

## LETTER II.

Deliberations of Cortes, and hours of assembling.—Address to the King.—Committees of Inquiry.—Retrospective View.—State of popular opinion in 1814.—National character.—Degree of knowledge.—Religious dogmas.—Influence of the Priesthood and Nobility.—Effects of the French Revolution.—Mental change.—Political apostacy.—The Army.—Errors of Government.—Imprudent speech in Cortes.—Its effects.

Madrid, July —, 1820.

SOME days have now elapsed, since the ceremony, described in my last letter, during which the Cortes have met generally twice a day, at nine in the morning, and eight at night; to judge by the temperate and zealous manner in which they have proceeded, every thing may be expected from their future exertions. When it is considered that the elections have, with scarcely a single exception, fallen on men distinguished for talent and virtue, who have been besides proved by persecution and suffering, there is no reason to apprehend that this celebrated assembly will not fully justify the expectations of their constituents.

As in the British Parliament, an address in reply to the King's speech was drawn up on the 10th, and presented on the following day. This document contains a rapid view of the national evils; pays a just tribute to the superior blessings of freedom over slavery, and expresses a determination to make every effort for the removal of public abuses.

Conformably to the regulations of Cortes, established in 1812, fourteen committees have been

formed, under the heads of Legislation, Finance, Responsibility, Agriculture, Public Instruction, &c. ; these are busily occupied in preparing reports on the respective points submitted to their examination ; mean while, Ministers, who have the privilege of assisting in the deliberations, continue to give the necessary information on the foreign and domestic relations of the Peninsula and colonies. Addresses of congratulation are pouring in from every side ; the utmost unanimity prevails throughout Spain, and all classes of the people agree in praying for the removal of those abuses which have reduced it to its present deplorable condition. Leaving the National Representatives to pursue the arduous duties, and fulfil the solemn obligations imposed on them, I shall proceed to notice some of the causes which have led to the late change ; fully trusting that when the time arrives for examining the transactions of this eventful session, it will be found not to have disappointed the hopes of Europe.

So connected are the events of 1814 with recent circumstances, and such are the seeming contradiction exhibited by them, that to form any correct ideas of what has occurred, it becomes absolutely necessary to take a retrospective view. I shall, therefore, begin with a few facts and observations on the above disastrous epoch of Spanish history, and, in attempting to describe the state of public opinion on the return of FERDINAND VII. I am more likely to elucidate the subject, than if I had commenced my inquiries at a more recent period.

1820

The favourite maxim of Bernardin de St. Pierre, that ignorance is a necessary precursor to knowledge, and that our mental vision, if not protected by such a shade, would be unable to bear the too sudden transition from darkness to light, is borne out by the experience of history; but never has it been more strikingly exemplified than in Spain, where the Constitution, promulgated by the Cortes of 1812, and numerous reforms which followed that memorable year, seem, from subsequent events, to have been more than a nation nurtured in superstition and slavery, could either appreciate or esteem, without being liable to retrograde, on the first attempt that was made to renew their ancient bondage.

That a spirit of freedom, and love of independence, scarcely known to any other nation, have distinguished the people of Spain in all their struggles against foreign aggression, is a fact which every page of their records amply proves; they have, however, made a most extraordinary distinction between external foes and domestic oppressors, and by a singular fatality, while the former were speedily repelled, or only enabled to obtain dominion over the dead bodies of their opponents, the latter have, for three centuries, found it an apparently easy task to establish a tyranny more galling in its effects on the multitude, and ruinous in its operations, than any other recorded in the annals of mankind.

As if they had no danger to apprehend, except

from the armies of Napoleon, no sooner had the war terminated, and the excitement to resistance ceased, than the influence of the aristocracy and priesthood immediately returned. The various governments established, for administering public affairs in the name of Ferdinand, were too much occupied with other concerns, to institute a system of public education, and perhaps the means for doing so, were insufficient. This would certainly have afforded the only probable hope of opposing a successful barrier to the insidious doctrines, which led to the renewal of despotism.

Those who refer to the previous condition of the people here, justly observe, that the same monster which had so long succeeded in excluding knowledge from without, possessed still more powerful means of obstructing, and closing the channels of internal communication. This monster was the Inquisition! Such were the effects produced by the Holy Office, that the faculty of thinking, totally excluded from the peasantry and artisan, was only in embryo amongst the upper and middling classes; of those two classes which exercise so great an influence on the permanent destinies of civilized society, it is an undoubted fact, that the latter was by far the most enlightened in Spain: it is equally notorious, that, with very few exceptions, the highest order of nobility, and the common people, were on a level, in point of talents and information!

This almost universal ignorance of the nation is

not to be wondered at, when we reflect on the total absence of instruction in which it was suffered to remain: here, the dogmas of Christianity, as taught by its ministers, consisted in impressing the credulous believer with a firm conviction, that both himself and the soil were formed to be the exclusive patrimony of the privileged few: unacquainted with the animating sounds of liberty or patriotism; accustomed implicitly to obey the spiritual guides, or hear the formula of despotism, as set forth in Royal Edicts, they had no conception of political rights, or civil equality. How, therefore, was it possible for such a people to comprehend the word Constitution? How, it has been asked, could those, who were bred up to believe in the existence of a celestial hierarchy, and in the necessity of a similar state of things here below, subscribe to a convention of equality among mankind?\*

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\* A writer, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information, relates, that having once endeavoured to persuade a dignitary of the church, of the advantages which would arise from establishing a greater degree of equality amongst the members of the body politic, he replied, "Is it possible, my friend, that a man of your judgment can agree with those fools, (alluding to the *Liberales*,) who pretend to establish such a principle; forgetting that the inmates of heaven itself are not equal either as to happiness or pre-eminence; since they are divided into saints, archangels, seraphim, and cherubim!" This well intentioned man, adds the writer, is adorned with the purest

taught to consider the name of liberty as a political blasphemy, and to regard themselves as possessing an innate right to the passive obedience of the multitude, it was not less difficult for the nobility and priesthood to approve of the doctrines laid down in the new political code. With respect to the people, so deep-rooted were their habits of submission, and so reconciled were they to servitude, that many intelligent observers have informed me, they considered it a species of sacrilege, either to think, act, or speak in opposition to the will of their masters, previous to the diffusion of knowledge which followed the arrival of the French army in 1808. Such, then, being the materials, for which the Constitution of 1812 was framed, who can be surprised at the facility experienced by those who caused its suspension in 1814.

With respect to the origin and progress of those opinions which overspread Europe soon after the French revolution, although not so general in Spain as in other countries, a deep interest was manifested for the result of the events of 1789: those works which had exposed the vices of the old despotism in France, from *The Spirit of Laws*, to the writings and speeches of Mirabeau and his con-

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moral and religious virtues, and so anxious was he to remove the delusion under which I laboured, that he repeatedly urged me to abjure my false notions, as the only means of avoiding perdition!

temporaries, were sought for, with avidity, by a large party here ; and, when, by a combination of circumstances, which all good men must ever deplore, that country became a prey to contending factions, the reflecting portion of the Spanish nation, who had made themselves acquainted with the previous state of things, never confounded the crimes and follies of a few, with the just causes of the Revolution. They saw that a frightful contrast between the state of knowledge and the administration of public affairs, rendered the recent change inevitable ; and that absolute power, no less dangerous to sovereigns, than injurious to their subjects, never fails to engender the elements of its own destruction. Like other patriots of Europe, they lamented those horrors which sullied a cause that might have been, in better hands, a source of immediate and incalculable benefits to mankind ; meanwhile, passing events operated as so many lessons to the people, while the admirable publications of Jovellanos, Cabarrus, and La Isla, served to stimulate the spirit of inquiry and reform.

If the above has been marked, as the first era of a great change in the public opinion of Spain, another, and scarcely less important one, is said to have resulted from the impulse given to it, in 1808, and the subsequent intercourse between numerous foreign corps and the inhabitants. The installation of Cortes in 1810, together with the talents displayed by many of its members, soon

diffused a light that seems to have completed a mental revolution, which had commenced twenty years before.

Amongst the variety of causes that led to a renewal of tyranny on the return of Ferdinand, I shall mention only a few of the most prominent. Referring to those changes in the public mind, which convinced a large portion of the community that the political existence of Spain depended on the reform of abuses, and the establishment of liberal institutions, it is of course natural to suppose that a still greater number, embracing the grandees, priesthood, legal harpies and their train of attendants, not to mention the followers of the court, all, in fact, who were personally interested in the restoration of the former system of government, left no means untried to insure the success of their designs.

No sooner had the liberty of the press been proclaimed, than several eloquent writers, who had travelled, and marked the progress of knowledge throughout the rest of Europe, almost exclusively devoted their talents to enlightening the people, and showing the advantages of civil freedom: had their efforts been seconded by a more efficient system of legislation, it is incontestible that the enemies of the constitution would have found it much more difficult to carry their projects into effect. Other writers, however, were soon opposed to the former, and although they did not, in the first instance, openly attack the



new system, yet, by their continued insinuations against the measures of Cortes, and the policy of ministers ; their constant appeals to the passions of an uneducated multitude, they, at length, succeeded in weakening that confidence which had been so justly inspired by the regency and national congress. At a later period, and not long previous to the King's return, when the danger of foreign invasion had subsided, many of those who were distinguished by their zeal in the cause of liberty, suddenly turned round, and, taking advantage of the excessive lenity of the administration,\* they did not hesitate to decry the very institutions which they had, themselves, aided to establish. These were represented in pamphlets and periodical publications as subversive of religion and social order ; scurrilous person-

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\* The ministry of this period has been reproached for its misplaced liberality in selecting a number of persons to fill the office of Alcaldes, Corregidors, and other situations of trust, whose bigotted sentiments, and illiberal views, should have excluded them from power, until the constitution had been more firmly established. When these men had effectually coalesced with the priesthood and grandees to restore the old tyranny, there seems to have been no bounds to their zeal in the work of iniquity ; no method was left untried to foment disorders in the provinces : crimes were suffered to remain unpunished, and, as an instance of their turpitude, it is said, that Art. 287 of the constitutional code, which provides for the personal liberty of the subject, in the manner of our *habeas corpus*, was represented as being calculated to introduce anarchy, inasmuch as that it gave impunity to crime !

lities were continually directed against the most eminent patriots; thus it was that the press, which had rendered such important benefits on the first dawning of Spanish independence, now became the chief engine of political mischief. When, in addition to the foregoing causes, the impoverished state to which the people were reduced, by a long protracted war, and the influence exerted over them by their spiritual advisers, are considered, there is no longer any reason to be surprised at the apparent indifference, with which the liberticide measures of 1814 were received by the nation.

The army is accused by some, of having given the final blow to Spanish freedom, and much acrimonious recrimination has attended the controversy between those who attribute the conduct of the military to their natural inclinations to favour despotism, and others who maintain that they were merely the organs of public opinion. There is, perhaps, no single point connected with the history of the above disastrous period, so worthy of inquiry and examination, as the circumstances by which a body of the state, that has since so effectually retrieved its character for patriotism and disinterestedness, could have been led to co-operate in a work which entailed such irreparable misfortunes on their native country.

Various causes are assigned for the part taken by the military on the return of Ferdinand. Those with whom I have conversed on the subject, since

my arrival here, principally deplore that fatality which prevented the Cortes and executive government from sufficiently identifying the interests of the army with the stability of the Constitution.

It is true, several wholesome regulations were made to reform the abuses tolerated under the old system ; amongst others, a decree was published in 1811, which settled that proofs of nobility were no longer required for admission into the Naval and Military Colleges : provision was also made for the widows and orphans of those who fell in battle ; and a new order was instituted to reward acts of gallantry in the field ; but whether it arose from the dilapidated state of the finances, or the poverty of the nation, which rendered it impossible to carry these salutary decrees into effect, they do not appear to have secured the affections of men, who were more anxious to provide for their present wants, than be satisfied with the prospect of future advantages. It had been an invariable policy of the former Government to encourage that *esprit de corps* which has hitherto taught the soldier to believe he has interests separate from those of the citizen ; its power, in fact, depended in a great measure, in fomenting jealousies, and creating distinctions between these two orders of the state ; and knowing the baneful influence of this policy, men are now astonished that the legislature of 1812, should have omitted any efforts to promote a union, without which, past experience

clearly demonstrates, no government founded on the genuine principles of freedom can be of long duration. Had the Cortes exerted the same zeal in organizing a really constitutional army, and in securing its attachment to the new institutions, by a liberal distribution of the uncultivated wilds of the Peninsula, and those immunities which should prove to them that they had an interest in the soil, as this assembly did in the reform of other departments, it is very generally believed, those attacks which were so successfully directed against the Constitution in 1814, would have been completely unavailing.

The erroneous plan of defence adopted by the Spanish generals, and continued disasters resulting from it, were of themselves sufficient to break the chivalrous spirit and damp that generous ardour which had been so often displayed by the troops of Spain. When to these fertile sources of discontent, are added the want of pay and cloathing, together with those innumerable privations they had been exposed to for above five years, it will be readily imagined that the army was but too well prepared to receive the unfavourable impressions made on their minds by the emissaries of the servile party, whose agents were to be found wherever any troops happened to be stationed.

In order the more effectually to accomplish the object in view, every device which malice could suggest, or hatred dictate, was resorted to. Although

the least reflection must have proved to the army and national militia, that their sufferings arose from the impoverished state of the country, and those causes inseparable from the peculiar circumstances of the war; yet, did those employed to weaken their confidence, attribute every disaster in the field, or privation in the camp, to the misconduct and inefficiency of the Government. If, while a regiment was on its march, the municipal authorities, either through ignorance, or a design to co-operate with the servile faction, made any difficulties in providing quarters, or other comforts, it was immediately pointed out as the result of those disorders incident to the constitution.

The most lavish praises were, at the same time, bestowed on the olden time, when no such evils visited the Peninsula; in proportion, as present distresses were exaggerated, so were former days eulogized; while those who had destroyed the morals of the people, and degraded the monarchy, were held up as patterns of political perfection!

With enemies such as the friends of liberty had now to contend, nothing but a system of firmness and coercion, very different from that adopted by the too credulous government, could afford the smallest chance of counteracting their insidious machinations. The most trifling incidents were taken instant advantage of to depreciate the character and distort the views of the Cortes. Having succeeded in withdrawing the affections of the

soldiery from the executive, there still remained a strong feeling of attachment towards the National Congress, which it became necessary to obliterate, before the enemies of freedom could persuade the people to acquiesce in their meditated projects. Something was still required to remove those sentiments of veneration and respect with which the fathers of their country, as they were emphatically called, had inspired the great mass of the nation. This desideratum of perfidy, was unhappily found, in an event which, under different circumstances, would have been justly regarded as unworthy of notice.

A discussion having arisen in Cortes, during the session of 1813, relative to those civil rights and privileges which ought to be accorded to the army, one of the Deputies, a man of talent and celebrity, influenced either by his prejudices, or anxious to furnish additional means of destruction to the servile faction, launched forth into the bitterest invectives against the military profession in general, and, as a climax to his imprudent speech, he is said to have terminated it by styling those who composed the regular army, "*privileged mercenaries and hired assassins.*"\*

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\* This sweeping condemnation originated in some of those excesses, which were, it is feared, too justly laid to the charge of the native as well as foreign armies, that served in the Peninsula during the war of independence.

Although this absurd anathema was neutralized by its very extravagance, while every act of the Cortes flatly contradicted imputations that were never more palpably misapplied than to those brave men, who had displayed so much gallantry, and made such sacrifices in defence of their country, yet was it sufficient to produce an almost immediate effect on the opinion of the army. The expressions of the Deputy spread with rapidity through all the regiments, and to complete the mischief, they were represented as conveying the sense of the assembly at large. It was in vain that numbers of the military, including officers of the highest rank, laboured to prove, in opposition to those employed to circulate the poison, that the Cortes had given numerous proofs of a desire to better the condition of the army, and place its members on an equality with the citizens. All their efforts seemed ineffectual, and to such a degree of exasperation had the minds of the soldiery been worked up, that the only reason given by the officers and men who formed the corps under Elio, why they considered the constitution as having been justly abolished, and the liberal members of the Cortes imprisoned, was by repeating the offensive expressions I have quoted, as being the opinion entertained by the whole Congress!

Having thus endeavoured to give you some notion of that change in public opinion, which led

to the revival of despotism, other facts, tending to throw additional light on that chaos of disorder and crime which preceded the catastrophe of 1814, remain to be noticed ; but as these belong more immediately to the personal history of Ferdinand, it will perhaps be better to connect them with the following account of his return to power.



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA



## LETTER III.

Regency and Cortes of 1812.—Refutation of the Charges against them.—Treaty of Valençay.—Correspondence between the King and Regency.—Decree of Cortes.—Return of Ferdinand.—Journey to Zaragoza, and arrival at Valencia.—The Cardinal de Bourbon.—Policy of the British Ministers.—Assemblage at Valencia.—Decree of May 4th.—Servile faction.—Arrest and imprisonment of the Patriots.

Madrid, July—, 1821.

THOSE memorable events which awakened Spain from its lethargy of three centuries, threatening, at no distant day, to erase this country from the list of civilized nations, are, doubtless, fresh in your recollection. You cannot, however, form a correct notion of the perfidy and ingratitude experienced by the Regency and Cortes of 1812, without taking a retrospective view of all that occurred in the Peninsula, from the abdication of Ferdinand and his father Charles IV., pronounced at Bayonne, on the 5th May, 1808, till the triumphant establishment of the Cortes at Madrid, in January, 1814. Notwithstanding the calumnies to which they have been exposed, their public acts, no less than the persevering assiduity with which they conducted the affairs of Spain, in times of unexampled difficulty and danger, labouring to introduce reforms analogous to the new code which their wisdom had framed, will always furnish an unanswerable reply to the assertions of their enemies; and, many as are the brilliant eras of Spanish history, posterity will surely regard

that in which so much heroism and constancy were displayed, as most worthy of its applause and imitation.

Although the circumstances which induced the reigning family to forfeit every claim to the crown, were overlooked by the partizans of tyranny, they have not hesitated to assert that there had been no *legitimate* government in Spain, except those appointed by Charles IV. and his son; yet, is it worthy of attention, to compare the conduct of both parties: the Sovereign and Heir Apparent tamely resigning their rights to the Throne, while the Provisional government and Cortes, were making the most strenuous efforts for its preservation in their family! The latter assembly, is also represented as having been illegally constituted: this charge, like every other made against them, has been ably refuted by so many writers, that I shall merely adduce the wisdom and moderation with which they exercised their legislative functions, as affording the best possible title to legitimacy. Had they retained the Inquisition, suffered the Church property to remain in the hands of an indolent and overgrown hierarchy, or taken no steps to remove those monstrous abuses which had sprung up with, and been tolerated by the old Government, then indeed, might there have been some ground for the obloquy with which that celebrated body of patriots has been assailed. Having, by the most unwearied exertions, and the co-operation of their allies, reconquered the Peninsula, and laid the

foundation of that reform, which was effected to a considerable extent, both the Government and people of Spain looked forward to the arrival of the King, with the exultation of men who felt they had performed a sacred duty: proud of the victory they had achieved, his return was hailed, as the termination of all their sufferings, and since the best blood of Spain had been shed, to secure his crown, they had certainly a right to calculate on his gratitude, and even to consider it as the best guarantee of their future felicity.

How these just expectations of a generous people were requited, is but too well known to Europe: as, however, many of the facts connected with the Restoration of Ferdinand may have escaped your memory, I shall shortly recapitulate the result of my own inquiries, on an epoch, by which the historians of other times will naturally estimate the character of this deluded monarch.

When, during the disastrous campaign of 1814, Napoleon had determined to negotiate with Ferdinand VII.\* a treaty was concluded at Valençay,

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\* I have been confidently informed, that there was at this period, a party in the Cortes, who wished to transfer the crown of Spain to the head of Lord Wellington; and that his fears lest such an event should take place, greatly influenced the conduct of the French Emperor. It was also said, that had it not been for his anxiety to conciliate the people of Spain, Napoleon would in conformity to the last arrangements at Bayonne, have restored Charles IV., instead of his son.

Referring to the first point, it would have been a novel incident in the history of our time, to see a French and an English

on the 11th December, by which he recognised the latter as legitimate Sovereign of Spain; stipulating amongst other provisions, that those who had followed the fortunes of Joseph Bonaparte, or had held places of trust under him, should be reinstated in their dignities, and have their confiscated property restored.

As it was contrary to the uniform policy of the Regency, and in direct opposition to the decree of Cortes, promulgated on the 1st January, 1811, declaring that they would not acknowledge any stipulations entered into, between the Royal Family and Napoleon, while the former continued in France, a copy of the above decree was immediately sent to Ferdinand in reply to his letter, announcing what had taken place, and the treaty was returned, without being ratified.

While the Duke de San Carlos was on his way to Madrid with the first despatches of Ferdinand, the king received a note from the Count de la Forest, the French diplomatic agent at Valençay, proposing a suspension of hostilities on the part of Napoleon : anxious to return, on any terms, General Palafox, the celebrated hero of Zaragoza, was sent on, charged with another communication, enclosing the note, to the Regency, and urging

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General wielding sceptres at the two extremities of Europe : but, perhaps, such a coincidence would have been highly favourable to its interests, particularly if Lord Wellington had used his power in Spain, as Bernadotte has that with which he is intrusted in Sweden.

their immediate attention to its contents. To this, the Cardinal de Bourbon, as President, returned an answer, breathing sentiments of the utmost loyalty; congratulating Ferdinand on the prospect of his speedy return, and expressing the joy with which he would be received by the nation. "In the midst of those transports," said the President, "to which the proximity of such a blessing gives rise, the Regency already think they hear the voice of your Majesty, that you have arrived amongst your faithful subjects, and that we have placed in your hands that power, of which we have been only the depositaries, and whose weight is oppressive to all, except the Monarch himself, who, though in exile, has re-established the Cortes, given liberty to an enslaved people, and precipitated from the throne of Spain, the ferocious monster of despotism. The highest praise is due to your Majesty, for this noble action, and Europe already pays you the tribute of applause which has been so well merited." Such was the language of men who have been so frequently accused of a desire to protract the King's return for the purpose of keeping the reins of government somewhat longer in their own hands! The letter ended, by informing Ferdinand that, a Plenipotentiary had been named by the Regency, to appear at any Congress which might be appointed to conclude a general peace, and that the treaty ought to be ratified, not by them, but by the King himself, either at Madrid, or

wherever he should be established when constitutionally invested with the functions of royalty.

The above communication was dated on the 29th January, and on the following day the Cortes, informed by the Regency of its proceedings, directed that the Council of State should suggest what line of policy ought to be adopted towards the King, in the event of his return to Spain, before the conclusion of a general peace. This matter was accordingly discussed, and on the 2nd February, the Council declared that Ferdinand VII. should not be allowed to exercise the royal authority, until he had sworn to maintain the Constitution of 1812.

The Cortes having taken the foregoing opinion into consideration, a decree, composed of fourteen articles, was immediately drawn up; this enacted that the King was not to be considered at liberty, and that, consequently, no oath of allegiance could be administered in His Majesty's name, till he had, himself, sworn to observe the new political code, as prescribed in Art. 173; that the Generals commanding on the frontiers, should be charged to send couriers extraordinary to Madrid, advising the Regency of his approach, in order that the necessary arrangements might be made for his reception; that the President should go forward to meet His Majesty, and give an account of all that had been done during his absence; that no armed force was to enter Spain with the King; that the Captain General of the province should

appoint an escort suited to the royal dignity; that none of those who had espoused the cause of King Joseph should be allowed to pass the frontiers with His Majesty; that the Regency should indicate the route, by which he was to reach Madrid, and that he was to be accompanied by the President, who was to present a copy of the Constitution to the King, in order that he might be prepared to swear with an entire knowledge of its contents; that on reaching the capital, Ferdinand should proceed directly to the hall of Cortes, to take the oath, with all the solemnities required by the established regulations; that after having sworn, he should go to the Royal Palace, accompanied by thirty members, and that the Regency should be there, in readiness to transfer the executive authority to the hands of the Constitutional Monarch. Finally, that a proclamation should inform the people of all the occurrences attending this important consummation of their wishes.

In a public address to the nation, which preceded the King's arrival, the Regency entered into a full explanation of the motives which led to the rejection of the treaty of Valençay, exposing its incompatibility with the honour and interests of Spain, and accounting for the exclusion of those who had followed the fortunes of Joseph Bonaparte.\*

While the correspondence between Ferdinand

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\* I shall have another opportunity of alluding to this famous party, so well known by the name of *Afrancesados*.

and the Regency was carried on, Napoleon, relying on the good faith of the former, decided that he should return to his dominions, without any farther guarantee, than his own promise to fulfil the conditions of the treaty.

Leaving Valençay, accompanied by his brothers, a confessor, and some other attendants, the companions of his retreat, Ferdinand reached the Catanian frontier, on the 24th of March, 1814, in consequence of the treaty already mentioned, and which, according to a passage in one of his letters to the Regency, "contained no condition that did not accord with the honour, glory and interests of the Spanish nation; for, it could not have obtained a more advantageous peace, after a succession of victories!"

Nothing could exceed the amiable and paternal tone of Ferdinand, during his journey; to the Spaniards, who had accompanied King Joseph to France, he gave the consolatory assurance, that they should soon return to their native country; and that, as the common father of his people, he had determined to collect the members of every party under the royal mantle, and to form of them but one family.

As Napoleon still occupied the throne of France, when Ferdinand entered Catalonia, amidst the acclamations of the people and soldiery, he continued to express the same beneficent sentiments with regard to his future policy, so industriously circulated by his attendants at Tou-



louse, and the other towns through which he had passed.

Marshal Suchet, who was charged with the safe conduct of the King, having performed that duty as far as the confines of France, Ferdinand was received on the limits of the Spanish territory by the General in chief, Don Francisco Copons, who immediately communicated the decree of Cortes, and the orders of the Regency; with all of which, he declared himself perfectly satisfied; nor did he exercise a single act of sovereignty, while in the above province.

Instead, however, of proceeding by the direct road to Valencia, as prescribed by the Cortes, His Majesty came to Zaragoza, alleging as the reason of this change, his anxiety to view the ruins of that celebrated city, and thus pay a compliment to its brave inhabitants.

When the liberal professions made by Ferdinand while on his way to the frontiers, are compared with his subsequent conduct, it is difficult to conceive what his real intentions were, on entering Spain. However plausible the reasons assigned for visiting Zaragoza may have been, this act alone, was sufficient to excite suspicions of his sincerity, and many days did not elapse, before these were but too fatally realized.

From some incidents that occurred both in the above city and on his reaching Valencia, it soon became apparent that the restored monarch was neither an admirer of those who framed the Con-

stitution of Cadiz, nor inclined to favour the adherents of King Joseph. This was proved by his quietly suffering the arrest of two highly distinguished individuals who had been Counsellors of State to the latter, while it was plainly intimated to those in his confidence, that a new charter would be granted, but that it should be very different from the one then in force.

Disappointed in meeting the King, owing to his change of route as settled by the Cortes, the President did not see Ferdinand until he had approached within a few leagues of Valencia. The manner in which the Venerable Prelate was received by his royal nephew, is adduced as another proof of his disposition to second the views of those perfidious advisers who were collected there, even before they had conquered any scruples he might have previously entertained. Impressed with a due sense of their own dignity, the Cortes had strictly enjoined the President, not to conform to the old feudal ceremony of kissing the King's hand, which had formerly been the token of vassalage, and he faithfully promised to obey the injunction; but on being admitted to an audience, Ferdinand insisted on his conforming to the ancient usage, and whether influenced by his fears, or thinking it of little importance to resist, the Cardinal yielded, thus betraying a want of firmness and dignity, at a time, when both were so essential to the interests of the people. This ill-timed condescension did not, however, operate in favour of

the President, who was dismissed half-way on the road to Madrid, and not only sent into exile, but deprived of his ecclesiastical emoluments soon after the King's arrival here.

On hearing that Ferdinand had re-entered his dominions, several of the foreign envoys joined him from Madrid, amongst the rest the British Ambassador went to congratulate his Majesty, and a secret treaty was concluded between the two countries. Although the articles of this convention are still unknown, they are supposed to have included nothing more than a personal recognition of our claims for the supplies of arms and money granted during the war; but in thus entering into negociations with the King before he had conformed to the wishes of the Cortes, the ministers of that day have incurred the charge of being indifferent to the fate of the Constitutional party.

In addition to those who were attracted to Valencia by the presence of Ferdinand, it was remarked, that many hundred individuals of every rank and profession, who had been distinguished for their opposition to the new institutions, or who had remained in obscurity and concealment, while the Peninsula was exposed to the ravages of war, now flocked to the royal standard, and greatly increased the servile party. The King had only been a few days there, when the news of Napoleon's abdication arrived. This event must have had considerable influence on his policy, while it afforded him a plausible excuse for rejecting the

treaty of Valençay. As might be expected, such a moment was not lost by the priesthood and grandees, who had come to offer their advice; they used every argument to convince Ferdinand that the constitutionalists and followers of King Joseph, were equally obnoxious to the people, adding that the attachment of all ranks and conditions to his own person was unbounded. Considering the credulous facility with which those who had accompanied the King into France, acceded to all the terms successively proposed there, the way in which they suffered the inexperienced prince to be cajoled on this occasion, ceases to be a source of astonishment.

But another and more powerful impulse was given to the destinies of Spain, by the arrival of a deputation, charged with the famous representation of the *sixty-nine*, since known under the ironical appellation of *Persas*. This compilation of calumny and falsehood, contained a virulent attack on all the measures adopted by the Cortes and Regency, whether for the defence of the country, or reform of public abuses, from the period of Ferdinand's departure, until his return, and is justly designated as a monument of eternal infamy and crime, by those able writers who have so triumphantly refuted all its calumnies.

It cannot be doubted, that many causes conspired to restore the old despotism, but there could be little hope for Spanish freedom, when sixty-nine deputies, who had been returned on the express condition of adhering to the constitution, and who

had solemnly sworn to preserve it inviolate, could be found so lost to all sense of honour, as to sign a document, in which the monarch was advised not to sanction the proceedings of their own body.\*

It was not until ELIO commanding the corps assembled at Valencia, had placed the troops at the entire disposal of His Majesty, that the project for the re-establishment of despotism, was completely developed. This man, who had but a short time before, sworn fidelity to the political code, and been honoured with particular marks of favour by the Regency, issued an order of the day, in which he congratulated the army on the King's return, talked of their attachment to his

\* The composition of this scandalous paper, is attributed to Bernardo Mozo y Rosales, who has since been raised to the dignity of a Marquis, under the title of Mata-Florida, and filled offices of the highest trust, during the reign of terror. Having formed part of the ministry, whose power terminated with the events of last March, he has since taken up his abode at Bayonne, which, from its proximity to the frontier, has become a receptacle for many of those, who are disaffected to the new order of things. A most able and conclusive refutation of the false assertions and specious arguments of Rosales has appeared since my arrival: this eloquent production, in addition to its having defended the Cortés, and vindicated the nation, contains a great mass of valuable information, relative to the ancient laws and customs of the Spanish monarchy.

The denomination of Persas, is derived from the first paragraph, which begins by alluding to a custom of the ancient Persians, by which anarchy was tolerated for five days after the death of the Sovereign, in order that the excesses to which it gave rise, should ensure a greater degree of fidelity to his successor. This simile was absurdly applied to the state of the Peninsula, during the absence of Ferdinand.

sacred person, and concluded, by advising Ferdinand to govern in the manner of his ancestors! When every thing was ripe for commencing more active operations, two Royal decrees dated from Valencia, on the 4th of May, at once discovered the views of the servile party, proving that both the *liberales* who had preserved the throne and reformed the government, as well as the followers of King Joseph, which had hitherto divided the nation, were now to be sacrificed to a third, till then regarded with the greatest contempt, and composed of persons, only remarkable for their ignorance and imbecility.

By the first of these decrees, Ferdinand was made to declare that the convocation of Cortes at Cadiz was illegal, and the Constitution promulgated by it prejudicial to the interests of Spain. He confessed that the existing state of knowledge did not admit of a despotic government; and promised to convoke the legitimate Cortes both of Spain and South America, in which a new charter favourable to liberty should be framed; that it should also guarantee the liberty of the press, save and except those precautions necessary to prevent its abuses; that he would govern according to law by respecting individual liberty, because he hated despotism. After all these princely promises, the decree concludes by dissolving the Cortes, and threatening with death all those who should either act or speak in favour of that Constitution which

had been sworn to by nearly the whole monarchy, and acknowledged by all the great powers of Europe, opposed to Napoleon.\*

The second decree, related to the liberty of the press as established by the Cortes, and directed that until a new law was promulgated on the subject, all periodical and other works should be submitted to a censorship composed of persons who had neither served under the provisional governments, nor followed the fortunes of the *intrusive* King, as Joseph Bonaparte was now styled.†

Previous to the publication of the decrees which preceded a return to despotism, the Cortes addressed two letters to the King, expressing the state of doubt and agitation, in which his long delay at Valencia had thrown the nation, also praying that no time should be lost in assuming the reins of government. To these, evasive answers were given; Ferdinand promised to comply with

\* The Cortes and Constitution of 1812, had been recognized by all the colonies, except Venezuela and Buenos Ayres; a copy of Ferdinand's decree will be found in the Appendix.

† This being the first time the King had been known to call his predecessor an intruder, it excited considerable surprise on the part of those who had observed his former conduct. It was certainly no proof of consistency in Ferdinand, thus to designate a Prince, whose legitimacy he had himself repeatedly acknowledged in the formal cessions made at Bayonne; various proclamations, private letters, the celebration of anniversaries, soliciting the first order in the monarchy from Joseph while at Valençay, and above all, by demanding one of the Imperial Family in marriage!

their wishes, but entered into no farther explanations. Conscious of the rectitude of their past conduct, and relying on the purity of their future intentions, no steps were taken by the Cortes or Regency to avert the coming storm. It is however an undoubted fact, that several of the chiefs, who had been most popular during the war of independence, offered to act against the traitors who surrounded the monarch at Valencia, and that nothing but the fear of plunging the nation into the horrors of civil war, prevented those offers from being accepted. While the praise of their contemporaries, and the applause of posterity are due to these real fathers of their country, they should have reflected, that those who erect an edifice of freedom, do but half their office, in not taking the precautions necessary for its maintenance: and above all, in not being prepared to make every sacrifice for its preservation.

The reign of terror which continued to desolate Spain during the following six years, may be dated from the publication of the decrees promulgated on the 4th of May; as a natural consequence of these, a part of Elio's corps under General Eguia, were directed to surround the Capital, an order was at the same time forwarded to the agents of Police at Madrid, to arrest and imprison the Regents Agar and Ciscar, together with all the Ministers, President and Secretaries of Cortes; many of its most distinguished members, and those who had written in favour of the Consti-



tution. The arrest took place on the night of the 10th and 11th of May. Two days after, the king entered his capital, preceded by a large body of cavalry, and attended by all the ambassadors of foreign courts accredited to the Regency, also the whole of those who had gone to welcome his arrival at Valencia: the event was celebrated by a succession of splendid fêtes, in which many of the foreign envoys vied with each other in demonstrations of respect to the restored monarch.\*

Having thus brought you to the re-establishment of despotism, it next remains for me to notice those measures which led to the late explosion, and reduced Spain to the deplorable state in which it was found by the constitutional government.

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\* I have been told by an eye witness that the celebration of Ferdinand VII.'s return by the English ambassador, lasted ten days, and that the expences thus incurred, could not have been much less than £20,000. It is also a remarkable fact, that the Spanish cavalry which escorted the king into Madrid, was commanded by an English General, now a governor in one of our West India Islands.

## LETTER IV.

Violation of the Royal Promises.—Decrees and Circular Letters.—General Measures after the King's Arrival at Madrid.—Principal Actors in the Persecution of the Patriots.—Anecdote of a ci-devant Monk.—Projects imputed to the *Liberales*.—Story of a Seal and Medal.—New efforts to Criminate the Patriots.—Proceedings in the Provinces.—*Informers*.—Police Judges.—Legal Procedure.—Treatment of Arguelles.—Ruiz de Padron, Cessero, &c.

Madrid, July, 1821.

THERE can be no better criterion for estimating the claims of Ferdinand VII. to the loyalty and confidence of a people who greeted his return with enthusiastic demonstrations of joy, than by comparing the plan of government adopted immediately after his arrival here, with the flattering promises held out in his proclamation of the 4th, of which, the most important were openly violated within a few days of their being made; while, in fact, the foreign ambassadors and servile faction were celebrating the King's entry in the capital.\* The very first measures of his ministers proved that, the above state paper was merely the prelude

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\* Lord Wellington arrived at Madrid from Paris on the 24th May, and is said to have experienced a most flattering reception from the King, as Duke of Ciudad-Rodrigo.

to a system of tyranny and oppression, more intolerable, than any other hitherto exercised in this devoted country.

Pursuant to the determination previously formed, to rescind the beneficent acts of the Regency and Cortes, royal orders and circular letters now succeeded each other with unceasing rapidity; and, as if it was not enough to revive the numberless abuses accumulated in former reigns—all those who had contributed to their removal, or manifested the smallest predilection in favour of liberal institutions, were marked out as the victims of a persecution unequalled in atrocity since the sanguinary days of Sylla and Marius.

So well had the project for restoring despotism been combined, that while Madrid was disgraced by the excesses committed under the sanction of priests; regularly organized mobs, also headed by the clergy, were occupied in destroying the emblems of freedom and insulting the constitutional authorities in several of the provinces. It should however be recorded, in justice to the army, that excepting the Corps under Elio, few of the military participated in those scenes of anarchy and crime; on the contrary, if sanctioned by their superiors, both the officers and men of several regiments would have gladly fought in defence of liberties that had been so dearly earned; nor could the fanatics who thus dishonoured humanity and polluted their sacred calling obtain any partizans at Cadiz, where the political Chief, General Valdes, and municipi-

pality were, amongst the first who addressed spirited remonstrances to the Regency, complaining of Ferdinand's delay at Valencia, pointing out its probable consequences, and urging the Cortes to take such steps as were best calculated to secure the constitution against the designs of its enemies.

In addition to the decrees which restored the religious corporations, opened the convents, re-established the inquisition,\* and ordained the restitution of church property, appropriated by Cortes to the expences of the war and payment of the national debt; the liberal party, as well as those who had espoused the interests of King Joseph became the objects of Royal orders, which clearly indicated that no mercy was to be shown towards either. A sketch of the treatment experienced by these two parties, embracing as they do, all the knowledge and virtue of Spain, will serve more than any thing else I could adduce, to illustrate the cruelty and injustice which signalized the transactions of this melancholy period.

Over this sanguinary persecution presided Don Pedro Macanaz, invested with the specious

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\* The decree upon this measure appeared on the 21st July. It is a curious as well as important historical document, and will therefore be found in the appendix. It was countersigned by Macanaz, whose grandfather passed a great part of his life in the prisons of the holy office, and died in exile for his writings against that dreadful tribunal.

title of Minister of grace and justice, and Eguia, the Captain General of Madrid, who succeeded the patriotic Villa Campo. Amongst their numerous subordinate agents, Ostolaza and Agustin de Castro, the former a priest, the latter a Monk of the Escorial, were the most conspicuous. The first is supposed to have insidiously prevailed on Ferdinand to adopt a line of policy foreign to his intentions on leaving Valencia; while the latter, who had passed through all the gradations of political apostacy, at one time recommending the exclusion of the Bourbon dynasty, and at another preaching sermons in favour of the constitution, was now hired by the servile faction to vilify the patriots in general, but more particularly the Cortes and Regency. De Castro who had long been connected with the public press, now superintended the editorship of a newspaper called the Sentinel of La Mancha,\* whose political agency soon became apparent. It is worthy of remark that the warrant of arrest dated from Valencia, which Ferdinand opened against the Patriotic deputies and members of the late government, bears the same date with the

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\* Another paper equally slavish in its doctrines and scurrilous in its abuse of the patriotic party, entitled the *Advocate of the Nation and King*, was also in the pay of government, and conducted by the Count Torre-Musquiz, a rank servile, and one of the sixty-nine, a third *el Lucindo* or *Fernandino*, published at Valencia, co-operated with those of the Capital.

declaration in which he solemnly guaranteed the personal liberty of his subjects. No sooner was this edict carried into effect, than a list of the proscribed appeared in the *Sentinal* ; elucidated by a variety of comments, in which they were designated as traitors, and indirectly alluded to, as fit objects of popular vengeance. Such was the influence of these appeals to the passions of a mob, already instructed how to act, that one party headed by the Vicar of La Trappe, whose convent had been recently established by a decree of Cortes, actually assailed the prison of La Corona in which the deputies were confined, and but for the firmness of the guard, would have succeeded in sacrificing the intended victims, while many of those who had been sent to pull down the constitutional stone,\* and drag it through the streets, were heard to exclaim that the authors of the constitution, ought

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\* When the political code was promulgated in 1812, a decree of the Cortes directed, that a marble slab, bearing, *PLAÇA DE LA CONSTITUCION*, in gilt letters, should be conspicuously affixed in the principal square or market place of each town throughout the monarchy. These were, of course, taken down and broken to pieces on the King's return, but at present there is scarcely a village in the Peninsula without its *Lapida*, which has been every where restored and consecrated amidst the rejoicings of the people. Such was the veneration in which these symbols of liberty were held by the patriots, that many contrived to preserve fragments, which have been restored to light since March last, and are now sought for as valuable relics. I saw a great number on my way to Madrid.

to be served like the Lapida ; others were ordered to sing the following wretched couplet before the prison doors :

Murieron los Liberales,  
Murio la Constitucion,  
Porque viva el Rey Fernando,  
Con la Patria y Religion !.

The calumnies of De Castro and Torre-Musquiz were supported by others, still more atrocious than the first ; in these, the prisoners were accused of a design to abolish the monarchical system in Spain and substitute a republic,\* while the Constitution

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\* This was only an old calumny revived ; for such were the efforts of the servile faction to render the heads of the liberal party unpopular, that they had in 1813, employed a dependent of the old dowager Duchess de Osuna, to personate a French general, sent by Napoleon to treat with the *liberales*, for the establishment, of what the impostor was directed to style, the *Iberian Republic*. The dexterous mode of getting up the plot, proves that this talent does not exclusively belong to the statesmen of more northern countries. Being provided with a false passport, and other documents necessary for the performance of his part, the agent suffered himself to be arrested by the governor of Baza in Grenada : when examined, he stated that his name was Louis Aridinot, and that he was in communication with some of the most distinguished characters in Spain, all of whom had received him very favourably ; amongst others, he had gained over Agustin Argüelles. Notwithstanding the plausible manner in which his story was told, there could be no doubt of his object, but the insinuations of the servile papers were so pointed, that government caused a regular prosecution to be instituted against the impostor. The deception was made still more apparent on the *soi-disant* general's being confronted with M. Argüelles, whose

of Cadiz was falsely represented to be a mere copy of that framed by the National Assembly of France, intended to annihilate religion, dethrone the King, and enslave the people!

Amongst the absurd tales circulated by the servile journals, in order to justify the measures of severity in agitation, one stated that eight thousand jacobins had subscribed to raise a fund for establishing the new republic; that arms were prepared and every thing in readiness to put their plan into execution; moreover, that the arrival of the King, had alone prevented his throne from being occu-

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interrogatories soon led to an exposure of the real authors of the plot.

On his being threatened with the consequences of persevering in such gross falsehoods, the agent at length proposed that if his life was spared, he would disclose the truth; to this the Regency acceded; upon which it appeared, that after having amply provided him with funds, the duchess sent him to a canon of the Cathedral at Grenada, for the purpose of being finally instructed in the object of his mission!

With respect to the impostor himself, he is said to have terminated his existence by suicide. From some additional disclosure made before he had recourse to this act of desperation, it appears he was a native of France, and that his real name was *Jean Barbeau*, who, after having passed some years in the French monastery of *La Trappe*, and conformed to all the austerities of that singular community, became a soldier, and served with one of the Swiss regiments in the pay of Spain: judging from a variety of other confessions relative to his former adventures, it was easy to perceive he had played many parts not much more honourable than that which had been so ably cast for him by the *Serviles*.