

the plot, the precise object of which was never clearly ascertained. Richart himself constantly affirmed, that he merely intended to watch a favourable opportunity to surround the king when he left the palace, and prevail on him to restore the Constitution; while others insisted, that the conspirators contemplated the assassination of Ferdinand. Pecuniary funds, but to an inconsiderable amount, had been furnished, and some progress made towards bringing the scheme to maturity; when one of the individuals to whom the whole plan was entrusted, supposed to have been bribed by the ministers, was base enough to betray his coadjutors, on a stipulation of obtaining a pardon for himself. The high character of Richart, which he had always maintained, for disinterestedness, courage, and patriotism, was preserved, and even heightened, by the last scenes of his life, which are thus described. Arrested, and brought before the judges, his talents and resolution only served to aggravate his alleged crimes. Indifferent to the fate which awaited him, the chief care of the accused was to make his example act as a stimulus to others. Richart defended his conduct on the broad principle of public utility, which, according to his arguments, rendered it a sacred duty on the part of all those forming the social body, to aid in rescuing their fellow men from slavery; and, as the system of tyranny established after Ferdinand's return had become intolerable, he considered himself bound by every tie, moral and religious, to assist in effecting the regeneration of Spain. The necessity of performing this duty was the more deeply impressed on his mind, since he felt assured that it might be accomplished without having recourse to any greater act of violence than the one proposed. The prisoner referred to his past services, his patriotic publications, and private life, to prove that neither motives of interest nor ambition had influenced his conduct. "When led to the scaffold," says the historian, "the demeanour of Richart was such as became a votary of freedom: firm and resigned, he died bravely; and instead of indulging in the voice of complaint, his last words are said to have been a fervent ejaculation for the deliverance of his country." Only one of the conspirators suffered with their leader: the rest, about

twelve in number, were sentenced to fine, exile, and imprisonment.

The last, and more important, but not less unsuccessful, attempt made this year, (1817,) in behalf of constitutional liberty, was headed by the celebrated chief, Don Louis Lacy, to whose gallantry and military skill Catalonia was formerly indebted for its liberation from the French army, and who, after the return of Ferdinand, was rewarded by being driven into exile.\* The history of this transaction is well related by the author of the 'Historical Review;' and the reflections which accompany the narrative are pertinent and judicious. In the spring of the year, Lacy visited Caldetes, a village on the sea-coast near Barcelona, for the purpose of drinking its mineral waters, and there happened to fall in with a few old acquaintances, whose breasts beat in unison with his own in favour of public liberty, and who mutually joined in deploring the wretched state of their common country. From the mournful accents of unavailing regret, their kindred spirits immediately turned to an inquiry, whether redress was practicable. The real patriot is distinguished by "deeds of noble daring:"—by "deeds of noble daring" were Lacy and his associates inspired.

"Although the result of former efforts in favour of freedom," says Mr. Blaquiere, "were sufficient to deter ordinary men from exposing themselves to the fate of Porlier and Richart, it seemed only to stimulate the patriots of Spain. In the present case, a number of circumstances concurred to render it probable that a well-combined plan would be attended with success. Lacy had long been regarded as one of the best officers in the Peninsula; he

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\* This species of punishment was acted upon by the Spanish court to an amazing extent, and was executed in a very summary way. Whenever any political opinion was known to be entertained by a military officer, that was not in unison with the proceedings of the government, it was the usual practice of the minister at war, to assign some fortress for his confinement, where he was ordered to be kept under the immediate inspection of the governor, until the suspicions which led to his exile were removed, or during the pleasure of the monarch. On his removal from the captain-generalship of Galicia, Lacy was ordered to Catalonia, and continued there to reside until he conceived the moment had arrived for the liberation of his unhappy country.

had acquired the affection of the army; and was, above all, the staunch and enlightened advocate of liberty. General Milans, Lacy's companion during several campaigns, together with his brother, Don Rafael, a retired colonel of cavalry, were amongst the friends he found at Caldetes; both these meritorious characters placed themselves at his entire disposal; while Don Jose Quer, lieutenant-colonel of the Tarragona regiment, stationed at Arens del Mar, a small sea-port in the vicinity, undertook to ensure the co-operation of that corps. Though the continued enormities of the government were such as to justify a belief on the part of Lacy and his coadjutors, that even a partial movement would be followed by the whole army, it was not until he had communicated with the different garrisons, and received positive assurances of support from all those in Catalonia, that he consented once more to raise the standard of independence. Matters being thus arranged, the 5th of April was named for carrying the project into execution. Considering the state of public opinion, and the abilities of those engaged in the enterprise, sanguine hopes were indulged, that fortune would be more propitious than heretofore. These hopes, however, were cruelly disappointed; for, when on the point of being realized, two subalterns, named Appentel and Nandin, formed the design of betraying the patriots. This act was rendered the more atrocious, from the traitors having been indebted to the bounty and protection of Lacy, while captain-general; a fact, which alone had induced Quer to employ them as his chief agents in gaining over the regiment.

“When informed of the meditated rising, the first step of Lassala, the colonel, was to hasten to the officers' quarters, and ask them whether they were prepared to shed their blood in defence of the king? On being answered in the affirmative, the battalion was immediately assembled on the parade; where the Servile chief contrived, by flattery and promises, to dissuade the men from following two companies which had already marched, under Quer, and his friend, Don Antonio Oliver, to join the leaders at Caldetes. As it was too late to bring these back, the utmost Lassala could do was to despatch emissaries after them,

to induce their return by the assurance of a liberal reward, and such other offers as were most likely to detach them from Lacy. The remainder of the corps were then conducted to an adjacent height, there to await events, and be removed from the probable consequences of having their loyalty shaken by the inhabitants, who appeared extremely anxious to second the views of Lacy and his friends.

“On reaching Caldetes, the two companies were warmly greeted; and after a short harangue from the general, who received them in full uniform, the whole party repaired to the country-house of Don Rafael Milans, close to the village, where they remained in a state of great perplexity till daylight, when they were joined by some officers from Barcelona and Matarosa, who fully confirmed their fears that the plan had been discovered. There being no time to lose, they held a consultation, in which it was determined not to relinquish the enterprise while a single soldier remained: as the men seemed disposed to act, it was decided that they should proceed towards Mataro, and, if not seconded by the garrisons or peasantry on their march, they could at least gain the frontiers, and pass into France.

“Creditable as the above resolution was to the patriots, the commencement was too disheartening to afford any hopes of success: they had, accordingly, been only a few hours on the road, before the agents employed by Lassala prevailed on the soldiers suddenly to turn round, and take the direction of Arens del Mar, leaving Lacy and his companions to their fate. It was in vain that Milans, and the other officers, expostulated with them on this unexpected defection: their fears had been so worked upon by Cuero, the principal emissary, that neither entreaties nor remonstrances had any effect; it therefore only remained for the leaders to provide for their own safety in the best manner they could.

“A general had been sent, in the mean time, from Barcelona, by Castanos, to co-operate with Lassala in quelling the insurrection, although the former is said to have given secret directions that no obstacle should be opposed to the escape of Lacy: this did not prevent measures from being taken to arrest both the patriot general and his fel-

lowers. Various parties were despatched in pursuit of the fugitives, who proceeded by different roads, some directing their steps towards the French frontier, while others endeavoured to reach the coast. Quer and Oliver owed their escape to the forbearance of an officer named Cabrera, who, in the true spirit of patriotism and humanity, kept aloof till assured of their safety, when he entered the house in which they had slept the preceding night, and, seizing their swords and uniforms, sent these to Lassala as proofs of his vigilance. The latter, having gone in person to secure Milans, could find only his wife and daughter, who were despatched under an escort, as hostages, to Barcelona; while the general himself, accompanied by two infant sons, whom he was determined not to leave behind, after a series of adventures which would form no bad episode to a romance or melo-drama, reached the small fishing-town of Badalona, and embarked for Gibraltar, whence he sailed to Buenos Ayres, there to serve the cause of South American independence until happier circumstances should enable him to revisit his native country.\*

A much severer fate attended Lacy, and those who had to share his fortunes. In consequence of an order issued by the governor of Mataro, calling upon the peasantry, on pain of death, to assist in the pursuit, the fugitives were forced to take refuge in a farm-house, whose proprietor was base enough to betray them soon after their departure for the frontiers. Intimidated by the above peremptory mandate, and strictly enjoined to obey it by their spiritual advisers, who had, as usual, made common cause with the Servile leaders, a large party came up with Lacy and his friends, and threatened to fire on them if they did not surrender. On hearing this unexpected summons from

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\* Although Milans was thus unable to share the glory of personally aiding the heroes of San Fernando, he had the consolation of being eminently useful to the cause of freedom in South America; and, on his return to Barcelona in 1820, was received with acclamations; when the event was celebrated by rejoicings and addresses of congratulation from the municipality and other public bodies. To increase the joy of this public officer, he found Madame Milans and her children—waiting only his arrival, to complete their happiness.

those who had been till then regarded as friends, the general came forward, and, with great calmness, replied, that he was ready to do so, but would not deliver his sword, or be taken alive, except by a military officer. The dignified manner in which Lacy expressed himself had such an effect on the infatuated peasants, that many of them instantly retired: a few, however, calculating on the reward which had been offered for his apprehension, persisted in their demand; and a violent altercation ensued. This was proceeding to extremities; when an officer and a file of soldiers appeared, and put an end to the dispute. On Lacy's presenting his sword, the former refused to accept it, observing, in a respectful tone, 'The weapon cannot be in better hands, general; your excellency must therefore excuse me from taking it.' Having at length surmounted his scruples, the prisoner was conducted to Blanes, and thence escorted to the citadel of Barcelona.

"Tried by the commission for the prosecution of the patriots, the general was condemned in the same illegal manner as Porlier, and might have been executed with as little ceremony, were it not for his popularity, and, consequently, a fear lest the garrison would have interfered to prevent the execution of the sentence. Of all those acts which have rendered the reign of terror memorable, the subterfuge adopted for the purpose of sacrificing Lacy is the most worthy of execration. It was while one universal cry for mercy ascended the throne of Ferdinand, in behalf of this unfortunate chief, that the ministers ordered him to be conveyed to Majorca, under pretence of commuting his sentence into imprisonment. Reaching that island on the 30th of June, he was shut up in the castle of Bellver, and had been only four days in confinement, when Algarre, the judge-advocate, who officiated at his trial, presented himself to the unsuspecting victim, read his sentence, and notified that it would be carried into execution at five o'clock on the following morning! It was no wonder if this abrupt announcement of his last hour, when he might perhaps be indulging the fond hope of once more embracing his wife and child, or that he might yet live to see Spain free, occasioned a severe shock:

the hero, however, is said to have speedily recovered from the first impulse of horror, so natural at such a moment, and tranquilly observed, 'I was not prepared to hear this sentence; but, since it must be so, I will be ready.'

"Thus betrayed, and condemned to suffer at a distance from his relatives and friends, the death of Lacy was imbittered a thousand-fold: yet do all the details which have transpired relative to this sad event concur in proving, that it exhibited a rare example of unaffected courage and manly fortitude. The few hours of preparation afforded to Lacy were occupied in drawing out a will in favour of his wife, and in giving directions relative to the education of their only child, who was recommended to the protection of that country which his parent had so faithfully served. A slave to his professional duties, and incessantly called upon to make pecuniary sacrifices in support of freedom, the general had scarcely any property to bequeath.

"Prompted by more zeal than prudence, the friends of Lacy have recently taken great pains to prove that he died a staunch votary to the Catholic faith, conforming to all its ceremonies. A number of depositions, describing those circumstances which took place just before his death, have been circulated, to confirm these unimportant assertions. It would, perhaps, be more flattering to his memory, had the original reports remained uncontradicted. Like Porlier, the hero of Catalonia also attached more importance to the practice of virtue than to the forms of religious worship; so that when surrounded by the band of priests that usually flock to the aid of the condemned in Spain, as well to discover their secrets as to prepare them for paradise, Lacy is said to have betrayed some doubts as to their means of consoling his wounded spirit, smarting, as it was, under the impressions created by the conduct of his persecutors. Minutely versed in the history of his country, the general could not forget that nearly all its misfortunes had originated in superstition or fanaticism; and when he recollected that those who now came to preach peace and good-will belonged to a class which had invariably opposed the progress of liberty, how could the dying hero possibly reconcile the mild and amiable doctrines of Christ

with that misplaced devotion which could as readily denounce a patriot, as it could offer absolution to the vilest and most degraded criminal? There is, in fact, every reason to believe, that although Lacy was incapable of giving offence to his spiritual guides, (who were, doubtless, honourable exceptions to the body,) by an open expression of his sentiments, he at least convinced them that his hopes in futurity were derived from a much more exalted source than the elevated cross and consecrated wafer. In other respects, few could have less need of external consolation than one whose whole life had been marked by a scrupulous regard for the obligations of morality and virtue; while his magnanimity and personal bravery in a hundred combats bore testimony to the indifference with which he could meet the final hour.

“The only advantage enjoyed by the Catalonian chief over his illustrious rival in the lists of fame, was that of being shot, instead of suffering the more ignoble fate of Porlier. There is good ground for inferring, that his enemies thought even this indulgence a great favour, though it is clearly proved they dreaded the consequence of a public execution. Conducted to a ditch of the castle, at five in the morning, accompanied by a priest, and a file of soldiers destined to terminate his existence, the death of Lacy presents more the character of a midnight murder than a judicial decree carried into effect for the purpose of a salutary example—the object of all punishments, under a government of law and justice.”

During the remainder of this, and the following year, no important political events occurred: the same disgusting policy was still pursued by the court, that had marked its career since the king's return; and the patriotic party appeared to sink into a state of complete exhaustion. Ferdinand, however, in this interval, published a definitive decree relative to the Spanish exiles, which was excessively cruel towards one class of his subjects, and but very partially beneficial to another. By this state-instrument, all those who had acted under Joseph Buonaparte, in quality of counsellors, ministers, &c. all military officers, down to the rank of captains inclusively, who served under his banners, were for ever banished from their country. With these

exceptions, all other fugitives were permitted to return, under certain prescribed conditions, one of which was, that they should fix their domicile in a determined place, at a prescribed distance from the capital and royal palaces.

On the 20th of January, 1819, Charles the Fourth, the abdicated king of Spain, ended his days at Rome, in the 71st year of his age, having survived his consort only a fortnight. This circumstance, in itself of small importance, was at the time regarded as a favourable event for King Ferdinand, whose justly discontented subjects it deprived of a rallying point. Charles himself had been much less the object of unpopularity than his queen, and her favourite the Prince of Peace; and his restoration appears to have been for a moment contemplated by the Liberales of Spain.

In the mean time, the spirit of disaffection was daily extending itself amongst the higher classes of society, and especially amongst the military; whilst the lower, in several provinces—in Andalusia, Estremadura, New Castile, and particularly in the district of La Mancha—indulged themselves in all the excesses which a feeble and ill-conducted government is unable to restrain. The high roads were infested with numerous bands of robbers, evidently acting under a regularly organized system, who manifested somewhat of a political object in their depredations, by attacking with much greater eagerness all persons charged with the receipt of money for government, than individuals travelling on their private affairs. One of these troops was stated to have amounted to three hundred men.

A conspiracy against the government was formed in the city of Valencia, which, like numbers of others, was discovered, and rendered abortive, when just on the point of being carried into effect. On this occasion, General Elio, the military governor of the province, seized the opportunity of completing what he had commenced in 1814: after putting the gallant leader, Colonel Vidal, and twelve of his companions, to an ignominious death, their bodies were exposed on a gibbet, as objects of terror to the peaceful inhabitants. Not satisfied with the blood of so many victims, more than two hundred individuals of both sexes were arrested, and thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition,

by order of this modern Attila; who is further described as having personally assisted in applying the torture of the Holy Office to numbers, with a view of discovering all the accomplices of Vidal, and spreading dismay among the patriots generally. Acting throughout the terrific drama as judge and executioner, neither age, sex, nor condition, escaped this sanguinary minister of vengeance, whose order of the day, issued previous to sacrificing the patriots, deserves to be recorded as a specimen of *legitimate* rule in the nineteenth century, and to furnish another proof of what the people of Spain were doomed to suffer under its agents. The following is a correct copy of this precious document.—

*Proclamation issued by Elio, Captain-General of Valencia, previous to the Execution of the brave Colonel Vidal, and twelve of his Companions, amongst whom was young Bertran de Lis.*

“Inhabitants of Valencia, and you, brave Soldiers!

“Beware of shewing any compassion for the scene which this day will offer to your astonished sight; but, on the contrary, reflect on the enormity of the crime which consigns these monsters to death, and to the shame of expiring on a scaffold. Their conspiracy had no less an object than the overthrow of the monarchy, the destruction of the laws, revenge, plunder, and other projects, which would have caused rivers of blood to flow: they wished to subject the Spanish nation to an eternal disgrace, by exposing it to Europe as the accomplice of their atrocious revolutions!—Providence, which watches over you, has employed inscrutable means for enabling government to punish the enemies of the throne, the laws, and religion: it has empowered me to arrest and convict the thirteen monsters whom you will see executed this morning.—Inhabitants of Valencia, these traitors are not the only ones who are amongst you; they have accomplices and satellites dispersed through all classes in the nation.—Loyal inhabitants, and you, brave soldiers, who have been in all times models of fidelity to the king, and of submission to the laws of your ancestors; you, whose indignation is an evident proof of the hatred you have for these monsters; hasten to accuse them to me,

and *I shall annihilate them all*. The advice I give you is necessary for your happiness and tranquillity. So long as a traitor exists, you cannot have any repose. So long as the hateful principles of these wretches are not entirely eradicated, fathers, you will not have obedient children; husbands, you cannot have faithful wives; friendship can no longer exist; confidence will no longer prevail in commerce; the laws will lose all their vigour; and the very recollection of the social virtues be effaced: we shall end by destroying each other; the son will murder his father and mother. If this picture terrifies and seems chimerical to you, look to France, and the history of the period in which we live will soon convince you of the truth of what I say. The principles which have destroyed that monarchy are the same as those which your enemies endeavoured to disseminate, and with which they try to involve us in ruin.—But fear nothing: God, who protects our Catholic country, has endowed it with the most brilliant virtues; and none shall succeed in alienating it from its duties towards the king and our holy religion. For the preservation of this religion, and the defence of the throne, a great number of commanders, whose fidelity is undoubted, are to be found. Valencia contains many of them. Have confidence in your general; you will always find him at the head of all worthy subjects. (*Valencia, January 20th, 1819.*) ELIO.”

In the month of May, a fresh revolution took place in the administration, which within the last five years had changed as many times: one of the ministers was ordered to quit Madrid in an hour; and another was recommended to repair to some town in the kingdom of Granada, until he should receive an appointment in that quarter. Financial difficulties, which each set of counsellors in its turn tried to overcome, and found insuperable, were believed to be the true cause of these endless vicissitudes in the cabinet of Ferdinand the Seventh.

The sailing of the long-intended expedition from Cadiz, for the recovery of the revolted provinces of South America, continued to be postponed from time to time; for the equipment of a single squadron was now an effort which exhausted

all the resources of this great kingdom, once, by its power and riches, the tyrant and the terror of Europe. The Spanish marine, since the fatal alliance formed with France in the year 1796, and the long series of national misfortunes which had resulted from this step, had sunk into the last stage of decay. The navy had been annihilated, the arsenals emptied, and the forests of the kingdom destroyed. In the present emergency, therefore, the government had found it necessary to make application to Russia, to furnish vessels for the South American expedition, and a considerable number had arrived at Cadiz. But these ships, which were built only of pine, and had already seen much service, were soon discovered to be in so bad a state, that very considerable repairs were requisite to fit them for the voyage. During the delay occasioned by this circumstance, a spirit of mutiny gained upon the soldiers destined for the service, which broke out just as other difficulties had at length been surmounted, and the preparations appeared on the point of being completed. Very decided symptoms now made it manifest, that the troops would not allow themselves to be embarked on board bad ships, badly fitted out, and, above all, badly commanded, in order to restore the colonies to the domination of a prince whose arbitrary system of government had already disgusted themselves. In the night of the 7th of June, Count Abisbal, (O'Donnell,) the commander-in-chief, became apprised of the existence of a conspiracy in the first division of the army, which he felt the necessity of strangling in its birth. He quitted Cadiz with despatch and secrecy, and collected the troops in garrison at the Isle of Leon and Puerto Real, to the number of 4000. With this force having surrounded the disaffected camp, 7000 strong, he caused the soldiers to lay down their arms, pronounced the dismissal of the officers, above a hundred and twenty of whom he took into custody, and disposed the regiments among the towns of Andalusia.\* The whole was performed without resistance,

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\* Of all those who have appeared on the political stage of Spain, during her conflict with foreign and domestic enemies, Henry O'Donnell, Count Abisbal, is unquestionably the most wavering and enigmatical.