

1809, the armies of Spain were completely dispersed, and her strongest holds in the possession of her enemy. Some of the causes of these misfortunes are obvious. They had too much confidence in their own strength, they were ignorant of the force and movements of their enemy: they were neglectful of that particular mode of warfare, which was adapted to the nature and circumstances of the Spanish troops. Add to this, that the supreme and central junta was chiefly composed of weak and feeble characters who had been chosen, not on account of their personal merit, but by the influence of great families. They were not qualified to rouse, combine and direct the energies of the country. The abilities of many were slender, and the patriotism of some was hollow. They fought to aggrandize themselves rather than to promote the weal of the country. So conscious do they appear to have been of their own infidelity, that they were more afraid of domestic disturbances than of external riots. This is evident from the jealousy with which they watched the public journals of the country—suffering nothing to be published that was calculated to enlighten the minds of the people. As to the invasion of enemy, they seemed to have relied almost entirely on their allies for protection. But even of this, they did not enjoy the full advantage for the want of sufficient concert, as was fatally evinced in the retreat of sir John Moore. The British ministry was not insensible of the ignorance and imbecility of the junta, and they were aware of the importance of rousing the nation. The marquis of Wellesley was nominated as ambassador extraordinary to the junta in May; though he did not arrive at Cadiz till the last of July—two months after his brother had taken the field, and precisely at that moment when that general, for whom he had come to concert a plan of operations, victorious in battle, but defeated in the war, began his retreat in Portugal. The delay of this appointment is ascribed to some private contentions about the great offices of state, one of which was sought by the marquis, and he subsequently succeeded in obtaining it.

The new ambassador was received with every mark of kindness and respect. He explained to the junta, the nature of the instructions which he bore, and he offered such advice as seemed proper, in such a manner as neither to alarm the jealousy, nor offend the pride of the Spaniards. The British army was in great distress for want of provisions, owing partly to their having been frequently intercepted by Cuesta, who, on the arrival of the marquis was recalled—and partly to the exhausted state of the country and the indolence of the magistrates. That the British should return to Portugal, excited the utmost terror and alarm, and such was the confidence reposed in them, that even after their retreat to Badajos, the marquis of Wellesley received several notes from the junta, urging the British to advance again against the enemy. The ambassador was well assured that it was a common thing for whole divisions, and even corps of Spaniards to run, on the first appearance of danger, without waiting to give or receive a shot. The evils which were the consequence of such conduct, they were willing to ascribe to the British or to any other cause than their own want of courage and discipline. The apprehensions which arose from the retreat of their allies, were somewhat dissipated by the masterly manner with which that retreat had been conducted: and the intelligence of a renewal of hostilities between France and Austria afforded new gleams of hope. The marquis hoped the retreat of the British army, by compelling them to rely upon

themselves, would teach them to investigate and direct those resources with prudence and energy. A relaxation of domestic government and indolent confidence in the aid and activity of strangers, the marquis thought, had endangered all the noble and virtuous objects for which Spain had lavished so much blood: and until some change should be effected in the distribution or application of the military resources of Spain, and the state of its army, no British force could attempt with safety to co-operate with Spanish troops on Spanish ground.\* The greatest aid, the marquis said, to be expected by Spain from an English army, should be confined to that kind of occasional concert and co-operation which lately took place between the forces commanded by sir Arthur Wellesley and those under the orders of general Cuesta. In case of a British army of 30,000 men being employed in a campaign in Spain, they should be assured in the first place, of being provided with the means of movement, and with necessary provisions. Should it become necessary for them to retreat, the supreme command of the Spanish army should be vested in the English general.

The disposition of the people was in general, favorable to the great cause in which the nation was engaged, and the great mass of the population in Spain, certainly presented means for organising a powerful government, and elements for the formation of an excellent army. But in the *higher* and in the *middling classes* too many traces were to be found of French intrigue, and of its success. In those two classes a disposition was perceived to *watch events*, and to keep terms with the party that should ultimately prevail in the struggle. Many of this description, if they received no favours from government, at least were never molested by it.—Thus no pains were taken to form one public opinion, to cultivate and exalt public spirit, and to direct its energy to great national objects. The population of the country had not yet furnished the proportion of recruits demanded by the dangers of the country; nor could any accession of numbers avail without a change in the organization and discipline of the army. Many officers of the army in the most important stations, made no secret of their hostility to the cause of Spain and her allies, and were not sufficiently watched by government. On a review of the principal events of the last campaign, it appeared to the marquis, impossible to account for the conduct of some Spanish generals and other officers, on any other hypothesis than that they had concerted their operations with the French, instead of coming to an understanding with the English generals.

In order to vindicate the independence of Spain, it was necessary, not to depend merely upon that general spirit of resistance which animated the bulk of the people in the provinces, but to concentrate and direct that spirit in such a manner as to call forth with effect the military resources of the country, and to form an army which might give time to Spain, with the assistance of her allies, to establish the restoration of the government. The nomination of a central junta, was no doubt the first step towards the consolidation of public authority; but the constitution of the supreme junta was not founded on the basis of union among the provinces, and still less on a just and wise distribution of the elements and force of government. There was not hitherto any confederation among the provinces.—

\* Despatch from the marquis of Wellesley to Mr. Canning, Seville, 2d September, 1809.