

Caldagues, whose rash enterprise, although crowned with success, should have caused his own destruction. In those affairs it is certain Duhesme displayed neither talent nor vigor; but in the severities he exercised at the sacking of Mattaro, in the burning of villages, which he executed to the extreme verge of, if not beyond, what the harshest laws of war will justify, an odious energy was apparent;\* and as the ardor of the somatenes was rather increased than repressed by these rigorous proceedings, his conduct may be deemed as impolitic as it was barbarous. It is however to be remembered that Duhesme has not wanted defenders, who, asserting that he was humane and just, accuse Lechi, his equal in rank, of being the author of the severities exercised at Barcelona.†

OBSERVATION 4th.—In Catalonia all the inherent cruelty of the Spaniards was as grossly displayed as in any other province of Spain. The Catalans were likewise vain and superstitious. But their courage was higher, their patriotism purer, and their efforts more sustained; the somatenes were bold and active in battle, the population of the towns firm, and some of the juntas apparently disinterested. The praise merited and bestowed upon the people of Zaragoza is great, yet Gerona more justly claims the admiration of mankind. For the Aragonese troops were by Lefebvre driven from the open country in crowds to their capital, and little was wanted to induce them to surrender at once; it was not until the last hour that, gathering courage from despair, the people of Zaragoza put forth all their energy, whereas those of Gerona, although attacked by a greater force, and possessing fewer means of defence, without any internal system of terror to counterbalance their fear of the enemy, manfully and successfully resisted from the first. The people of Zaragoza rallied at their hearthstones, those of Gerona stood firm at the porch. But, quitting these matters, I must now, following the order I have marked out, proceed to relate the occurrences in Valencia.

#### OPERATIONS OF MARSHAL MONCEY.

The execution of Calvo and his followers changed the horrid aspect of the Valencian insurrection; the spirit of murder was checked, and the patriotic energy assumed a nobler appearance. Murcia and Valencia were united as one province, and towards the end of June nearly thirty thousand men, armed and provided with artillery, attested the resources of these rich provinces, and the activity of their chiefs. The Valencians then conceived the plan of marching to the assistance of the Aragonese; but Napoleon had

\* Napoleon's Notes. St. Cyr. Cabanes.

† Lafaille.

already prescribed the measures which were to render such a movement abortive.

An order dated the 30th of May had directed Moncey to move with a column of ten thousand men upon Cuença; from that point he was to watch the country comprised between the lower Ebro and Carthagená, and he was empowered to act against the city of Valencia if he judged it fitting to do so. The position of Cuença was advantageous; a short movement from thence to the left would place Moncey's troops upon the direct line between Valencia and Zaragoza, and enable him to intercept all communication between those towns;\* and a few marches to the right would place him upon the junction of the roads leading from Carthagená and Valencia to Madrid. If he thought it essential to attack Valencia, the division of General Chabran was to co-operate from the side of Catalonia, by which combination the operations of Lefebvre Desnouettes at Zaragoza, and those of Duhesme in Catalonia, were covered from the Valencians; and at the same time the flank of the French army at Madrid was protected on the side of Murcia.

The 6th of June Moncey marched from Aranjuez by Santa Cruz, Tarancón, Carascoso, and Villa del Osma, and reached Cuença the 11th. Here receiving information of the rapid progress of the insurrection, of the state of the Valencian army, and of the projected movement to relieve Zaragoza, he resolved to make an attempt against the city of Valencia.† In this view, supposing General Chabran to be at Tortosa, he ordered him to march upon Castellón de la Plana, a town situated at some distance eastward of the river Guadalaviar, proposing himself to clear the country westward of that river; and he fixed the 25th of June as the latest period at which the two columns were to communicate in the immediate vicinity of Valencia.

Halting from the 11th to the 16th at Cuença, he marched the 17th to Tortola, the 18th to Buenaches, the 19th to Matilla, the 20th to Minglanilla, and the 21st to Pesquiera; but from Buenaches to Pesquiera no inhabitants were to be seen, the villages were deserted, and either from fear or hatred, every living person fled before his footsteps. At length a Swiss regiment, some of the Spanish guards, and a body of armed peasantry, made a stand at the bridge of Pajaso, upon the river Cabriel, and the manner in which the country had been forsaken, the gloomy and desolate marches, and the sudden appearance of an armed force ready to dispute this important pass, prognosticated a desperate conflict; yet the event belied the omens,—scarcely any resistance was made.

\* S. Journal of Moncey's Operations, MSS.

† Ibid.

Moncey, having informed General Chabran of this success, appointed the 27th and 28th for a junction under the walls of Valencia. The next day he took a position at Otiel;\* but hearing that the defeated patriots had rallied, and, reinforced to the number of ten or twelve thousand, were intrenching themselves upon his left, he quitted the direct line of march to attack them in their post of Cabrillas, which was somewhat in advance of the Siete Aguas. The Spanish position was of extraordinary strength; the flanks rested upon steep rocky mountains, and the only approach to the front was through a long narrow defile, formed by high scarped rocks, whose tops, inaccessible from the French side, were covered with the armed peasantry of the neighborhood. As a direct assault upon such a position could not succeed, and General Harispe was directed to turn it by the right, while the cavalry and artillery occupied the attention of the Spaniards in front, that general soon overcame the obstacles of ground, reached the Spanish troops, and defeated them, with the loss of all their cannon, ammunition and baggage, and also of the Swiss regiment, which came over to the victors. This action happened on the 24th; it freed Moncey's left flank, and he resumed his march by the direct road to Valencia, where he arrived the 27th. The ancient walls remained, all the approaches were commanded by works hastily repaired or newly raised, the citadel was in a state of defence, and the population were willing to fight.

A city containing eighty thousand people actuated by violent passions cannot be easily overcome; and Valencia, built upon low ground, and encircled with numerous canals and cuts, made for the purposes of irrigation, had its deep ditches filled with water, so that no approach could be made except against the gates. An assault seemed hopeless, but it is said that the Marshal had corrupted a smuggler, who promised to betray the city during the heat of the assault, and it is probable that some secret understanding of that kind induced him to make an attempt which would otherwise have been rash and unmilitary.

Don Joseph Caro, a brother to the Marquis of Romana, was with four thousand men intrenched behind the canal of the Guadalaviar, five miles in advance of the city gates; and as the village of Quarte, and some thickly planted mulberry trees, helped to render this post very strong, Moncey, who attacked it upon the 27th, met with a vigorous resistance. Caro was, however, beaten and chased into the city, with the loss of some cannon, and on the 28th the French drove in the outposts, and occupied all the principal avenues of the town. Enthusiastic as the Valencians were while

\* S. Journal of Moncey's Operations, MSS.

the enemy was at a distance, Moncey's appearance filled them with terror, and it is possible that a vigorous assault might have succeeded at the first moment of consternation; yet the favorable opportunity, if it really existed, quickly passed away. Padre Rico, a friar distinguished by his resolution, traversed the streets with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other, arousing the sinking spirit and exciting the fanaticism of the multitude. The fear of retaliation for the massacre of the French residents, and the certainty that Moncey's troops were few, powerfully seconded his efforts; and as it is usual for undisciplined masses to pass suddenly from one extreme to another, fear was soon succeeded by enthusiasm.

After disposing his field-pieces at the most favorable points, Moncey, while the impression of Caro's defeat was fresh, summoned the governor. The latter answered, "that he would defend the city," and the French fire then opened; but the heavy guns of the Spaniards soon overpowered it. A warm skirmish about the houses of the suburbs and at the gates ensued, and the Valencians fought so well, that when the night fell, no impression had been made on the defences; the assailants were repulsed with loss at every point, and the situation of the French Marshal became delicate. The persons sent to seek Chabran could gain no intelligence of that general's movements; the secret connexions of the town, if any there were, had failed; the ammunition was nearly expended, and the army was encumbered with seven or eight hundred wounded men, and among them the general of engineers. Moncey, swayed by these circumstances, relinquished his attack, and the 29th fell back to Quarte.

When it is considered that in a great city only a small number of persons can estimate justly the immense advantages of their situation and the comparative weakness of the enemy, it must be confessed that the spirit displayed by the Valencians upon this occasion was very great. Unfortunately it ended here; nothing worthy of such an energetic commencement was afterwards performed, although very considerable armies were either raised or maintained in the province.

At Quarte, the French ascertained that the Captain-General, Serbelloni, was marching upon Almanza to intercept the communication with Chieva and Buñol, whereupon Moncey resolved to relinquish the line of Cuença, and attack him before he could quit the kingdom of Murcia.\* This vigorous resolution he executed with great celerity; for, directing the head of his column towards Torrente, he continued his march until night, halting a short distance from that town, and by a forced march the next day reached

\* Journal of Moncey.



Alcira, only one league from the river Xucar. From his bivouac at that place he dispatched advice to General Chabran of this change of affairs, and meanwhile Serbelloni, surprised in the midst of his movement, and disconcerted in his calculations by the decision and rapidity of Moncey, took up a position to defend the passage of the Xucar. The line of that river is strong, and offers many advantageous points of resistance, but the Spaniards imprudently occupied both banks, and in this exposed situation they were attacked on the morning of the 1st of July. The division on the French side of the river was overthrown, the passage forced without loss of time, and Serbelloni retired to the heights of San Felice, which covered the main road leading from Alcira to Almanza, hoping to secure the defiles in front of the latter town before the enemy could arrive there. But Moncey was again too quick for him; leaving San Felice to his left, he continued his march on another route, and by a strenuous exertion seized the gorge of the defiles near Almanza late in the night of the 2d, and when the Spanish troops approached his position, he dispersed them at day-break on the 3d, and captured some of their guns. The road being now open, Moncey entered Almanza, and then marched by Bonete and Chinchilla to Albacete, where he got intelligence that Frere's division, which he expected to find at San Clemente, was gone to Requeña.

To understand this movement of Frere, it must be known, that, when Dupont and Moncey marched against Andalusia and Valencia, two divisions were retained by Savary to scour the country near Madrid, and to connect the operations of the main bodies; but they were ill-managed. General Gobert, who, following Napoleon's orders, should have been at Valladolid, reinforced Dupont; and General Frere was sent to Requeña to reinforce Moncey, when he should have been at San Clemente, a central point from whence he could have gained the road of Seville, that of Valencia and Cuença, or that of Carthagena. Meanwhile the people of the Cuença district having suddenly overpowered a detachment left there by Moncey, Savary ordered Frere to move from San Clemente to Requeña, and sent Caulaincourt from Tاراcon to quell the insurgents, which was effected with great slaughter on the 3d of July; and the town of Cuença was pillaged. Hence when Frere, who quitted San Clemente on the 26th, reached Requeña, he found the country quiet, heard of Caulaincourt's success, and discovered that Moncey, having crossed the Xucar, was on the road to San Clemente. Then retracing his steps, he returned to the latter place with troops sickly, wearied, and exhausted by these long useless marches in the heat of summer.

Moncey now re-organized his forces, and was preparing artillery and other means for a second attempt against Valencia, when he was interrupted by Savary, who, alarmed at the advance of Cuesta and Blake, recalled Frere towards Madrid. The Marshal, extremely offended that the Duke of Rovigo, inflated with momentary power, should treat him with so little ceremony, then abandoned San Clemente, and returned by the way of Ocaña to the capital.\*

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. The result of Marshal Moncey's campaign was published by the Spaniards, as a great and decisive failure, and produced extravagant hopes of final success; a happy illusion, if the chiefs had not partaken of it, and pursued their wild course of mutual flattery and exaggeration, without reflecting that in truth there was nothing very satisfactory in the prospect of affairs. Moncey's operation was in the nature of a movable column, the object of which was to prevent the junction of the Valencian army with the Aragonese; the attempt upon the town of Valencia was, therefore, a simple experiment, which, successful, would have produced great effects—failing, was of trifling consequence in a military point of view. Valencia was not the essential object of the expedition, and the fate of the general campaign depended upon the armies in Old Castile.†

2. It was consoling that a rich and flourishing town had not fallen into the power of the enemy; but at the same time, a want of real nerve in the Spanish insurrection was visible. The kingdoms of Murcia and Valencia acted in concert, and contained two of the richest sea-port towns in the Peninsula; their united force amounted to thirty thousand organized troops, exclusive of the armed peasants in various districts, and the populace of Valencia were deeply committed by the massacre of the French residents. Here then, if in any place, a strenuous resistance was to be expected; nevertheless, Marshal Moncey, whose whole force was, at first, only eight thousand French, and never exceeded ten thousand men, continued marching and fighting without cessation for a month, forced two of the strongest mountain passes in the world, crossed several large and difficult rivers, and carried the war into the streets of Valencia. Disappointed of assistance from Catalonia, he yet extricated himself from a difficult situation, defeated his opponents in five actions, killed and wounded a number of them equal in amount to the whole of his own force, and made a circuit of above three hundred miles through a hostile and populous country, without having sustained any serious loss, without any

\* Foy's History.

† Appendix, No. 7.

desertion from the Spanish battalions incorporated with his own, and what was of more importance, having those battalions much increased by desertions from the enemy. In short, the great object of the expedition had been attained, the plan of relieving Zaragoza was entirely frustrated, and the organization of an efficient Spanish force retarded. But Moncey could hardly have expected to succeed against the town of Valencia; for, to use Napoleon's words, "*a city with eighty thousand inhabitants, barricadoed streets, and artillery placed at the gates, cannot be TAKEN BY THE COLLAR.*"

3. General Frere's useless march to Requena was very hurtful to the French, and the Duke of Rovigo was rated by the Emperor for his want of judgment upon the occasion. "It was a folly," the latter writes, "to dream of reinforcing Moncey, because, if that Marshal failed in taking the city by a sudden assault, it became an affair of artillery, and twenty thousand men, more or less, would not enable him to succeed."—"Frere could do nothing at Valencia, but he could do a great deal at San Clemente; because from that post he could support either Madrid or General Dupont."

4. Moncey was slightly blamed by the Emperor for not halting within a day's march of Valencia, in order to break the spirit of the people, and make them feel the weight of the war; but this opinion was probably formed upon an imperfect knowledge of the local details. The Marshal's line of operations from Cuenca was infested by insurgent bands, his ammunition was nearly exhausted, he could hear nothing of Chabran's division, the whole force of Murcia was collecting upon his flank and rear, the country behind him was favorable for his adversaries, and his army was encumbered by a number of wounded men; it was surely prudent, under such circumstances, to open his communications again with Madrid as quickly as possible.

By some authors, the repulse at Valencia has been classed with the inglorious defeat of Dupont at Baylen, but there was a wide difference between the events, the generals, and the results. Moncey, although an old man, was vigorous, active, and decided, and the check he received produced little effect. Dupont was irresolute, slow, and incapable, if not worse, as I shall hereafter show; but before describing his campaign, I must narrate the operations of the Gallician army.

## CHAPTER VII.

Second operations of Bessieres—Blake's and Cuesta's armies unite at Benevente—Generals disagree—Battle of Rio Seco—Bessieres' endeavor to corrupt the Spanish Generals fails—Bessieres marches to invade Galicia, is recalled, and falls back to Burgos—Observations.

## OPERATIONS OF BESSIERES AGAINST BLAKE AND CUESTA.

WHILE Bessieres' movable columns, ranging over the Asturian and Biscayan mountains, dispersed the insurgent patriots of those provinces, Cuesta, undismayed by his defeat at Cabezon, collected another army at Benevente, and prepared to advance again towards Burgos; and he was supported by the Gallician army, which Filanghieri had organized without difficulty, because the abundant supplies poured in from England were beginning to be felt, and patriotism is never more efficacious than when supported by large sums of money. Taranco's soldiers, joined to the garrisons of Ferrol and Coruña, had been reinforced with new levies to twenty-five thousand men, and being well equipped, and provided with a considerable train of artillery, were assembled at Manzanal, a strong post in the mountains, twelve miles behind Astorga.

The situation of that city offered great advantages to the Spaniards, for the old Moorish walls which surrounded it were complete, and susceptible of being strengthened, so as to require a regular siege; but a siege could not be undertaken by a small force, while the army of Galicia was intrenched at Manzanal, and while Cuesta remained at Benevente; neither could Bessieres, with any prudence, attack the Gallicians at Manzanal while Cuesta was at Benevente, and while Astorga contained a strong garrison. Filanghieri, who appears to have had some notion of its value, had commenced forming an intrenched camp in the mountains; but being slain by his soldiers, Joachim Blake succeeded to the command, and probably fearing a similar fate, if the army remained stationary, left one division at Manzanal, and with the remainder marched towards Benevente to unite with Cuesta.

Bessieres immediately collected his scattered columns at Palencia, and his plan, founded upon instructions from Bayonne, was to make a rapid movement against Cuesta, in the hope of beating him, while Blake was still behind Leon; then wheeling to the right, to drive the Gallicians back to the mountains, to overrun the flat country with his numerous cavalry, to open a communication with Portugal, and after receiving certain reinforcements, preparing for him,

to subdue Galicia, or assist Junot, as might seem most fitting at the time.\*

At this period the King was on his journey to Madrid, and the military system of Napoleon was brought to its first great crisis; for unless Bessieres was successful, there could be no sure footing for the French in the capital; and as Madrid was the base of Moncey's and Dupont's operations, the farther prosecution of their plans depended upon the result of the approaching struggle in the plains of Leon. Napoleon, foreseeing this crisis, had directed Savary to occupy Segovia, to send General Gobert's division to Valladolid, and to hold Vedel's and Frere's, the one in La Mancha, a few marches from the capital, and the other at San Clemente, a central point connecting Moncey, Dupont, and Madrid. But Savary, unable to estimate justly the relative importance of the different operations, sent Vedel and Gobert into Andalusia to reinforce Dupont, when he should rather have recalled the latter to the northern side of the Sierra Morena; he caused Frere, as we have seen, to quit San Clemente, and march by Requeña against Valencia, at the moment when Moncey was retiring from that city through Murcia to San Clemente; thus he dispersed and harassed his reserves by long marches to the south without any definite object, when the essential interests were at stake in the north. Now, struck with fear at the approach of Cuesta and Blake, whose armies he had hitherto disregarded, he precipitately recalled Frere, Vedel, Gobert, and even Dupont, to Madrid; too late to take part with Bessieres in the coming battle, but exactly timed to frustrate Moncey's projects, and, as we shall hereafter find, to insure the ruin of Dupont. In this manner, steering his vessel against every wind that blew, he could not fail of storms.

Greatly was Napoleon discontented with these errors; he relied, and with reason, on the ability of Bessieres for a remedy, but to Savary he sent the following instructions, dated the 13th of July:

"The French affairs in Spain would be in an excellent state, if Gobert's division had marched upon Valladolid, and Frere's had occupied San Clemente, with a movable column, three or four marches upon the route of General Dupont. Gobert having been directed upon Dupont, Frere being with Moncey, harassed and enfeebled by marches and countermarches, the position of the French army is become less advantageous.

"Marshal Bessieres is this day at Medina del Rio Seco with fifteen thousand men, infantry, cavalry, and artillery; the 15th or 16th he will attack Benevente, open a communication with Portu-

\* Journal of Bessieres' Operations, MSS. Napoleon's Notes.

gal, drive the rebels into Galicia, and seize upon Leon. If his operations succeed thus, and in a brilliant manner, the position of the French army will again be as good as it was.

“If General Cuesta retires from Benevente without fighting, he will move by Zamora and Salamanca to gain Avila and Segovia, certain that then Bessieres cannot pursue him, as, in that case, he would be menaced by the army of Galicia, whose advanced guard is at Leon. The general who commands at Madrid must then be able to assemble six or seven thousand men and march upon Cuesta; the citadel of Segovia must be occupied by three or four hundred convalescents, with some guns and six weeks' biscuit. It was a great fault not to have occupied this citadel when the major-general ordered it; of all the possible positions, Segovia is the most dangerous for the army—the capital of a province, and situated between two routes, it deprives the army of all its communications; and the enemy once posted in the citadel, the French army cannot dislodge him. Three or four hundred convalescents, a good commandant, and a squad of artillery, will render the castle of Segovia impregnable for some time, and will insure to the army the important position of Segovia.

“If General Cuesta throws himself into Galicia without fighting or suffering a defeat, the position of the army will become better; of course it will be still better if he does so, after having suffered a defeat.

“If Marshal Bessieres faces Cuesta at Benevente without attacking him, or if he is repulsed by him, his object will always be to cover Burgos, and to hold the enemy in check as long as possible; he could, perhaps, be reinforced with the three thousand troops of the line which accompany the King, but then there would be no room for hesitation. If Bessieres retires without a battle, he must be reinforced instantly with six thousand men. If he retreats after a battle wherein he has suffered great loss, it will be necessary to make great dispositions—to recall Frere, Gobert, Caulaincourt, and Vedel, by forced marches to Madrid; to withdraw Dupont into the Sierra Morena, or even bring him nearer to Madrid (keeping him always, however, seven or eight marches off), then to crush Cuesta and all the Gallician army, while Dupont will serve as an advanced guard to hold the army of Andalusia in check.”

However, before Bessieres could collect his troops, Blake effected a junction with Cuesta, at Benevente, and three plans were open to those generals.

1. To remove into the mountains, and take a position covering Galicia.
2. To maintain the head of the Gallician army in advance of



Astorga, while Cuesta, with his Castilians, pushing by forced marches through Salamanca and Avila, reached Segovia.

3. To advance farther into the plains, and try the fate of a battle.

This last was rash, seeing that Bessieres was well provided with horsemen, and that the Spaniards had scarcely any; but Cuesta, assuming the chief command, adopted it. He left a division at Benevente to protect his stores, and advanced, much against Blake's wishes, with twenty-five thousand regular infantry, a few hundred cavalry, and from twenty to thirty pieces of artillery, in the direction of Palencia. His march, as we have seen, dismayed Savary. To use Napoleon's expressions, he who had been "*hitherto acting as if the army of Galicia was not in existence,*" now acted "*as if Bessieres was already beaten;*" but that Marshal, firm and experienced, rather than risk an action of such importance with insufficient means, withdrew even the garrison from the important post of Santander, and having quickly collected fifteen thousand men and thirty pieces of artillery at Palencia, moved forward on the 12th of July to the encounter.

His line of battle consisted of two divisions of infantry, one of light cavalry, and twenty-four guns; his reserve was formed of four battalions and some horse grenadiers of the Imperial Guards, with six pieces of artillery. On the 13th he halted at Ampudia and Torre de Mormojon, but advancing on the 14th in two columns, he drove in an advanced guard of one hundred and fifty Spanish cavalry, and arrived about nine o'clock in front of Rio Seco, where Cuesta's army was drawn up like some heavy domestic animal, awaiting the spring of an active wild beast.\*

#### BATTLE OF RIO SECO.

The first line of the Spaniards, with all the heavy guns, were posted along the edge of a step of land which had an abrupt fall towards the French. The second line, composed of the best troops, augmented but not strengthened by some eighteen thousand armed peasants, was displayed at a great distance behind the first, and the town of Rio Seco was in rear of the centre. Bessieres was at first startled at their numbers, and doubted if he should attack; but soon perceiving the vice of Cuesta's disposition, he ordered General Lasalle to make a feint against the front with the light cavalry, while he himself, marching obliquely to the right, outstretched the left of the Spaniards, and suddenly thrust Merle's and Mouton's divisions and the Imperial Guards, horse and foot, between the lines, and

\* S. Journal of Bessieres' Operations.

threw the first into confusion. At that moment Lasalle charged furiously, the Spanish front went down at once, and fifteen hundred dead bodies strewed the field.\*

The victor's ranks were disordered, and Cuesta made a gallant effort to retrieve the day; for, supported by the fire of all his remaining artillery, he advanced with his second line upon the French, and his right wing falling on boldly, took six guns; but his left hung back, and the flank of the right was thus exposed. Bessieres, with great readiness, immediately charged on this naked flank with Merle's division and the horse grenadiers, while the fourteenth provisional regiment made head against the front. A fierce short struggle ensued, and the Spaniards were overborne, broken and dispersed. Meanwhile the first line rallied in the town of Rio Seco, but being a second time defeated by Mouton's division, fled over the plains, pursued by the light cavalry and suffering severely in their flight.†

Five or six thousand Spaniards were killed and wounded on the field, twelve hundred prisoners, eighteen guns, and a great store of ammunition, remained in the hands of the French, and the vanquished sought safety in all directions, chiefly on the side of Benevente.‡ Blake and Cuesta separated in wrath with each other: the former made for the mountains of Galicia, and the latter towards Leon, while the division left at Benevente dispersed. The French, who had lost fifty killed and three hundred wounded, remained at Rio Seco all the 15th, and the 16th advanced to Benevente, where they found many thousand English muskets and vast quantities of ammunition, clothing and provisions. The communication with Portugal was now open, and Bessieres at first resolved to give his hand to Junot, but hearing that the fugitives were likely to rally on the side of Leon, he pursued them by the road of Villaferre. On his march, learning that Cuesta was gone to Mayorga, he turned aside to that place, and on the 22d captured there another great collection of stores; for the Spanish general, with the usual improvidence of his nation, had established all his magazines in the open towns of the flat country.

After this, Bessieres entered the city of Leon and remained there until the 29th, during which time he received the submission of the municipality, and prepared to carry the war into Galicia. Meanwhile the Junta of Castile and Leon, whose power had hitherto been restrained by Cuesta, retired to Puente-Ferrada, assumed supreme authority, and the quarrel between the generals having

\* S. Journal of Bessieres' Operations.

† Ibid.

‡ Mr. Stuart's Papers.

become rancorous, they sided with Blake. This appeared to Bessieres a favorable occasion to tamper with the fidelity of the chiefs. He therefore sent his prisoners back, argued the hopeless state of the insurrection, offered the viceroyalty of Mexico to Cuesta, and promised military ranks and honors to Blake; but as neither would listen to him, he had reached Puente Orbigo the 31st, intending to break into Galicia, when he was suddenly recalled to protect the King; for Dupont had surrendered with a whole army in Andalusia. The victory of Rio Seco was rendered useless, the court was in consternation, and Bessieres immediately returned to Mayorga, where he took a defensive position.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. As Blake was overruled by Cuesta, he is not responsible for the errors of this short campaign; but the faults were gross on both sides, and it seems difficult to decide whether Savary or Cuesta made the greatest number. If Savary had sent Gobert's division to Valladolid, Bessieres would have had twenty-two thousand men and forty pieces of artillery in the field; a force not at all too great, when it is considered that the fate of three French armies depended upon a battle to which the Spaniards might have brought at least double the number. On the other hand, Cuesta, having determined upon an offensive movement, disregarded the powerful cavalry of his enemy, and chose a field of battle precisely in the country where that arm would have the greatest advantage; when he should have brought every man to bear upon the quarter which he did attack, he displayed his ignorance of the art of war by fighting the battle of Rio Seco with twenty-five thousand men only, leaving ten thousand disciplined troops in the rear, to guard positions which could not be approached until he himself was first beaten. Neither was the time well chosen for his advance: had he waited a few days, the port of Santander would have been attacked by eight English frigates, and a detachment of Spanish troops under the command of General du Ponte; an enterprise that would have distracted and weakened Bessieres, but which was relinquished in consequence of the battle of Rio Seco.

2. Once united to Blake, Cuesta's real base of operations was Galicia, and he should have kept all his stores within the mountains, and not have heaped them up in the open towns of the flat country, exposed to the marauding parties of the enemy; or covered, as at Benevente, by strong detachments, which weakened his troops in the field, and confined him to a particular line of operations in the plain.

3. The activity and good sense of Marshal Bessieres overbalanced the errors of Savary, and the victory of Rio Seco was of infinite importance, because, as we have seen, a defeat in that quarter would have shaken the French military system to its centre; it would also have obliged the King, then on his journey to Madrid, to halt at Vittoria until the distant divisions of the army were recalled to the capital, and a powerful effort made to crush the victorious enemy. Napoleon's observations are full of strong expressions of discontent at the imprudence of his lieutenant. "*A check given to Dupont,*" he says, "*would have a slight effect, but a wound received by Bessieres would give a locked jaw to the whole army. Not an inhabitant of Madrid, not a peasant of the valleys that does not feel that the affairs of Spain are involved in the affairs of Bessieres; how unfortunate, then, that in such a great event you have wilfully given the enemy twenty chances against yourself.*" When he heard of the victory, he exclaimed that it was the battle of Almanza, and that Bessieres had saved Spain. The prospect was indeed very promising; the King had arrived in Madrid, bringing with him the veteran brigade of General Rey and some French guards, and all fears upon the side of Leon being allayed, the affairs of Andalusia alone remained of doubtful issue; for Zaragoza, hard pushed by Verdier, was upon the point of destruction, in despite of the noble courage of the besieged.\* Nor did the subjugation of Andalusia appear in reason a hard task, seeing that Moncey was then at Sar Clemente, and from that point threatened Valencia, without losing the power of succoring Dupont, while Frere's and Caulaincourt's troops were disposable for any operation. In fine, the French army possessed the centre, the Spaniards were dispersed upon a variety of points on the circumference without any connection with each other, they were in force only upon the side of Andalusia, and the great combinations of the French Emperor were upon the point of being crowned with success, when a sudden catastrophe overturned his able calculations, and raised the sinking hopes of Spain.

It was the campaign in Andalusia which produced such important effects, and it offers one of the most interesting and curious examples recorded by history of the vicissitudes of war; disorder, unaccompanied by superior valor, triumphed over discipline; inexperienced officers were successful against practised generals, and a fortuitous combination of circumstances enabled the Spaniards, without any skill, to defeat in one day an immense plan, wisely arranged, embracing a variety of interests, and until that moment happily conducted in all its parts. This blow, which felled Joseph

\* Napoleon's Notes.

from his throne, marked the French army with a dishonorable scar, the more conspicuous because it was the only one of its numerous wounds that misbecame it.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Dupont marches against Andalusia, forces the bridge of Alcolea, takes Cordoba—Alarm at Seville—Castaños arrives, forms a new army—Dupont retreats to Andujar, attacks the town of Jaen—Vedel forces the pass of Despeñas Perros, arrives at Baylen—Spanish army arrives on the Guadalquivir—General Góber defeated and killed—Generals Vedel and Darfour retire to Carolina—General Reding takes possession of Baylen—Dupont retires from Andujar—Battle of Baylen—Dupont's capitulation, eighteen thousand French troops lay down their arms—Observations—Joseph holds a council of war, resolves to abandon Madrid—Impolicy of so doing.

### OPERATIONS IN ANDALUSIA.

DUPONT was ordered to march against Cadiz with a force composed of the Spanish-Swiss regiments of Preux and Reding—Barbou's division of French infantry; Fresia's division of cavalry—a marine battalion of the imperial guards, and eighteen pieces of artillery.\* Three thousand infantry, five hundred cavalry, and ten guns, were to join him at Seville, from the army of Portugal; three other Swiss regiments were in Andalusia, and it was expected that both they and the troops at San Roque would join the French army.

In the latter end of May he traversed La Mancha, entered the Sierra Morena by the pass of Despeñas Perros, and proceeded by Carolina and Baylen to Andujar, where he arrived the 2d of June. There he was informed that a supreme junta of government was established at Seville, that minor juntas ruled in Granada, Jaen, and Cordoba; that war was formally declared against the French, that the whole of Andalusia was in arms, and the Swiss regiments ranged under the Spanish banners; lastly, that General Avril, commanding the detachment expected from Portugal, had halted at Tavora, and was preparing to return to Lisbon.

Alarmed by this intelligence, Dupont wrote to Murat and Savary to demand reinforcements, and in the mean time closed up the rear of his columns, and established a hospital in Andujar. The 6th he crossed the Guadalquivir and continued his march towards Cordoba, following the left bank of the river. But two leagues

\* Journal of Dupont's Operations, MSS.

from that ancient city the road re-crossed the Guadalquivir by a long stone bridge, at the farthest end of which stood the village of Alcolea; and when the French general arrived there at day-break on the 7th, his progress was opposed by the Spanish General Echevaria, who had fortified the head of the bridge, placed twelve guns in battery on the right bank, and was prepared to dispute the passage with a force composed of three thousand regulars, supported by ten thousand new levies and smugglers. Besides these troops, a small reserve was left in a camp close to Cordoba, and a cloud of armed peasants, from the side of Jaen, hovered on the hills behind the French, ready to fall on the rear when they should attack the bridge.

Dupont having observed this disposition, placed the cavalry, the Swiss regiments, and the marine battalion in reserve, facing to the hills, and with the division of Barbou stormed the head of the bridge. The Spaniards there, making a feeble resistance, were driven across the river, and their whole line immediately fled to the camp at Cordoba. The multitude on the hills descended during the battle, but were beaten back by the cavalry, with loss; and the French general then, leaving the marine battalion at Alcolea to secure the bridge, marched with the rest of his forces to complete the victory. At his approach the Spaniards took refuge in the town, and opened a fire of musketry from the walls, whereupon the French, bursting the gates with their field-pieces, broke in, and after a short and confused fight Echevaria's men fled along the Seville road, pursued by the cavalry. As the inhabitants took no part in the contest, and received the French without any signs of aversion, the first disorders attendant on the action were soon suppressed, the town was protected from pillage, and Dupont, fixing his quarters there, sent patrols as far as Ecija without finding an enemy.

In Seville the news of this disaster, and the arrival of the fugitives, struck such a terror that the Junta were only prevented from retiring to Cadiz by their dread of the populace; they even entertained thoughts of abandoning Spain altogether and flying to South America.\* Castaños, who a few days before had been declared Captain-General of the armies, and was at this time in march with seven thousand troops of the line from San Roque, repaired to Seville the 9th, and after a short conference with the Junta, proceeded to take the command of Echevaria's forces. The greater part of these were re-assembled at Carmona, but in such confusion, and so moody, that Castaños returned immediately. Having persuaded the president, Saavedra, to accompany him, he fixed his head-

\* Nellerto.



quarters at Utrera, where he gathered two or three thousand regulars from the nearest garrisons, directed all the new levies to repair to him, and hastened the march of his own men from San Roque.\* He also pressed General Spencer to disembark and take up a position with the British forces at Xeres; but that officer, for reasons hereafter to be mentioned, sailed to Ayamonte,—a circumstance which augmented the general distrust of the English prevailing at the time, and secretly fomented by Morla and by several members of the Junta.

Andalusia was lost if Dupont had advanced. His inactivity saved it. Instead of pushing his victory, he wrote to Savary for reinforcements, and to General Avril, desiring that he would without delay come to his assistance, remaining himself meanwhile in Cordoba, overwhelmed with imaginary dangers and difficulties. For although Castaños had in a few days collected at Carmona and Utrera seven or eight thousand regulars and above fifty thousand new levies, and although Dupont's desponding letters were intercepted and brought to him, such was the condition of affairs, that, resigning all thoughts of making a stand, he had, under the pretence of completing the defences of Cadiz, embarked the heavy artillery and stores at Seville, resolving, if Dupont should advance, to burn the timbers and harness of his field artillery and retreat to Cadiz.† Nevertheless, he continued the organization of his forces, filled up the old regiments with new levies, and formed fresh battalions; in which he was assisted by two foreigners—the Marquis de Coupigny, a crafty French emigrant, of some experience in war, and Reding, a Swiss, a bold, enterprising, honest man, but without judgment, and of very moderate talents as an officer.

Castaños wished to adopt a defensive plan, to make Cadiz his place of arms, and to form an intrenched camp, where he hoped to be joined by ten or twelve thousand British troops, and in security to organize and discipline a large army; but, in reality, he had merely the name and the troubles of a commander-in-chief, without the power.‡ Morla was his enemy, and the Junta, containing men determined to use their authority for their own emolument and the gratification of private enmity, were jealous lest Castaños should control their proceedings. They thwarted him, humored the caprice and insolence of the populace, and meddled with affairs foreign to the matter in hand. But as the numbers at Utrera increased, the general confidence augmented, and a retreat was no longer contemplated. Plans were laid to surround Dupont in Cordoba, and one detachment of peasants, commanded by regular

\* Sir Hew Dalrymple's Papers.

† Appendix, No. 13, Section 8.

‡ Sir Hew Dalrymple's Papers.

officers, was sent to occupy the passes of the Sierra Morena leading into Estremadura; another detachment marched from Granada, accompanied by a regiment of the line, to seize Carolina and cut off the communication with La Mancha; a third, under Colonel Valdeañes, proposed to attack the French in Cordoba without any assistance: and this eagerness for action was increased by a knowledge of the situation of affairs in Portugal, and by rumors exaggerating the strength of Filanghieri and Cuesta. It was believed that the latter had advanced to Valladolid, and had offered Murat the option of abiding an attack or retiring immediately to France by stated marches, and that, alarmed at Cuesta's power, the Grand Duke was fortifying the Retiro. These reports, so congenial to the wishes and vanity of the Andalusians, caused the defensive plan proposed by Castaños to be rejected; and when Dupont's despatches, magnifying his own danger, and pressing in the most urgent manner for reinforcements, were again intercepted and brought to headquarters, it was resolved to attack Cordoba immediately.

Dupont's fears outstripped the Spaniard's impatience. After ten days of inactivity, by which he lost the immediate fruit of his victory at Alcolea, the lead in an offensive campaign, and all the imposing moral force of the French reputation in arms, he resolved to fall back to Andujar, because Savary would not promise any succor save what Moncey, after subduing Valencia, could give by the circuitous route of Murcia.\* This retreat was commenced the 17th of June, and the French were followed as far as Carpio by the advanced guard of the Andalusians, under General Coupigny.†

Along the line of march, and in the town of Andujar, where he arrived the evening of the 18th, Dupont found terrible proofs of Spanish ferocity; his stragglers had been assassinated, and his hospital taken; the sick, the medical attendants, the couriers, the staff officers, in fine, all who had the misfortune to be weaker than the insurgents, were butchered, with circumstances of extraordinary barbarity, and upwards of four hundred men had perished in this miserable manner since the fight of Alcolea.‡ The fate of Colonel Frené was horrible. He had been sent on a mission to Portugal, previous to the breaking out of hostilities, and was on his return, travelling in the ordinary mode, without arms, attached to no army, engaged in no operations of war; but being recognized as a Frenchman, he was seized, mutilated, and then being placed, living, between two planks, was sawed in two.

\* Journal of Dupont's Operations.

† Napoleon's notes. Appendix, No. 1.

‡ Whittingham. Journal of Dupont. Foy's History. Victoires et Conquêtes.

At Andujar the French General collected provisions, and prepared to maintain himself until he should be reinforced; yet wishing to punish the city of Jaen, from whence the bands had come to murder his sick, he sent Captain Baste, a naval officer, with a battalion of infantry and some cavalry, to accomplish that object. The soldiers, inflamed by the barbarity of their enemies, inflicted a severe measure of retaliation, because it is the nature of cruelty to reproduce itself in war; and for this reason, although the virtue of clemency is to all persons becoming, it is peculiarly so to an officer, the want of it leading to so many and such great evils. Meanwhile the Andalusian army remained quiet, and Dupont, who knew that General Vedel, with a division of infantry, and escorting a large convoy for the army, was marching through La Mancha, sent Captain Baste with a second detachment to clear the pass of Despeñas Perros, which was now occupied by insurgents and smugglers from Granada to the number of three thousand. This pass was of incredible strength, and the Spaniards had artillery, and were partially intrenched; however their commander, a colonel of the line, deserted to the enemy, and before Baste could arrive, Vedel had forced his way to Carolina, where he left a detachment, and then descended to Baylen, a small town sixteen miles from Andujar. But other insurgents came from Granada to Jaen, and would have moved on Despeñas Perros and Carolina, by the Linhares road; wherefore Vedel sent General Cassagne against them, Jaen was again taken, and the Granadans were driven back with slaughter; but the French, who lost two hundred men, returned on the 5th to Baylen without the provisions, to obtain which had been one object of the expedition.

Notwithstanding these successes, and that Vedel, besides his own division, brought reinforcements for Barbou's division and the cavalry, Dupont's fears increased. His position at Andujar covered the main road from Seville to Carolina; but eight miles lower down the river, it could be turned by the bridge of Marmolexo; sixteen miles higher up by the roads leading from Jaen to the ferry of Mengibar and Baylen; and beyond that line by roads from Jaen and Granada to Úzeda, Linhares, and the passes of El Rey and Despeñas Perros. The dryness of the season had rendered the Guadalquivir fordable in many places; the regular force under Castaños was daily increasing in strength; the population around was actively hostile, and the young French soldiers were drooping under privations and the heat of the climate: six hundred were in hospital, and the whole were discouraged.\* It is in such situations that the worth of a veteran is found; in battle the ardor of youth

\* Dupont's Journal. Foy's History.

often appears to shame the cool indifference of the old soldier, but when the strife is between the malice of fortune and fortitude, between human endurance and accumulating hardships, the veteran becomes truly formidable, when the young soldier resigns himself to despair.

After the actions at Jaen, Vedel posted General Ligier Bellair's brigade at the ferry of Mengibar, with a post beyond the river, but on the 13th this post was driven across the Guadalquivir, and on the 15th Gobert, who should have been at Rio Seco with Bessières, arrived at Baylen with a division of infantry and some cuirassiers. Vedel then advanced to Mengibar, and it was full time, seeing that the whole Spanish army was on the opposite bank of the river.\* For when Dupont's retreat from Cordoba had frustrated the plan of the Spaniards to surround him, Castaños would have returned to his old project of a rigorous defensive system, but the Junta, although at first they acquiesced, were unsettled in their policy, and getting intelligence of Vedel's march, had ordered Castaños to attack Dupont at Andujar before the reinforcements could arrive.†

The Spanish General had twenty-five thousand regular infantry, two thousand cavalry, and a very heavy train of artillery. Large bodies of armed peasantry, commanded by officers of the line, attended this army, and the numbers varied from day to day, but the whole multitude that advanced towards the Guadalquivir could not have been less than fifty thousand men; hence the intelligence that Vedel had actually arrived did not much allay the general fierceness. Castaños, however, was less sanguine than the rest, and learning that Spencer had again returned to Cadiz with his division, he once more requested him to land and advance to Xeres, to afford a point of retreat in the event of a disaster, and the English General consented to disembark, but refused to advance farther than Port St. Mary.‡

From the 1st of July the Spanish army occupied a position extending from Carpio to Porcuñas, and the 11th, a council of war being held, it was resolved that Reding's division should cross the Guadalquivir at the ferry of Mengibar, and gain Baylen;§ that Coupigny should cross at Villa Nueva, and support Reding; and that Castaños, with the other two divisions, advancing to the heights of Argonilla, should attack Andujar in front, while Reding and Coupigny should descend from Baylen and attack it in the rear: some detachments of light troops under Colonel Cruz were also or-

\* Vedel's Précis of Operations.

† Whittingham's Correspondence, MSS.





‡ Ibid.

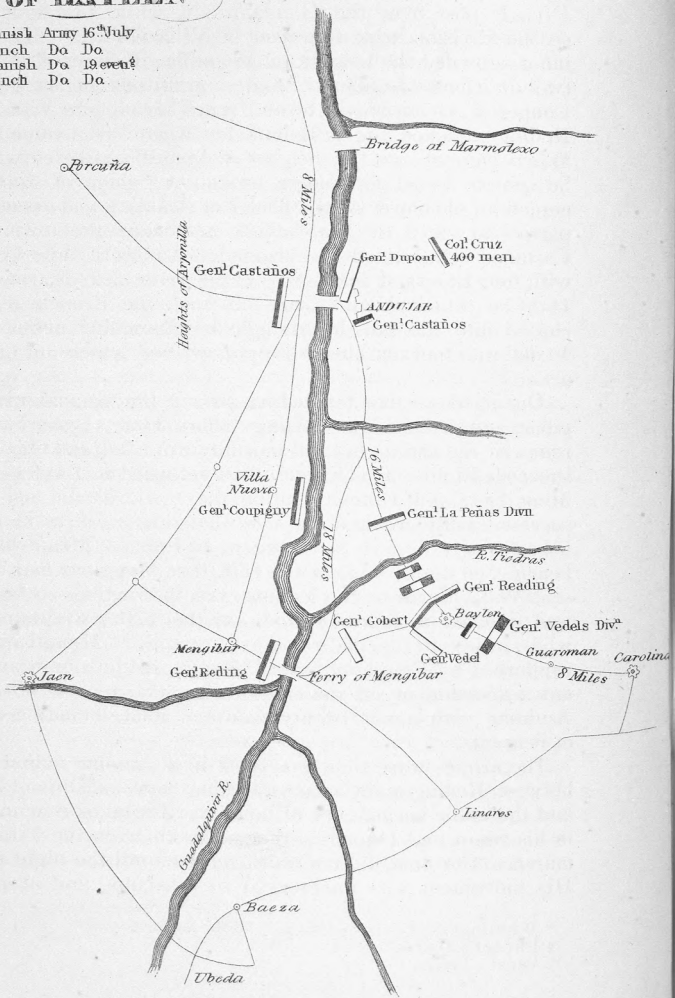
§ Ibid.



Explanatory Sketch  
of the  
**BATTLE OF BAYLEN**

Vol. I. Plate I.  
Face Page 91.

-  Spanish Army 16<sup>th</sup> July
-  French Do Do
-  Spanish Do 19<sup>th</sup> even<sup>g</sup>
-  French Do Do





dered to pass the Guadalquivir by Marmolexo, and to seize the passes leading through the Morena to Estremadura. The 13th, Reding, with the first division, and three or four thousand peasantry, marched towards Mengibar, and, as I have said, drove the French post over the Guadalquivir, while Coupigny, with the second division, took the road of Villa Nueva.\* The 15th, Castaños crowned the heights of Argonilla, in front of Andujar, with two divisions of infantry, and a multitude of irregular troops; Coupigny skirmished with the French picquets at Villa Nueva, and Reding attacked Ligier Bellair, but when Vedel came up retired.† When Dupont saw the heights of Argonilla covered with enemies, he sent to Vedel for succor, broke the bridge of Marmolexo, occupied an old tower on the bridge of Andujar, and detached cavalry parties to watch the fords above and below the town. The 15th Castaños cannonaded the bridge of Andujar, while Colonel Cruz, with four thousand men, crossed the river near Marmolexo. The 16th he attacked, and Cruz fell upon the French rear, but was chased into the hills by a single battalion, and about two o'clock Vedel, who had marched all night, arrived, which put an end to the action.‡

During these events, Reding passed the Guadalquivir at Mengibar, and drove Ligier Bellair before him. Gobert arrived and renewed the action, but fell mortally wounded, and General Dufour succeeded him. The French then returned to Baylen—Reding to Mengibar; and Dufour, finding the Spaniards did not push their success, rashly credited a rumor that they were in march by Linhares, and therefore retreated to Carolina. Meanwhile Dupont, hearing, on the evening of the 16th, that Mengibar had been forced, sent Vedel again to Baylen, but with instructions so vague that he was induced to follow Dufour on the 17th; whereupon Reding, who, strange to say, had remained tranquil at Mengibar, being now reinforced by Coupigny, seized Baylen in the night, and throwing out a detachment on the side of Carolina, took a position facing Andujar with about twenty thousand men, including a multitude of peasants.

The armies were thus interlaced in a singular manner—Dupont between Reding and Castaños, Reding between Dupont and Vedel; and the affair became one of time: yet Castaños remained tranquil in his camp, and Dupont, although he knew on the 17th of Vedel's march to Carolina, did not quit Andujar until the night of the 18th. His movement was unobserved by Castaños, and at daybreak he

\* Whittingham's Correspondence, MSS.

† Dupont's Journal. Foy

‡ Vedel's Précis.

reached the Tiedras—a torrent with rugged banks, only two miles from Reding's position, which was strong, well shaded with olive trees, and intersected by deep ravines. Dupont, hoping that Vedel would return, immediately passed the Tiedras, and leaving Barbou with a few battalions on that stream, to check Castaños if he should arrive during the action, fell on, yet feebly and with few troops; for his march had been unmilitary, and his best soldiers were employed guarding the baggage, which was enormous, and mixed with the columns. For some time the French appeared to gain ground, but, fatigued by their night's work and unable to force the principal points, they became discouraged. The Swiss then went over to the Spaniards, and about twelve o'clock, after losing two thousand men, killed and wounded, Dupont proposed an armistice with a view to a convention, which Reding, hard pressed, willingly granted.

Vedel had quitted Carolina at five in the morning of the 19th. The sound of battle became distinct as he advanced, yet he halted at Guaroman, two leagues from Baylen, and remained there until three o'clock, to refresh his men and to ascertain if any enemy was at Linhares.\* When the firing had entirely ceased, he resumed his march, and coming upon the rear of Reding, attacked, and, after some fighting, captured two guns and made fifteen hundred prisoners.† An aide-de-camp of Dupont's then brought him an order to cease the attack, whereupon he awaited the result of this singular crisis.

Castaños, who did not discover Dupont's march until eight hours after the latter's departure from Andujar, had sent La Peña's division in pursuit, but remained himself in that town.‡ La Peña reached the Tiedras about five o'clock, and soon after, one Villoutreys passed his posts, going to ask Castaños' consent to the terms accepted by Reding; and on the 20th, Generals Marescot and Chabert likewise passed to Andujar, being empowered by Dupont to conclude a convention.§ They demanded permission for the French army to retire peaceably upon Madrid; and Castaños was ready to grant this, but Savary's letter, written just before the battle of Rio Seco, to recall Dupont, was intercepted, and brought at this moment to the Spanish head-quarters. The aspect of affairs immediately changed, and a convention was no longer in question. Dupont's troops were required to lay down their arms and become prisoners of war, on condition of being sent by sea to France; and

\* Foy.

† Journal of Dupont's Operations, MSS.

‡ Whittingham's Correspondence, MSS.

§ Ibid.

Vedel's division was to surrender, and be sent to France likewise, but not as prisoners of war. Without hesitation these terms were accepted.

Meanwhile Vedel had proposed to Dupont to make a joint attack upon Reding, and General Privé gave a like counsel; but the French General refused, and sent Vedel orders to give up his prisoners and retreat to Carolina.\* Castaños menaced Dupont with death if Vedel did not return; and the latter, on receiving his commander's orders to that effect, did come back to Baylen the 22d, and surrendered. Thus above eighteen thousand French soldiers laid down their arms, before a raw army incapable of resisting half that number led by an able man. Nor did this end the disgraceful transaction; for Villoutreys, as if to show how far fear and folly combined will carry men, passed the Morena with a Spanish escort, and gathering up the detachments left by Dupont in La Mancha, even to within a short distance of Toledo, sent them to Andujar as prisoners under the convention. Nay, he even informed Castaños how to capture two French battalions that had been left to guard the passes into La Mancha; and these unheard-of proceedings were quietly submitted to by men belonging to that army which for fifteen years had been the terror of Europe—a proof how much the character of soldiers depends upon their immediate chief.

This capitulation, shameful in itself, was shamefully broken. The French troops, instead of being sent to France, were maltreated, and numbers of them murdered in cold blood, especially at Lebrixa, where above eighty officers were massacred in the most cowardly manner. Armed only with their swords, they kept the assassins for some time at bay, and gathering in a company, upon an open space in the town, endeavored to save their lives; but a fire from the neighboring houses was kept up until the last of those unfortunate gentlemen fell. No distinction was made between Dupont's and Vedel's troops, and all who survived the march to Cadiz, after being exposed to every species of indignity, were cast into the hulks at Cadiz, whence a few hundreds escaped, two years afterwards, by cutting the cables of their prison-ship, and drifting in a storm upon a lee shore: the remainder, transported to the desert island of Cabrera, perished by lingering torments in such numbers, that few remained alive at the termination of the war. Dupont himself was permitted to return to France, and to take with him all the generals; and it is curious that General Privé, who had remonstrated strongly against the capitulation, and had pressed Dupont on the field to force a passage through Reding's army, was the only one left behind.†

\* Vedel's Précis of Operations.

† Victoires et Conquêtes

Don Thomas Morla, after a vain attempt to involve Lord Collingwood and Sir Hew Dalrymple in the transaction, formally defended the conduct of the Junta in breaking the capitulation, and soon afterwards betrayed his own country, with the readiness that might be expected from his shameless conduct on this occasion.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. The gross amount of Dupont's corps when it first entered Spain was about twenty-four thousand men, with three thousand five hundred horses; of these twenty-one thousand were fit for duty.\* It was afterwards strengthened by a provisional regiment of cuirassiers, a marine battalion of the guard, and the two Swiss regiments of Preux and Reding. It could not therefore have been less than twenty-four thousand fighting men when Dupont arrived in Andalusia; and as the whole of Vedel's and the greatest part of Gobert's division had joined before the capitulation, and as eighteen thousand men laid down their arms at Baylen, Dupont must have lost, by wounds, desertion, and deaths in hospital or the field, above five thousand men.

2. The order which directed his corps upon Cadiz was despatched from Bayonne before the Spanish insurrection broke out; it was therefore strange that Dupont should have persevered in his march, when he found affairs in such a different state from that contemplated by Napoleon at the time the instructions for this expedition were framed. If the Emperor considered it necessary to reinforce the division, which marched under Dupont's own command, with a detachment from the army in Portugal, before the insurrection broke out, it was evident that he never could have intended that that General should blindly follow the letter of his orders when a great and unexpected resistance was opposed to him, and that the detachment from Portugal was unable to effect a junction. The march to Cordoba was therefore an error; and it was a great error, because Dupont confesses in his memoir he advanced under the conviction that his force was too weak to obtain success, and consequently, having no object, his operations could only lead to a waste of lives.

3. At Cordoba, Dupont remained in a state of torpor for ten days. This was the second error of a series which led to his ruin; he should either have followed up his victory and attacked Seville in the first moment of consternation, or he should have retired to Andujar while he might do so without the appearance of being compelled to it. If he had followed the first plan, the city would inevitably have fallen before him, and thus time would have been

\* Return of the French Army. Appendix.

gained for the arrival of the second and third divisions of his corps. It may be objected that ten thousand men dared not penetrate so far into a hostile country; but at Alcolea Dupont boasts of having defeated forty thousand men, without any loss to himself: from such armies, then, he had nothing to fear, and the very fact of his having pushed his small force between the multitudes he defeated upon the 7th, proves that he despised them.\* "He retired from Cordoba," he says in his memoir, "because to fight a battle when victory can be of no use is against all discretion;" but to make no use of a victory when it is gained comes to the same thing, and he should never have moved from Andujar unless with the determination of taking Seville. These errors were, however, redeemable. The position behind the Guadalquivir, the checks given to the patriots at Jaen after the arrival of Vedel at Carolina upon the 27th, above all, the opportune junction of Gobert at the moment when Castaños and Reding appeared in front of the French line, proved that it was not fortune, but common sense that deserted Dupont. The Spanish forces, divided, and extended from Argonilla to Mengibar, were exposed to be beaten in detail; but as their adversary was indulgent to them, their false movements were successful, and, amidst the mass of greater errors on both sides, appeared like acts of wisdom.

4. At Mengibar a variety of roads branch off, leading to Jaen, to Linhares, to Baylen and other places. From Andujar, a road nearly parallel to the Guadalquivir runs to the ferry of Mengibar, and forms the base of a triangle, of which Baylen may be taken as the apex. The distance of this latter town from the ferry is about six miles, from the ferry to Andujar is about eighteen, and from the latter to Baylen the distance may be sixteen miles. Fifteen miles above Baylen the town of Carolina, situated in the gorge of the Sierra Morena, was the point of communication with La Mancha and the line of retreat for the French in the event of a defeat; hence Baylen, not Andujar, was the pivot of operations. The French force was inferior in number to that under Castaños; yet Dupont spread his divisions upon several points, and the natural results followed. The Spaniards, although the most unwieldy body, took the lead and became the assailants; the French divisions were worn out by useless marches; the orders of their chief were mistaken or disobeyed; one position being forced, another was of necessity abandoned; confusion ensued; and finally Dupont says he surrendered with *eighteen thousand* men, because his fighting force was reduced to *two thousand*.† Such an avowal saves the

\* Dupont's Journal of Operations.

† Dupont's Journal, MSS.

honor of his soldiers, but destroys his own reputation as a general. The first question to ask is, what became of the remainder? Why had he so few, when ten thousand of his army never fired a shot? It must be confessed that Dupont, unless a worse explanation can be given of his conduct, was incapable to the last degree. But this worse explanation has been given. His own officers, as well as the Spaniards, assert that his baggage was filled with plunder, and that he surrendered to save it!

5. There were two plans, either of which promised a reasonable chance of success under the circumstances in which the French army was placed on the 14th. 1st. To abandon Andujar, send all the incumbrances into La Mancha, secure the passes, unite the fighting men at Carolina, and fall in one mass upon the first corps of Spaniards that advanced. The result of such an attack could hardly have been doubtful; but if, contrary to all probability, the Spaniards had been successful, the retreat was open and safe. 2dly. To secure Carolina by a detachment, and placing small bodies in observation at Andujar and the ferry of Mengibar, to unite the army on the 15th at Baylen, and in that central position await the enemy. If the two corps of the Spanish army had presented themselves simultaneously upon both roads, the position was strong for battle and the retreat open; if one approached before the other, each might have been encountered and crushed separately. Dupont had a force more than sufficient for this object, and fortune was not against him.

6. On the Spanish side, the direction in which Reding marched was good, but it should have been followed by the whole army. The heights of Argonilla would have screened the march of Castaños, and a few troops with some heavy guns left in front of the bridge of Andujar would have sufficed to occupy Dupont's attention. If the latter General had attacked Castaños upon the morning of the 16th, when Vedel's division arrived from Baylen, the twelve thousand men thus united by accident would easily have overthrown the two Spanish divisions in front of Andujar; and Reding, if he had lost an hour in retreating to Jaen, might have been taken in flank by the victorious troops, and in front by Gobert, and so destroyed. Instead of availing himself of this opening, the French General sent Vedel back to Baylen, followed himself two days after, and, being encountered by Reding, vainly hoped that the divisions which with so much pains he had dispersed would reunite to relieve him from his desperate situation.

7. In the action Dupont clung tenaciously to the miserable system of dividing his troops, when his only chance of safety was to force Reding before Castaños could arrive upon the Tiedras. It



was a wretched misapplication of rules to have a reserve watching that torrent, and to fight a formal battle with a first and second line and half-a-dozen puny columns of attack. An energetic officer would have formed his troops in a dense mass and broken at once through the opposing force upon the weakest point: there are few armies so good that such an assault would not open a passage through them. Seven thousand infantry, with cavalry and artillery, is a powerful column of attack, and the Spanish line could not have withstood it for a moment. The battle should have been one of half an hour; Dupont, by his ridiculous evolutions, made it one of ten hours, and yet so badly did the patriots fight, that in all that time not a single prisoner or gun fell into their hands,—and the fact of Reding's entering at all into a convention proves his fears for the final result. It is truly astonishing that Dupont, who from his rank must have been well acquainted with Napoleon's Italian campaigns, should have caught so little of the spirit of his master. And then the capitulation of Vedel, after his retreat was actually effected! Vedel, who might have given battle and disputed the victory by himself, without any great imprudence! Joseph called Dupont's capitulation a "*defection.*"\*

8. Castaños, although active in preparation, discovered but little talent in the field; his movements were slow, uncertain, and generally false. The attempt to turn the French position at Andujar by detaching four thousand men across the river, was ill conceived and badly supported; it was of that class of combinations to which the separate march of Reding's corps belonged. To the latter General the chief honor of the victory is due; yet, if Vedel had returned from Carolina upon the 19th, with the rapidity which the occasion required, Reding would have repented taking post at Baylen. It was undoubtedly a daring step; but instead of remaining at that place, he should have descended instantly upon the rear of Dupont, leaving a corps of observation to delay the march of Vedel. Time not being taken into his calculation, Reding acted like a bold, but rash and unskilful officer. Fortune, however, favored his temerity, and with her assistance war is but child's play.

Intelligence of the capitulation of Baylen was secretly spread among the Spaniards in Madrid as early as the 23d or 24th of July; but the French, although alarmed by rumors of some great disaster, were unable to acquire any distinct information, until the King sent two divisions into La Mancha to open the communication; these troops having reached Madrilejos, one hundred and twenty miles from Baylen, met Villoutreys with his Spanish escort collecting prisoners, and apparently intending to proceed in his dis-

\* Appendix, No. 6.

graceful task to the very gates of Madrid;\* the extent of the disaster thus became known, and the divisions retraced their steps. Joseph then called a council of war, and it was proposed to unite all the French forces, place a small garrison in the Retiro, and fall upon the Spanish armies in succession as they advanced towards the capital. But a dislike to the war was prevalent amongst the higher ranks of the French army, the injustice of it was too glaring; hence the reasons for a retreat, which might perchance induce Napoleon to desist, being listened to with more complacency than this proposal, it was resolved to abandon Madrid and retire behind the Ebro. The operation commenced on the 1st of August. The King marched by the Somosierra, and Bessières, posted at Mayorga, covered the movement until the court reached Burgos, and then fell back himself; in a short time the French were all behind the Ebro, the siege of Zaragoza was raised, and the triumphant cry of the Spaniards was heard throughout Europe.

This retreat was undoubtedly hasty and ill-considered; whether as a military or political measure it was unwise. Bessières, with seventeen thousand victorious troops, and forty pieces of artillery, paralyzed the northern provinces; the Spanish army of Andalusia was too distant from that of Valencia to concert a combined movement, and if they had formed a junction, their united force could not have exceeded forty thousand fighting men, ill provided, and commanded by jealous independent chiefs. Now the King, without weakening Bessières' corps too much, could have collected twenty thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and eighty pieces of artillery; the battle of Rio Seco shows what such an army could have effected, and every motive of prudence and of honor called for some daring action to wipe off the ignominy of Baylen.

Let it be conceded that Joseph could not have maintained himself in Madrid; the line of the Duero was then the true position for the French army. Taking Aranda as a centre, and occupying the Somosierra, Segovia, Valladolid, Palencia, Burgos, and Soria on the circumference, two ordinary marches would have carried the King to the succor of any part of his position, and the northern provinces would thus have been separated from the southern. Then Blake dared not have made a flank march to the Guadarama, Castaños dared not have remained in the basin of Madrid, and the siege of Zaragoza might have been continued; because from Aranda to Zaragoza the distance is not greater than from Valencia, or from Madrid, and from Soria it is only three marches; wherefore the King could have succored Verdier if the Valencians attacked him, and it was impossible for Castaños to have arrived at Zaragoza

\* Foy's History.

under a month. Now by taking up the line of the Ebro, Napoleon's plan of separating the provinces, and confining each to its own exertions, was frustrated, and Joseph virtually resigned the throne; for, however doubtful the prudence of opposing the French might have been considered before the retreat, it became imperative upon all Spaniards to aid the energy of the multitude when that energy was proved to be efficient.

In this manner Napoleon's first effort against Spain was frustrated. Yet he had miscalculated neither the difficulties, nor the means to overcome them; for although Bessières was the only general who perfectly succeeded in his operations, the plan of the Emperor was so well combined, that it required the destruction of a whole army to shake it at all. Even when the King, by committing the great fault of abandoning Madrid and raising the siege of Zaragoza, had given the utmost force to Dupont's catastrophe, it was only the political position of the French which was shaken; their military hold of the country was scarcely loosened, and the Spaniards were unable to follow up their victory. But there was another operation, too great indeed for Joseph, yet such a one as in Napoleon's hands would have fixed the fate of the Peninsula. The King might have directed the troops before Zaragoza, and the detachments upon the communication with France, to have assembled round Pampeluna, while he, uniting with Bessières, made, not a retreat, but a march with forty thousand men into Portugal. He would have arrived about the period of the battle of Vimiero, and the English would have been overwhelmed; a demonstration against Seville or Cadiz would then have sufficed to keep the Spanish armies from gathering on the Ebro, and three months later, Napoleon was on that river with two hundred thousand men!

The moral effect of the battle of Baylen was surprising; it was one of those minor events which, insignificant in themselves, are the cause of great changes in the affairs of nations. The defeat of Rio Seco, the preparations of Monecy for a second attack on Valencia, the miserable plight of Zaragoza, the desponding view taken of affairs by the ablest men of Spain, and, above all, the disgust and terror excited among the patriots by the excesses of the populace, weighed heavy on the Spanish cause. One victory more, and probably the moral as well as the physical force of Spain would have been crushed; but the battle of Baylen, opening as it were a new crater for the Spanish fire, all their pride, and vanity, and arrogance burst forth, the glory of past ages seemed to be renewed, every man conceived himself a second Cid, and perceived in the surrender of Dupont, not the deliverance of Spain, but the immediate conquest of France. "We are much obliged to our good