

CHAP. taken from the Moors by the first King of Portugal, restored
 X. from its ruins and fortified in the thirteenth century by Affonso
 1808. III. and beautified by his son, King Diniz, with his charac-
June. teristic magnificence, of which the walls with their forty towers,
 and the fine castle, bore testimony in their ruins. Here, as in
 all the other cities of Alem-Tejo, there was a melancholy air of
 decay, less owing to the long and destructive struggle with
 Spain, in which that province had been the great scene of action,
 than to the peculiar circumstances which depressed its agricul-
 ture, and that inhuman persecution of the New-Christians, by
 which the largest part of the commercial capital in Portugal had
 either been annihilated by confiscations, or driven out of the
 kingdom. Still, however, it contained some ten or twelve thou-
 sand inhabitants, and was a place of considerable importance in
 that thinly peopled province. It stood on the highest part of an
 elevated and extensive plain, conspicuous from a distance, and
 commanding a wide prospect on all sides, the heights of Pal-
 mella and even of Cintra being distinctly visible. The imme-
 diate country, where it is cultivated, is fertile, and the situation
 in high repute for its salubrity. Eventful as the history of Beja
 had been, it was now to undergo as severe a calamity as any
 with which it had been visited in the unhappiest ages of Spain.

June 23.
 The people
 rise against
 them.

The French detachment entered the city without opposition,
 passed the night there, and on the next day ordered quarters
 and provisions to be made ready for the whole body of troops
 in Mertola, who, they said, were about to follow them. Their
 demand was received in such a manner by the people of Beja,
 who were now acquainted not only with the state of Spain, but
 with the nearer events in Algarve and at Jurumenha, that the
 French deemed it prudent to march out, and take a position in
 the open country, not far from the walls. This encouraged the
 populace; and, like all mobs, becoming cruel as they felt them-

selves strong, they murdered two soldiers whom the French indiscreetly sent into the city for provisions. Ignorant of their fate, the commander supposed they had been imprisoned, and threatened, if they were not immediately set free, to release them by force. The people then riotously demanded arms, that they might rush out and attack the enemy. The magistrates remonstrated with them in vain, and on the following morning the Corregedor, finding that farther delay would only endanger his own life, distributed among them such weapons as could be collected, and taking the safest course for himself, set off to solicit aid from the Junta of Ayamonte, the nearest authority by which it could be supplied. The Provedor and the Juiz de Fora thought it their duty to avert, if possible, the immediate danger: they went out to the French, intreated them not to attack the town, and promised them supplies; the enemy were easily intreated, because they were not strong enough in reality for any such attempt; the magistrates then endeavoured to make the people ratify what they had undertaken for them; all reasoning was in vain, and to save their own lives they left the city. But here also private malice availed itself of public troubles to effect its own ends; a messenger recalled them, upon the plea that they were wanted to give orders for collecting provisions, in fulfilment of their agreement; for the Corregedor having departed, there was no person to take upon himself that business. Deceived by this treacherous message, they returned, and were butchered by a ferocious mob, who knew not that they were made the brutal instruments of individual revenge.

By this time, however, the ardour of the people had so far cooled, that they no longer talked of sallying against the French, they contented themselves with keeping a tumultuous watch through the night; and when the morning dawned, and there appeared no enemy, they fancied themselves secure.

CHAP.

X.

1808.

June.

June 25.

Neves, iii.
323—327.*Beja sacked
by the
French,
and set on
fire.*

CHAP. X.
 1808. *June.*
 June 26.

The French commander had merely retired out of sight: his dispatches reached Mertola at eleven on the preceding night; at midnight Maransin, with 950 men, began his march, and at four the next evening the united force arrived before Beja. They were opposed by a mere multitude without order, leader, or plan of defence, every man acting for himself as he thought best. Yet the victory was not gained without a brave resistance, and some loss to the assailants. According to the French account they lost eighty in killed and wounded, while 1200 of the Portuguese were slain in the action, and all who were taken in arms were put to death. The worst excesses followed by which humanity can be disgraced and outraged, and the * city was sacked and set on fire.

Observador
 Portuguez,
 341.
 Neves, iii.
 327—332.

In this whole merciless proceeding Maransin acted upon his

* Baron Thiebault represents this as a great exploit on the part of his fellow-soldiers. He says, *Le Colonel Maransin auroit pu éviter Beja, mais il crut devoir ramener, par un grand exemple, ce pays à l'obeissance. Il forme ses colonnes en marchant, et sans artillerie attaque cette ville, enceinte de hautes murailles, dont toutes les portes étoient barricadées, dont les murs, les tours, étoient défendus par des forces quintuples des siennes, et par des hommes qui, dans leur fureur, defioient nos bataillons.* Who would suppose, from this description, that these high walls and towers were in ruins, and that they were defended by a mob of three or four thousand men, not a third part of whom were armed with firelocks! After killing 1200 men in action, and all who were found in arms after it, sacking the city, and setting it on fire, it seems difficult to understand what the mercy was which the surviving inhabitants are said to have sent to Lisbon to solicit. According to Baron Thiebault, *un brave religieux*, after the assault, moved all his auditors to tears, by representing to them how much they had provoked their own misfortunes; he was consequently deputed unanimously to implore Junot's clemency. Junot received him graciously, and rewarded him with a canonry; LA RECONNOISSANCE FUT EXTREME, . . . *et Beja n'en reprit pas moins les armes peu de jours après.* In the bulletin published at Lisbon upon this occasion, and signed by this same General Thiebault, it is said, the inhabitants expressed their contrition by their deputy, acknowledged that they had been justly punished, and confessed that they had been seduced by the English!

own judgement, well knowing that such was the system which Napoleon had laid down, and which his generals felt no reluctance in executing. He proceeded to Evora, and Kellermann, approving of his conduct, held out the fate of Beja in a proclamation, as a warning to the province. “Inhabitants of Alem-Tejo,” he said, “Beja had revolted, and Beja exists no longer. Its guilty inhabitants have been put to the edge of the sword, and its houses delivered up to pillage and to the flames. Thus shall all those be treated who listen to the counsels of a perfidious rebellion, and with a senseless hatred take arms against us. Thus shall those bands of smugglers and criminals be treated, who have collected in Badajoz, and put arms into the hands of the unhappy Lusitanians, but dare not themselves march against us. Who, indeed, can resist our invincible troops? Ye who have precipitated yourselves into rebellion, prevent, by prompt submission, the inevitable chastisement that awaits you! And ye who have hitherto been happy or prudent enough to continue in your duty, profit by this terrible example! Our general in chief has not told you in vain that clouds of rebels shall be dispersed before us like the sands of the desert before the impetuous breath of the south wind.”

CHAP.

X.

1808.

June.

Kellermann's proclamation to the people of Alem-Tejo.

Observador Portuguez, 347.

Junot's proclamation to the Portuguese.

The bombastic sentence which Kellermann thus quoted, was from a proclamation that Junot had just sent forth, in that spirit of shameless falsehood and remorseless tyranny which characterised the intrusive government. He asked the Portuguese what madness possessed them? What reason they could have, after seven months of the most perfect tranquillity, of the best understanding, to take arms; . . . and against whom? against an army which was to secure their independence and maintain the integrity of their country! Was it their wish, then, that ancient Lusitania should become a province of Spain? Could they regret a dynasty which had abandoned them, and under

CHAP. which they were no longer counted among the nations of Europe?
 X. What more could they desire than to be Portugueze, and in-
 1808. dependent? and this Napoleon had promised them. They had
 June. asked him for a king, who, under his all-powerful protection,
 might restore their country to its rank. At this moment their
 new monarch was expecting to approach them. "I hoped," said
 Junot, "to place him in a peaceable and flourishing kingdom;
 am I to show him nothing but ruins and graves? Will he reign
 in a desert? assuredly not; and you will not be any thing but
 a wretched province of Spain. Your customs and laws have
 been maintained; your holy religion, which is ours also, has not
 suffered the least insult; it is you who violate it, suffering it to
 be influenced by heretics, who only wish for its destruction.
 Ask the unhappy Roman-catholics of Ireland under what op-
 pression they are groaning! If these perfidious islanders in-
 vade your territory, leave me to fight them; . . . your part is to
 remain peaceably in your fields." He then attempted to soothe
 them, saying, that if any abuses in the administration still existed,
 every day's experience would diminish them. The Emperor, sat-
 isfied with the reports which he had received of the public
 spirit, had graciously remitted half the contribution. He was ful-
 filling all their wishes. And would they let themselves be dragged
 on by the influence of a banditti, at the very moment when they
 should be happy? "Portugueze," said he, "you have but one
 moment to implore the clemency of the Emperor, and disarm
 his wrath. Already the armies of Spain touch your frontiers at
 every point; . . . you are lost if you hesitate. Merit your pardon
 by quick submission, or behold the punishment that awaits you!
 Every village or town in which the people have taken arms, and
 fired upon my troops, shall be delivered up to pillage, and de-
 stroyed, and the inhabitants shall be put to the sword. Every
 individual found in arms shall instantly be shot."

CHAP.
X.

1808.

*June.**National
feeling of
the Portu-
guese.*

The French had dealt largely in false promises; they were sincere in their threats, and on the very day when this proclamation was issued at Lisbon, that sincerity was proved at Beja. But as the Portuguese had not been deceived, neither were they now to be intimidated. Their character had been totally mistaken by their insolent oppressors. They, like the Spaniards, had a deep and ever-present remembrance of their former greatness. It was sometimes expressed with a vanity which excited the contempt of those who judge hastily upon that imperfect knowledge which is worse than ignorance; more generally it produced a feeling of dignified and melancholy pride. The kingdom had decayed, but the degeneracy of the people was confined to the higher ranks, whom every possible cause, physical and moral, combined to degrade. Generation after generation, they had intermarried, not merely within the narrow circle of a few privileged families, but oftentimes in their own; uncles with their nieces, nephews with their aunts. The canonical law was dispensed with for these alliances; but no dispensing power could set aside the law of nature, which rendered degeneracy the sure consequence. Thus was the breed deteriorated; and education completed the mischief. The young fidalgo was never regarded as a boy: as soon as the robes, or rather bandages of infancy were laid aside, he appeared in the dress of manhood, was initiated in its forms and follies, and it was rather his misfortune than his fault, if, at an early age, he became familiar with its vices. When he arrived at manhood, no field for exertion was open to him, even if he were qualified or disposed to exert himself. The private concerns of embellishing and improving an estate were as little known in Portugal as those public affairs in which the nobility of Great Britain are so actively engaged: if not in office, he was in idleness, and his idleness was passed in the capital. A wasteful expenditure made him a bad landlord,

CHAP. and a bad paymaster; a deficient education made him a bad
 X. statesman; and well was it if the lax morality which the casuists
 1808. had introduced into a corrupt religion, did not make him a bad
 June. man. Exceptions there were, because there are some dispositions
 so happily tempered, that their original goodness can never
 be wholly depraved, however unpropitious the circumstances in
 which they are placed; but men, for the most part, are what
 circumstances make them, and these causes of degeneracy were
 common to all of the higher class. On the other hand, the
 middle classes were improved, and the peasantry uncorrupted.
 Their occupations were the same as those of their forefathers;
 nor did they differ from them in any respect, except what was a
 most important one at this time, that a long interval of peace,
 and their frequent intercourse with the Spaniards, had effaced
 the old enmity between the two nations, so that along the border
 the languages were intermingled, and intermarriages so com-
 mon, as to have produced a natural and moral union. They
 were a fine, hospitable, noble-minded race, respected most by
 those who knew them best. The upper boughs were scathed,
 but the trunk and the root were sound.

*Their ha-
 tred of the
 French.*

Their ignorance as well as their superstition, contributed at
 this time to excite and sustain a national resistance. They ex-
 pected miracles in their favour; the people of Coimbra actually
 believed that a miracle had been wrought, because when the
 French fired upon them from the windows of their quarters, no
 person was hurt. Of the relative strength of nations they knew
 nothing, nor of the arrangements which are necessary for carry-
 ing on war, nor of the resources by which it must be maintained.
 Spain filled a larger space in their imagination than France, and
 Portugal than either; and they were not erroneous in believing
 that Spain and Portugal together possessed a strength which
 might defy the world. The threats of the intrusive government

*Neves, iii.
 210.*

therefore excited indignation instead of dismay ; such language addressed to minds in their state of exaltation, was like water cast upon a fire intense enough to decompose it, and convert its elements into fuel for the flames. The fate of Beja excited hatred and the thirst of vengeance instead of fear, and the insurrection continued to spread in the very province where the experiment had been made upon so large a scale of putting an end to it by fire and sword.

CHAP.
X.
1808.
June.

A Portugueze of the old stamp, by name Antonio Leite de Araujo Ferreira Bravo, held the office of Juiz de Fora at Marvam, a small town about eight miles from Portalegre, surrounded with old walls. Of the many weak places upon that frontier it was the only one which, in the short campaign of 1801, resisted the Spaniards in their unjust and impolitic invasion, and was not taken by them ; and this was in great measure owing to his exertions. When the French usurped the government, a verbal order came from the Marquez d'Alorna, at that time general of the province, to admit either French or Spanish troops as friends, and give them possession of the place. Antonio Leite protested against this, maintaining that no governor ought to deliver up a place entrusted to his keeping without a formal and authentic order ; proceedings were instituted against him for his opposition, and he was severely reprehended, this being thought punishment enough at that time, and in a town where no commotion was dreamt of. When the decree arrived at Marvam, by which it was announced that the house of Braganza had ceased to reign, Antonio Leite sent for the public notaries of the town, and resigned his office, stating, in a formal instrument, that he did this because he would not be compelled to render that obedience to a foreign power which was due to his lawful and beloved Sovereign, and to him alone. Then taking with him these witnesses to the church of the Misericordia, he de-

*The Juiz
de Fora at
Marvam.*

CHAP.

X.

1808.

*June.**News, ii.*
109—122.*He flies the town.*

posited his wand of office in the hands of an image of N. Senhor dos Passos, and in the highest feeling of old times called upon the sacred image to keep it till it should one day be restored to its rightful possessor. He then returned to his house, and put himself in deep mourning. The order arrived for taking down the royal arms. He entreated the *Vereador* not to execute it, upon the plea that the escutcheon here was not that of the Braganza family, but of the kingdom, put up in the reign of Emanuel, and distinguished by his device; and when this plea was rejected, he took the shield into his own keeping, and laid it carefully by, to be preserved for better days.

The Juiz seems to have been a man who had read the chronicles of his own country till he had thoroughly imbibed their spirit. These actions were so little in accord with the feelings and manners of the present age, that they were in all likelihood ascribed to insanity, and that imputation saved him from the persecution which he would otherwise have incurred. But when the national feeling began to manifest itself, such madness was then considered dangerous, and the Corregedor of Portalegre received orders from Lisbon to arrest him. Before these orders arrived he had begun to stir for the deliverance of his country, and had sent a confidential person with a letter to Galluzo, the Spanish commander at Badajoz, requesting aid from thence to occupy Marvam; men could not be spared; and the messenger returned with the unwelcome intelligence that before he left Badajoz the business on which he went had transpired, and was publicly talked of. Perceiving now that his life was in danger, his first care was that no person might suffer but himself, and therefore he laid upon his table a copy of the letter which he had written, from which it might be seen that the invitation was his single act and deed; having done this, he seemed rather to trust to Providence than to take any