

The fitness of this designation was well exposed by Sr. Terreros: "They," said he, "who go among the mountains hunting the wild beasts of France, and bathing their weapons in French blood, are local militia! and they who live at home and drag their sabres at their heels in coffee-houses are regulars and veterans!" . . . Mina's object in soliciting rank in the regular army was, that his men, when they fell into the hands of the enemy, might not be put to death as insurgents; but, like the Empecinado, and Manso, and Ballasteros, he found that men who were equally destitute of honour and humanity could only be made to observe the ordinary usages of war by the law of retaliation. Repeatedly and earnestly had he applied to the French generals, conjuring them to respect the laws of war; nor did he cease to remonstrate till farther forbearance would have been a crime. In the course of two days, twelve peasants were shot by the French in Estella, sixteen in Pamplona, and thirty-eight of his soldiers, and four officers, were put to death: Mina then issued a decree for reprisals, exclaiming, that the measure was full. He began his manifesto by contrasting his own conduct with that of these ferocious invaders; then declared war to the death and without quarter, without distinction of officers or soldiers, and especially including by name Napoleon Buonaparte. Wherever the French might be taken, with or without arms, in action or out of it, they were to be hung, and their bodies exposed along the highways, in their regimentals, and with a ticket upon each specifying his name. Every house in which a Frenchman should have been hidden should be burnt, and its inhabitants put to death. If from any village information were given to the enemy that there were volunteers there, such volunteers not amounting to eight in number, five hundred ducats should be levied upon that village for the information; and if any volunteer in consequence should have

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*His decree  
for retri-  
sals.*

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fallen into the hands of the French, four of that village should be chosen by lot and put to death. Mina's anxiety not to bring the inhabitants into danger is apparent in this decree; he seems to have thought that if as many as eight volunteers were in one village, the imminent hazard of concealing them might exempt the people from punishment for informing against them. He declared Pamplona in a state of siege, and the villages and buildings within a mile round the walls; within this line no person was to pass on pain of death; the parties who should be stationed to observe it were ordered to fire upon any one who trespassed beyond the bounds assigned, and if they apprehended him, wounded or unwounded, to hang him instantly upon the nearest tree. All persons who wished to leave that city should be received with the humanity of the Navarrese character; they were to present themselves to him in person, . . . if a whole family came out, it was sufficient that the head should appear. Deserters of all ranks were invited by a promise that they might, at their own choice, either serve with him, or go to England, or return to their own country; in either of which latter cases, he undertook to convey them to one of the ports on the coast; and he decreed the punishment of death against all who should kill or betray a deserter, or refuse him shelter and assistance. All persons were forbidden to go beyond the limits of their respective villages without a passport from the Alcalde or Regidor, signed by the parochial priest, or by some other inhabitant in places where no priest resided; whoever should be apprehended without one was to be shot: the innkeepers were charged to demand the passport from all their guests, and seize every person who could not produce one, and deliver him over to the first Guerrilla party. If any village should pay, or influence the payment of the forty *pesetas* per week, which the enemy had imposed upon the parents and relations of the volunteers,

(the name by which Mina always designated his followers), the property of the magistrates, priests, and influential persons of that village should be confiscated at discretion. And in requital for this imposition of the Intrusive Government, he imposed a weekly mulct of twice that sum upon the parents, brothers, and kinsmen, of those persons who were in the employ of the French at Pamplona. This decree was to be circulated in all the cities, towns, valleys, and *cendeas* (parochial, or district meetings) of Navarre; it was to be proclaimed every fifteen days, and to be read by the officiating priest in every church on the first and third Sundays of every month; wherever this duty was omitted, the magistrates, priests, *escribanos*, or town-clerks, and two of the influential inhabitants, were declared subject to military punishment. He dated this decree from the field of honour in Navarre, and the Government ratified it by inserting it in the Regency's Gazette.

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The movements of the Guerrilla leaders on the Ebro, as well as in Navarre and Upper Aragon, made Suchet feel that he had placed himself in a situation in which every day that deferred his success increased his danger; nor was he without uneasiness on the side of Catalonia, where the Catalans carried on their warfare with such vigour, that the French could aim at nothing more than preserving and provisioning their fortified posts. His communication with Tortosa was interrupted by the armed peasantry; scarcity began to be felt in his camp, and he was obliged to detach 4000 men to protect a convoy going from Zaragoza. It was Blake's hope that Duran, the Empecinado, and Mina, might threaten that city, and perhaps succeed in delivering it from its oppressors. The plan was well concerted, and if it had been executed, Suchet would hardly have ventured to maintain his ground in the kingdom of Valencia. The attempt, however, was not made; for some differences arose

Duran and  
the Empeci-  
nado sepa-  
rate.

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 XXXIX. junction with Mina, they separated from each other. By this  
 1811. time Murviedro was closely pressed, a battery of eight four-and-  
 December. twenty pounders had been constructed, and the governor made  
 signals of distress. The Spaniards were eager for battle; and  
 Blake foregoing his first and better resolution, consented to  
 gratify them, in the hope that one victory, when victory cer-  
 tainly appeared attainable, and would be of such immense im-  
 portance, might repay him for the many disasters which he had  
 sustained. He advanced, therefore, on the 24th about noon,  
 and took post for that night on the height of El Puig, his right  
 resting on the sea, and his left upon Liria.

*Blake de-  
 termines to  
 give battle.*

*Battle of  
 Murviedro.*

The country between Valencia and Murviedro is like a  
 closely-planted orchard, bounded by the sea on the right, and  
 on the left terminating at some distance from the foot of the  
 mountains which separate Valencia from La Mancha, Cuenca,  
 and Aragon. Three great carriage roads cross this land of  
 gardens; and by these three roads the attack was to be made;  
 for though, from the nature of the ground, the left wing could  
 not be united with the centre and the right, it was thought that  
 this would be a less inconvenience than to leave open either of  
 the three roads. It was of especial consequence to occupy  
 the left road, that of Betera; for should Suchet, as might be  
 expected, endeavour to anticipate the attack, he might other-  
 wise send his main body in this direction, where the mountains  
 would cover them, and the open country give free scope for his  
 cavalry and for those manœuvres, in which Blake knew but too  
 well the superiority of the enemy.

On the next morning the army was put in motion. Zayas  
 commanded the right, Lardizabal the centre, Carlos O'Donnell  
 the left, consisting of the Valencian division under Miranda,  
 and the Aragonese under Villacampa: Mahy, with the Murcian

division, was to support this wing ; Blake, with another body of reserve, remained upon El Puig. The left wing was to begin the attack, relying upon the support which they would receive from the centre and the other wing, who were to accompany the movement and cover them on the right ; this, it was thought, would be a resource in case of a want of firmness on their part, which would not have been the case, had a different disposition been preferred. If there was an error in Blake's disposition, it was in thus trusting the principal attack to that part of his army upon which he had least reliance.

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Suchet, who desired nothing so much as an action, prepared to meet his antagonist, leaving six battalions to continue the siege. At eight in the morning his sharp-shooters were briskly driven back ; and from that moment, he says, he knew that he had to contend with troops very unlike those of Valencia. Some strong columns outflanked him on the left, and his right, which was a league distant from the main body, was outflanked also by O'Donnell. Both armies began their movements at the same time : about half way between them on the left of the Spaniards, where the fate of the battle was to be decided, was a ridge of ground, which offered some advantage, and which both parties endeavoured to gain. The sharp-shooters of O'Donnell's division running with eagerness towards this point, drove back that part of the French cavalry which covered the enemy's advance : they got possession, and were supported by two battalions and some field-pieces ; but their ardour had been inconsiderate, for they had separated too much from the columns, and the French, who knew how to avail themselves of every opportunity which was offered, speedily dislodged them by a well-supported charge.

This error was fatal ; for the want of discipline was felt in leaving the ground, as it had been in winning it ; one battalion

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after another, after a feeble resistance, was thrown into disorder, and abandoned the field. It was now that Mahy with the reserve should have endeavoured to support them and retrieve the day, but the order for him to attack did not arrive in time, and he did not advance in time without it: and seeing that the chief efforts of the enemy would now be directed against him, and that his cavalry abandoned him on their approach, he immediately commenced his retreat. While the fate of the left wing was thus decided, Suchet broke through the centre; not without a brave struggle on the part of the Spaniards. D. Juan Caro, the brother of Romana, who commanded a body of cavalry on the left of the centre, made a desperate charge against the enemy's horse, though they were supported by artillery, and defended by a mud wall. The Spaniards leaped the wall, Colonel Ric of the grenadiers leading the way, and cut down the French at their guns. The enemy's reserve came up, and the second line of the Spaniards, which should have supported them, having been unhappily detached to reinforce the vanguard, the guns were retaken, and Caro himself was made prisoner.

The centre of the Spanish army was now defeated; Lardizabal, however, supported the character which he had gained at Santi Petri, and, collecting some cavalry, checked the enemy and covered the retreat of his troops. But it was on the right that the Spaniards displayed most resolution; and had all the army behaved like Zayas and the division of Albuhera, Blake's highest hopes might have been accomplished. They, though unsupported on their left, cleared the road before them, and when the day was lost in the other part of the field, repeatedly repulsed the superior forces which were brought against them. By the account of Suchet himself, the action was maintained here with great slaughter; they covered their left with a battalion in mass, and stood their ground till their cartridges were

consumed, . . . Zayas then sent for more, but Blake ordered him to retreat. This movement was admirably executed, all the wounded were removed, and so little were the men dispirited, that twice they demanded to be allowed to charge with the bayonet. They occupied the houses in the village of Puchole, and fired from the roofs and windows; but here by an error, for which the commandant of the imperialists of Toledo was suspended, the remains of the Walloon battalion were surrounded and made prisoners. When the fugitives had reached Tuna, the reserve was ordered to retreat, and Zayas brought them off in the face of the enemy.

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This was the best action which had yet been fought by the Spaniards, but it was most unfortunate in its results, and the issue proved but too plainly that it ought not to have been hazarded. By the French account 4639 prisoners were taken, four stand of colours, and sixteen pieces of cannon; the killed and wounded were estimated at 2000 men; on their own part they acknowledged only 128 men killed and 596 wounded. Suchet was struck by a ball on the shoulder, General Harispe had two horses killed under him, and two others of the French generals were wounded: the manner in which they exposed themselves, and the number of officers of rank whose names appeared among the wounded, prove that the victory was not achieved without difficulty, nor without greater loss than the official account admitted.

The garrison of Murviedro, when they saw the battle commence, threw their caps into the air with shouts of joy, calling to their countrymen to come on to victory. In the evening, Suchet, leaving his army a league from Valencia, returned to the camp; a breach had been made during the day, which was not yet practicable, but by the fire of some hours longer would

*Murviedro  
surrendered*

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have been rendered so; the French general had no inclination to assault the walls again; . . . it was of consequence, he said, to profit by the victory which had been gained under the eyes of the garrison; . . . and the governor's want of constancy, or perhaps of integrity, enabled him to do this most effectually; for Andriani had no sooner satisfied himself that General Caro was really taken prisoner, than, as if the victory of the French had destroyed all hopes, he capitulated with more than 2500 men. "Thus," said the French, "we became masters of a place which had so long resisted Hannibal." Had Andriani been as true to the cause of his country as the soldiers under him, the second siege might possibly have become as famous as the first. A successful assault could only have put the enemy in possession of a fourth part of the fort, when there would have been three more breaches to make, and three more attacks. It was the governor's duty to have resisted to the last extremity: but to that extremity he was not reduced. By Suchet's own statement, the place was in no danger, and notwithstanding all the efforts of his engineers and all their skill, nothing could be less certain than the success of a new assault.

*Mémoires,*  
2. 191.

Blake, in the orders which he issued on the following day, said that he was dissatisfied with certain corps, and with some individuals, and that as soon as their cowardice was juridically proved, he would punish them with all the rigour of national justice. But in general he declared, that the conduct both of officers and men, and especially that of the division under Zayas, had been satisfactory. "For himself," he said, "he was sufficiently accustomed to the vicissitudes of war, not to be surprised at the ill success of the action, and he was not the less confident of being able to repel the invasion of the enemy." But Blake did not feel the confidence which he affected. He confessed after-



wards, that after the fall of Tarragona, the loss of Valencia was to be apprehended ; but that the brilliant manner in which the defence of Murviedro was begun, the forces which its defence gave time for assembling, and the spirit of the officers and troops, had given well-founded and flattering hopes, which continued till this battle extinguished them. From that moment, he said, nothing but what was gloomy presented itself ; only some political revolution, or other extraordinary event, which should deprive Suchet of his expected reinforcements, could save Valencia ; and his plan was to defend the lines which had been formed for its protection as long as possible, without entirely compromising the safety of his army.

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Valencia stands in an open plain, upon the right bank of the Guadalaviar, about two miles from the sea. Its old ramparts were at this time in good preservation ; but works of antiquity are of little use against the implements of modern war. They were thick walls of brick-work, flanked with round towers at equal distances, and without moats. The river flows at the foot of the walls the whole extent of the eastern side, separating the city from its suburbs ; the suburbs, being of later date than the town, are more open and commodiously built, and contain a larger population ; including them, the number of inhabitants is estimated at 82,000. The adjoining country is in the highest state of cultivation ; and the city, from its history, its remains of antiquity, and the customs of the people, is one of the most interesting and curious in the whole Peninsula. In no part of Spain, nor perhaps of Christendom, were there so many religious puppet-shows exhibited ; nowhere were the people more sunk in all the superstitions of Romish idolatry, and, if the reproaches of even the Spaniards themselves may be credited, there was as little purity of morals as of faith. It is a proverbial saying,

Valencia.

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 XXXIX. women, and the women \* nothing. But if the Valencians were,  
 1811. as a censorer has said of them, light equally in mind and body,  
 December. the cause has been wrongly imputed to their genial and  
 delicious climate; the state of ignorance to which a double  
 despotism had reduced the nation, and the demoralizing prac-  
 tices of the Romish church, sufficiently account for their de-  
 gradation.

The Guadalaviar at Valencia is about an hundred yards wide; it is usually kept low, because its waters are drawn off by canals, which render the adjoining country like a rich garden; but in the rainy season the stream is so strong, that it has frequently swept away its bridges. There are five of these, fine structures, and so near each other, that all may be seen at once. Two had been broken down, and the other three were covered by *tetes-de-pont*. There had been ample time to provide for defence, and much labour and much cost had been bestowed upon the works which were deemed necessary. A small ditch filled with water was made round the wall, with a covered way; works also were constructed to defend the gates; but the Valencians chiefly relied upon their intrenched camp, which contained within its extensive line, the city, and the three suburbs upon the right bank. These works were fortified with bastions, and mounted with 100 pieces of cannon; they extended from the sea to Olivette; but as the point in which they terminated was weak, because it could be attacked in the rear by the left bank, other interior works were commenced, for the purpose of insulating

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\* *La carne es yerva, la yerva agua,  
 Los hombres mugeres, las mugeres nada.*