if at the same time they gathered together sins, and thereby averted from themselves the protection of the Almighty, which alone could ensure them the victory over their enemies. Happy would it have been for Spain if this principle had been steadily pursued; the foundations of that moral reformation might then have been laid, without which neither the strength nor the prosperity of any country can be stable.

Dupont might have secured his retreat across the Sierra Morena, if he had not relied too confidently upon his actual

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*Dupont's
despatches
intercepted.*