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XII.1808.
September.

power; they possessed the passes, and had made themselves, by what treachery was well known, masters of the strong frontier fortresses, and of Barcelona. The despot of France, deceiving, by the grossest impostures, the slaves who obeyed him, was striving to keep all other states in inactivity, that he might bring the whole enormous weight of his military force upon Spain. The continental powers were watching the issue of this first struggle, desiring to declare themselves against the common enemy, but proceeding with the timid circumspection which they had learnt from past misfortunes. A confederacy against the tyrant was evidently their only means of preservation: for what state could now hold relations of amity with him? who could now give credit to the words and promises of Buonaparte, or trust to his good faith? The fate of Spain was at once a lesson and a warning to Europe, . . . her resolution would serve as an example, her victories as an incentive; and the reprobate, who had trampled under foot the principles of justice, had placed himself in that fearful situation, that he must either become master of all, or perish in the struggle which he had so wantonly provoked.

But this co-operation would not be obtained till the Spaniards had given such earnest of success as rendered victory certain: they must therefore call forth all their means, as if they were singly to contend against the whole power of France. The Junta believed it would be necessary to maintain 500,000 men in arms, besides 50,000 cavalry, . . . a force which, however disproportionate to their present situation, and to all former exigencies, was not more than the present times required. The power of their adversary was colossal, his ambition even greater than his power, and his existence incompatible with their liberty. His exertions were to be estimated by the barbarity of his character and the extremity of his danger; but they were the

CHAP. exertions of a tyrant, and would be confounded, when opposed
 XII. to the constancy of a great and free people.

1808. The last government . . . if that might be called government
September. which was one continued and monstrous dilapidation, had exhausted all the sources of prosperity. The resources which arose from the revenues of the royal household, from the enormous sums formerly devoured by the insatiable avarice of Godoy, from his collected rapine, and the confiscated estates, from a free trade, a well-arranged administration of the revenue, and regularly distributed contributions, had already been indicated. The succours already given so generously by England, and still to be expected from that nation, were to be added to these means. "But," said the Central Junta, "it is incumbent on us that these succours, which have been so opportunely given, and so gratefully received, and the effects of which have been so beneficial, should be hereafter recognized and recompensed with the reciprocity and decorum which become a great and powerful nation. The Spanish monarchy must not, in this respect, be placed in a state of inequality and dependence on its allies. The produce of these various means would be great, but slow, and therefore insufficient for the urgent necessities of the state. Would they be sufficient to furnish for a time the ordinary supplies, discharge the great debt which must be incurred, and maintain the formidable army which must be kept up? If not, the government would at once have recourse to the nation, certain, from the fidelity with which its accounts would regularly be published, from the necessity and notoriety of the public wants, and the patriotism of the nation, that, although to evils so extraordinary as the present remedies as extraordinary must be applied, its demands would neither be disregarded through distrust, nor detested as arbitrary.

"The defence of the kingdom, and the means of providing

for it, must necessarily be the first duty of the government ; but it would fulfil only half its duties if it attended to this alone : other duties remained, to be the great reward of the virtue of the Spaniards and of their sacrifices. A little time only had passed since, oppressed and degraded, ignorant of their own strength, and finding no protection against these evils, neither in the institutions nor in the laws, they had even regarded foreign dominion as less hateful than the wasting tyranny which consumed them. The dominion of a will always capricious, and most often unjust, had lasted too long : their patience, their love of order, their generous loyalty had too long been abused : it was time that law, founded on general utility, should commence its reign. This was the desire of their good and unfortunate King Ferdinand ; this was what he pointed out, even from the captivity to which a perfidious traitor had reduced him. The name of their country ought no longer to be a vague and idle word to the Spaniards ; henceforward it was to import to their ears and to their hearts the sanctuary of laws, the theatre for talents, the reward of virtue. Such a country the Junta solemnly promised they should possess ; and till the military operations, which must at first be slow, in order better to insure success, should furnish the leisure necessary for this great and solemn reform, the government would privately prepare for it. Instead of rejecting the advice of enlightened men, they desired and requested it. The knowledge and illustration of their ancient and constitutional laws ; the changes which change of circumstances rendered necessary in their re-establishment ; the reform which might be necessary in the civil, criminal, and commercial codes ; projects for improving public education, which was in Spain so greatly on the decline ; a system of regulated economy for the distribution and collection of the public revenue, . . these were subjects for the investigation of wise and thoughtful men, and on which the opinions of such men were

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*Jovellanos
proposes a
Regency,
and that a
Cortes be
summoned.*

solicited. The Junta would form different committees, each entrusted with a particular department, to whom all writings on matters of government and administration might be addressed: so that each contributing by his exertions to give a just direction to the public mind, the government might be enabled to establish the internal happiness of Spain."

These were fair professions; nor were the intentions of the Central Junta less laudable than their language. Tilly alone excepted, the members were upright and honourable men, worthy to represent a nation distinguished for its high sense of honour. But they were unacquainted with each other, and except the President, Jovellanos, and Garay, wholly unused to business: for a national assembly too few, and for an executive government too many. Jovellanos was of opinion that they ought immediately to appoint a regency of five persons, one of them being a dignitary of the church, to be installed on the first day of the ensuing year: that the Central Junta should then be reduced to half its original number, retaining one member only of each deputation, for the purpose of watching over the observance of the constitution entrusted to the regency, and corresponding with the provincial Juntas, which should thenceforward consist of four members each: these were to exist as long as the Council of Regency; and the Central Junta of Correspondence, as it was then to be called, only till the meeting of the Cortes, which Jovellanos maintained ought immediately to be announced as to assemble as soon as the enemy should have been driven out of Spain, or, at all events, in two years from the present time, if the delivery of the country should not be accomplished before. He proposed also that the Junta, before it resigned its powers, should appoint persons qualified for such a task to prepare plans of reform in the constitution, laws, finance, system of public instruction, army, and marine; . . . these plans were to be formed under the inspection and approbation

of the Council of Regency and the Junta of Correspondence, and finally submitted to the Cortes. In delivering this advice, Jovellanos, to remove all suspicion of any interested views, repeated in writing the solemn declaration which he had before made by word of mouth, that he never would accept of any office or employment himself; the natural and invincible repugnance which he had ever felt for such preferment, the bitter price which he had paid for having once accepted it, in deference to a brother whom he respected like a parent, and the sad sense of decay both in his physical and moral powers, determined him to this resolution. The only duty which he would undertake to perform was the noble one of simply delivering those opinions which he thought most conducive to the good of his country, in discharge of the high trust wherewith his own province had honoured him.

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*Jovellanos
Memoria,
p. ii. § 33,
34. Apen-
dices, No. 5.*

Jovellanos expected the greatest benefit from a Cortes; but he apprehended great evil if it were hastily convoked, and without due preparation. That party who have since assumed the appellation of *Liberales* censured him for proposing to postpone it so long. They were then a very small, but active, minority, consisting chiefly of physicians, lawyers, and unbelieving priests, whose little knowledge, exclusively derived from prohibited French books, was worse than ignorance. These persons were for hurrying on to a jacobinical revolution, and were impatient for a Cortes as the first great means of embodying that democracy which they expected to govern. But there were also many of the best of the Spaniards who looked to the Cortes as the surest means of delivering their country, and restoring it to its former dignity and power; and the same views were very generally entertained in England, and by the British Government itself. In fact, the assembling of a Cortes had been proposed by our first authorized agent, Mr. Stuart, to the Juntas of Galicia and Asturias. Some of the difficulties which would

*Expecta-
tions from
a Cortes.*

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attend it were then perceived; the Asturians proposed that it should assemble at Oviedo, the Galicians at Villa Franca in the Bierzo, each Junta wishing that it should be convoked near their own place of abode; and for the purpose of retaining their power, they wished to enlarge the deputation, so that all their own members might be included. Though it was thus seen that the measure was not so easily accomplished as had been supposed, still the opinion prevailed in England, that if a free legislative assembly were established in Spain, the same blessings would ensue which the British people enjoy under the well-tempered constitution which has grown with their growth, and adapted itself to their circumstances. There are errors from which it is painful to be undeceived. Those persons were wiser in their generation, who, having the recent example of France before their eyes, believed that legislative assemblies, in countries unaccustomed to such modes of legislation, are more to be dreaded than desired; that the reformation which is thus begun tends to certain anarchy; and that where great and extensive improvements in the existing system are necessary, the only means whereby they can be effected, without inducing worse evils than those which are removed, is by an upright and far-sighted minister, under a strong government. Upon this point Florida-Blanca judged more truly than Jovellanos. Such, however, was the respect with which the opinions of that admirable man were at this time heard, that his proposal would have been carried, if the Junta had come to an immediate decision upon it; and it was only by deferring the final discussion till Nov. 7, being that day month, that the minority averted a measure which shocked their prejudices as much as it alarmed their fears.

*Florida-
Blanca
averse to it.*

*Jovellanos
Memoria,
p. ii. § 35.*

*State of Ca-
talonia.*

The Junta were at this time full of hope; they had just confidence in the national character; and they were elated by the enthusiastic spirit which had manifested itself, the splendid successes which had been obtained, the apparent inactivity of the

enemy, and the promised co-operation of Great Britain, which had already effected the delivery of Portugal. They had also encouraging advices from Catalonia. After relieving Figueras, the French dispatched a force from that fortress to get possession of Rosas, but failed in the attempt. Ill armed, and worse disciplined as they were, the Catalans displayed that unconquerable spirit which in all ages has distinguished them. In no other province were such great and continued exertions made against the invaders: and in no other province were the people left so entirely to their own resources. They made the most urgent solicitations to the Junta of Seville for a supply of artillery, which could have been spared in abundance from the arsenals of Seville and Cadiz, and which Lord Collingwood offered them the means of conveying; but they could obtain none, and were fain, therefore, to use the trunks of trees, bored, and hooped with iron. The want of cavalry was even more severely felt in all the level part of the country; . . . no substitute could be found for this, nor was it possible that their volunteers and newly-raised levies could resist well-disciplined horse-soldiers upon plain ground. They had, however, been eminently successful where the ground favoured them; and confiding in their numbers, they occupied the right bank of the Llobregat from San Boy to Martorell, in order to distress the enemy in Barcelona. From thence they were dislodged by General Lechi, who, marching out by night with 2500 men, forded the river in several places at daybreak, drove them from their batteries, sacked the towns and villages along the line, set fire to them, and returned in triumph, bearing as trophies the banners of the churches which had been plundered. Duhesme then resolved to undertake the siege of Gerona, having concerted it with Reille, who was to co-operate with him from Figueras. It was an object of great importance; for while Gerona and Hostalrich were in possession of the Spaniards, they would be able greatly to molest, if not

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*Duhesme
resolves to
besiege
Gerona.*

CHAP. wholly to interrupt, the communication by land between Barce-
 XII. lona and France. Materials of every kind were found in the
 1808. well-stored arsenals and magazines of Barcelona, and the horses,
 July. mules, and carriages of the inhabitants of that city were put in
 requisition for conveying them. So sure of success was Du-
 hesme, and so exasperated by his former failure, that he is said
 to have declared he would arrive before the city on one day,
 attack it the next, take it on the third day, and on the fourth
 destroy it.

*Cabañes, p.
 z. 80—85.*

*Difficulties
 on the
 march.*

He began his march on the 10th of July, with about 6000
 men. From Barcelona to Gerona is a journey of twenty hours ;
 but Duhesme had not calculated upon the obstacles which he
 was to encounter on the way. The road for two-thirds of the
 distance lies always within sight of the sea, and in great part
 along the coast ; the Catalans, under D. Francisco Milans, had
 broken it up, and annoyed him with great activity on his left,
 while an English frigate, and some smaller vessels, brought their
 guns to bear upon him from the sea ; these impediments delayed
 him five days between Caldetas and San Pol. On the 19th he
 divided his troops ; one part crossed the wild mountains of Vall-
 gorguina to S. Celoni, and endeavoured by a sudden attack to
 get possession of Hostalrich. Twice they attempted to escalade
 it, and were repulsed with loss by the acting governor D. Manuel
 O'Sullivan. The other division continued the coast road, losing
 many guns and much of its ammunition there. They rejoined
 on the way to Gerona, and arrived before that city on the 22nd,
 where they were met on the following day by Reille with 2000
 men from Figueras ; but Duhesme had suffered so much on the
 march, that he was in no condition for active operations, and the
 remainder of the month was employed in preparing for the siege.

*Cabañes, z.
 85—87.*

*Troops
 from Mi-
 norca land
 at Tarrag-
 ona.*

On the very day that the French General appeared for the
 second time before Gerona, the Marques del Palacio, with 4600
 regular troops from Minorca, landed at Tarragona. Many officers,

who had hitherto remained in Barcelona, and several magistrates, escaped now from that city to join him. The first measure of the Marques was to strengthen the line of the Llobregat, which the Somatenes and Miquelets, undismayed by their late defeat, had again occupied. The Conde de Caldagues was sent with a detachment upon this service, and the garrison, who made a vigorous attempt to dislodge him immediately on his arrival, were repulsed. The Catalans were now in high spirits, and with the assistance of Lord Cochrane, in the *Imperieuse* frigate, made a successful attack upon the Castle of Mongat, a small fort on the coast, about nine miles from Barcelona, which the French had strengthened, as a point of support for their plundering incursions to the eastward. About an hundred prisoners were taken there, seven pieces of cannon, and a considerable quantity of ammunition and stores. The enemy could no longer maraud in that direction, and feeling great present inconvenience, began to apprehend serious consequences from the blockade of Barcelona: the British cruisers watched it effectually by sea, and in the only part of the land now open to them, which was the mountainous country in their immediate vicinity, between the Llobregat and the Besos, they had to contend with an armed and exasperated peasantry; for even those persons who would have remained quiet were driven to despair by the system of fire and sword which Duhesme pursued.

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*Barcelona
blockaded.*

*Cabañes, p.
ii. 3—25.*

Barcelona.

Barcelona, with its fort Monjuich, is one of the strongest places in Europe. It is remarked by Swinburne, that the citadel was calculated to overawe the inhabitants at least as much as to protect them from a foreign enemy. For this in fact it was built, when six hundred houses were demolished for its site; and to the same purpose it was now applied against the family which built it, when Buonaparte's perfidy had made the Bourbons as popular in Catalonia as they had been hated there during the war