

his rights in his own name, and that of his family, the crown of Etruria should be conferred upon him according to the Salic law; and the Emperor's niece be given him in marriage immediately, if he chose to demand her, upon the execution of the treaty. If he refused, he should remain without compensation, and the Emperor would carry his purposes into effect by force.

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Escoiquiz was of opinion that Ferdinand would do well to yield to a force which he could not resist, and save what he could from the wreck. He argued that it was their business to mitigate the evil as far as possible, saving always the honour of the King and the interests of Spain; and that as Ferdinand was yet but a youth, he might hope, in some of those changes which are incident to human affairs, to regain what he now lost. The cession which was demanded would be palpably invalid, and would not prevent the Spanish nation from making any exertions which their loyalty and spirit might prompt. By accepting Etruria, he would secure to himself the kingly title and kingly treatment from Buonaparte; for though he would certainly be detained in France as long as Spain resisted, still it would be with all outward marks of honour; he would be kept like a slave in fetters of gold, not imprisoned in some castle where misery and ill-treatment would put an end to him and his brothers. If Spain should make a successful stand, by the help of England, which might be expected, and perhaps that of other powers also, Etruria would be always something in possession, the exchange of which would facilitate his return to his lawful throne: but if unhappily, after all efforts, Spain should succumb in the strife, her disherited princes would still remain with an honourable and princely asylum. It was moreover especially to be considered, that if Ferdinand refused to treat with the Emperor Napoleon, and cede his rights as King of Spain, the cession would beyond all doubt be made by his father, and Ferdinand would then be

*Debates
among Fer-
dinand's
counsellors.*

CHAP. dealt with in the character of an undutiful and rebellious son.

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These arguments did not prevail; the majority of Ferdinand's advisers, notwithstanding all that had passed, could not be persuaded that Buonaparte meant seriously to depose him; they continued to believe that all these measures were only designed to extort a cession of territory, and that if Ferdinand continued firm in his refusal, he need not sacrifice the provinces on the left of the Ebro, nor even Navarre, but that some of the colonies would suffice. They urged this persuasion so strongly, that Escoiquiz, without altering his own opinion, assented to theirs. But all these discussions were made known to Buonaparte by one of their own number, who was sold to the tyrant.

*Labrador
appointed
to treat
with M.
Champagny*

Ferdinand therefore now invested Don Pedro de Labrador, honorary counsellor of state, in whose talents he had great reliance, with full powers, instructing him to present them to the French minister for foreign affairs, and to demand his full powers in return, that the proposals of Buonaparte might be communicated in an authentic manner. The instructions given him, which were drawn up by Cevallos, were to ask M. Champagny if King Ferdinand were at full liberty? for if he was, he would return to his dominions, and there give audience to the plenipotentiary whom the Emperor might depute: if he were not, all acts at Bayonne were nugatory, and could have no other effect than to stain the reputation of Buonaparte before the whole world. Ferdinand, he was charged to say, was resolved not to yield to the Emperor's demands: neither his own honour, nor his duty to his subjects, permitting him. He could not compel them to accept of the Buonaparte dynasty, much less could he deprive them of their right to elect another family to the throne, when the reigning one should be extinct. It was not less repugnant to his feelings to accept of the throne of Etruria as a compensation; that country belonged to its lawful sove-

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reign, whom he would not wrong, and he was contented with the kingdom which providence had given him.

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*Ferdinand
is prevented
from re-
turning.*

When Labrador presented his powers, and required the usual return, M. Champagny replied, these things were mere matters of form, and wholly unconnected with the essential object of which they were to treat. Buonaparte, indeed, had determined to force from Ferdinand the form of a voluntary renunciation, but he and his ministers considered all other forms as useless. The Frenchman proceeded to talk of the propositions: Labrador declared he could discuss no subject till the previous formalities had been observed; and asked if the King were at liberty? M. Champagny made answer, undoubtedly he was. Then, said the Spaniard, he ought to be restored to his kingdom. But M. Champagny replied, that, with respect to his return, it was necessary he should come to a right understanding with the Emperor, either personally or by letter. Already, Ferdinand had had sufficient reason to feel himself a prisoner; this language was such as could leave no doubt. But that the violence might be apparent and notorious, Cevallos addressed a note to the French minister of state, saying, that the King had left Madrid with the intention of meeting the Emperor at Burgos, on the assurances which the Grand Duke of Berg, the ambassador Beauharnois, and General Savary, had given of his approach; and that, in consequence of the agitation of the public mind in Spain, it was impossible to answer longer for the tranquillity of the people, especially as they were apprized that their King had now been six days at Bayonne. He had, in the most solemn manner, promised them on his departure that he would speedily return. This, therefore, he was about to do; he now made known his intentions, that they might be communicated to the Emperor, whose approbation they would doubtless meet; and he should be ready to treat, in his dominions, on all con-

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CHAP. venient subjects, with any person whom it might please his Imperial Majesty to authorize. No answer was returned to this
 IV. dispatch ; but the spies within the palace and the guards without
 1808. were doubled. A guard at the door even ordered the King and
 April. his brother one night to retire to their apartments. Ferdinand's
 mind was not yet so subdued to his fortunes as to brook this
 insult. He complained bitterly of it ; and the governor in consequence soothed him with courteous language, and expressed his disapprobation of such conduct. The act, however, was repeated ; and, not choosing to expose himself a third time to insults, which he had no means of resenting, he abstained from going out.

Buonaparte sends for Charles and the Queen to Bayonne.

Buonaparte had expected that Ferdinand would more easily be intimidated into compliance ; in that case he would have recognized the validity of the father's abdication ; which, in fact, he did virtually acknowledge, while treating with the son for his renunciation. He now found it necessary to alter his plan of proceedings, and ordered Murat to send off Charles and the Queen as expeditiously as possible to Bayonne. There was no danger of exciting any popular commotion by removing them ; but the deliverance of Godoy was also to be effected ; and artifice must be employed for this, unless he resorted immediately to force, which it was his purpose to avoid till the whole of the royal family were in his hands. The release of the fallen favourite had been requested of Ferdinand during his stay at Vittoria. He replied, that he had promised his people to publish the result of a process, on which the honour of many of his subjects, and the preservation of the rights of the crown, depended. Throughout the whole extent of Spain, he said, there was not a single district, however small, which had not addressed complaints to the throne against that prisoner : the joy at his arrest had been general, and all eyes were fixed upon the pro-

ceedings. Nevertheless, he gave his royal word, that, if, after a full examination of the case, Godoy should be condemned to death, he would remit that punishment in consequence of the Emperor's interposition. At the time when Ferdinand returned this answer to Buonaparte, he received advices from the Junta of government that Murat had required them to release Godoy; threatening, if they refused, to deliver him by force, and put his guards to the sword if they offered the slightest resistance. They were informed, in reply, of the answer which had been sent to Bayonne, and were instructed to tell the Grand Duke, if he renewed his applications, that the business was in treaty between the two sovereigns, and that the result depended exclusively on the decision of the King.

The French have at all times had less public faith than any other nation in Europe; but whether under their old monarchy, their democracy, or the absolute tyranny in which that democracy had its natural end, they have effectually protected their agents and partizans in other countries. Godoy had been the creature of France, and Buonaparte was resolved to save him: he treated, therefore, the letter of Ferdinand with contempt; and, having recourse to direct falsehood, sent information to Murat, that the Prince of Asturias had put the prisoner entirely at his disposal, and ordered him to demand and obtain the surrender of his person. A note was accordingly delivered to the Junta, in Murat's name, by General Belliard, demanding the prisoner. This, he said, was only a new proof of the interest which the Emperor took in the welfare of Spain; for his Imperial Majesty could not recognize as King any other than Charles IV.; and, by removing the Prince of the Peace, he wished to deprive malevolence itself of the possible belief, that that monarch would ever restore him to confidence and power. One member of the government, Don Francisco Gil, protested against yielding to

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Godoy released by Murat, and sent to Bayonne.

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*April.**Memoria de
Azanza y
O'Farrel,
p. 25.*

the demand, because it was not authorized by Ferdinand their King: the others deemed it wiser to submit, and the Infante D. Antonio declared, that it depended upon their compliance in this point whether his nephew should be King of Spain. The Marquis de Castellar, therefore, to whose custody Godoy had been committed, was instructed to deliver him up, and he was removed by night. Had the people been aware that this minister was thus to be conveyed away from their vengeance, that indignation which soon afterwards burst out would probably have manifested itself now, and Godoy would have perished by their hands. He was immediately sent under a strong escort to Bayonne.

*He is re-
instated as
Charles's
minister.*

In obtaining the release of this wretch, Buonaparte had probably no other view at the time, than of preserving that uniform system of protection towards his agents, which pride as well as policy dictated. But when he found his designs unexpectedly impeded by the firmness which Ferdinand and his counsellors then displayed, he perceived that Godoy might yet be useful; and when Charles arrived at Bayonne, the favourite was restored to him, and reinstated as minister, that he might, by a last act of office, consummate his own infamy, and complete the destruction of the dynasty which had raised him, and the country which had given him birth. Willing to be revenged on Ferdinand, and now also hating Spain, Godoy, who had hitherto seconded the projects of Buonaparte, because he was duped by the hopes of aggrandizement, now forwarded them with equal eagerness for the sake of vengeance. It was necessary that Charles should be induced to treat his son as an enemy, a rebel, and a traitor; and that, while he punished him as such for having accepted his abdication, he should be made to resume the crown, solely for the purpose of transferring it to a stranger; and that stranger one from whose treacherous and

unprovoked aggressions he himself but a few weeks before had attempted to fly to America, abandoning his kingdom. To this resolution, monstrous as it was, the unhappy King was brought; nor was compulsion needful; the ascendancy of the favourite was sufficient to make him fancy it his own act and deed. Fear might have extorted the renunciation; but the manner in which he personally treated his son sprung evidently from his own feelings, thus exasperated.

Ferdinand had now only to choose between degradation and destruction. He made, however, one effort in behalf of himself and of Spain, and addressed his father in a letter not less dignified than respectful, in which he at the same time asserted his right to the crown, and his readiness to restore it. The King, he said, had admitted that the proceedings at Aranjuez were in no degree occasioned or influenced by him; and had told him, that the abdication had been voluntary, and that it was the happiest act of his life. He still declared, that it was an act of his own free-will; but professed that it had been made with the mental reservation of a right to resume the crown whenever he thought proper; and now he reclaimed it, avowing at the same time, that he would neither return to the throne nor to Spain. The fundamental laws of the kingdom conferred the crown upon himself, he said, upon his father's free resignation of it. His father had freely resigned; and yet now reclaimed his power, without any intention of retaining it. Here, then, he required an act of duty which the son could not perform, without violating the duty which he owed to his subjects. But both might be reconciled; and Ferdinand would willingly restore the crown to his father, on condition, 1. That they both returned to Madrid; 2. That a Cortes should be assembled there; or, if Charles objected to so numerous a body, that all the tribunals and deputies of the kingdom should be convoked; 3. That the

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Ferdinand's proposals to his father.

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CHAP. renunciation should be executed in due form, in the presence of
 IV. the council, and the motives stated which induced him to make
 1808. it: these, Ferdinand said, were the love which he bore to his
May. subjects, and his anxiety to secure their tranquillity, and save
 them from the horrors of a civil war; 4. That the King should
 not be accompanied by individuals who had justly excited the
 hatred of the whole nation; and, 5. That, if the King persisted in
 his present intention, neither to reign in person nor return to
 Spain, Ferdinand should govern in his name: "there is no
 one," said he, "who can have a claim to be preferred before
 me. I am summoned thereto by the laws, the wishes, and the
 love of my people, and no one can take more zealous and
 bounden interest in their welfare."

*Letter from
 Charles to
 his son.
 May 2.*

In the answer to this letter, the dictation, as well as the purposes of Buonaparte, is apparent. Charles began, by declaring, that Spain could be saved by the Emperor alone. Since the peace of Basle, he had seen that the essential interests of his people were inseparably connected with the preservation of a good understanding with France; and he had spared no sacrifices to preserve it. Spain had been forced by the aggression of England into the war, and having suffered more by it than any other state, the consequent calamities had been unjustly attributed to his ministers; nevertheless, he had the happiness of seeing the kingdom tranquil within, and was the only one among the Kings of Europe, who sustained himself amid the storms of these latter times. That tranquillity Ferdinand had disturbed: misled by the aversion of his first wife towards France, he thoughtlessly participated in the prejudices which prevailed against the minister and his parents. "It became necessary for me," said Charles, "to recollect my own rights, as a father and a King. I caused you to be arrested; . . . I found among your papers the proof of your crime. But I melted at seeing my son on the

scaffold of destruction. I forgave you; and, from that moment, was compelled to add to the distresses which I felt for the calamities of my subjects, the afflictions occasioned by dissensions in my own family."

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The part which followed must have been designed by Buonaparte to conceal the manifest proofs of his own hand, which appear in the rest of the letter. The Emperor of France, it was here said, believing that the Spaniards were disposed to renounce his alliance, and seeing the discord that prevailed in the royal family, inundated the Spanish provinces with his troops, under various pretences. While they occupied the right bank of the Ebro, and appeared to aim only at maintaining the communication with Portugal, the King was not alarmed; but when they advanced towards the capital, then he felt it necessary to collect his army round his person, that he might present himself, in a manner becoming his rank, before his august ally. . . all whose doubts he should have removed. For this purpose, his troops were ordered to leave Portugal and Madrid, not that he might abandon his subjects, but that he might support with honour the glory of the throne. Sufficient experience had also convinced him, that the Emperor of the French might entertain wishes conformable to his particular interest, and to the policy of the vast system of the continent, which might be inconsistent with the interests of the Spanish Bourbons. Ferdinand availed himself of these circumstances, to accomplish the conspiracy of the Escorial. Old, and oppressed by infirmity, his father was not able to withstand this new calamity; . . he repaired, therefore, to Buonaparte, not as a King, not at the head of his troops, not with the pomp of royalty, but as an unhappy and abandoned prince, who sought refuge and protection in his camp. To that Emperor he was indebted for his own life, and for the lives of the Queen, and of the minister whom he had appointed and

CHAP. adopted into his family. Every thing now depended upon that
IV. great monarch. "My heart," said Charles, "has been fully
1808. unfolded to him. He knows the injuries I have received, and
the violence which has been done me ; . . he has declared that you
shall never be acknowledged as King ; and that the enemy of his
father can never acquire the confidence of foreign states. He
has, in addition to this, shown me letters written with your own
hand, which clearly prove your hatred of France.

"Things being thus situated," he continued, "my rights
are clear, and my duties are much more so. It is incumbent
upon me to prevent the shedding the blood of my subjects ;
to do nothing at the conclusion of my career, which should
carry fire and sword into every part of Spain, and reduce it
to the most horrible misery. If, faithful to your primary ob-
ligations, and to the feelings of nature, you had rejected per-
fidious counsels, and placed yourself constantly at my side, for
the defence of your father ; if you had waited the regular course
of nature, which would have elevated you in a few years to the
rank of royalty, I should have been able to conciliate the policy
and interests of Spain, with those of all. For six months, no
doubt, matters have been in a critical situation ; but notwith-
standing such difficulties, I should have obtained the support of
my subjects. I should have availed myself of the weak means
which yet remained to me, of the moral aid which I should have
acquired, meeting always my ally with suitable dignity, to whom
I never gave cause of complaint ; and an arrangement would
have been made which would have accommodated the interests
of my subjects with those of my family. But in tearing from
my head the crown, you have not preserved it for yourself ; you
have taken from it all that is august and sacred in the eyes of
mankind. Your behaviour with respect to me . . your inter-
cepted letters, have put a brazen barrier between yourself and