

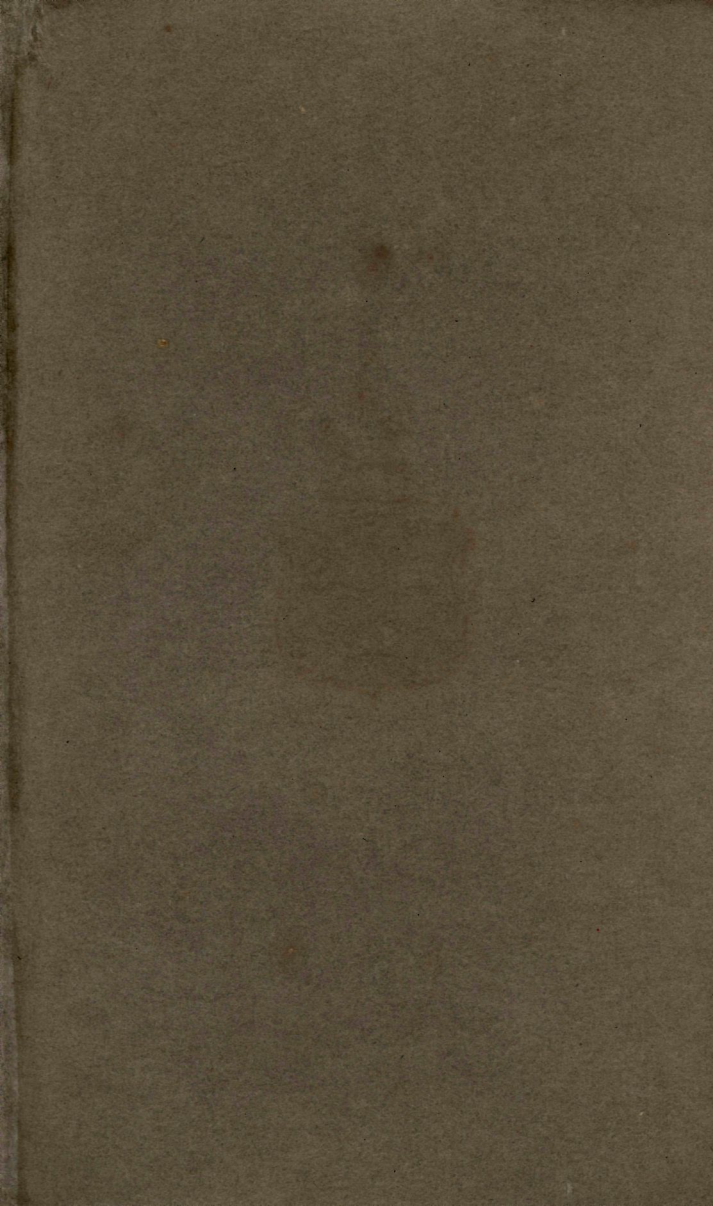


ANNALS
OF THE
PENINSULAR
CAMPAIGNS

V O L
I.







[Capt. Thomas
Hamilton]
1852.

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3 VOLS.

ANNALS
OF THE
PENINSULAR CAMPAIGNS

FROM 1807 TO 1810

BY THE AUTHOR OF CYRIL THURTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

WILLIAM BENTLEY, BIRMINGHAM, AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON,
PRINTERS.

ANNALS

OF THE

PROGRESS OF

THE

ARTS

AND

MANUFACTURES

IN GREAT BRITAIN

FROM 1713 TO 1789

ANNALS
OF THE
PENINSULAR CAMPAIGNS :

FROM
MDCCCVIII TO MDCCCXIV.

BY THE AUTHOR OF CYRIL THORNTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH: AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
MDCCCXXIX.

ANNALS

OF THE

FRANCISCAN CAMPAIGNS

BY

MICHAEL TO MIDDLETON

BY THE AUTHOR OF CYRIL TORNTON

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.



WHITTAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH, AND

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MDCCLXXIX.

PREFACE.

IN offering the following volumes to the Public, the Author would by no means be understood as courting any competition with the more able and elaborate works of his contemporaries. To all the British historians of the Peninsular War, he has been largely indebted, and it would ill become him to speak of their labours, otherwise than with respect. The works of Colonel Jones, and Colonel Napier, display a very high degree of talent and ingenuity; and that of Mr. Southey, considered as a vast magazine of facts, laboriously collected, and embodied in a narrative of uniform clearness, may be considered as a valuable addition to our literature.

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Yet, admitting the merit of these writers, it appeared to the author, that their accounts of the Peninsular War were calculated rather for the closet of the professional student, than for the great mass of the public, who are little likely to feel interested in any dry or lengthened detail of accessory incidents, or to enter very deeply into the intricacies of military discussion; and that there was still wanting a work which should introduce to the intimate acquaintance of the great body of the people, the events of one of the most memorable periods in the history of their country, which should diffuse and imprint, more widely and more deeply, a fitting pride in the great achievements of the British arms, and render Englishmen more familiar with the circumstances of the most splendid and important triumph ever gained by the supporters of liberty, justice, and the rights of man, in opposing the gigantic usurpation of wild and profligate ambition.

To furnish such a work has been the object of the author of these Annals. That he has succeeded he cannot flatter himself; yet he trusts that he has at least deserved the credit of having detailed the occurrences of the war with fairness and impartiality; and that he has, in no instance, made his work subservient to the dictates of national bigotry or unworthy prejudice.

To any peculiar qualifications for the task he has undertaken, the author of these volumes makes no pretension. A few years of his early life were spent in the army—when he had the good fortune to be present in some of the great battles which it has now fallen to him to describe. He was thus enabled to acquire, by personal observation, a knowledge of many important localities, which he trusts will occasionally be found to have produced a beneficial influence on his narrative. Of any other advantages he is unaware; and the circumstance of the present work being given any-

mously to the world, may be taken as an acknowledgment that the opinions which it contains could derive nothing of authority from the name of its author. Were it otherwise, however, he would prefer that these opinions should stand or fall without extrinsic support ; and he is aware of none which he is not prepared to relinquish, whenever, by more able reasoners, they shall be shown to be erroneous.

In a work embracing so vast a variety of detail, it is scarcely possible to hope that complete accuracy has been attained. The author trusts, however, that he will be found to have fallen into few important errors ; and he submits the present work to the judgment of the public, not with confidence certainly, but with no wish to deprecate the severity of any censure to which it may be found liable.

Toulouse, 2d September, 1829.

NOTE.

IN the first volume will be found references to an Appendix which does not exist. It has been omitted, on the ground that the documents referred to were easy of access, and not sufficiently important to warrant the addition of another volume, which the introduction of an Appendix would have rendered necessary.

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ERRATA.

Vol. 3, page 127, line 2d, for “western” read eastern.

Do. do. line 4th, for “east and south-east” read west and south-west.

ANNALS
OF THE
PENINSULAR CAMPAIGNS.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

THE Annals of neighbouring nations seldom present a contrast more striking, than that exhibited by the History of France and Spain, for the twenty years preceding the commencement of the Peninsular War. During that period, France had become the theatre of a vast and terrible revolution; the whole fabric of her government had been overthrown; society had been reduced to its original elements; and, amid torrents of blood shed on field and scaffold, she

CHAP. I.

CHAP. I. had passed from despotism to anarchy, and from
anarchy had again subsided into despotism.

These mighty changes had not flowed slowly onward, borne as it were on the progressive current of events, into gradual and almost imperceptible development. They had at once burst on the world, in all the suddenness and terror of the earthquake or the tornado. Their causes, it is true, had been long in operation, but they had wrought in secrecy and silence; and mankind stood aghast at a catastrophe so unlooked-for and appalling, whose overwhelming force and magnitude seemed to set all human efforts to impede its progress at defiance.

It was impossible that the consequences of so tremendous a convulsion should be confined to France: they were felt in every zone and region of the earth. Kings trembled on their thrones, and nobles in their palaces; while nations, partaking of the endemic delirium of the hour, were prepared to burst the chains which had hitherto enthralled them, and hail the advent of that political millennium, which they imagined had already dawned in hurricane and tempest.

All the governments of Europe became par-

takers, in a large degree, of the general alarm; CHAP. I.
and endeavoured, with natural anxiety, to avoid
being drawn into a vortex so wide and over-
whelming. In community of interest they found
a common bond of union; and war was resorted
to, as the only means of escape from those
dangers, the near approach of which they had
witnessed with dismay. A general confederacy
of the European monarchies was formed against
France, and the restoration of the Bourbons to
the throne, was the avowed end to which the
hostilities of the alliance were directed.

To such an interference in her domestic gov-
ernment, it was not to be expected that France
would tamely submit. Though torn by the
strife of faction, and distracted by internal con-
vulsion, she displayed, in her relations with
foreign powers, a vigour, a fearlessness, and a
promptitude to repel or retaliate aggression,
which the feebleness and insecurity of her gov-
ernment at home gave little reason to expect.
In the war which followed, the star of France
prevailed, and that of the Allies grew dim be-
fore it. The energies of the Republic, under
the guidance of the great military leaders
whom the revolution had called from obscur-

CHAP. I. ity to stations of prominence and command, were directed against her enemies with decided vigour and success. The league was soon broken; one by one the members of the Alliance were encountered and overthrown; and, on the return of peace, France, triumphant at all points, remained undisputed mistress of a large accession of territory, and of an almost overwhelming influence in the whole political relations of continental Europe.

Great Britain alone remained among her enemies, unhumbled and unsubdued. Mistress of the sea, while the arms of France were everywhere triumphant on land, it seemed as if earth and ocean were divided against each other, in vast and interminable conflict. While the boundaries of their respective elements seemed to assign to either belligerent his peculiar sphere of triumph, and to prescribe the limits of his sway, there existed few points of contact on which the strength of these mighty combatants could be matched in final and decisive struggle. Each seemed armed against his enemy in mail of impenetrable proof; and France having succeeded in compelling the continental powers to withdraw from their alliance with England, the

war gradually degenerated on both sides, into a war of petty enterprises, attended only by comparatively unimportant results. CHAP. I.

In the meantime, the power of France, which, from the period of the Revolution, had been progressively increasing, had become apparently consolidated by time and conquest. Her government had at length assumed a form of sufficient permanence and consistency, to warrant an expectation, on the part of England, that the national faith, if solemnly pledged by treaty, would not, as heretofore, be sacrificed to popular clamour, or be disregarded amid the strife of contending factions. It was, at least, obvious to all reasonable observers, that whatever changes the internal government of France might yet be destined to undergo, these could proceed only from within, and could neither be accelerated nor retarded by hostile aggression from without. Both parties had, in truth, become tired of a contest which occasioned a continued outpouring of blood and treasure, but which held out to neither, any prospect of a brilliant or advantageous result. Pacific overtures were made and accepted; and, by the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, the sword was again returned to its scabbard, and the

CHAP. I. world, for a brief interval, enjoyed tranquillity
— and repose.

While France had thus become the theatre, not only of a political, but of a mighty moral revolution, and was exercising an irresistible control on the destinies of Europe, Spain had partaken in nothing of the intellectual vigour and advancement which had long exerted a silent but powerful influence on the surrounding nations. The moral energy, the proud and chivalrous gallantry, the spirit of heroic enterprise, by which, in the better and brighter ages of her history, her character was so strongly marked, had, for centuries, been gradually on the decline; and the Spanish people, long habituated to despotism both political and religious, were still surrounded by an atmosphere of bigotry and darkness, which the light, dawning in the intellectual horizon of other nations, had been unable to penetrate. In the case of Spain, ignorance and misgovernment had produced their natural effect; and, notwithstanding the formidable magnitude of her physical resources, she had gradually fallen from the prominent station she once held in the foremost rank of European nations, to that of a secondary power.

During the greater part of the reign of Charles CHAP. I.
the Third, the government of Spain had fol-
lowed the true policy, dictated at once by her
geographical position, and her deficiency in of-
fensive power, in withdrawing, as much as
possible, from all participation in the contests
in which the other nations of Europe were
embroiled. Bounded by France on the north,
and on the east and south by the sea, the
acquisition of Portugal and Gibraltar were the
only projects of European aggrandizement to
which the ambition of her rulers could be ra-
tionally extended; and, in the execution of such
schemes of conquest, she could not but be aware
that the whole maritime and military force of
England would be exerted in opposition to her
views. England, therefore, she had been ac-
customed to regard as the chief obstacle to the
success of her ambition; and, actuated by dislike,
heightened perhaps by difference of religion, com-
mercial jealousies, and the great naval superiority
of Britain, the government of Spain had been uni-
formly more prompt to engage in hostilities with
that power, than any other with whom, in the oc-
casional jarring of interest or policy, she might be
brought into collision. France, on the other hand,

CHAP. I. was naturally indicated, by her power and proximity, either as the most powerful ally of Spain, or her most formidable enemy. Through France alone was the Spanish territory vulnerable to the rest of Europe; while no alliance with other powers could afford protection from her hostility.

Under the ministry of Florida Blanca, Spain, instigated by France, had taken part in the war between Great Britain and her colonies, and made a vigorous attempt to regain the fortress of Gibraltar. In this she failed; and, after a protracted war, in which her best energies had been exhausted with inadequate effect, she at length retired from a contest, of which the only favourable result was the restoration of Minorca and the Floridas.

1783. Immediately before the breaking out of the French Revolution, Charles the Fourth, by the death of his father, had succeeded to the throne of Spain. Alarmed, in common with other sovereigns, at the new and startling doctrines, both political and religious, of which the revolutionary government proclaimed itself at once the partisan and the apostle, Charles acceded to the general confederacy then forming in Europe,

1788.

and declared war against France. In the hos- CHAP. I.
tilities which followed, Spain was eminently un-
successful, and compelled to act only on the de-
fensive. The army of the Republic crossed the
Pyrenees, reduced the fortresses of San Fer-
nando de Figueras and St. Sebastian, and, after
defeating the Spanish force in several engage-
ments, became masters of the Biscayan provinces
and the kingdom of Navarre. Charles, who saw
with dismay the whole northern portion of his
kingdom already in possession of the enemy, has-
tened to supplicate for peace. The prayer of the
Spanish monarch was granted by the Republic ;
and, by the treaty of Basle, Charles was again
restored to the sovereignty of his conquered pro-
vinces, on condition of his relinquishing to France
the Spanish portion of St. Domingo.

1795.
July 22.

Once more at peace, and relieved from the fear
of present invasion, the government of Spain lost
no time in disbanding her armies, and resigning
herself to the enjoyment of an insecure and de-
fenceless repose. While the whole population
of France were training to the use of arms, the
Spanish monarch, by a sort of inexplicable fatui-
ty, was depressing the military spirit of his peo-
ple, and depriving himself of all means of prompt