

CHAP. XI. troops of that nation who had been sent to serve in Buonaparte's armies should be restored to their own country; such a stipulation ought to have been required, though it would undoubtedly have been broken. The other oversights which were objected were merely frivolous, and the manner in which, through all the subsequent details, the feelings as well as interests of the Portuguese had been consulted, had already contented them, and made them grateful for the conduct of their allies. There was another cause which exasperated the English people: they compared the treatment of Junot's army with that of Dupont's, and were mortified by a comparison which ought rather to have elated them; for looking to what seemed advantageous, and not to what was just, they did not perceive that in deferring to a popular cry the Junta of Seville had broken a solemn engagement. The strong disapprobation with which Sir Hew Dalrymple regarded that breach of faith, acted upon him, perhaps unconsciously, when he allowed the French the utmost which could be claimed upon the most liberal construction of the letter of the treaty in their favour.

*Board of
Inquiry ap-
pointed.*

Meetings were convened in most parts of England to express the indignation of the people at the convention, and call for the punishment of those by whom it had been negotiated. The Common Council presented an address to the same purport, and were told in reply that it was inconsistent with the principles of British justice to pronounce judgement without previous investigation, and that their interposition was not necessary for inducing the King to institute a due inquiry into a transaction which had disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation. Accordingly the three Generals were recalled, and a Board of Inquiry was appointed, composed of the Earl of Moira, General Craig, Lord Heathfield, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir George Nugent, and Lieutenant-General Nicolls, with Sir David Dundas for pre-

sident. Their decision, after a long and full investigation, was, that they could not pronounce, with confidence, whether the victory of Vimeiro ought to have been pursued or not; but, considering the extraordinary circumstances under which two new commanders arrived from the ocean, and joined the army, (the one during, and the other immediately after the battle, and these successively superseding each other, and both the original commander, within the space of twenty-four hours,) it was not surprising that the army was not carried forward until the second day after the action, from the necessity of the generals' being acquainted with the actual state of things, and proceeding accordingly. On a consideration of all circumstances, they were of opinion, that no farther proceeding was necessary; and, however some of them might differ respecting the fitness of the convention, it was their unanimous declaration, that unquestionable zeal and firmness had been exhibited by all the three generals.

As this was, in fact, delivering no opinion at all, the board was called upon, by the Duke of York, as commander-in-chief, to resume its consideration of the armistice and convention, and pronounce decidedly whether they thought them adviseable. The armistice was disapproved by Earl Moira; the convention by the same nobleman, by the Earl of Pembroke, and General Nicolls: thus, six of the seven members approved the armistice, and four approved the convention. The dissentient members delivered in their reasons for the opinion which they gave. General Nicolls and Earl Pembroke confined themselves to a military point of view. Earl Moira took a wider scope, and argued ably against the moral and political effects of the treaty. The proceedings were concluded by a declaration from the King, adopting the unanimous opinion of the board, that no farther proceeding was necessary; but expressing his disapprobation of those articles of the convention in which stipulations were made,

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CHAP. XI. 1808. directly affecting the interests or feelings of the Spanish and Portugueze nations. That disapprobation his Majesty had signified to Sir Hew Dalrymple when the treaty was first laid before him, and he repeated it, deeming it necessary that his sentiments should be clearly understood, as to the impropriety and danger of the unauthorised admission, into military conventions, of articles of such a description. Nor could he forbear observing, that Sir Hew's delaying to transmit the armistice concluded on the 22d of August, till the 4th of September, when the ratified convention was transmitted at the same time, was calculated to produce great public inconvenience, and that such inconvenience had, in fact, resulted therefrom. The King abstained from any observations upon other parts of the convention.

Thus the whole censure fell upon Sir Hew Dalrymple. But it was seen by the people that the great error of judgement had been committed at home, in not providing that the General by whom the campaign was planned should carry it to the end. And how often may it be observed in history, as in private life, that the course of events is better directed to the end desired, than if the persons most interested in the success could themselves have ordered it! So it was in this campaign, which at the time so severely disappointed the nation. A more splendid triumph might have been obtained in the field, a higher tone might have been taken in the negotiation; but in either of these cases Almeida and Elvas would have been left in possession of the enemy; and whatever efforts might have been made for reducing them, they could easily have held out till the dispersion of the Spanish armies. It would then have been a great object with the French to relieve the garrisons, and this would have brought them to Lisbon at a time when there were neither preparations nor means for resistance there.

CHAPTER XII.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRAL JUNTA. OPERATIONS IN CATALONIA. EMBARRASMENTS AND MOVEMENTS OF THE SPANISH ARMIES. ESCAPE OF THE SPANISH TROOPS FROM DENMARK.

WHEN Castaños was informed of Sir Hew Dalrymple's appointment to the command of the British army, he declared that he regarded this nomination as the most fortunate event of his own life; so much advantage to the common cause did he anticipate from their confidence in each other, and the cordial co-operation which would ensue. In reality that influence which the confidence of a British commander would have given him, might have been of the most essential benefit to Spain at this momentous crisis.

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*Necessity of
a provision-
al govern-
ment.*

Such was the national character, that when the struggle commenced every man was ready to follow in the cause of his country; but so pitiable had been the state of education, and so successfully had the double despotism of the government and the inquisition shut out knowledge from their empire, that no man was fit to lead. There were now as many governments as there were Juntas, each acting with little regard to the others; and as these were every where filled by persons chosen because of their station, the government throughout Spain was delivered, or rather fell into the hands of the provincial nobility and gentry, with a few clergy; a set of men whom their general want of information, their prejudices, and their previous way of life, in great measure disqualified for the task to which they were called.

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Among them were some persons who had formerly been in office at Madrid; but whatever advantage they might have derived from habits of business, was more than counterbalanced by the dilatory formalities acquired at the same time, and their attachment to the old routine with all its defects and evils. Wherever therefore such statesmen of the old school were found, the Juntas were less efficient than they might have been without them. The powers with which these bodies found themselves invested were neither limited in extent or duration: the people in their confidence (which at such times is as blind as their suspicion) never thought of proposing restrictions: and the Juntas, when once in possession of authority, thought only of making it as extensive, and retaining it as long as they could. Some of them passed decrees bestowing upon themselves the titles of Excelencias and Highnesses, and adopted uniforms of the gaudiest fashion. This was mere vanity; but serious injury was done, when, with as little decency as had been observed under the old system, they conferred commissions and commands, not upon those persons who had the fairest claim, but upon their own friends and relations and dependents; and thus, as the enrolment was general, the armies were filled with officers who had no other pretensions to rank and promotion than what they derived from favour.

Castanos prevents a contest between Granada and Seville.

After the great success in Andalusia, the provincial Juntas, instead of exerting themselves to the utmost for completing the deliverance of the country, became jealous of each other. Where the rival authorities were far distant, this feeling impeded the public service; greater evils were threatened when they bordered upon each other. Granada at this time refused to acknowledge the supreme authority which the Junta of Seville assumed, and had hitherto exercised with ability and good fortune. A warm contention ensued; and Tilly, either from irri-

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tation, or worse motives, proposed that a division of the Andalusian army should be sent to enforce submission. Fortunately Castaños was present at the meeting in which this proposition was made; he rose from his seat, and, striking the table, said, he should like to see the man who dared order a division of the troops under his command to march without his authority! He knew no distinction of provinces; he had the honour to command part of the army of Spain, and never would he suffer it to be made the instrument of civil war.

The occasion required, and therefore justified, this prompt assumption of a power, dangerous in its kind, and in nowise congenial to the unambitious temper of Castaños, a man whose only desire was to do his duty like a true Spaniard under any circumstances. It proved, however, the necessity of establishing a more legitimate authority than as yet existed. Lord Collingwood, in his first communications with Seville, had advised that a general Council, Cortes, or Congress, should be appointed, and invested with power from the several provincial Juntas to preside over and act in the name of the whole. The necessity of some such arrangement became every day more apparent. Some persons proposed to establish a military form of government, in which that vigour which the emergency required might be found; some were for assembling a Cortes; others recommended that a viceroy or lieutenant of the kingdom should be appointed, and to this Castaños was at one time inclined. His first thought before the struggle began had been to invite the Archduke Charles; but upon considering that the invitation could not be accepted while Austria continued at peace with France, and that if a war between those powers took place, the Archduke's services would be required at home, he then thought the Prince Royal of the house of Naples would be the fittest person to hold the regency till the fate of Ferdinand should be

*Plans for a
government*

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*Arrival of
a Sicilian
Prince at
Gibraltar.*

known; and this he proposed to the Junta. The Sicilian court from the commencement of the insurrection had directed their views to the same object: their minister in London had sounded the disposition of the British Government, and found it decidedly unfavourable to their schemes; and they sent a plenipotentiary to reside at Gibraltar, for the purpose of furthering the interests of the family. But Sir Hew Dalrymple happened to be informed of what had passed in London, and finding that the object of this mission was altogether disapproved by the British Government, and that the agent had papers which he intended to circulate without previously communicating their contents to him, felt it necessary to let him know that his residence in the garrison, under these circumstances, might be attended with inconvenience, and therefore he must return to Palermo for new instructions. This was about the middle of July; in the ensuing month, a few days before Sir Hew left Gibraltar to take the command of the army, Prince Leopold, second son of the King of the Two Sicilies, with the Duke of Orleans and a large retinue, arrived there in a British man of war. A more ill-judged step could hardly have been taken. Great Britain had scrupulously avoided any thing which could have the appearance of dictating to the Spaniards, or interfering with them in any other way than that of giving the most prompt and liberal support; but what a pretext would it afford those who were ever ready to malign the measures of England, if at a time when the Spaniards were deliberating concerning the settlement of their government, a Prince who claimed the regency should be received with royal honours at Gibraltar, and at the very juncture when a British army arrived upon the coast! Under these embarrassing circumstances Sir Hew acted with great firmness and discretion. Persisting in that upright and steady course of conduct which had in so great a degree contributed to win the con-

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confidence of the Spanish nation, he refused in any manner to support pretensions which he had reason to believe were not approved by his government; to that government he referred the Duke of Orleans, who accordingly resolved to go to England, and make his representations in person; the Prince was received into Gibraltar, and left there, when Sir Hew went to the army; if he were chosen Regent, any deputation duly appointed to announce that nomination was of course to be admitted, and considered as attached to his retinue; but no such deputation from any local or provisional government was to be received on such terms.

There was at this time a report that the Junta of Seville had declared for a regency, and were hesitating between the Archbishop of Toledo, as the only remaining member of the Bourbon family in Spain, a Prince of the Neapolitan house, and the Conde de Montijo, the most intriguing, and then one of the most popular persons in Spain. As this individual had no pretensions to such a charge, except what his undeserved popularity might give him, the report was probably raised by himself as one means to bring about his elevation. Some members of that Junta were intoxicated with success; a few others cared for nothing but their own interest: the latter wished for a Regent of their own appointment, under whose name they might possess the real power; the former were for retaining the authority which hitherto they had administered well, but which ceased to be legitimate when it became apparent that it was retained for ambitious motives. A paper from the Junta of Murcia, which expressed the opinion of Florida Blanca, had forcibly pointed out the necessity of a central government, and the inevitable ruin which a polyarchy of independent Juntas would bring on. It advised that the cities which had a seat in the Cortes should elect a council to govern in the name of Ferdinand, and that the mili-

*Ambition of
the Junta of
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The Council of Castille advise a central Junta.

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Project of the Junta of Seville.

tary affairs should be entrusted to a council of generals. The Junta of Seville suppressed this paper wherever their influence extended; but a like measure was now recommended by an authority with which the Junta could not cope.

The Council of Castille had recovered some of its lost reputation by the tardy resistance which it opposed to the Intruder, and by exerting itself with authority to maintain order in the capital, after the retreat of the French. It published a justification of its own conduct, more elaborate than convincing, and dispatched a circular address to the provincial Juntas, declaring its readiness to co-operate with them in any plans of defence. With respect to measures of another kind, it said, which were necessary to save the country, all that belonged to that Council was to excite the authority of the nation, and assist it with its influence, advice, and knowledge. Under circumstances so extraordinary it was not possible to adopt at once the measures indicated by the laws and customs of Spain; the Council therefore would confine itself to recommending that deputies should be appointed by all the different Juntas, who should meet together, and, in union with it, confer and determine upon this important object; so that all provisions proceeding from this common centre might be as expeditious as the end required.

The better spirits in the Junta of Seville prevailed on this occasion, and that body, yielding with a good grace to the general opinion, seemed at the same time to direct it. They published an address, written with the ability which distinguished all their public papers. Hitherto, they said, the cause of the Spaniards had been prosperous, and nothing could frustrate their hopes of success, except a want of union among themselves. Their enemies were anxious to foment divisions. Human passions, personal interests ill understood, the ignorance, the weakness, the blindness of men, might assist these evil designs, destroy a