

on an unfordable river three hundred yards wide, should think himself safe from an attack for one day, is not wonderful. The improbability that such a barrier could be forced in half an hour, might have rendered Fabius careless! yet there were some peculiar circumstances attending the surprise of the French army which indicate great negligence. The commanding officer of one regiment reported, as early as six o'clock, that the English were crossing the river;\* the report was certainly premature, because no man passed before ten o'clock, but it reached Soult, and he sent General Quesnel, the Governor of Oporto, to verify the fact. Quesnel stated, on his return, and truly, that it was an error, and Soult took no further precaution; the patrols were not increased, no staff-officers appear to have been employed to watch the river, and no signals were established; yet it was but three days since D'Argenton's conspiracy had been discovered, and the extent of it was still unknown. This circumstance alone should have induced the Duke of Dalmatia to augment the number of his guards and posts of observation, that the multiplicity of the reports might render it impossible for the malcontents to deceive him. The surprise at Oporto must, therefore, be considered as a fault in the General, which could only be atoned for by the high resolution and commanding energy with which he saved his army in the subsequent retreat.

3. When General Loison suffered Marshal Beresford to drive him from Pezo de Ragoa and Mezamfrio, he committed a grave military error, and when he abandoned Amarante, he relinquished all claim to military reputation, as a simple statement of facts will prove. The evening of the 12th he wrote to Soult that one regiment had easily repulsed the whole of the enemy's forces; yet he, although at the head of six thousand men, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, that night, and without another shot being fired, abandoned the only passage by which, as far as he knew, the rest of the army could escape from its perilous situation with honor! It was not General Loison's fault if England did not triumph a second time in the capture of a French Marshal.

#### MOVEMENTS OF THE BRITISH GENERAL.

1. If Sir Arthur Wellesley's operations be looked at as a whole, it is impossible to deny his sagacity in planning, his decision and celerity in execution. When he landed at Lisbon, the nation was dismayed by previous defeats, distracted with anarchy, and menaced on two sides by powerful armies, one of which was already in possession of the second city in the kingdom. In twenty-eight days he had restored public confidence, provided a defence against one ad-

\*Noble's Campaign de Galice.

versary, and, having marched two hundred miles through a rugged country, and forced the passage of a great river, cursed his other opponent to flee over the frontier, without artillery or baggage.

2. Such being the result, it is necessary to show that the success was due, not to the caprice of fortune, but to the talents of the General, that he was quick to see, and active to strike. And first, the secrecy and despatch with which the army was collected on the Vouga belong entirely to the man; for there were many obstacles to overcome, and D'Argenton, as the sequel proved, would, by his disclosures, have ruined Sir Arthur's combinations, if the latter had not providently given him a false view of affairs. The subsequent march from the Vouga to the Douro was, in itself, no mean effort; for it must be recollected that this rapid advance against an eminent commander and a veteran army of above twenty thousand men, was made with a heterogeneous force, of which only sixteen thousand men were approved soldiers, the remainder being totally unformed by discipline, untried in battle, and, only three weeks before, in a state of open mutiny.

3. The passage of the Douro, at Oporto, would, at first sight, seem a rash undertaking. When examined closely, it proves to be an example of consummate generalship, both in the conception and the execution. The careless watch maintained by the French may indeed be called fortunate, because it permitted the English General to get a few men over unperceived; but it was not twenty-five, nor twenty-five hundred, soldiers that could have maintained themselves, if heedlessly cast on the other side. Sir Arthur, when he so coolly said, "*Let them pass,*" was prepared to protect them when they had passed. He did not give that order until he knew that Murray had found boats at Avintas, to ferry over a considerable number of troops, and, consequently, that that General, descending the Douro, could cover the right flank of the Seminary, while the guns planted on the heights of Sarea could sweep the left flank, and search all the ground inclosed by the wall round the building. Had only General Murray's troops passed, they would have been compromised; if the whole army had made the attempt at Avintas, its march would have been discovered; but in the double passage all was secured—the men in the Seminary by the guns, by the strength of the building and by Murray's troops; the latter by the surprise on the town, which drew the enemy's attention away from them. Hence it was only necessary to throw a few brave men into the Seminary unperceived, and the success was almost certain; because, while that building was maintained, the troops in the act of passing could neither be prevented nor harmed by the enemy. To attain great objects by simple means is the highest effort of genius

4. If General Murray had attacked vigorously, the ruin of the French army would have ensued. It was an opportunity that would have tempted a blind man to strike; the neglect of it argued want of military talent and of military hardihood; and how would it have appeared if Loison had not abandoned Amarante? If Soult, effecting his retreat in safety and reaching Zamora or Salamanca in good order, had turned on Ciudad Rodrigo, he would have found full occupation for Sir Arthur Wellesley in the north; and he would have opened a free communication with the Duke of Belluno. The latter must then have marched either against Seville or Lisbon; and thus the boldness and excellent conduct of the English General, producing no adequate results, would have been overlooked, or, perhaps, have formed a subject for the abuse of some ignorant, declamatory writer.

5. Sir Arthur Wellesley's reasons for halting at Oporto the 13th have been already noticed, but they require further remarks. Had he followed Soult headlong, there is no doubt that the latter would have been overtaken on the Souza river and destroyed; but this chance, arising from Loison's wretched movements, was not to be foreseen. He knew nothing of Beresford's situation, but he naturally supposed that, following his instructions, he was about Villa Real, and that, consequently, the French would, from Amarante, either move by Villa Pouca to Chaves, or, taking the road to Guimaraens and Braga, make for the Minho; hence he remained where he could command the main roads to that river, in order to intercept Soult's retreat and force him to a battle; whereas, if he had once entered the defile formed by the Douro and the Sierra de Catalina, he could only have followed his enemy in one column by a difficult route—a process promising little advantage. Nevertheless, seeing that he detached General Murray by that route at last, it would appear that he should have ordered him to press the enemy closer than he did; but there a political difficulty occurred. The English Cabinet, although improvident in its preparations, was very fearful of misfortune; and the General dared not risk the safety of a single brigade, except for a great object, lest a slight disaster should cause the army to be recalled. This circumstance often obliged him to curb his naturally enterprising disposition; and to this burthen of ministerial incapacity, which he bore even to the battle of Salamanca, may be traced that over-caution which has been so often censured as a fault, not only by military writers, but by Napoleon, who, judging from appearances, erroneously supposed it to be a characteristic of the man, and often rebuked his generals for not taking advantage thereof.\*

\* King Joseph's captured Correspondence, MS.

6. The marches and encounters, from the 14th to the 17th, were excellent on both sides. Like the wheelings and buffetings of two vultures in the air, the generals contended, the one for safety, the other for triumph; but there was evidently a failure in the operations of Marshal Beresford. Soult did not reach Salamonde until the evening of the 15th, and his rear-guard was still there on the evening of the 16th. Beresford was in person at Chaves on the 16th, and his troops reached that place early on the morning of the 17th. Soult passed Montalegre on the 18th, but from Chaves to that place is only one march. Again, Marshal Beresford was in possession of Amarante on the 13th, and as there was an excellent map of the province in existence, he must have known the importance of Salamonde, which was only thirty-two miles from Amarante, and that there was a road to it through Freixim and Refoyos de Basta, and another through Mondin and Cavez, both shorter than that by Guimaraens and Chaves. It is true that Silveira was directed to occupy Ruivaens and Melgasso; but he either disobeyed or executed his orders too slowly, and Miserella was totally neglected. Major Warre, an officer of the Marshal's staff, endeavored, indeed, to break down the bridges of Ponte Nova and Ruivaens, and it was by his exertions that the peasants, surprised at the former, had been collected; but he had only a single dragoon with him, and was without powder to execute this important task. The peasantry, also glad to be rid of the French, were reluctant to stop their retreat, and still more to destroy the bridge of Misarella, which was the key of all the communications, and all the great markets of the Entre Minho e Douro, and therefore sure to be built up again; in which case the people knew well that their labor and time would be called for without payment. It is however undoubted that Soult owed his safety, firstly, to the failure, whatever may have been the cause, in Beresford's general operations, and, secondly, to the particular failure in breaking down the bridges; and it is probable, from what he did do, that Major Warre would have effectually destroyed them, if he had been supplied with only the commonest means.

Silveira is accused of not moving either in the direction or with the celerity required of him by Beresford; but there seems to have been a misunderstanding between them, and some allowance must be made for the numerous mistakes necessarily arising in the transmission of orders by officers speaking different languages; and for the difficulty of moving troops not accustomed, and perhaps not perfectly willing, to act together.

## CHAPTER III.

Romana surprises Villa Franca—Ney advances to Lugo—Romana retreats to the Asturias—Reforms the government there—Ney invades the Asturias by the west—Bonnet and Kellermann enter that province by the east and by the south—General Mahi flies to the valley of the Syl—Romana embarks at Gihon—Ballasteros takes Santander—Defeated by Bonnet—Kellermann returns to Valladolid—Ney marches for Coruña—Carrera defeats Maucune at St. Jago Compostella—Mahi blockades Lugo—It is relieved by Soult—Romana rejoins his army and marches to Orense—Lapisse storms the bridge of Alcantara—Cuesta advances to the Guadiana—Lapisse retires—Victor concentrates his army at Torremocha—Effect of the war in Germany upon that of Spain—Sir A. Wellesley encamps at Abrantes—The bridge of Alcantara destroyed—Victor crosses the Tagus at Almaraz—Beresford returns to the north of Portugal—Ney and Soult combine operations—Soult scours the valley of the Syl—Romana cut off from Castile and thrown back upon Orense—Ney advances towards Vigo—Combat of San Payo—Misunderstanding between him and Soult—Ney retreats to Coruña—Soult marches to Zamora—Franceschi falls into the hands of the Capuchino—His melancholy fate—Ney abandons Galicia—View of affairs in Aragon—Battles of Maria and Belchite.

THE Duke of Dalmatia halted at Orense the 20th, and on the 21st put his troops in motion upon Lugo, to succor General Fournier, of the 6th corps, who, with three battalions of infantry and a regiment of dragoons, was besieged by twelve or fifteen thousand Spaniards, under the command of General Mahi.\* But to explain this it is necessary to resume the account of Romana's operations, after his defeat at Monterey on the 6th of March.

Having reassembled the fugitives at Puebla de Senabria, on the borders of Leon, he repaired his losses by fresh levies, and was soon after joined by three thousand men from Castile, and thus, unknown to Ney, he had, as it were, gained the rear of the sixth corps. Villa Franca del Bierzo was, at this time, only occupied by two weak French battalions, and as their nearest support was at Lugo, Romana resolved to surprise them. Dividing his forces, he sent Mendizabel with one division by the valley of the Syl to take them in rear, and marched himself by the route of Calcabellos; in this manner he surrounded the French, who, after a short skirmish, in which the Spaniards lost about a hundred men, surrendered, and were sent into the Asturias.

Romana then detached a part of his forces to Orense and Ponte Vedra, to assist Morillo and the insurrection in the western parts of Galicia, where, with the aid of the English ships of war, and notwithstanding the shameful neglect of the supreme Central Junta, the patriots were proceeding vigorously. The movable columns of the sixth corps daily lost a number of men, some in open battle,

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

and a still greater number by assassinations ; these last were however rigorously visited upon the districts where they took place, and thus, in Galicia, as in every other part of Spain, the war hourly assumed a more horrid character. Referring to this period, Colonel Barrios afterwards told Mr. Frere that to repress the excesses of Marshal Ney's troops, he himself had, in cold blood, caused seven hundred French prisoners to be drowned in the Minho !\* an avowal recorded by Mr. Frere without animadversion, but which, happily for the cause of humanity, there is good reason to believe was as false as it would, if true, have been detestable.

After the capture of Vigo, the Spanish force on the coast increased rapidly. Barrios departed for Seville, Martin Carrera assumed the command of the troops near Orense, and the Conde Noroña of those near Vigo. General Maucune returned to St. Jago from Tuy, and Ney, apprised of the loss at Villa Franca, advanced to Lugo. Romana immediately abandoned Galicia, and entering the Asturias by the pass of Cienfuegos, marched along the line of the Gallician frontier, until he reached Navia de Suarna, where he left Mahi, with the army, to observe Ney, but repaired himself to Oviedo, to redress the crying wrongs of the Asturians.

It is necessary to recapitulate the evil doings of the Asturian Junta, which was notoriously corrupt and incapable. Romana, after a short inquiry, dismissed the members in virtue of his supreme authority, and appointed new men ; but this act of justice gave great offence to Jovellanos and others. It appeared too close an approximation to Cuesta's manner in Leon, the year before ; and as the central government, always selfish and jealous, abhorred any indication of vigor or probity in a general, Romana was soon afterwards deprived of his command. Meanwhile he was resolutely reforming abuses, when his proceedings were suddenly arrested by an unexpected event.

As soon as Ney understood that the Spanish army was posted on the Gallician side of the Asturian frontier, and that Romana was likely to excite the energy of the Asturian people, he planned a combined movement, to surround and destroy, not only Romana and his army, but also the Asturian troops, which then amounted to about fifteen thousand men, including the partida of Porlier, commonly called the Marquisetto. This force, commanded by General Ballasteros and General Vorster, occupied Infiesta, on the eastern side of Oviedo, and Castropol on the coast. Ney, with the consent of Joseph, arranged that Kellermann, who was at Astorga,

\* Parl. Papers, 1810.

with six guns and eight thousand seven hundred men, composed of detachments, drawn together from the different corps, should penetrate the Asturias from the south-east by the pass of Pajares; that Bonnet, who always remained at the town of Santander, should break in, from the north-east, by the coast road; and that the sixth corps should make an irruption by the Concejo de Ibas, a short but difficult route leading directly from Lugo.

When the period for these combined movements was determined, Ney, appointing General Marchand to command in Galicia during his own absence, left three battalions under Maucune at St. Jago, three others in garrison at Coruña under General D'Armagnac, one at Ferrol, and three with a regiment of cavalry under Fournier at Lugo. He then marched himself, with twelve battalions of infantry and three regiments of cavalry, against Mahi, and the latter immediately abandoned his position at Navia de Suarna, and drawing off by his left, without giving notice to Romana, returned to Galicia and again entered the valley of the Syl. Ney, either thinking that the greatest force was near Oviedo, or that it was more important to capture Romana than to disperse Mahi's troops, continued his route by the valley of the Nareca; and with such diligence that he reached Cornellana and Grado, one march from Oviedo, before Romana knew of his approach. The Spanish General, thus surprised, made a feeble and fruitless endeavor to check the French at the bridge of Peñafior, after which, sending the single regiment he had with him to Infiesta, he embarked on board an English vessel at Gihon, and so escaped.

The 18th, Ney entered Oviedo, where he was joined by Kellermann, and the next day pursued Romana to Gihon; Bonnet, likewise, executed his part, but somewhat later, and thus Vorster, being unmolested by Ney, had time to collect his corps on the coast. Meanwhile Ballesteros, finding that Bonnet had passed between him and Vorster, boldly marched upon Santander and retook it, making the garrison and sick men (in all eleven hundred) prisoners; the *Amelia* and *Statira*, British frigates, arrived off the harbor at the same moment, and captured three French corvettes and two luggers, on board of which some staff-officers were endeavoring to escape.

Bonnet, however, followed hard upon Ballesteros, and, the 11th of June, routed him so completely that he, also, was forced to save himself on board an English vessel, and the French recovered all the prisoners, and, amongst them, the men taken at Villa Franca, by Romana. But, before this, Ney, uneasy for his posts in Galicia, had returned to Coruña by the coast-road through Castropol, and Kellermann, after several trifling skirmishes with Vorster, had

also retired to Valladolid. This expedition proved that Asturia was not calculated for defence, although with the aid of English ships, it might become extremely troublesome to the French.

While Ney was in Asturia, Carrera, advancing from the side of Orense, appeared in front of St. Jago de Compostella at the moment that Colonel D'Esmenard, a staff-officer sent by the Marshal to give notice of his return to Coruña, arrived with an escort of dragoons in Maucune's camp. This escort was magnified by the Spaniards into a reinforcement of eight hundred men; but Carrera, who had been joined by Morillo, commanded eight thousand, and, on the 23d, having attacked Maucune at a place called "*Campo de Estrella*," totally defeated him, with a loss of six hundred men and several guns. The Spaniards did not pursue, and the French retreated in confusion to Coruña. Nor was this the only check suffered by the 6th corps, for Mahi, having united a great body of peasants to his army, drove back Fournier's outposts, and closely invested him in Lugo on the 19th.

Such was the state of affairs in Galicia when Soult arrived at Orense; and as the inhabitants of that town, from whom he got intelligence of these events, rather exaggerated the success of their countrymen, the French Marshal immediately sent forward an advanced guard of his stoutest men to relieve Lugo, and followed himself, by the route of Monforte, with as much speed as the exhausted state of his troops would permit.\* The 22d, he reached Gutin, and, the same day, his van being descried on the mountains above Lugo, Mahi broke up his camp and fell back to Mondenedo.

The 23d, Soult entered Lugo, where he heard of the Emperor's first successes in Austria, and, with renewed energy, prepared for fresh exertions himself. The 30th, he was joined by Ney, who, uninformed of Mahi's position at Mondenedo, had missed a favorable opportunity of revenging the loss of St. Jago. Meanwhile Romana, disembarking at Ribadeo, joined Mahi at Mondenedo, and immediately marched along the line of the Asturian frontier, until he arrived at the sources of the Neyra; then crossing the royal road, a little above Lugo, plunged, once more, into the valley of the Syl; and, having gained Orense, the 6th of June, opened a communication with Carrera at St. Jago, and with the insurgents at Vigo. This movement of Romana's was able, energetic, and worthy of every praise.

In pursuance of an order from the Emperor, Soult now sent eleven hundred men, composed of dismounted dragoons and skeletons of cavalry regiments, to France; and, having partially restored

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.



the artillery and equipments of the second corps, from the arsenals of Coruña and Ferrol, he, in concert with the Duke of Elchingen, arranged a fresh plan for the destruction of Romana; in the execution it failed, as shall be hereafter noticed, but at present it is necessary to return to the campaign south of the Tagus.

#### VICTOR'S OPERATIONS.

After the abortive effort to gain Badajos, the Duke of Belluno, in obedience to the King's orders, proceeded to recover Alcantara.\* His rear was still within two marches of Merida when the head of his column, under Lapisse, driving back some cavalry posts, entered the town of Alcantara, and the next day attempted the passage of the bridge. The Portuguese force consisted of two thousand infantry, fifty cavalry, and six guns, and some works of defence were constructed on the right bank of the river; but on the 14th of May, Lapisse, lining the rocks on the left bank, skirmished so sharply that the militia regiment of Idanha gave way. Colonel Mayne then sprung a mine, yet the explosion did little injury to the bridge, and the French made good the passage; the Portuguese, who had suffered considerably, retired to the Puente de Segura, and Lapisse immediately sent patrols towards Castello Branco, Salvatierra, and Idanha Nova.

Intelligence of this attack having reached General Mackenzie, he directed preparations to be made for destroying the boat-bridge at Abrantes, and marched, in person, by Cortiçada to Sobreira Formosa; which movement, aided by a rumor that Soult had retreated from Oporto, afforded an excuse to Victor for again abandoning Alcantara, and resuming his former camp. During his absence, Cuesta, true to the promise he had given, attacked the fort of Merida, but, on the return of the French advanced guard, recrossed the Guadiana, and fell back to Zafra, having first ravaged all the flat country, and obliged the inhabitants to withdraw into the mountains.

Some time before this, King Joseph had received a despatch from the French Minister of War, giving notice that reinforcements had sailed from England, and warning him to lose no time in marching against Lisbon, to create a useful diversion in favor of Soult. It might be supposed that the original plan of the Emperor would then have been acted upon, and this was the first thought of Joseph himself; but other circumstances created doubt and hesitation in his councils, and, finally, induced him to abandon all thoughts of Portugal. It appears, when Napoleon returned to Paris, he imagined that hostilities with Austria, although certain, would not

\* Sémélé's Journal of Operations, MS.

break out so suddenly, but that he should have time to organize a sufficient army in Germany, without drawing his veteran troops from Spain; hence, he still left the imperial guards at Vittoria, and sending the Prince of Neufchâtel to command the troops on the Danube, he himself remained at Paris, to superintend the preparations for reopening the campaign. The Austrians were, however, not inattentive observers of the perfidy which accompanied the invasion of Spain, and, aptly taking the hint, attacked the French outposts and published their own declaration of war at the same moment. Berthier, incapable of acting a principal part, was surprised, and made a succession of false movements that would have been fatal to the French army, if the Emperor, journeying day and night, had not arrived at the very hour when his lieutenant was on the point of consummating the ruin of the army. Then, indeed, was seen the supernatural force of Napoleon's genius: in a few hours he changed the aspect of affairs, and in a few days, *maigre* their immense number, his enemies, baffled and flying in all directions, proclaimed his mastery in an art which, up to that moment, was imperfect; for never since troops first trod a field of battle, was such a display of military skill made by man. But previous to these successes, so threatening had been the aspect of affairs in Germany, that the imperial guards were recalled from Vittoria, and hurried to the Danube; the great reserve of infantry was, as we have seen, struck off the rolls of the army in Spain, and the skeletons of the fourth squadrons of every cavalry regiment were ordered to return to their *dépôts* in France; even the fifth corps, under Mortier, then on its way to Valladolid from Zaragoza, was directed to halt, and hold itself in readiness to march for Germany. Thus, while Victor was reluctant to move, while Ney was demanding more troops to preserve Galicia, and while the fate of the second corps was unknown, the whole army was actually diminished by forty thousand men, and fifteen thousand more were paralyzed with regard to offensive operations.

These things had rendered Joseph timid. Madrid, it was argued in his councils, was of more consequence than Lisbon; Soult might be already at the latter place; or, if not, he might extricate himself from his difficulties, for the capital of Spain must be covered. In pursuance of this reasoning, Sebastiani was forbidden any forward movement; and the Duke of Belluno, whose army was daily wasting with the Guadiana fever, took a position at Torremocha, a central point between Truxillo, Merida, and Alcantara. His cavalry posts watched all the passages over the Guadiana and the Tagus; and his communications with Madrid, between the Tietar

and the Tagus, were protected by twelve hundred men, detached for that purpose by the King.\*

But one timid measure in war generally produces another. The neighborhood of the English force at Castel Branco increased the energy of the Spanish insurgents, who infested the valley of the Tagus, and communicated secretly with those of the Sierra de Guadalupe; hence, Victor, alarmed for his bridge at Almaraz, sent a division there the 22d, and, as from that period until the 10th of June he remained quiet, his campaign, which had opened so brilliantly, was annulled. He had neither assisted Soult, nor crushed Cuesta, nor taken Badajoz nor Seville; yet he had wasted and lost, by sickness, more men than would have sufficed to reduce both Lisbon and Seville. Meanwhile the Spaniards were daily recovering strength and confidence, and Sir Arthur Wellesley, after defeating Soult, had full leisure to return to the Tagus, and to combine his future operations with the Spanish armies in the south.

Information that Lapisse had forced the bridge of Alcantara reached the English General on the night of the 17th. That part of the army which was still behind Salamonde received immediate orders to retrace their steps to Oporto; and when the retreat of Soult by Orense was ascertained, the remainder of the troops, including three Portuguese brigades under Beresford, followed the same route. Colonel Trant was appointed military governor of Oporto, and it was thought sufficient to leave Silveira with some regular battalions and militia to defend the northern provinces, for Soult's army was considered a crippled force, which could not for a long time appear again in the field; a conclusion drawn, as we shall see, from false data, and without due allowance being made for the energy of that chief.

As the army proceeded southward, the narrow scope of Lapisse's movements was ascertained; Colonel Mayne was directed again to take post at Alcantara, and, as a reinforcement of five thousand men had landed at Lisbon, the rapidity of the march slackened. Passing by easy journeys through Coimbra, Thomar, and Punhete, the troops reached Abrantes the 7th of June, and encamped on the left bank of the Tagus, but there was sickness and a great mortality in the ranks.

From the moment of his arrival in Portugal, Sir Arthur Wellesley had looked to the defeat of Victor as the principal, and the operation against Soult as the secondary object of the campaign; † and the English government, acceding to his views, now gave him

\* *Sémélé's Journal of Operations*, MS.

† *Sir A. Wellesley's Correspondence*; *Parl. Papers*, 1810.

a discretionary power to enter the nearest province of Spain, if Portugal should not thereby be endangered. In his correspondence with the Junta and with Cuesta, he had therefore strongly urged the necessity of avoiding any serious collision with the enemy until the British troops could act in concert with the Spanish armies, and this advice, approved of by the Junta, was attended to by Cuesta, insomuch that he did not seek a battle; but he exposed his advanced posts, as if in derision of the counsel, and, disdainful of the English General's abilities, expressed his belief that the latter had no desire to act heartily; "because," said he, "the system of the British appears to be never to expose their troops, owing to which, they never gain decisive actions by land."

Cuesta's knowledge of the enemy's strength and positions was always inaccurate, and his judgment false; hence he himself not only never gained any decisive action, but lost every army intrusted to his command. He was now discontented with the movement against Soult; asserting that the French hold of Galicia would only be strengthened thereby, unless that favorite folly of all Spanish generals were adopted, namely, surrounding the enemy, without regarding whether the troops to be surrounded were more or less numerous than the surrounders. Sir Arthur Wellesley, however, affirmed that if Soult was first driven over the Minho, a combined attack afterwards made upon Victor would *permanently deliver Galicia*; and this plan being followed, Galicia was abandoned by the French, and they never returned to that province!

When the English army was again free to act, Cuesta was importunate that a joint offensive operation against Victor should be undertaken, yet, obstinately attached to his own opinions, he insisted upon tracing the whole plan of campaign. His views were, however, so opposed to all sound military principles, that Sir Arthur, although anxious to conciliate his humor, could scarcely concede the smallest point, lest a vital catastrophe should follow. Valuable time was thus lost in idle discussions which might have been employed in useful action, seeing that the return of the British army from the Douro had falsified Victor's position at Torremocha. That Marshal, as late as the 10th of June, had only one division guarding the bridge of Almaraz, and it was difficult for him to ascertain the movements of Sir Arthur Wellesley, covered, as they were, by the Tagus, the insurgents, and Mackenzie's corps of observation: hence, by rapid marches, it was possible for the English General, while Victor was still at Torremocha, to reach the valley of the Tagus, and cutting the first corps off from Madrid, to place it between two fires. This did not escape the penetration of either





commander;\* but Sir Arthur was forced to renounce the attempt, partly because of the sick and harassed condition of his troops, the want of shoes and money, and the difficulty of getting supplies; but chiefly that Cuesta's army was scattered over the open country, between the defiles of Monasterio and the Guadiana, and as he refused to concentrate or retire, Victor might have marched against and crushed him, and yet found time to meet the British on the Tietar.† Early in June, however, three brigades were directed upon Castello Branco, and the Duke of Belluno, immediately taking the alarm, and being also assured, by despatches from Madrid, of Soult's retreat, resolved to recross the Tagus; but, previous to commencing this movement, he resolved to secure his flank, by causing the bridge of Alcantara to be destroyed.

Colonel Mayne, as I have already observed, had been again intrusted with that post, and unfortunately, his first orders to blow up the bridge, if the enemy advanced, were not rescinded, although the return of the army from the north rendered such a proceeding unnecessary. Neither did Mayne keep his instructions secret, and Victor hearing of them, sent a detachment to the bridge with no other view than to induce its destruction. He succeeded. That noble monument of Trajan's genius was ruined! Yet such is the nature of war that, not long afterwards, both armies found its fall injurious to their interests, and, as a matter of taste and of military advantage, sighed alike over the broken arches of Alcantara.

Having completed this operation, Victor passed the Tagus, at Almaraz, on the 19th, without being molested by Cuesta, and removing his boat-bridge, proceeded to take post at Placentia. Meanwhile Beresford returned to the defence of the northern provinces of Portugal, which Soult was again menacing; for during the forced inactivity of the British at Abrantes, the cause of which I shall explain in another place, changes in the relative positions of the hostile armies were taking place; and it is important that these changes should be well understood, because on them the fate of the succeeding campaign hinged.

When Ney and Soult met at Lugo, they, although still on bad terms, agreed, after some discussion, that the first should march from Coruña, by the route of St. Jago and Vigo, against Carrera and the Conde de Noroña; and that the second, entering the valley of the Syl, should attack Romana, and drive him upon Orense, at which place it was expected that Ney, after taking or blocking Vigo, would be able to reach him, and thus the whole force of Galicia be crushed at once. Soult was then to menace the Tras

\* Sémélé's Journal of Operations, MS.

† Parliamentary Papers, 1810.

os Montes, by the side of Bragança, with the view of obliging Sir Arthur Wellesley to remain in that province, while the second corps opened a direct communication with Madrid and with the first corps. This being arranged, Ney returned to Coruña; and, on the 1st of June, two divisions of infantry and a brigade of dragoons, of the second corps, marched upon Monforte; they were followed the next day by two other divisions of infantry, and at the same time Franceschi, who was on the Fereira river, supported by La Houssaye's dragoons, was directed, after scouring the road to St. Jago, to fall down the right bank of the Tambuga, towards Orense.

From the 2d to the 9th, the main body halted at Monforte, to get up stores from Lugo, and to scour the country on the flanks; for Romana, in his passage, had again raised the peasantry of all the valleys. Loison was then sent with a division to the Val des Orres, having orders to feign a movement towards Villa Franca and Puente Ferrada, as if for the purpose of meeting a French column in that direction. The 10th, he passed the Syl, and took post at the Puente de Bibey, and the 12th, Franceschi, reinforced with a division of infantry, arrived at Monte Furada also on the Syl, and sent a detachment to Laronco, to connect his division with Loison's.\* The remainder of the infantry followed this movement, and detachments were sent up the course of the Syl, and towards Dancos, on the road from Villa Franca to Lugo. Loison then forced the passage of the Puente de Bibey, and drove the insurgents to Puebla de Tribes. The French army thus cleared all the valleys opening on the course of the upper Minho, and Romana was confined to the lower part of that river.

The 13th, Franceschi, ascending the valley of the Bibey, took post at Bollo and the bridge of the Hermitage, and pushed his patrols to Gudina and Monterey on one side, and into the Sierra de Porto on the other, as far as the sources of the Bibey, with a view to ascertain the exact direction which Romana would take to avoid Loison's column, and to prevent the Spanish General from passing the left of the French army, and gaining the Asturias by the route of Puebla de Senabria. These precautions occupied the Duke of Dalmatia till the 19th, when, being assured that Romana had fallen back to Monterey, he judged that he would attempt the same march towards Puebla de Senabria, by which he had escaped after the action in the month of March; the French army was therefore directed up the valley of the Bibey, upon Viana, where there was a bridge, and where many of the mountain roads united. The same day Franceschi fell in with the head of Romana's army, and repulsed it; and the evening of the 20th the whole of the

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.



French troops were concentrated near Viana, intending to give battle to the Spaniards the next morning; but the latter retreated precipitately during the night, and many of the men dispersed.

Soult continued his movement by the left until he reached the great road running from Castile to Orense, and from thence, having sent Heudelet's division to Villa Vieja to threaten the Tras os Montes frontier, and Mermet's division and Lorge's dragoons towards La Canda, to observe the road of Puebla de Senabria, he marched himself, with an advanced guard, to La Gudina, leaving Laborde and La Houssaye in reserve between Gudina and Villa Vieja. These divers movements, through the rugged passes of Galicia, led to a variety of slight skirmishes, the most important of which took place at the Puente de Bibey, a place of such prodigious strength that it is scarcely conceivable how men, with arms, could be brought to abandon such a post.

Romana's situation was now nearly hopeless, but he was saved by a misunderstanding between the French Marshals. It appears that Ney, having marched from Coruña, entered St. Jago with about ten thousand men, and Carrera fell back upon Ponte Vedra; the Conde de Noroña joined him there with some fresh troops, and assuming the command, continued the retreat to the Octavem river, behind which he took post, placing his main body at the bridge of San Payo, and sending detachments to guard some secondary points. On the 7th of June the French came up. The Spaniards had thirteen thousand men, two eighteen-pounders, and nine field pieces; of the troops only seven thousand were armed, but the whole of the artillery was in position to defend the passage at San Payo, and the bridge being cut, was overlooked by a battery of two eighteen-pounders. Three thousand men were in reserve at Redondela; and at Vigo, about sixty stragglers from Sir John Moore's army were landed, and, in conjunction with a detachment of seamen and marines, occupied the forts. Some Spanish gun-boats, one of which was manned by English seamen, under Captain Winter, also proceeded up the river to the bridge of San Payo.

During the 7th, a desultory and useless fire took place on both sides, and on the 8th, the French were repulsed in two feeble attempts to force a passage at San Payo and at Soto Mayor, the loss on either side being about a hundred men. These attacks were merely to keep the Spaniards employed until the reports of the officers sent by Ney to ascertain the situation and projects of Soult's army, were received; but in the evening of the 8th, those officers returned with information received from the peasants, that the second corps was retreating upon Castile. I have been assured by persons then on Marshal Ney's staff, that he, amazed at these

tidings, rashly concluded that Soult, swayed by personal feelings, wished to endanger the sixth corps; hence, filled with indignation, he immediately retired to Coruña, while Soult, on the other hand, viewed this retreat as a breach of their engagements, and an under-hand policy to oblige him to remain in Galicia. Certain it is that by these ebullitions of temper, both Romana and Noroña were saved; for there was nothing to prevent Ney from sending a column against Orense, while he himself kept in check Noroña, on the Octavem; and, however spirited the conduct of the Spaniards was at San Payo, it would be ridiculous to imagine that ten thousand of the best soldiers of France, led by an officer so quick and resolute as Ney, could have been resisted by an equal number of raw troops and peasants, one-third of whom were without arms. But the history of the quarrel between these Marshals is involved in mystery, the clearing of which must be left to those who shall write the memoirs of the men: for the purposes of this history it is sufficient to know that there was ill-blood, and that therein the Gallicians found safety.

Soult, informed of Ney's retreat and of Sir Arthur Wellesley's arrival on the Tagus, ceased to pursue Romana, and marched to Zamora, where his sick had been before sent, and where his brother, General Soult, had conducted three or four thousand stragglers and convalescents. Here, also, he requested the King to send the artillery and stores necessary to re-equip the second corps; and here he proposed to give his harassed troops some rest, for they had now been for eight months incessantly marching and fighting, and men and officers were alike dispirited by the privations they had endured, and by the terrible nature of a war in which the most horrid scenes were daily enacted.

To put the King in possession of his views, Soult sent General Franceschi to Madrid; but this celebrated officer, refusing an escort, fell into the hands of the *Capuchino*.\* Being transferred to Seville, the Central Junta, with infamous cruelty, treated him as if he had been a criminal instead of a brave soldier, and confined him in a dungeon at Carthagea. The citizens there, ashamed of their government, endeavored to effect his escape; but he perished in confinement, at the moment when his liberation was certain. When his young wife, a daughter of Count Mathieu Dumas, heard of his fate, she refused all nourishment, and, in a few days, by her death, added one more to the thousand instances of the strength of woman's affections.

The 25th of June, Soult reached Puebla de Senabria.

The 28th, he marched to Mombuey.

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

The 29th and 30th, he crossed the Esla, by the bridges of San Pelayo and Castro Gonzales.

The 2d of July, he entered Zamora, having previously rejected a proposition of Ney's, that the two corps should jointly maintain Galicia, a rejection which induced the Duke of Elchingen to evacuate that province.

To effect this, Ney formed a camp near Betanzos; and, on the 22d of July, withdrew his garrisons from Coruña and Ferrol, having previously destroyed all the stores and arsenals and disabled the land defences. Nevertheless, his influence was still so powerful that Captain Hotham, commanding the English squadron off Coruña, seeing the hostile attitude maintained by the inhabitants, landed his seamen on the 24th, and spiked the guns on the sea-line; and, in like manner, compelled a Spanish garrison, left by Ney in the forts of Ferrol, to surrender on the 26th. The Marshal, however, marched, unmolested, by the high road to Astorga, where he arrived on the 30th, having brought off all his own sick and those of the second corps also, who had been left in Lugo. Thus Galicia was finally delivered.

This important event has been erroneously attributed to the exertions of the Spaniards. Those exertions were creditable to the Gallicians, although the most powerful motive of action was to protect their personal property; and when the French withdrew, this same motive led them to repair their losses by resisting the payment of tithes and rents—a compensation by no means relished by the proprietors of the church. But it is certain that their efforts were only secondary causes in themselves, and chiefly supported by the aid of England, whose ships, and arms, and stores were constantly on the coast. How can the operations of the Spaniards be said to have driven the sixth corps from Galicia, when Ney retained every important post in that province to the last—when single divisions of his army, at two different periods, traversed the country from Coruña to Tuy without let or hindrance—and when the Spaniards could not prevent him from overrunning the Asturias without losing his hold of Galicia? It is true, Soult, writing to Joseph, affirmed that the Gallicians would wear out the strongest army, that is, if a wrong system was pursued by the French; but he pointed out the right method of subduing them, namely, in pursuance of Napoleon's views, to fortify some principal central points, from whence the movable columns could overrun the country; and this, he estimated, would only require fifty thousand pounds and six weeks' labor.\* It is plain the real causes of deliverance were—the quarrels between the marshals, which saved

\* Intercepted Despatches, Parl. Papers, 1810.

Romana and Noroña from destruction; and the movements of Sir Arthur Wellesley on the Tagus; for, in an intercepted letter from Soult to Joseph, that Marshal expressly assigns the danger hanging over Madrid and the first corps as the reason of his refusing to remain in Galicia. Now, although Soult's views were undoubtedly just and his march provident, the latter necessarily drew after it the evacuation of Galicia, because it would have been absurd to keep the sixth corps cooped up in that corner of the Peninsula, deprived of communication, and estranged from the general operations.

The movement of the second corps, after quitting Monforte, being along the edge of the Portuguese frontier, and constantly threatening the northern provinces, drew Marshal Beresford, as I have before stated, from the south, and all the regular Portuguese forces capable of taking the field were immediately collected by him round Almeida. The Duke del Parque was at Ciudad Rodrigo; and as that part of Romana's force which had been cut off by Soult's movement upon Gudina fell back upon Ciudad Rodrigo, not less than twenty-five thousand men, Portuguese and Spaniards, were assembled or assembling round those two fortresses.

The change of situation thus brought about in the armies on the great western line of invasion was rendered more important by the events which were simultaneously taking place in other parts—especially in Aragon, where General Blake, whose army had been augmented to more than twenty thousand men, inflated with his success at Alcañiz, had advanced to Ixar and Samper. Suchet, himself, remained close to Zaragoza, but kept a detachment, under General Faber, at Longares and Villa Muel, near the mountains on the side of Daroca. Blake, hoping to cut off this detachment, marched in person through Carineña, and sent General Arisaga with a column to Bottorita, and the latter captured a convoy of provisions on the Huerba; but Faber retired to Placentia, on the Xalon.

The 14th of June, the advanced guards skirmished to Bottorita; and Blake, endeavoring to surround the enemy, pushed a detachment to Maria, in the plain of Zaragoza.

The excitement produced in that city, and in Aragon generally, by this march, was so great that Suchet doubted if he should not abandon Zaragoza and return towards Navarre; for the peasantry had assembled on many points in the mountains around, and it required great vigilance to keep down the spirit of insurrection in the city itself. The importance of that place, however, made him resolve to fight a battle, for which the near approach of Blake, who came on in the full confidence that the French General would retreat, furnished an opportunity which was not neglected.

## BATTLE OF MARIA.

The 14th, after some skirmishing, the Spanish army was concentrated at Bottorita.

The 15th, Blake slowly and unskillfully formed his troops in order of battle, near the village of Maria, and perpendicular to the Huerba, of which he occupied both banks. Towards two o'clock in the day, he extended his left wing to outflank the right of the French; but Suchet, who had just then been rejoined by Faber, and by a brigade from Tudela, immediately stopped this evolution, by attacking the wing with some cavalry and light troops. The Spaniards then fell back to their line of battle. Blake drew men from his right to reinforce his centre and left, and was immediately engaged in a severe conflict. He repulsed the foremost of the enemy's columns, but so violent a storm arose at the moment, that neither army could see the other, although close together, and the action ceased for a time. Blake's position was so ill chosen, that he was surrounded by ravines, and had only one line of retreat, by the bridge of Maria, which was on the extremity of his right flank.\* Suchet, who had observed this error, when the storm cleared off a little, briskly engaged the centre and left of the Spaniards, and forming his cavalry and two regiments of infantry in column, by one vigorous effort broke quite through the Spanish horse, and seized the bridge of Maria. Notwithstanding this, Blake, who was at all times intrepid, collected the infantry of his centre and left wing in a mass, and stood for the victory; but the French troops overthrew his with a great slaughter. A general, twenty-five guns, and many stands of colors were taken, yet few prisoners, for the darkness enabled the dispersed Spaniards to escape by the ravines, and Blake rallied them the next day at Bottorita. The French lost nearly a thousand men, and General Harispé was wounded.

During the action, a French brigade held the position of Monte Torrero, without mixing in the fight, lest the citizens of Zaragoza, being released from their presence, should rise against the garrison; but after the victory, this brigade marched down the Ebro to cut off Blake's retreat; General Laval, who commanded it, did not, however, execute his orders, and the Spanish army retired on the night of the 16th.

The 17th, the rear-guard suffered some loss at Torrecilla; and on the 18th, the two armies were again in presence at Belchite. Blake, reinforced by some detachments, was about fourteen thousand strong; but he had lost the greatest part of his artillery, and

\* Suchet's Memoirs.

his men were dispirited. Suchet, on the contrary, having by the success at Maria awed the Aragonese, was able to bring twenty-two battalions and seven squadrons, or about fifteen thousand men, flushed with victory, into action.

#### BATTLE OF BELCHITE.

The Spaniards were drawn up on a range of hills half inclosing the town;\* their right, resting on a hermitage and some buildings, was inaccessible to cavalry; the left was also well covered; and behind the right, a hill with a building on it, overtopping all the position and occupied by a reserve, served as a rallying point, because there was an easy line of communication between it and the left wing.† The centre, being on rough ground, containing the town of Belchite, which had a wall and gates, was also very strong, and the whole position was so compact that Blake, after completely filling his line, had yet a considerable reserve in hand. His dispositions were made to fight by his centre and right, his left being rather in the nature of an advanced post.

A French battalion commenced the action, by skirmishing with the Spanish centre, but, at the same time, two columns of attack marched, the one against the right, the other against the left. The latter, which was the principal one, preceded by a fire of artillery, soon closed upon the Spanish troops, although Blake's guns opened heavily from his centre and right. The rapid attack of the French, and the accidental explosion of an ammunition wagon, created a panic, which, commencing on the left, spread to all parts of the line. The Spanish General made a charge of cavalry to retrieve the day; it was, however, easily repulsed, and the confusion which followed is thus described by himself: "One regiment fled without firing a shot; it was followed by another, and a third, all flying without having discharged a gun, and, in a few moments, the whole position was abandoned."—"Thus we, the generals and officers, were left alone, without being able to rally a body which could make any opposition; and I had the mortification to see our army dispersed, abandoning all its baggage, and throwing away its arms, and even its clothes, before a single corps of the enemy; nor were we able to avail ourselves of the defence of any strong place, as it was impossible to collect two hundred men to make head against the enemy."

Blake, although a bad general, was a man of real courage: stung to the quick by this disgrace, he reproached his troops with bitterness, demanded an inquiry into his own conduct, and, with a

\* Suchet's Memoirs.

† Blake's Despatch.

strong and sincere feeling of honor, restored to the Junta the estate which had been conferred upon him for the success at Alcañiz.

The battle and the pursuit, in which Suchet took about four thousand prisoners, and all the artillery, ammunition, and baggage of the Spaniards, not only made him master of the operations in Aragon, but also rendered the fifth corps, under Mortier, who were now at Valladolid, completely disposable for offensive operations. Thus, on the 1st of July, there were, exclusive of Kellermann's and Bonnet's divisions, three complete *corps d'armée*, furnishing six thousand cavalry and fifty thousand infantry, collected between Astorga, Zamora, and Valladolid. The inroad on Portugal had failed, and the loss of Galicia followed, but Napoleon's admirable system of invasion was unbroken; his troops, deprived of his presiding genius, had been stricken severely and shrunk from further aggression; they had been too widely spread for a secure grasp, but the reaction disclosed all the innate strength of his arrangements.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

State of the British army—Embarrassments of Sir Arthur Wellesley—State and numbers of the French armies—State and numbers of the Spanish armies—Some account of the *partidas*, commonly called *guerillas*—Intrigues of Mr. Frere—Conduct of the Central Junta—Their inhuman treatment of the French prisoners—Corruption and incapacity—State of the Portuguese army—Impolicy of the British government—Expedition of Walcheren—Expedition against Italy.

THE British army remained in the camp of Abrantes until the latter end of June. During this period, Sir Arthur Wellesley, although burning to enter Spain, was kept back by a variety of difficulties. He had been reinforced with five thousand men immediately after his return from the Douro; and, in the preceding operations, the killed and hurt in battle had not exceeded three hundred men, but the deaths by sickness were numerous. Four thousand in hospital, and fifteen hundred employed in escort and dépôt duties, being deducted, the gross amount of the present under arms, as late even as the 25th of June, did not exceed twenty-two thousand men; and these were, at any moment, liable to be seriously diminished, because the ministers, still intent upon Cadiz, had authorized Mr. Frere, whenever the Junta should consent to the measure, to draw a garrison for that town from Sir Arthur's force. As an army, therefore, it was weak in everything but spirit; the

commissariat was without sufficient means of transport; the soldiers nearly barefooted, and totally without pay; the military chest empty, the hospitals full.\*

The cost, at a low estimation, was about two hundred thousand pounds a month; with the most strenuous exertions, a hundred and sixty thousand pounds only had been procured in the two months of May and June, and of this, thirteen thousand had been obtained as a temporary loan in Oporto. The rate of exchange in Lisbon was high, and notwithstanding the increased value given to the government paper by the successes on the Douro, this rate was daily rising; the Spanish dollar was at five shillings, while Spanish gold sunk so much in value that the Commissary-General sent all that he received from England, or could collect in Lisbon, to Cadiz, and other parts, to truck for dollars;† but, in all places of commerce, the exchange was rising against England, a natural consequence of her enormous and increasing issues of paper. Those issues, the extravagant succors given to Spain, together with subsidies to Austria, made it impossible to supply the army in Portugal with specie, otherwise than by raising cash in every quarter of the globe on treasury-bills, and at a most enormous loss; an evil great in itself, opening a wide door to fraud and villany, and rendering the war between France and England not so much a glorious contest of arms as a struggle between public credit and military force, in which even victory was sure to be fatal to the former.

The want of money, sickness, Cuesta's impracticable temper, and a variety of minor difficulties, too tedious to mention, kept the army in a state of inactivity until the end of June; but, at that period, the retreat of the first corps from Torremocha, and the consequent advance of Cuesta, removed one obstacle to offensive operations, and Sir Arthur, having the certainty that eight thousand additional troops were off the rock of Lisbon, then commenced his march into Spain by the northern banks of the Tagus; meaning to unite with Cuesta on the Tietar, and to arrange, if possible, a plan of operations against Madrid.

But, before I embark on the full and broad stream into which the surges and eddies of the complicated warfare that succeeded Napoleon's departure from the Peninsula settled, I must give a general view of the state of affairs, that the reader, comprehending exactly what strength each party brought to the encounter, may judge more truly of the result.

\* Appendix 12. † Parl. Papers, 1810.



## FRENCH POWER.

	Men.	Horses.
The French, having received some reinforcements of conscripts, amounted, in the beginning of July, including the King's guards, to about.....		
In hospital.....	275,000	
Stragglers and prisoners borne on the states.....	61,000 } 7,000 }	68,000
Total under arms.....	207,000	36,000
The military governments, lines of correspondence, garrisons, and detachments, absorbed.....	32,000	3,000
<i>Present under arms, with the corps d'armée</i> .....	175,000	33,000

The actual strength and situation of each *corps d'armée* was as follows:\*

*Under the King, covering Madrid.*

	Inf. & Art.	Cav.
First corps, in the valley of the Tagus.....	20,881	4,200
Fourth corps, La Mancha.....	17,490	3,200
Division of Dessolles, Madrid.....	6,864	
King's French guards, Madrid, about .....	4,000	1,500
Total.....	49,235	8,900

*In Old Castile, under Marshal Soult.*

	Inf. & Art.	Cav.
Second corps, Zamora, Tora, and Salamanca.....	17,707	2,883
Fifth corps, Valladolid .....	16,042	874
Sixth corps, Astorga, and its vicinity.....	14,913	1,446
Total.....	48,662	5,203

*In Aragon, under General Suchet.*

	Inf. & Art.	Cav.
Third corps, Zaragoza, Alcañitz, &c.....	15,226	2,604

*In Catalonia, under Marshal Augereau.*

	Inf. & Art.	Cav.
Seventh corps, Vich, Gerona, and Barcelona.....	30,593	2,500

In addition to these corps there were twelve hundred men belonging to the battering train; four thousand infantry under Bonnet at Santander; and two thousand two hundred cavalry under Kellermann, in the Valladolid country.

The fortresses and armed places in possession of the French army were—St. Sebastian, Pampeluna, Bilbao, Santona, Santander, Burgos, Leon, Astorga, on the northern line;

Jacca, Zaragoza, Guadalaxara, Toledo, Segovia, and Zamora, on the central line;

Figueras, Rosas, and Barcelona, on the southern line.

\* Master-rolls of the French Army, MS.

It needs but a glance at these dispositions and numbers to understand with what a power Napoleon had fastened upon the Peninsula, during his six weeks' campaign. Much had been lost since his departure, but his army still pressed the Spaniards down, and, like a stone cast upon a brood of snakes, was immovable to their writhings. Nevertheless, the situation of Spain at this epoch was an ameliorated one compared to that which, four months before, the vehemence of Napoleon's personal warfare had reduced it to. The elements of resistance were again accumulated in masses, and the hope, or rather confidence, of success was again in full vigor; for it was in the character of this people, while grovelling on the earth, to suppose themselves standing firm; and when creeping in the gloom of defeat, to imagine they were soaring in the full blaze of victory.

The momentary cessation of offensive operations on the part of the French, instead of being traced to its true sources, the personal jealousies of the Marshals, and the King's want of vigor, was, as usual, attributed, first, to fear and weakness; secondly, to the pressure of the Austrian war. It was not considered that the want of unity, checking the course of conquest, would cease when the French army was driven to the defensive; neither was the might of France duly weighed, while the strength of Austria was unduly exalted. The disasters at Ucles, at Almaraz, at Zaragoza, Rosas, Cardadeu, Valls, at Ciudad Real, Medellin, Braga, and Oporto, and in the Asturias, were all forgotten; the French had been repulsed from Portugal, and they had not taken Seville! This, to the Spaniards, was sufficient evidence of their weakness; and, when the French were supposed to be weak, the others, by a curious reasoning process, always came to the conclusion that they were themselves strong. Hence, the fore-boasting at this period was little inferior to what it had been after the battle of Baylen, and the statement of the relative numbers was almost as absurd. The utmost amount of the French force was not calculated higher than a hundred and fifteen, or a hundred and twenty thousand men, of which about fifty thousand were supposed to be on the French side of the Ebro, and the whole only waiting for an excuse to abandon the Peninsula.

#### SPANISH POWER.

The Spanish armies, on paper, were, as usual, numerous; and the real amount of the regular force was certainly considerable, although very inadequate to the exigencies or the resources of the country. Before the battle of Belchite had broken Blake's strength, there were, organized and under arms, twelve thousand cavalry, and about one hundred and twenty thousand infantry, exclusive of

irregular bands and armed peasantry, who were available for particular defensive operations. After that defeat the number of regular forces, capable of taking the field in the south-eastern provinces, was not above twenty thousand men, of which about ten thousand, under Coupigny, were watching Barcelona, or, again, rallying under Blake; the remainder were in Valencia, where Caro, Romana's brother, had taken the command.

In the north-western provinces there were about twenty-five thousand men, of which fifteen thousand were in Galicia, some thousands in the Asturias under Vorster and Bellasteros, and the remainder under the Duke del Parque, who was directed to organize a new army in the neighborhood of Ciudad Rodrigo.

In Andalusia, or covering it, there were about seventy thousand men. Of these twenty-three thousand infantry, and two thousand five hundred cavalry, were assembled in the Morena, near St. Elena and Carolina, under the command of General Venegas; and thirty-eight thousand, including seven thousand cavalry, were in Estremadura, under the orders of Cuesta, who was nominally commander-in-chief of both armies.

The troops, thus separated into three grand divisions, were called the armies of *the right, the centre, the left*. The fortresses were Gerona, Hostalrich, Lerida, Mequinenza, Tarragona, Tortosa, Valencia, Carthagena, and Alicant, for the army of the right; Cadiz and Badajos, for that of the centre; Ciudad Rodrigo, Coruña, and Ferrol, for the army of the left.

The Spanish troops were, however, far from being serviceable in proportion to their numbers; most of them were new levies, and the rest were ill-trained. The generals had lost nothing of their presumption, learnt nothing of war, and their mutual jealousies were as strong as ever. Cuesta, still hating the Junta, was feared and hated by that body in return, and Venegas was placed at the head of the Carolina army as a counterpoise to him. Romana, also, was obnoxious to the Junta, and in return, with more reason, the Junta was despised and disliked by him. In Valencia and Murcia generals and juntas appeared alike indifferent to the public welfare, satisfied if the war was kept from their own doors. In Catalonia there never was any unanimity.

Blake, who had abandoned Romana in Galicia, and who was still at enmity with Cuesta, had been, for these very reasons, invested with supreme power in Valencia, Aragon, and Catalonia; and moreover, there were factions and bickerings among the interior officers in the armies of Venegas and Cuesta. Albuquerque was ambitious of commanding in chief, and Mr. Frere warmly intrigued in his cause, for that gentleman still labored under the

delusion that he was appointed to direct the military instead of conducting the political service in the Peninsula. In April, he had proposed to the Junta that a force of five thousand cavalry and some infantry, taken from the armies of Cuesta and Venegas, should, under the command of the Duke of Albuquerque, commence offensive operations in La Mancha; this, he said, would, "*if the enemy refused to take notice of it,*" become "a very serious and perhaps a decisive movement;"\* and he was so earnest that, without communicating upon the subject with Sir Arthur Wellesley, without waiting for the result of the operations against Soult, he pretended to the Junta that the co-operation of the English army with Cuesta (that co-operation which it was Sir Arthur's most anxious wish to bring about) could only be obtained as the price of the Spanish government's acceding to his own proposal.† The plenipotentiary's greatest efforts were, however, directed to procure the appointment of Albuquerque to the command of an army; but that nobleman was under the orders of Cuesta, who was not willing to part with him, and, moreover, Frere wished to displace Venegas, not that any fault was attributed to the latter, but merely to make way for Albuquerque; a scheme so indecorous that both the Junta and Cuesta peremptorily rejected it.

Mr. Frere did not hesitate to attribute this rejection to a mean jealousy of Albuquerque's high birth and talents;‡ yet the Junta had sufficient reason for their conduct, not only on this occasion, but afterwards, when they refused to give him any independent command. The Duke, although a brave and patriotic and even an able soldier, was the dupe of a woman who corresponded with the French; the Junta, in the fear of offending him, forbore to punish her, at first, yet, finally, they were obliged to shut her up, and they could not intrust him with a command while her dangerous influence lasted. Hence, Mr. Frere's intrigue failed to serve Albuquerque, and his military project for La Mancha fell to the ground when Sir Arthur Wellesley, unable to perceive its advantages, strongly advised the Junta, not to weaken but to reinforce Cuesta's army; not to meddle with the French either in La Mancha or Estremadura, but to preserve a strict defensive in all quarters.

The *Supreme Junta* was itself in fear of the old *Junta of Seville*, and the folly and arrogance of the first and its neglect of the public weal furnished ample grounds of attack, as a slight sketch of its administrative proceedings will suffice to prove. The King, after the battles of Medellin and Ciudad Real, had, through the medium of Don Joachin Sotelo, a Spanish minister in his service, made an

\* Parliamentary Papers, 1810. † Appendix 8. ‡ Ibid.

attempt to negotiate for the submission of the Junta, which was spurned at by the latter, and in suitable terms, for dignified sentiments and lofty expressions were never wanting to the Spaniards; yet, taken with their deeds, they were but as a strong wind and shrivelled leaves.

The Junta did not fail to make the nation observe their patriotism upon this occasion, and, indeed, took every opportunity to praise their own proceedings; nevertheless, men were not wanting in Spain most anxious not only to check the actual abuses of power, but to lay bare all the ancient oppressions of the country, and recur to first principles, both for present reform and future permanent good governments; in short, to make public avowal of the misrule which had led to their misfortunes, and, if possible, to amend it. Knowing that although national independence may co-exist with tyranny, it is necessarily attached to civil and religious freedom, they desired to assemble the Cortes; to give the people an earnest that national independence was worth having, and to convince them that their sufferings and their exertions would lead to a sensible good, instead of a mere choice between an old and a new despotism; this party was powerful enough to have a manifesto, to their purpose, drawn up by the Junta, and it would have been published if the English ministers had not interposed; for, as I have before said, their object was not Spain, but Napoleon.

Mr. Frere vigorously opposed the promulgation of this manifesto, and not ambiguously hinted that the displeasure of England, and the wrath of the partisans of despotism in Spain, would be vented on the Junta, if any such approach to real liberty was made.\* In his despatches to his Cabinet he wrote that, from his knowledge of the members of the Junta, he felt assured they would "*shrink from the idea of giving permanent effect to the measures which they held out;*" and this expression he meant in their praise! but still he thought it necessary to check the tendency to freedom in the outset, and it would be injustice not to give his sentiments in his own words; sentiments which were at this time perfectly agreeable to his immediate superior, Mr. Canning, but offering a curious contrast to the political liberality which that politician afterwards thought it his interest to affect.

Writing as a Spaniard, Mr. Frere thus addressed Don Martin Garay:—

"If we have indeed passed three centuries under an arbitrary government, let us not forget that it is a price which we pay for having conquered and peopled the fairest portion of the globe; that the integrity of this immense power rests solely upon these two

\* Papers laid before Parliament, 1810.

words, religion and the king. If the old constitution had been lost by the conquest of America, our first object should be to recover it, but in such a manner as not to lose what has cost us so much in the acquisition. From this consideration, it appears to me that we ought to avoid, as *political poison*, any *annunciation of general principles*, the application of which it would be impossible to limit or qualify, even when the negroes and Indians should quote them in favor of themselves. But let us allow that we have made a bad exchange in bartering our ancient national liberty for the glory and extension of the Spanish name. Let us allow that the nation has been deceived for three centuries, and that this error should, at all hazards, be immediately done away. Even though it were so, it does not appear *very becoming the character of a well educated person to pass censures upon the conduct of his forefathers*, or to complain of what he has lost by their negligence or prodigality; and still less so, if it is done in the face of all the world: and what shall we say of a nation who would do this publicly, and after mature deliberation?\*\*\*

The manifesto was suppressed, a new one more consonant with Mr. Frere's notions was published, and a promise to convoke the Cortes given, but without naming any specific time for that event. The Junta, who, as Mr. Frere truly stated, were not at all disposed to give any effect to free institutions, now proceeded to prop up their own tottering power by severity. They had, previous to the manifesto, issued a menacing proclamation, in which they endeavored to confound their political opponents with the spies and tools of the French; and having before established a tribunal of public security, they caused it to publish an edict, in which all men who endeavored to raise distrust of the Junta, or who tried to overturn the government by popular commotion or other means, that had by the Junta been reprobated, were declared guilty of high treason, undeserving the name of Spaniards, and sold to Napoleon: their punishment to be death, and confiscation of property. Any person propagating rumors tending to weaken or soften the hatred of the people against the French, was instantly to be arrested and punished without remission; lastly, rewards were offered for secret information upon these heads.

This decree was not a dead letter. Many persons were seized, imprisoned, and executed, without trial, or knowing their accusers. But the deepest stain upon the Spanish character, at this period, was the treatment experienced by prisoners of war. Thousands, and amongst them part of Dupont's troops, who were only prisoners by a breach of faith, were sent to the Balearic Isles, without any

\* Papers laid before Parliament, 1810.

order being taken for their subsistence, and when remonstrated with, the Junta cast seven thousand ashore on the little desert rock of Cabrera. At Majorca, numbers had been massacred by the inhabitants, in the most cowardly and brutal manner, but those left on Cabrera suffered miseries that can scarcely be described. The supply of food, always scanty, was often neglected altogether; there was but one spring on the rock, which dried up in summer; clothes were never given to them except by the English seamen, who, compassionating their sufferings, often assisted them in passing the island. Thus, afflicted with hunger, thirst, and nakedness, they lived like wild beasts while they could live, but perished in such numbers that less than two thousand remained to tell the tale of this inhumanity; and surely, it was no slight disgrace that the English government failed to interfere on such an occasion.

But what were the efforts made for the defence of the country by this barbarous Junta, which, having been originally assembled to discuss the form of establishing a central government, had unlawfully retained their delegated power, and used it so shamefully? There was a Spanish fleet, and a sufficient number of sailors to man it, in Carthagená, and there was another fleet, and an abundance of seamen, in Cadiz. Lord Collingwood and others pressed the Junta, constantly and earnestly, to fit these vessels out, and to make use of them, or at least to place them beyond the reach of the enemy, yet his remonstrances were unheeded; the sailors were rendered mutinous for want of pay, and even of subsistence, and the government would neither fit out ships themselves, nor suffer the English seamen to do it for them.\* At the period when the Marquis of Romana and the insurgents in Galicia were praying for a few stands of arms and five thousand pounds from Sir John Cradock, the Junta possessed many millions of money, and their magazines in Cadiz were bursting with the continually increasing quantity of stores and arms arriving from England, but which were left to rot as they arrived, while, from every quarter of the country not yet subdued, the demand for these things was incessant.†

The fleet in Cadiz harbor might have been at sea in the beginning of February. In a week it might have been at Vigo, with money and succors of all kinds for the insurgents in Galicia; after which, by skilful operations along the coast from Vigo to St. Sebastian, it might have occupied an enormous French force on that line of country. Instead of a fleet, the Junta sent Colonel Barios, an obscure person, to steal through by-ways, and to take the command of men who were not in want of leaders. In the same manner, the fleet in Carthagená might have been employed on the Catalonian

\* Appendix 5. † Lord Collingwood's Correspondence. Gen. Miller's Mem.

and French coasts; but, far from using their means, which were really enormous, with energy and judgment, the Junta carried on the war by encouraging virulent publications against the French, and confined their real exertions to the assembling of the unfortunate peasants in masses, to starve for awhile, and then to be cut to pieces by their more experienced opponents.

The system of false reports, also, was persevered in without any relaxation: "*The French were beaten on all points; the marshals were slain or taken; their soldiers were deserting, or flying in terror at the sight of a Spaniard; Joseph had plundered and abandoned Madrid; Zaragoza had not fallen.*" Castro, the envoy to the Portuguese Regency, so late as April, anxiously endeavored to persuade that government and the English General that Zaragoza had never been subdued, and that the story of its fall was a French falsehood. In June, official letters were written to Marshal Beresford, from the neighborhood of Lugo, and dated the very day upon which Soult's army relieved that town, not to give intelligence of the event, but to announce the utter defeat of that Marshal, and the capture of Lugo itself; the amount of the killed and wounded, and the prisoners taken, being very exactly stated, and with such an appearance of truth as to deceive Beresford, notwithstanding his previous experience of the people he had to deal with.

But the proofs of corruption and incapacity in the Junta are innumerable, and not confined to the records of events kept by British officers. Romana, a few months later, upon the question of appointing a regency, thus describes their conduct: "He himself," he said, "had doubted if the Central Junta was a lawful government, and this doubt was general in the provinces through which he had passed; yet he had, to preserve the nation from anarchy, not only yielded obedience to it, but he had, likewise, forced the provinces of Galicia, Leon, and Asturias to do the same; because he thought that an illegal government might be useful if it deserved the confidence of the people, and that they respected its authority. The Central Junta, however, was not thus situated; the people, judging of measures by their effects, complained that the armies were weak, the government without energy; that there were no supplies; that the promised accounts of the public expenditure were withheld; and yet, all the sums drawn from America, all the succors granted by England, the rents of the crown, and the voluntary contributions were expended. The public employments were not given to men of merit and true lovers of their country. Some of the members of the Junta rendered their power subservient to their own advantage; others conferred lucrative appointments on their relations and dependents. Ecclesiastical offices had been filled up to enable indi-