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XIV.

1808.

December.

*Infantado
chosen com-
mander.
Dec. 9.*

*They retire
to Cuenca.*

hastening to Despeñaperros, to take their post in the passes of the Sierra Morena, for the defence of Andalusia. This afforded opportunity for the General to reason with them, and pacify them for a while. In consequence of this circumstance, the difficulty which daily increased of subsisting the troops, their increasing wants, and the rapid desertions which were naturally occasioned by privations, want of hope, and total relaxation of discipline, Lapeña assembled his general officers at Alcazar de Huete. The Duque del Infantado, and Llamas, who had joined them at Villarejo, were present at this council, and it was determined, on Lapeña's proposal, that the Duque should take the command. One reason for appointing him was, that he was president of the Council of Castille, and in that character was entitled to require provisions and all things necessary from the people, . . . such being the respect paid to the old authorities and established forms, even at a time when necessity might have superseded all laws, as paramount to all.

No command was ever accepted under more painful and disheartening circumstances. The troops were in a state of mutiny; the enemy within three leagues, preparing to complete their destruction; they had neither stores, supplies, nor treasure, nor other means of obtaining any than by the obedience which the people might pay to his authority; and upon any panic which might seize the soldiers, or any suspicion that should arise among them, the General would be the first victim; it had too fatally been proved, that no character, however unimpeached, no services, however eminent, afforded any protection against the ferocity of a deluded multitude. With a full sense of these dangers, the Duke accepted a command which it might have been even more dangerous to refuse. His rank, his affable manners, the part which he had taken against the Prince of the Peace, and the share which he was supposed to have had in

bringing about the downfall of that worthless minion, had made him one of the most popular persons in Spain; and though he had lost something by accompanying Ferdinand on his miserable journey to Bayonne, still he stood high in the opinion of the nation. The new appointment was announced to the army in a short proclamation; and the Central Junta ratified it afterwards, approving Lapeña's resignation, and dispensing with an informality, which the dangerous and peculiar state of things rendered prudent. The immediate good which had been expected from this measure was produced; for the soldiers confided in their untried General, and order was re-established among them. On the 10th they entered Cuenca, there concluding a retreat of nearly four hundred and fifty miles. The position of that city enabled them to receive supplies from La Mancha, Valencia, and Murcia; there they rested for a while, discipline was restored, and three persons, who had been most active in the mutiny, were brought to trial and executed. The troops were clothed, funds were raised for paying and supporting them, and hospitals established. The stragglers having recovered that strength, for want of which they had fallen behind, rejoined their corps; new levies were raised; and it was manifest that, notwithstanding all their disasters, notwithstanding the mighty power of the enemy, the treachery of some leaders, and the misconduct of others, which had been hardly less injurious, the spirit of patriotism was still unimpaired, and the people, by whom alone a country is to be saved, had not abated one jot of heart or hope.

Five days after their arrival they were joined by a corps which it was supposed had been cut off among the mountains of Rioja. The history of its escape is equally honourable to the men and to the Conde de Alache D. Miguel Lili, who conducted them. They formed originally a part of the army of Old Cas-

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*Arrival of
the Conde
de Alache's
corps.*

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tille, under the Conde de Cartaojal, which had been broken up after the position of Logroño was lost. At the end of October, Castaños stationed it along the skirts of the Sierra de Cameros, extending from in front of Logroño to Lodosa; the last division of this force, which formed the left flank of the army, was posted at Nalda under Lili. During the first three weeks of November, this division sustained repeated and almost daily attacks; varying its position as circumstances required, and having, like Blake's army, to endure the severest privations; nevertheless it carried off fourteen pieces of artillery, from Nalda to Ausejo and Calahorra, in sight of the French, and by roads which had been thought impracticable. On the night of the 21st, Lili received intelligence that a considerable force of the enemy had moved from Logroño towards Ausejo; the next day he learnt that the Spaniards, who were stationed there and at Tudelilla, had fallen back upon their right, and that 5000 French infantry and 1000 horse had moved from Najara, giving out that they were going for Calahorra. He was thus in imminent danger of being surrounded. Immediately he left the banks of the Iregua, and fell back to Venta de Codes, four leagues in the rear of Nalda, where, in the course of the night, a messenger from Cartaojal reached him with instructions written at Tudelilla, on the 21st, saying, that the French were in great force at Ausejo, and that Castaños ordered him to retreat by the Sierra to Agreda, whither Cartaojal himself was going with all his troops to oppose the French on the side of Almazan.

Nov. 23.

For Agreda, therefore, Lili began his march at daybreak. By two in the afternoon he had reached Villar del Rio, five leagues from the place which he had left, eight from that to which he was bound; but here he met intelligence of fresh disasters and new dangers. Agreda, it was said, had already been abandoned by the Spaniards; 1200 French cavalry, with a small

body of foot, were on their way to that town from Soria, which had opened its gates to the enemy; other columns from Soria and from Almazan were to follow in the same direction. Fugitives now arrived every hour, with tidings that the enemy were sacking one place, or approaching another, all their parties tending to the one point of Agreda. Lili perceived, that if Cartaojal had not already retired from that town, he inevitably must, and that for himself, if he continued his march, it would be to run into the midst of his enemies. He did not hesitate, therefore, to disobey orders which would have involved him in certain destruction; and, acting upon his own judgement, he marched the next morning in a contrary direction, to Lumbreras, and the day afterwards to Montenegro, thinking that a more defensible point, and for the sake of receiving certain intelligence from the side of Agreda. The report that that town had been evacuated on the 23d was premature; and Lili received a letter from Cartaojal, written from thence on the 24th, and regretting that he had fallen back to Lumbreras upon erroneous information; to have joined him at Agreda, he said, was the proper movement, and almost the only means of safety; but it was no time to consider what might have been done, and, as things were, he must now follow his own discretion, with that zeal which it was not doubted he possessed. Whatever regret Lili might have felt at receiving this reproof, was effectually counteracted by the report of the messenger who brought it; for at the very moment when Cartaojal dispatched him, news arrived that the enemy were beginning to attack the town. In fact, he was compelled speedily to abandon it, and, marching by way of Borja to Calatayud, joined the wreck of the army of the centre, and accompanied them in their retreat.

Perilous as Lili's situation now was, he had yet to receive intelligence of events which rendered it more desperate. On the

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27th he learned at Salas de los Infantes, by some stragglers who had escaped from the action at Burgos, that that capital was now in the hands of the French. His spies brought him information, that the Intruder was with a great force at Aranda; that the enemy occupied all the bridges and fords of the Duero; and that the Somosierra was threatened: finally, to crown the distressing news of the day, a full account reached him of the battle of Tudela. On every side he was surrounded; to move in any direction seemed equally perilous, and he was utterly ignorant what course had been taken by the relics of the army which he wished to join. In these difficulties his first measure was to march to Canales, four leagues from Salas, where, in the very centre of the mountains, he might hope to remain concealed from the enemy, or resist them to the best advantage if he were attacked. There, amid those difficult and inclement heights, from whence the Arlanza flows toward Lerma, the Duero toward the plains of Castille, the Tiron, the Najerilla, and the Iregua toward Rioja, he remained six days. During this time he obtained sufficient intelligence of the movements of the French to direct his own, and then proceeded towards New Castille, in search of Castaños's broken army. On the 5th he reached Quintanar de la Sierra, on the 6th San Leonardo. His men travelled the whole of the following day and night, and crossed the Duero at Berlanja. On the 9th they entered Atienza, and here the information which they found served only to occasion new perplexity; for here Lili learned that the central army had passed through, and been pursued by the French; that they had afterwards abandoned Guadalaxara and the heights of Santorcaz: of their farther movements nothing was known. Lili, however, considering all circumstances, was convinced that they must have retreated upon Cuenca, and he directed his march towards the same point. On the 11th, at daybreak, he crossed the great

road from Zaragoza to Madrid, at an opportune and happy hour, passing between the last division of the French and their rear-guard, then on the way from Calatayud; and on the day that the Duke del Infantado reached Cuenca, he arrived at Villar de Domingo Garcia, from whence, on the 16th, he passed to the head-quarters of the Commander. During this whole retreat, which was over a tract of nearly four hundred miles, through the most difficult and untravelled ways, this corps had constantly been surrounded by the enemy, who were seldom more than ten or twelve miles distant from them. Food they had none, but what they could procure upon the way; most of the men were barefoot, many of them nearly naked, but their spirits never failed.

If ever during the contest there was a time when Spain might have been irretrievably subjected, it was now, if a dissolution of the government had taken place. The Central Junta had been slow in perceiving the danger, but when it came upon them they acted with promptitude and wisdom. Before they left Aranjuez a commission of six members was appointed to transact business during their journey, and official intelligence of their removal was communicated to the foreign ministers. Their escort was so insufficient, that a small body of cavalry might have surprised them; they travelled in parties, but assembled at Talavera; three members were left there to collect and re-organize the soldiers who were coming in great numbers to that point. From thence proceeding to Truxillo, there they again met, dispatched orders to the provinces, and sent some of their own members to those places where they might be most useful. That city afforded an opportunity of reconsidering where they should fix their abode, whether at Badajoz, as had been determined, or at Cordoba, the road to either place being open: Seville was preferred to either, and they assembled there on the 17th of De-

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*Retreat of
the Central
Junta from
Aranjuez.*

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 XIV. lanos, with some members of the Royal Council and of the
 1808. Council of the Indies, that eleven members of the former and
 December. nine of the latter, including their presidents, should follow the
 Central Junta, and with two members from each of the other
 tribunals, form a *Consejo reunido*, or united Council. The other
 members were commanded to leave Madrid, and retire either
 to their own places of abode in the provinces, or whither they
 would, there to receive their salaries, assist the government with
 their advice and services when called upon, and promote by all
 means in their power the national cause. Too many of these
 persons were found wanting in the hour of trial, some in weak-
 ness submitting to the Intruder rather than endure the ills of
 honourable poverty, others taking an active and infamous part
 in his service. The proposed Council was formed of those who
 repaired to Seville; and those who, from whatever cause, ar-
 rived at a later time, found from the Junta an indulgence which
 would not have been granted them by the people, less charitable,
 and perhaps less just; they were received with respect, and their
 salaries continued to them.

*Their ad-
 dress to the
 people of
 Madrid.*

The agents of the Intruder knowing how desirable for their
 views it would be to bring the national government into dis-
 repute, reported that the Junta had sanctioned and approved
 the capitulation of the capital. This the Junta contradicted in
 a manly proclamation, and they exhorted the inhabitants of
 Madrid to bear in mind that the temporary occupation of their
 buildings by the enemy was of little moment, while he was not
 master of their hearts. "Continue to resist him," said they,
 "in the very bosom of your families; place no confidence in the
 promises of the French; remember that they have promised hap-
 piness to every people, and have made every people miserable.
 Keep alive your hope, retain your fortitude, and your deliverance

will be glorious in proportion to the greatness of the danger which you have encountered." They made no attempt to conceal the extent of their disasters; but they attributed them to the inexperience of their troops, and denied that the monarchy was comprehended within the narrow precincts of the metropolis. "Were you to believe the enemy," said they, "our armies have vanished like the smoke of the battle, and Spain has neither forces wherewith to oppose her invaders, nor authority to regulate her councils, nor resources to save her from destruction. All this is false. The government which has been chosen by the people never attracted more respect, never felt more strongly the strong principle of union, and never found more ardour in the public cause. The provinces have redoubled their exertions at its voice, and new enlistments, new contributions, and new sacrifices have already filled the void occasioned by our losses." A splendid instance of patriotism in one of the nobles was at this time made public; the Duke of Medina Sidonia, whose property had just been confiscated in Madrid by the intrusive government, had from the commencement of the struggle made a free gift every month of 2500 dollars, in addition to his share of the public burthens, and to various donations of necessaries for the army.

While the Junta was making exertions which were well seconded by the zeal of the people, the whole of those extensive plains, which form the centre or table-land of Spain, lay at the mercy of the invaders. On the 11th of December Victor had his detachments in Aranjuez and in Ocaña; on the 19th he occupied Toledo. The surrender of this ancient and famous city, after its professions of determined patriotism, was one of those circumstances for which the Spaniards were reproached, by those who had depreciated their exertions, and despaired of their cause. Yet if the Toledans did not signalize themselves by

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December.*The French enter Toledo.*

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XIII. right spirit, nor had they been deficient in their duty. In the
1808. spring of the preceding year Dupont and Vedel entered that
December. city with their divisions, and raised a most oppressive contri-
bution. But no sooner had they proceeded on their way to
Andalusia, than a Junta was formed, consisting of the most re-
spectable citizens: they could not raise forces themselves, being
surrounded by the enemy, and having no military means; but
they ordered as many of the districts in that kingdom as could
exert themselves to act under the instructions of the Junta of
Badajoz; they contributed large sums of money; and they re-
fused obedience to four successive orders which enjoined them
to proclaim the Intruder, though it was announced, that, if they
continued in their disobedience, 5000 French would come, and
perform the ceremony sword in hand. The evacuation of Madrid
relieved them from this danger. And when the victorious army
of Castaños was on its way to the capital, Toledo supported
10,000 men of that army for three weeks, made a donation of
300,000 reales to them on their departure, equipped many of
their officers, and clothed a great proportion of the men. This
was not all. In two months it raised and equipped two regiments
of infantry, and a corps of 700 horse; for which funds were
raised by a subscription, all persons, from the archbishop to the
poorest peasant, contributing according to their means. The
university also raised a corps of students; and after the siege
of Zaragoza the pectoral of the archbishop, valued at 150,000
reales, was converted into money to relieve the inhabitants of
that heroic city. After the defeat at Burgos, the Toledans ap-
plied to government for arms to defend their walls. This was
the mode of warfare to which the Junta, if they had rightly
understood the nature of their own strength, should have re-
sorted; and this system of defence was advised by the English