

reached Almanza on the day that Valencia capitulated ; nevertheless, in opposition to Suchet's advice, he persisted in advancing to Alicante, which he summoned to surrender, and then throwing in a few shells, commenced his return toward Madrid, having raised the spirits of the Spaniards by this unsupported and unsuccessful attempt, and afforded to a more vigilant enemy an opportunity which was not lost.

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1812.

January.

Suchet followed up his success by sending a division against the little town and port of Denia, which, though protected by a respectable fortress, was surrendered without resistance : he then sent General Severoli against Peniscola, a place so strong by nature, and so well secured by art, that it had obtained the name of Little Gibraltar, and was, in fact, impregnable by any regular attack. But General Garcia Navarro commanded there : he had been taken prisoner in 1810, had escaped from France, was trusted with this important post, and now betrayed his trust, and entered the Intruder's service, saying, he would rather share the fate of his country and submit to the French, than act under English orders. As this man was one of the basest traitors who deserted his country in its need, so was he the most unlucky in timing his treason ; for so great a change was presently effected in the relative situation of the contending powers, as to make it apparent even to himself that he had taken the losing side, and would have only perpetual infamy for his reward. About the same time, but in a very different manner, the Spaniards lost General D. Martin de la Carrera, who had distinguished himself in the recovery of Galicia, and had borne throughout the war an honourable name. He now commanded the cavalry of the Murcian army : a French detachment from Granada under General Soult, the Marshal's brother, had entered the city of Murcia and were raising contributions there, when Carrera attacked them

Denia surrendered.

Peniscola betrayed by Garcia Navarro.

Carrera killed in Murcia.

CHAP. with his advanced guard, gallantly, but unsuccessfully; for
 XL. though he took them by surprise, their numbers were greater
 1812. than he had expected to find, and he fell in the market-place,
 fighting bravely till the last. The French having sacked the
 city abandoned it during the night, and on the morrow Carrera
 was interred with all the honours which the inhabitants could
 bestow. On that day month his exequies were performed in
 the cathedral as a public solemnity, the General D. Jose
 O'Donnell, with Generals Mahy, Freyre, and other officers
 attending; the foundation of a monument to his memory was
 laid upon the spot where he fell; and O'Donnell and the other
 officers, touching the stains of his blood with their swords, swore
 like him to die for their country whenever the sacrifice of their
 lives should be called for, and added to that vow, one of per-
 petual hatred towards the French.

*New con-
 stitution.*

The Cortes, meantime, as if they were equally certain that the
 country would be delivered from its merciless invaders, and that
 no measures which they could take would accelerate the deliver-
 ance, employed themselves with unhappy diligence in forming
 a new constitution: a small but zealous minority succeeded in
 dictating this to their reluctant but less active colleagues; and
 in its details, as little regard was paid to the opinions and feel-
 ings of the people, as to the rights of the aristocracy and the
 fundamental principles of the government. The public were
 far more interested in a change of the Regency.. for the re-
 moval of Blake after his manifold misfortunes was considered
 as a gain, even though accompanied with the loss of an army.
 The new Regency consisted of the Duque del Infantado, at that
 time ambassador in England; D. Joaquin Mosquera y Figueroa,
 who was one of the Council of the Indies; D. Juan Maria Villa-
 vicencio, a lieutenant-general in the navy; D. Ignacio Rodriguez
 de Rivas, of the royal council, and the Conde de la Bisbal. A

*Change of
 Regency.*

new army was set on foot in Murcia, to supply the place of that which had been carried into captivity with Blake; and the national hopes were raised by successes in other quarters, as brilliant as they were at this time unlooked for.

Ballasteros had been appointed to the command in Andalusia following a system of war like that of the Guerrillas, which was best suited both to his own talents and the indiscipline and wretched equipment of his troops, he had inflicted more loss upon the enemy than they sustained from any of the regular Spanish armies. In vain did M. Soult boast repeatedly of defeating and putting him to flight; the men who dispersed to-day collected again on the morrow: and while the French were rejoicing for having routed him at one point, they heard that he had re-appeared in force at another, and made himself felt when he was least dreaded. In September he landed at Algeziras to act in aid of the mountaineers of Ronda: a movement was then planned by the enemy for cutting him off, and for getting possession of Tarifa, an important point which they had hitherto neglected, as if in full expectation that no measures for securing it would be thought of by the Spaniards and their allies till it should be too late. After some slaughter of the peasantry and some partial actions, General Godinot advancing with 5000 men from Prado del Rey, found Ballasteros well posted in front of Ximena: he retired to collect a stronger force, and having been joined by two columns under Generals Barroux and Semele advanced again with from 8 to 10,000 men, meaning to march upon St. Roque, occupy the coast, and get possession of Tarifa by a *coup de main*. Ballasteros, who had not half that number in a state of discipline on which any reliance could be placed fell back upon the heights of St. Roque, and took a position on the right of the town: four days afterwards the French appeared, and endeavoured to bring on an engagement; but Ballasteros knew

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1811.

October.

Ballasteros
retreats to
the lines of
St. Roque.

Oct. 10.

CHAP. his own weakness : he fell back upon the old Spanish lines, and
 XL. all the inhabitants of St. Roque flying from their town, took
 1811. shelter under the guns of Gibraltar. The French invited them
 to return to their houses, with promises of security and protec-
 tion ; but better experience had now taught the Spaniards what
 French protection meant, and they threw themselves upon the
 compassion of their allies. Rations were allotted both for them
 and the Spanish troops, and the reservoirs and tanks were
 emptied for their use.

October.

So busy and so stimulating a scene had not been witnessed from Gibraltar since the last siege of the rock. The fugitives, without any other accommodation or means of subsistence than what charity could supply them, were scattered about in all directions near the bay-side barrier ; the French occupied the heights, and Ballasteros, with his hardy and half-naked bands, remained under protection of the rock, waiting in hope that want would soon compel the enemy to retire, for previous arrangements had been made for annoying them in the rear and cutting off their supplies. Godinot was not more successful in his design of seizing Tarifa. Aware that such an attempt would be made, and warned by the example of Tarragona to take measures for resisting the enemy in time, the Spanish government dispatched a force under D. Francisco de Copons to garrison the town ; and 1000 British infantry, with a detachment of artillery under Colonel Skerritt, embarked at the same time for the same service. This, it was supposed, would also operate as a diversion in favour of Ballasteros. The British troops landed on the very day that Ballasteros fell back under the rock ; but a strong easterly gale delayed the Spanish part of the expedition. On the 18th about 1500 of the enemy advanced against Tarifa by the pass of La Pena ; but the road could be commanded from the sea, and our vessels fired upon them

*Tarifa at-
tempted by
the French.*

with such effect that they turned back. Godinot meantime felt severely the want of supplies; for the mountaineers of Ronda, and the parties which Ballasteros had appointed for that purpose, intercepted his communications and cut off his detachments. Three days, therefore, after his ineffectual demonstration against Tarifa, he retreated by Ximena upon Ubrique. Ballasteros was soon at his heels, and falling upon the division which composed the rear-guard, put it to flight, pursued it for three leagues, and brought away prisoners, knapsacks, and arms in abundance. He soon obtained a more important advantage: dividing his army for the purpose of deceiving the enemy, he collected it by a general movement from different directions to one point, in the village of Prado del Rey, and marching from thence by night, surprised Semele at daybreak. This general had taken his station at Bornos upon the right bank of the Guadalete, with 2000 foot, 160 horse, and three pieces of artillery. All the mules and baggage fell into the hands of the Spaniards; about 100 prisoners were taken, and the corps was put to flight. This fresh misfortune proved fatal to Godinot, whom Soult recalled to Seville. On his arrival in the evening he went to rest; early the next morning he came out of his chamber, took the musket of the sentry unobserved, and blew out his own brains.

The plans of Marshal Soult, however, were not to be frustrated by partial reverses, though they were impeded by them. France has rarely or never had an abler man in her service than this general, nor one who might have attained a higher reputation, if his consummate abilities had not been devoted to the service of a tyrant, and sullied by cruelties which bring disgrace upon France and upon human nature. He had lost Tarifa by relying too confidently on the supineness and inattention of the allies. The French entered it when they first over-ran Andalusia; and having, as they thought, taken pos-

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October.

session, passed on to other points of more immediate importance. The governor of Gibraltar, General Colin Campbell, seized the opportunity, and occupied it with about 250 men and thirty gunners under Major Brown of the 28th. A few weeks afterwards, a thousand French arrived to garrison it: the general hatred of the Spaniards prevented them from getting any information but what their own people, and the few traitors whom they had seduced, could supply; and their troops were under no little surprise when they found the gates closed against them. They drew up below the eastern hills, within musket-range, and poured their bullets into the town; and they entered the suburbs, where several of our men were killed; but they were without artillery, and seeing a detachment issue through the sea-gate to take possession of the south-east hills, and bring some guns to bear upon their flank, they hastily retired, and made no farther attempt to occupy the place, till this time.

Tarifa.

Tarifa is believed to have been a settlement of the Phœnicians. It derives its present name from Tarik, who first led the Moors into Spain, and who is said to have built the castle. The town had long been declining, till the late wars in which Spain had been involved with England in consequence of her unhappy connexion with France gave it a new importance: for a little island which stands out boldly into the Straits off the town rendered it a favourable station for gun-boats; and during the late war these boats inflicted greater losses upon the trade of Great Britain than it suffered from all the fleets of all her enemies. There were two half-moon batteries and a martello tower on the island; but when the Spaniards at the commencement of this dreadful struggle formed their alliance with Great Britain, these works, with the whole line of defence along the Straits, were dismantled, lest the French should at any time turn it against the best ally of Spain. The enemy occupied no

point which in so great a degree commanded the Straits ; and Soult was now the more desirous of obtaining it, because he was at this time negotiating with Morocco, and the possession of Tarifa, which is only five leagues distant from Tangiers, would render it impossible for England with all her naval means to prevent him from receiving corn ; and thus the difficulty of supplying the French armies would be greatly lessened, if not altogether removed.

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The little garrison which had saved this important place was withdrawn for the expedition under Generals Lapeña and Graham, and when the latter re-entered the Isle of Leon, he left Tarifa uncovered ; but General Colin Campbell a second time secured it, by sending thither the marines from the ships at Gibraltar. Soon after it was re-garrisoned, Major King of the 82nd was appointed to the command, and he and the Spanish governor, D. Manuel Daban, delayed not to take precautions against a danger, the approach of which now began to be apprehended. Picquets were placed at La Pena, at Facinas, and Port Alanca, and provisions were laid in for a siege. The first movement of the enemy indicated their ultimate object ; D. Antonio Begines de los Rios, an officer who had distinguished himself during General Lapeña's expedition, and who was now stationed at Algeziras, made a representation of the approaching danger, and General Campbell directed that some field works should be thrown up on the island to secure a retreat, in case a retreat should be unavoidable. These works excited some jealousy in the governor ; but Major King explained to him their use and necessity ; and Ballasteros, who inspected them about the same time, expressed in animated terms his gratitude to the British nation, seeming at that time, like a brave and generous man, to feel no petty suspicions, or lingering of old prejudices, or resentment of false and ill-directed pride.

Tarifa re-garrisoned by the English.

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October.
Col. Skerret
and Copons
arrive there.

In the middle of October, Colonel Skerret arrived with about 1200 men, and took the command of the garrison; and in a few days D. Francisco de Copons followed him with 900 Spaniards and about 100 cavalry. The Spanish general demanded that the keys of the town should be given up to him, and Colonel Skerret would have acceded to this, if it had not been represented, that his predecessors had kept possession of the keys, first to guard against any treachery; secondly, because the brother of the governor was in the French service; and, thirdly, as it was more conformable to the honour of the British nation. The validity of the two former reasons had been but too often proved; the latter might well have been dispensed with; on the part of England there was no point of honour implicated, and the British officer acted as he did for the welfare and security of Spain. The question was referred by Colonel Skerret to Governor Campbell's decision, and the rapid approach of the enemy, and the hearty co-operation of the allies against him, removed all jealousies which otherwise might have arisen.

The French
invest the
town.

The French advanced in such superior numbers, that little attempt could be made to oppose or impede them. They took possession of the surrounding hills on the 19th of December, and lighted fires, which were supposed to be for the purpose of misleading our gun-boats; for these vessels annoyed them materially by keeping up a brisk fire upon the pass of La Pena and the hills near the beach. By the following night the town was closely invested, after a warm day's work, in which the artillery on both sides played with destructive effect. One of the enemy's shells killed an artillery driver and eight artillery horses; fourteen Spaniards were killed by another. The allies lost seventy-one in killed and wounded; the loss of the enemy was also great. Four ten-inch mortars on the island were seen to

do terrible execution ; one of their shells burst in the centre of a column, and towards evening, when the enemy were most heated and exposed themselves most, they were evidently checked by the unexpected resistance which they met with. The siege was now fairly commenced, and the cavalry and staff-horses, as no longer useful, were sent to the island, from thence to be embarked on the first opportunity. An account of the enemy's force was obtained from a serjeant who was brought in prisoner ; there were 11,000 men, he said, with eighteen pieces of cannon, long sixteen-pounders, and two howitzers ; Marshal Victor commanded. The prisoner entreated that he might not be given up to the Spaniards. When he was asked whether he thought the French would succeed in the siege, he replied, " that their Emperor Napoleon had given them positive orders to take the place, and he generally provided means adequate to the end in view." The man appeared sensible and well informed ; this confidence in the wisdom with which their operations were directed was probably common to the whole French army, and it constituted half their strength.

The allies were not equally confident that they should be able to defend the place ; and the commanding officer of the flotilla surveyed the coast of the island, to fix upon a spot for embarking the garrison, if they should be compelled to evacuate both posts. A precaution of this kind, if it had been publicly known, might have contributed, by disheartening the men, to produce the catastrophe which it seemed to anticipate ; but it was the duty of the commanders to think of the worst result, while they hoped and acted for the best ; and when they remembered what weak walls and insufficient works were opposed to a numerous enemy, experienced in all the arts of war, and more especially in the attack of fortified places, it was not without good reason that they thought it expedient to provide a

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*October.**Doubts
whether the
town could
be defended.*