

CHAP. XI. theatre of war. In the meanwhile, the King, abstaining from any observations on the military points of the question, publicly expressed his disapprobation of those articles of the Convention, in which stipulations were made affecting the interests of his allies. "His Majesty deeming it necessary that his sentiments should be clearly understood, as to the impropriety and danger of the unauthorized admission into military conventions, of articles of such a description, which, especially when incautiously framed, may lead to the most injurious consequences."

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Thus closed all judicial proceedings on this memorable convention.

In reviewing the operations of the short campaign, of which we have just detailed the more prominent events, it must be admitted, we think, on all hands, that the conduct of Sir Arthur Wellesley, while in command, was marked by a degree of skill, boldness, promptitude, and fertility of resource, which can only be found united in a mind of the first order. Like an early sketch of a great master, it is perhaps possible to detect in it some error of conception, or fault of execution; yet he must be blind indeed, who does not perceive, in the general vigour

and boldness of the design, promise of lofty excellence and splendid achievement. The measure of landing his army, without waiting for reinforcements, has been condemned by men of different mould, as rash and imprudent. Never was an objection more futile urged against the measures of a great commander; and when stated by Sir Hew Dalrymple, in his defence before the Court of Inquiry, it drew forth a most triumphant refutation from Sir Arthur Wellesley. The truth is, that the determination of Sir Arthur Wellesley to engage his army in immediate operations against the enemy, was the result of the nicest and most accurate calculation, and of a deep and well-grounded conviction, that his force was fully adequate to the expulsion of the French army from the capital. Had the projects of Sir Arthur Wellesley been carried into effect, by those who succeeded him in command, there can be little doubt that the campaign would have been conducted to a more glorious result. To say nothing of the advance on Mafra, on the morning of the twenty-first, it was the decided opinion of Sir Arthur Wellesley, expressed in the Court of Inquiry, that by a vigorous prosecution of the victory of Vimiero,

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CHAP. XI. and pushing forward the right wing on the  
 1808. road to Torres Vedras, we might have antici-  
 September. pated the enemy in reaching Lisbon, and have  
 at once placed Junot in a situation in which  
 another defeat must have terminated in uncon-  
 ditional surrender.

To say that an operation of this bold and splendid character, was attended by hazard, is, in fact, to say nothing. All warlike operations are so. But the point is, did the one in question hold out a fair and reasonable prospect of success, and was the object to be attained of magnitude and importance sufficient to justify the risk. These are questions which gave rise to much difference of opinion at the time, and on which it would ill become the most gifted writer to express his conviction with anything approaching to dogmatism. Yet we know not why we should conceal our own decided belief, that the conclusions of those military reasoners who would answer these questions in the negative, are founded on narrow and timid views, by which it was more than improbable, that a genius like that of Sir Arthur Wellesley could be influenced.

On Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Bur-

rard we would cast no censure. Successively called on to assume the command of the army in the immediate neighbourhood of an enemy, of whose strength and situation they knew nothing; in a state of utter ignorance of the localities of the country, and the temper of the inhabitants, these officers were placed, by the bungling mismanagement of government, in a situation of difficulty, which it conveys no imputation, to assert they were unequal to overcome.

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Up to the period of the armistice, the chief impediments felt in all the operations of the army arose from want of cavalry, and the miserable condition of the artillery horses. Why, we may ask, were these things so? Why was an expedition, thus crippled and incapacitated for vigorous operation in the field, sent forth to encounter difficulties, which might so easily have been avoided? It was solely owing to our deficiency in cavalry, that Delaborde was enabled to effect an orderly and unmolested retreat from the position of Roliça; and had our strength in that arm been greater, not only would the advantages acquired by the victory of Vimiero have been prodigiously increased, but all obstacle to a vigorous pursuit would at once have been re-

CHAP. XI. moved. Whatever degree of lustre, therefore, the operations which terminated in the field of Vimiero, may cast on the skill of the general, or the valour of his troops, they can contribute nothing to the honour of a ministry, by whose negligence or incapacity so many important advantages were lost to the country.

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On the subject of the armistice and subsequent convention, we have a few—and but a few—observations to make. In favour of the principle of the convention, and of its sound policy in the circumstances of the armies, the weight of evidence so decidedly preponderates, as almost to preclude a doubt with regard to a subject, on which we know that the highest military authorities entertained none. All the Generals of the army in Portugal, whose general or local information could lend weight to their opinions, declared their decided conviction that the Convention was founded, in the main, on a sound view of the situation and resources of the enemy, and of our own means of offensive operation. From the very commencement of hostilities, it is known to have been the decided opinion of Sir Arthur Wellesley, that the general interests of the cause, would be best promoted by adopting the

most speedy measures for the expulsion of the French from Portugal, and bringing a British force to co-operate with the Spaniards on the Ebro. That it was in the power of the British army—numerically superior as it was to the enemy—to have expelled him from Portugal by force of arms, has never been denied. But it as little admits of a negative, that when the event of another battle should have compelled Junot to evacuate Lisbon, the province of Alentejo was open for his retreat, and that magazines had been already formed for the supply of his army during its retreat to the frontier. The strong fortress of Elvas was in his possession; and the difficulty of provisioning the British army, in advancing into the interior, must have materially retarded the vigour of pursuit. It was judged too—and we think rightly judged—that the cause of the Spanish patriots would be more efficaciously promoted by the presence of thirty thousand British soldiers, and of four thousand liberated prisoners, than it could suffer disadvantage from twenty thousand additional French troops being thrown, at no very remote period, into the country.

So much for the principle of the Convention.

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CHAP. XI. That many of its details were objectionable cannot be denied: and here alone it is that censure can fall justly on Sir Hew Dalrymple. It was certainly incumbent on that officer to have insisted on a specific stipulation by which the French should have been forced to disgorge their disgraceful plunder, and to have taken strict measures for securing its execution. It became Sir Hew Dalrymple, we think, and it was due to the character of the army he commanded, to have assumed a higher moral tone in demanding all possible reparation from the infamous marauders, who had proved themselves alike destitute of principle and honour. That the armistice and preliminary convention were concluded without the knowledge or participation of the Portuguese general, we hold to have been another error. It ought not to have been forgotten that we stood in a relation of singular delicacy to the Portuguese Sovereign and people; and it should have been the object of the British general, to regulate his conduct in such a manner as to avoid exciting either jealousy or distrust, in a nation whose cordial co-operation was so essential to the successful prosecution of the war. Sir Hew Dalrymple must have known,

that the patriots of the whole peninsula were abundantly ready to misinterpret both the motives and actions of their allies; and he must likewise have been aware, that an union of sentiment between the authorities of the two nations, was, on such an occasion, above all things desirable.

On the whole, it will probably be admitted that the stipulations of the treaty were more favourable to the French than it was either prudent or politic to grant. To have gained the confidence of the Spanish nation in the purity of her motives and the prowess of her soldiers, was, to England, worth more than a victory. This, however, the Convention of Cintra did not tend to acquire for her. With an army flushed with recent victory, and greatly superior in numbers, and with the whole nation on our side, we shewed too plainly that the vanquished enemy was still formidable to the victors. The moral impression throughout Europe, arising from the measures in question, was decidedly unfavourable to our arms. Our military reputation was lowered; and the British generals were regarded as having scandalously sacrificed the interest of their allies. This impression may now, in a great measure, be re-



CHAP. XI. regarded as unfounded; yet we believe that no  
 1808. Englishman looks back with pride on the Con-  
 September. vention of Cintra, or would not feel happy  
 could all record of it be erased for ever from  
 our annals.

## CHAPTER XII.

## OPERATIONS ON THE EBRO.

It is now necessary to revert to Spain.— CHAP. XII.  
 Though the attachment of the nation to the  
 cause of liberty was still unabated, yet their ef- 1808.  
 forts had not been attended by any of those bril- September.  
 liant results which had been confidently antici-  
 pated. No man of unquestioned patriotism and  
 commanding talents had arisen to guide the ener-  
 gies of the Spanish people, and direct them into  
 a salutary channel. Each Junta had become an  
 isolated and independent government, acting  
 without concert, and on narrow views, and only  
 influenced in its policy by petty considerations  
 of personal or local interest. The govern-  
 ment throughout Spain had devolved on the pro-  
 vincial noblesse and higher orders of the clergy,

CHAP. XII. — classes of men who, from their deficiency of information, their habits, and their prejudices, were peculiarly unfitted for the task they had assumed. On the first appearance of success, jealousies sprang up between the rival authorities; and so powerful was the feeling of hostility thus excited, that it was even proposed in the Junta of Seville, to enforce submission to its supremacy by the sword. Fortunately for Spain, the firmness of Castanos saved it from the impending horrors of a civil war. On hearing the proposal, he at once declared, that the troops under his command should not be employed against any but the common enemy.

When the French evacuated Madrid, the reins of authority were, for a time, assumed by the Council of Castile. This body, which, by the tardy yet firm resistance which it opposed to the intruder, had regained some portion of its former influence with the nation, put forth an elaborate manifesto, vindicating the line of policy it had pursued in the difficult circumstances of the country. It declared its readiness to cooperate with the Provincial Juntas, in any measures conducive to the general defence, and limited its own pretensions, as a public body, to

guiding and stimulating the national ardour into  
 beneficial action. As the peculiar circumstances  
 of the country did not admit of the Cortes  
 being immediately assembled, it was recom-  
 mended, by the Council of Castile, that the  
 Provincial Juntas should despatch deputies to  
 the capital, in order to decide on the imme-  
 diate wants of the nation, and the mode by  
 which they could be most advantageously sup-  
 plied.

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A temporary form of government, founded on  
 these propositions, was adopted by the Junta of  
 Seville, and followed by the approbation of the  
 great body of the nation. The deputies were  
 consequently elected, and installed at Aranjuez,  
 with much formality, in their delegated func-  
 tions. Count Florida Blanca was elected pre-  
 sident; and a circular missive was despatched,  
 requiring recognition and obedience from the  
 different authorities of the kingdom.

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One of the first acts of the Provisional Gov-  
 ernment, was to vindicate their authority, which  
 had been publicly set at nought by Cuesta.  
 That general was unfavourable to the sway  
 of the Juntas, and desirous of preserving the  
 authority of the Captains-general and Royal

CHAP. XII. Audiencias, which had, in a great measure, been nullified by the establishment of these petty governments. Endowed with more than an ordinary share of the national obstinacy and pride, this haughty leader was prepared, if necessary, to support his opinions by the strong arm of military force. The Junta of Leon and Castile, which he had appointed as a subordinate council for the regulation of the district, had, subsequently to the battle of Rio Seco, erected themselves into an independent government; and, protected by Blake, issued orders to Cuesta to transfer his cavalry to the army of that officer. The proceedings of the Junta were accordingly declared void; and Cuesta issued orders for the immediate assembly of a new Junta. He ventured even to seize the Leonese deputies on their way to Aranjuez, and detain them as prisoners. One of them, named Valdes, made known the circumstances of his arrest to Florida Blanca, who, willing to avoid the fatal consequences of civil dissension, wrote mildly to Cuesta, requesting the release of the deputies thus unlawfully arrested, and that their conduct should be left to the judgment of the Supreme Government. Castanos also interfered to prevent the evil conse-

quences of intestine discord ; and addressed a letter to the General, containing a strong re-  
monstrance on the violence and impolicy of his  
conduct.

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In his answers to Count Florida Blanca, and Castanos, Cuesta entered on a laboured vindication of his conduct ; and concluded, by declaring his resolution of holding his prisoners in strict custody, till the Central Junta should have assembled. It was to that body alone, he said, that he owed, or would pay, submission.

The Council of Castile was then called on to interfere, with the view of restoring harmony ; but their efforts, for this purpose, were unsuccessful. Cuesta persisted in declaring, that the *soi-disant* Junta of Castile and Leon was an unlawful authority ; that he considered his own power, as Captain-general, could only be superseded by the decree of a Sovereign Regency ; and that as Valdes held the rank of general in the Spanish army, it was his intention to deliver him over to be tried by a military tribunal.

On the first meeting of the Central Junta, deputies from the Junta of Valladolid were sent, by the influence of Cuesta, to demand admission into that body. This was refused. Cuesta was

CHAP. XII. summoned to appear at the bar of the Junta, to  
1808. answer for his conduct ; and peremptory orders  
September. were issued for the release of the prisoners. On  
this occasion, the influence of Mr. Stewart, the  
British agent, was exerted to reduce Cuesta to  
obedience. That general at length thought it  
prudent to comply with the demands of the  
Junta ; and, releasing his prisoners, he repaired  
to Aranjuez. The result was, that Valdes was  
admitted to the exercise of his privileges as a  
member of the Assembly ; and that Cuesta re-  
mained at the seat of government, in a state of  
temporary obscurity.

The Central Junta, thus peaceably installed in  
their functions and authority, at first gave fair  
promise of a beneficial exercise of their power.  
But the prospect, so gratifying to the friends of  
liberty, soon vanished. Their president, a man  
in the last stage of decrepitude, was unfitted,  
by his decaying powers, for the task of guiding  
the deliberations of such a body, or of enforcing  
the necessary subordination in its members.  
Their time was wasted in useless formalities  
and frivolous debates ; and it soon became  
apparent that the Assembly inherited all the  
defects of the Provincial Juntas, without their

local influence. Its authority, though not openly questioned, was viewed by these bodies with jealousy and aversion; and the measures which it adopted were too little marked by vigour and decision to suit the character of the crisis. Feebleness of purpose, and tardiness of execution, were its besetting sins, and were partly perhaps inseparable from its constitution. The members, in general, were men of untarnished character; but, drawn from different provinces of the kingdom, they were unacquainted with each other, and deficient in the knowledge necessary to the successful exercise of their new duties. For a national convocation, their numbers were too few; for an executive government, too many.

The more enlightened members were by no means unaware of the almost inevitable deficiencies of the new government. It was the opinion of Jovellanos that a Regency of five persons should immediately be appointed, and that the Junta should be reduced to one half of its original number. That the power of the latter should cease on the assembling of the Cortes, which was to be convoked as speedily as was found prac-

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CHAP. XII. ticable in the circumstances of the country.

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September. It was scarcely to be expected that the Junta should decree the abrogation of its own powers; and the propositions of this distinguished patriot were not carried into effect.

But the measure admitted by all to be most indispensable in the circumstances of the country, was the appointment of a Commander-in-chief, who might consolidate the national troops, and direct their efforts with unity of purpose and effect, against the common enemy. To the accomplishment of this object, however, there were many impediments. Spain afforded no general whose claims to so distinguished a command were pre-eminent and acknowledged. The local governments, swayed by petty interests, were discordant in their sentiments; and it was found impossible to unite the voices of the people in favour of any individual on whom the appointment could be bestowed. Under these circumstances, the Junta endeavoured to supply the place of a General-in-chief by a Military Commission, of which Castanos was destined to be president. Yet this measure, too, was frustrated by unforeseen difficulties; and time passed on without the

final adoption of any efficacious steps for the im- CHAP. XII.  
 provement and consolidation of the national  
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In the meanwhile, the confidence of the people in their own prowess and resources, had been increased, by the victory of Baylen, to a pitch of exultation almost ludicrous. In their eyes, the contest was already at an end, and it only remained to reap the full harvest of their glorious resistance. It was impossible to impress on them that the safety of their country still depended on their adoption of a system of firm, unrelenting, connected, and continuous resistance. They were unable to appreciate the dangers which surrounded them, and remained equally intractable to advice or persuasion. The Central Government, instead of exerting itself to dispel the unfortunate illusions of the people, were smitten with the epidemic delirium, and endeavoured, by exaggerated statements of its military force, to deceive both the nation and its allies. At the very moment when the troops already organized were in want of almost every necessary, they proclaimed, in the true spirit of bluster and bravado, their immediate intention of augmenting the army to

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CHAP. XII. half a million of infantry and fifty thousand  
1808. cavalry; a force not larger, perhaps, than was  
September. requisite in the circumstances of the country, but  
one which it was quite impossible they could  
possess the means to organize and equip.

While such was the course of events in Spain, Napoleon was making vigorous exertions to retrieve the disasters of the preceding campaign. Had the efforts of the Spanish people been directed by a general government with vigour and judgment, it is probable he might have been induced to resign the task of subjugating the peninsula in despair. But the ignorance and imbecility of the numerous chaotic and ephemeral governments, which the revolution had called into existence, gave a prospect of success to his efforts, which led him to renew the contest with increased hope.

At the period in question, Europe might be said to be overspread by the armies of Napoleon. The French eagles were flying in Italy, in Dalmatia, in Prussia, in Denmark, in Poland, on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe; and the annals of modern history afford no parallel instance of a dominion so widely extended, yet apparently so firmly established, as that which

a long course of victory had acquired for France. CHAP. XII.

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The internal government of Napoleon was one of trickery and deception. It was part of his policy, that the nation should studiously be kept ignorant of the real state of Spain. The French newspapers indeed did, occasionally, mention that disturbances had taken place in the peninsula; but they were described as altogether trifling, and originating only in the vulgar, who had been led astray by motives of faction, or the intriguing agents of England. All the higher orders of the nation, the nobility and the public authorities, were represented as rejoicing in the new dynasty, and faithful in their allegiance.

The cabinet of the Thuilleries, however, were aware that the deception, thus practised on the credulity of the nation, was too flimsy to be long successful. A narrative, containing a distorted account of the events in Spain, was therefore published on the sixth of September. In this paper, the disturbances were exclusively attributed to the artifices of the priests, and of the English faction. It touched on the political circumstances of the country, in a manner the most desultory and unconnected, and an impen-

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CHAP. XII. etrable obscurity prevaded the military details.

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Skirmishes were magnified into battles, and the disasters of the French armies were passed over with a negligent rapidity intended to conceal their importance. The account of the transactions at Zaragoza was brought down only to the period when the French were in occupation of a large portion of the city, and no notice was taken of their subsequent abandonment of the siege. The details of the battle of Rio Seco were given with studious exaggeration. The Spanish army was declared to be annihilated; and though it was admitted that the disasters in Andalusia were of some importance, it attributed the retreat of Joseph to the Ebro to the extreme *heat of the weather*, and to the desire of locating the troops in a district which *afforded better water than New Castile!*

It was in such circumstances that two reports from M. Champagny, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, were laid before the French Senate. The first of these documents contained a strong recommendation that, in order to contribute to the overthrow of British power, the Emperor should seize on Spain; and boldly asserted the legitimacy of every measure by which an object

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Apr. 24.

so desirable to the peace and tranquillity of the world could be effected. From her geographical position, it was declared that Spain must necessarily be considered either as the most important ally or the most dangerous enemy of France. When either was engaged in war, the situation of the other did not admit of neutrality; the two nations must be united by intimate alliance, or separated by implacable enmity. It was for the interest of Spain, as well as of France, that her government should be regenerated, at a time when a feeble and dissolute administration had led her to the brink of ruin. It had been the policy of Louis XIV. to unite Spain to France, by an alliance which placed a Bourbon on the throne. That policy should again be pursued: Spain, by similar means, should once more be united to France. The increase of the Spanish army, before the battle of Jena, and the conduct of the government at that period, were in themselves a declaration of war. The commerce of France had been made to suffer by the laws of the Customs. The ports of Spain were open to the contraband merchandise of England, which, through her dominions, found access to the rest of continental Europe. What policy suggested, there-

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CHAP. XII. fore, justice demanded. It was an act of both, to conquer the territory of a power which had thus acted towards France.

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The second report—of four months later date than the former—was of similar import, and was intended to establish the same conclusions. It justified the conduct of Napoleon, in regard to Spain. The disturbances in that country had been excited by English gold. Would the Emperor permit England to say, “Spain is one of my provinces. My flag, driven from the Baltic, the North Sea, and the Levant, and even from the shores of Persia, rules in the ports of France.” No, never! To prevent so disgraceful a consummation, two millions of gallant soldiers were ready to scale the Pyrenees, and chase the English from the peninsula. If the French fought for the liberty of the seas, it was first necessary to wrest Spain from the tyrant of the ocean. If they fought for peace, it could not be attained till the fomenters of war had been driven from the Spanish territory. If they fought for honour, they must inflict prompt and signal vengeance for the outrages committed against the French name in Spain. At last the English would be made to feel those evils

which they had so long inflicted on others. CHAP. XII.  
 "They will be beaten," said M. Champagny, "de- 1808.  
 stroyed, dispersed; or they will fly, as they did September.  
 at Toulon, at the Helder, at Dunkirk, and in  
 Sweden,—wherever the French armies have  
 been able to find them! Their expulsion from  
 Spain would be the ruin of their cause; it would  
 exhaust their resources, and annihilate their last  
 hope. In this contest the wishes of all Eu-  
 rope would be with France!"

In a message to the Senate, the policy he intended to pursue with regard to the peninsula, was distinctly announced by Napoleon. "I am determined," he said, "to prosecute the war in Spain with the utmost vigour, and to destroy the armies which England has poured into that country. The future security of my subjects, a maritime peace, and the security of commerce, depend on the success of these important operations. Frenchmen, all my undertakings have but one object—your happiness, and the permanent prosperity of your children; and, if I know you aright, you will hasten to comply with this new call on your exertions, which is rendered necessary by the interests of your country."





CHAP. XII. Vast preparations were accordingly made for the prosecution of the war. Eighty thousand soldiers of Austerlitz, and Jena, and Friedland, were withdrawn from Prussia and Poland, and directed to cross the Pyrenees. The contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine were likewise set in motion, and a levy of one hundred and sixty thousand conscripts was decreed by the Senate.

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On entering France the veterans were received with public honours in every town along the line of their march. Deputations came forth to meet them with greeting and congratulation on their return, and they were feasted at the expense of the municipalities.

Such public demonstrations of respect to the soldiers of his army, were encouraged by Napoleon. They contributed to diffuse a military spirit throughout the nation. They were a cheap reward for past services, and an incitement to press onward in that career which had led to such honourable results. It was his uniform policy to impress on the people, that those who would pursue successfully the path of honour and distinction, must hew their way by the sword.

On the eleventh of September, the advanced-

guard of the army was reviewed by the Emperor at Paris; when, forming the officers in a circle, he thus addressed them :—

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“ Soldiers ! after having triumphed on the banks of the Danube and the Vistula, by rapid marches you have passed through Germany. I now direct you to march through France, without a moment’s repose. Soldiers ! I have need of you. The frightful presence of the Leopard contaminates the continent of Spain and Portugal. Let him fly terrified at your approach. Let us carry our triumphant eagles even to the pillars of Hercules. There also we have outrages to avenge ! Soldiers ! your fame has transcended that of all modern warriors. But have you equalled the glory of the Roman legions, who, in one campaign, were conquerors on the Rhine, the Euphrates, in Illyria, and on the Tagus ? A lasting peace, and permanent prosperity, shall be the reward of your exertions. A true Frenchman cannot, and ought not, to taste repose till the ocean has been freed from its tyrant. Soldiers ! all that you have already done, all that you will yet do, for the happiness of France and my glory, shall be eternally engraven on my heart.”

CHAP. XII. A force, amounting nearly to two hundred and fifty thousand men, of all nations, languages, and religions, thronged the roads to Spain; diverse in all of thought, motive, or expression, and united only by the strong bond of military discipline. A struggle, more vehement and deadly than that in which Spain had hitherto been engaged, was evidently approaching. Every nerve and muscle would be strained to regain the grasp which France, by the disasters of the former campaign, had been forced to loosen. It was the last and decisive contest between tyranny and freedom; and all hopes—those alike of the slave and the freeman—were absorbed in the event.

While to all eyes the horizon of Spain was thus hourly becoming more dark and overcast, Napoleon set out for Erfurth, to hold a conference with the Emperor Alexander. The consequences of this meeting were a treaty of alliance between the sovereigns, and a proposal for peace to Great Britain. The latter was accompanied by a joint letter from the two Emperors to the King of England. "The circumstances of Europe," they said, "had brought them together; and their first object was to yield to the wishes

and wants of all nations, and to seek, in a gen-  
 eral peace, the most efficacious remedy for the  
 common miseries of Europe. The long and  
 bloody war which had ravaged the continent  
 was at length at an end, and could not be re-  
 newed. Many changes had taken place in Eu-  
 rope; and many states had been overthrown.  
 Of these the chief cause was the distress and  
 convulsion produced by the stagnation of mari-  
 time commerce. Still greater changes might  
 take place against the policy of the English na-  
 tion. Peace, therefore, was the interest of Eng-  
 land, as well as of the continent. We write to  
 entreat your Majesty," observed the potentates,  
 in conclusion, "that, disregarding the dictates  
 of the passions, you would listen to the voice of  
 humanity. That you would at length resolve  
 to conciliate all interests, and, by so doing, pre-  
 serve the existing powers, and ensure the hap-  
 piness of Europe, and of this generation, at the  
 head of which providence has placed us."

This singular communication was answered  
 by Mr. Canning, in two letters addressed to the  
 Russian and French ministers, accompanied by  
 an official note. The former contained a state-  
 ment of the reasons, why his Majesty did not

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CHAP. XII. think it proper to depart from the usual mode  
1808. of conducting negotiations between indepen-  
*September.* dent sovereigns. In the latter, the King's readi-  
ness and desire to negotiate a peace, on any  
terms not inconsistent with his own honour, and  
with the permanent security of Europe, were a-  
gain asserted. If the condition of the continent  
had been one of agitation and convulsion—if many  
states had been subverted, and more were yet  
threatened with subversion, these calamities, it  
was declared, were not with any justice attri-  
butable to his Majesty. It was most true, that  
these dreadful wars were altogether in oppo-  
sition to the policy of Great Britain, yet the  
King could not be expected to learn, with unqual-  
ified regret, that the system which had occasion-  
ed a stagnation of commerce so deplorable, had  
recoiled on its authors or its instruments. It was  
neither, however, in the disposition of his Ma-  
jesty, nor in the character of the people over  
whom he reigned, to rejoice in the misery and  
privations even of the nations combined against  
him; and, therefore, he anxiously desired the  
termination of the sufferings of the continent.  
The sole object of the war in which his Majesty  
was engaged, was national safety; but in its