

adequate preparations might else have given him, because he knew that the governor, Don Rafael Menacho, intended to have emulated Zaragoza in the defence which he should make. This governor was killed upon the walls by a cannon ball, when the garrison were making their last sortie to prevent the covered way from being crowned. Don José de Imaz succeeded to the command: he was an officer of reputation, who had escaped with the troops from Denmark, had shared their sufferings under Blake, borne a part in their victory under the Duque del Parque, and followed their fortunes through evil and good till the present time.

In the official accounts of the French it was said that the English, according to their custom, had remained tranquil spectators of the destruction of their allies. They had, indeed, been so in the early part of the campaign, to the bitter mortification of the army and of the general, who, by the half measures of his Government, was placed in this most painful situation. The ill effects of the Walcheren expedition were felt more in the timid temporising policy which ensued, than in the direct loss, lamentable as that had been; for the ministry having spent then where they ought to have spared, spared now where they ought to have spent. Just views, right feeling, and public opinion (which in these days is, whether right or wrong, more powerful with a British ministry than any or all other considerations) made them continue the contest; while secret apprehension of ill success, insensibly produced by the constant language of their opponents, who spoke with more than oracular confidence of defeat and total failure as the only possible event, withheld them from prosecuting it with vigour. They considered always what was the smallest force with which Lord Wellington could maintain his ground, never entrusting him with one that might render success calculable, and not yet venturing to believe that British courage would render it not

CHAP.
XXXV.

1811.

February.

Imaz appointed to succeed him.

CHAP.
XXXV.

1811.

February.

less certain by land than it was by sea. Some excuse for this weak policy, which even to themselves needed excuse, they found in the prepossessions of the king, who, although upon some points of the highest importance he took clearer and juster views than the ablest of his ministers, could never in his latter days be brought to contemplate war upon the enlarged scale which the French Revolution had introduced; but looked upon an army of 20,000 men to be as great a force as it had been in the early part of his reign. Against this prepossession the ministers had always to contend while the king was capable of business; and when his fatal malady removed that impediment, Marquis Wellesley could not yet persuade his colleagues that the parsimony which protracts a war is more expensive than the liberal outlay which enables a general to prosecute it with vigour and thereby bring it to a successful end.

Had Lord Wellington found a reinforcement of 10,000 men when he fell back upon his lines, Massena, being entirely without provisions at that time, must have retreated as precipitately as Soult had done from Porto. That they were not attacked before they took up a position for the winter, and that no operations against them were undertaken while they remained there, the French imputed either to want of enterprise, or want of skill in the British commander, undervaluing both, as much as they overrated the force at his disposal. But though they were thus unjust in their censures of Lord Wellington, the imputation which they cast upon the British Government had been to all appearance justified up to this time, except in the case of Badajoz, on which occasion it was now made. Nothing but the grossest negligence and incapacity on his own part could have exposed Mendizabal to the total discomfiture which had befallen him. After the loss of his army it was impossible for Lord Wellington to detach a force sufficient for raising the siege, while Massena continued in his position; but it was of such import-

ance to preserve Badajoz, that the British general determined to attack him, strongly as he was posted, as soon as the long-looked for reinforcements should arrive. But the opportunity which both generals at this time desired of thus deciding the issue of the invasion was not afforded them: the winds continued to disappoint Lord Wellington in his expectations of succour; and no patience on the part of the French could enable them longer to endure the privations to which the system of their wicked Government had exposed them. They consoled themselves under those privations by thinking that no English army could have supported them; for that the sufferings which they had borne patiently would have driven Englishmen to desert. But their endurance had been forced now to its utmost extent. Reports were current, that if Massena would not engage in some decisive operations, which might deliver them from their sufferings, he should be set aside, and Ney, in whose intrepidity they had the fullest confidence, be called upon to command them. That degree of distress had been reached at which discipline itself, even in the most intelligent army, gives way; and the men, when nothing was left of which to plunder the inhabitants, began to plunder from each other, without regard of rank, the stronger from the weaker. Massena, therefore, was compelled, while it was yet possible to secure supplies for the march, to determine upon retreating to that frontier which he had passed with such boastful anticipations of triumph.

The first information of his purpose came through a channel which was entitled to so little credit, that it seems to have obtained none. On the evening of the first of March, a Portuguese boy was apprehended in Abrantes with articles of provision, which were with reason suspected to be for an enemy, because the boy was not ready with an answer when he was asked for whom he was catering. Being carried before the governor, he confessed that he was servant to the commanding officer of a

CHAP.
XXXV.
1811.

February.

*Feldzug
von Portu-
gal. 30.*

*The French
begin their
retreat.*

CHAP. French regiment, who had sent him to purchase these things,
 XXXV. because the army was about to return to the north of Portugal.

1811. The next day, he added, Massena would review the troops on
 the south of the Zezere, and the retreat would commence on the
 evening of the fifth. That a boy in such a situation should have
 acquired this knowledge, is a remarkable proof of his sagacity,
 and of the indiscretion of the officer from whom he must have
 obtained it; for it was verified in all its parts.

March.

Such a movement was, however, so probable, that it had for some days been expected. The first apparent indication of it was given by the French setting fire to their workshops, stores, and bridge-materials at Punhete, on the 3d. They had previously been sending the heavy artillery, the baggage, and the sick to the rear. On the 4th, transports with 7000 British troops on board anchored in the Tagus; and that same day the enemy's advanced corps withdrew from Santarem. Lieutenant Claxton, who commanded the gun-boats appointed to co-operate with the troops in Alentejo, saw them departing, as he was reconnoitring under that city. No time was lost in occupying it by the allies; and when it was seen how the natural advantages of that position had been improved by all the resources of military skill, Lord Wellington's prudence in waiting till time and hunger had done his work was acknowledged by those who before had been inclined to censure him for inactivity and want of enterprise. The opportunity which he had so long desired, and so anxiously expected, had now arrived; and in the sure confidence of intellectual power, he saw that the deliverance of the Peninsula might be secured in that campaign, if Badajoz were defended as it might and ought to be. No sooner, therefore, had it been ascertained that the enemy was retreating, than he dispatched the intelligence to Elvas, desiring the commander to communicate it to the governor of Badajoz, assuring him that he should speedily be succoured, and urging him, in reliance

upon that assurance, to defend the fortress to the last extremity. That intelligence was dispatched on the 6th. General Imaz received it on the 9th. The next day a breach was made, and Mortier summoned him to surrender. The garrison at this time consisted of 7500 effective men: the townsmen might have been made effective also; provisions and ammunition were in abundance; and the intelligence which Lord Wellington received from thence on the very day that Massena's retreat was made known to Imaz, was that the place might probably hold out a month; so well was it stored, so ably garrisoned, and so little injury had it received. The general, however, like every man who, in such a situation, is inclined to act a dishonourable part, called a council of war. The director of engineers delivered it as his opinion, that 5000 men would be required to resist an assault, and that then the surrender could only be delayed two or three days; if there was an evident probability of being succoured in that time, it would be their duty to hold out, though it should be to the last man; without such a probability, no farther sacrifice ought to be made. Twelve officers voted with him; one of them qualifying his vote with the condition, that unless the garrison were permitted to march out by the breach, and incorporate themselves with the nearest Spanish army, no terms should be accepted. Imaz delivered his opinion in these words: "Notwithstanding that our second line of defence is not formed; that we have very few guns in the batteries of Santiago, St. José, and St. Juan, and no support for withstanding the assault, I am of opinion that, by force of valour and constancy, the place be defended till death." In this he was followed by General Don Juan José Garcia. The commandant of artillery, Don Joaquin Caamaño, gave his vote for holding out in very different terms, and with as different a spirit. "The enemy," said he, "not having silenced the fire of the place, the flanks which

CHAP.
XXXV.

1811.

*March.**Badajoz
surrendered.*

CHAP. command the ascent of the breach being in a state of defence,
 XXXV. the breach being mined, the pitch barrels ready, and the en-
 1811. trance covered by the parapet which was formed during the
March. night, I think we ought to stand an assault; or make our way
 out to join the nearest corps, or the neighbouring forts." This
 opinion, which did not, like that of the governor, invalidate
 itself, was followed by Camp-Marshal Don Juan Mancio. It is
 due to those who did their duty thus to particularise their names.
 In the votes of an unworthy majority Imaz found all he wanted;
 and even in their excuse, it must be remembered that this traitor-
 ous governor did not inform them of Massena's retreat, and the
 assurance which he had received of certain and speedy relief.
 Romana, whose fear of democracy made him every where at
 variance with the popular authorities, had ordered the Junta
 of Extremadura to leave Badajoz, and retire to Valencia de
 Alcantara. That Junta had distinguished itself by its activity
 and zeal, and had its members not been thus imprudently ex-
 pelled, they might have given to the defence of the city that
 civic character which had formed the strength of Zaragoza, and
 Gerona, and Ciudad Rodrigo; and which, in this instance,
 would have proved the salvation, as well as the glory of the
 fortress.

On the eleventh of March, therefore, the garrison laid down
 their arms and were made prisoners of war. The empty stipu-
 lation that they should march out by the breach, was granted,
 curiously, as it proved, to the disgrace of those who proposed
 it, . . for so insignificant was this breach that some time was
 employed in enlarging it, to render it practicable for their
 passage! "Thus," in Lord Wellington's words, "Olivença
 and Badajoz were given up without any sufficient cause; while
 Marshal Soult, with a corps of troops which never was supposed
 to exceed 20,000 men, besides capturing these two places, made

prisoners and destroyed above 22,000 Spanish troops!" 17,500 were marched as prisoners of war to France! Mortier, in his dispatches, endeavoured to gloze over the conduct of General Imaz. "The death of Menacho," he said, "had possibly contributed to protract the siege for some days; for his successor wished to give some proof of his talents, and thereby occasioned a longer resistance." This could deceive no one. The Regency, when they communicated to the Cortes Mendizabal's official account of the fall of the place, informed them that they were not satisfied with the conduct of Imaz, and had given the commander-in-chief orders to institute an enquiry. But the surrender of the city was not the only part of these unhappy transactions which required investigation; and Riesco proposed that rigorous enquiry should also be made concerning the action of the 19th of February, and the consequent dispersion of Mendizabal's army, in order that condign punishment might be inflicted on those who were found culpable. "The loss of Badajoz," he said, "was a calamity of the greatest importance at this time: it facilitated to the enemy a free communication with Castille and Andalusia, gave them an entrance into Alentejo, and means for besieging Elvas: it would also enable them to support Massena; so that this fatal calamity might draw after it the conquest of Portugal." Calatrava proposed that it should also be explained why so considerable a division had been shut up in Olivença, and no attempt made to succour it. "My melancholy predictions concerning Extremadura," said he, "have been verified. The chiefs of the army of the left, instead of defending that province and preserving the capital, have at length ended in losing army, province, and capital. Well, indeed, may it be wondered at, that the governor, after having himself voted for continuing the defence, should immediately have capitulated, without sustaining an assault, . . . a contradiction

CHAP.
XXXV.1811.
March.

CHAP.
XXXV

1811.

March.

which can no otherwise be explained, than by supposing that the vote was given insincerely." He concluded by proposing, that notwithstanding the conduct of the governor, the Cortes should make honourable mention of the heroic inhabitants of that place, and the brave garrison. Del Monte said, it had been remarked on this occasion, that the loss of a battle was followed always by the surrender of a place besieged. This, he properly observed, was a position not less perilous to get abroad, than it was false in itself. . . . Another member, with indignant feeling, demanded, that when the capitulation of Badajoz, and the votes of the council of war were published, there should be added to them a statement of the situation of Gerona when that city was surrendered. "At Badajoz," said he, "nothing has been alleged for surrendering, but that there was an open breach; nothing was said of want . . . nothing of sickness, nor of any one of those causes which might have justified the surrender. Let then the soldiers and the nation contrast with this the conduct of Gerona! Months before that city was yielded, there was not merely an open breach, but the walls were destroyed; . . . the scarcity was such, that boiled wheat was sometimes the only food; and for the sick, a morsel of ass-flesh, when it could be had. In this state the governor of Gerona ordered, that no man, on pain of death, should speak of capitulation. By this path did they make their way to glory and immortality! The soldier who would step beyond the common sphere has here what to imitate. If Badajoz had resisted only four days longer, it would have been relieved."

This was a cutting reflection. But though the loss of that city led to consequences grievously injurious to the allies, and to a dreadful cost of lives, it did not produce all the evil which Riesco apprehended; and that its evil effects did not extend thus far, was owing to the spirit of the Portuguese people, who,

unlike General Imaz and his companions in infamy, had discharged their duty to the utmost. Treachery, which had done much for France in other countries, had not been found in Portugal; and popular feeling, which had done more, was there directed with all the vehemence of vindictive justice against the most unprovoked, the most perfidious, and the most inhuman of invaders. But Massena's military talents had never been more eminently shown, and nothing could exceed the skill which was now manifested in all his dispositions. His columns moved by angular lines converging to a point, upon gaining which they formed in mass, and then continued their retreat, Ney with the flower of the army covering the rear, while Massena so directed the march of the main body, as to be always ready to protect the rear guard, which whenever it was hardly pressed fell back, and brought its pursuers with it upon the main army, waiting in the most favourable position to receive them. This praise is due to M. Massena and his generals, and the troops which they commanded: but never did any general or any army insure such everlasting infamy to themselves by their outrages and abominations, committed during the whole of their tarrance in Portugal, and continued during their retreat. Lord Wellington said, their conduct was marked by a barbarity seldom equalled, and never surpassed: all circumstances considered, he might have said it had never been paralleled. For these things were not done in dark ages, nor in uncivilised countries, nor by barbarous hordes, like the armies of Timour or Nadir Shah; it was in Europe, and in the nineteenth century that these atrocities were committed by the soldiers of the most cultivated and most enlightened part of Europe, mostly French, but in no small proportion Germans and Netherlanders. Nor was the French army, like our own, raised and recruited from the worst members of society, who enter the service in an

CHAP.
XXXV.

1811.
March.

*Skill and
barbarity
of the
French in
their re-
treat.*