

and where it was impossible either to stop or overtake them. He estimated that Soult had lost all his artillery and equipments, and not less than a fourth of his men, since he was attacked upon the Vouga. “If,” said he, “an army throws away all its cannon, equipments, and baggage, and every thing that can strengthen it and enable it to act together as a body, and if it abandons all those who are entitled to its protection, but add to its weight and impede its progress, it must obviously be able to march through roads where it cannot be overtaken by an enemy who has not made the same sacrifices.”

CHAP.
XXII.
1809.
May.

When the British Commander was commencing his operations from Coimbra, he received information from the Ambassador at Seville that a French division of 15,000 men had certainly left Aragon, with the intent, it was believed, of joining either Ney or Soult. It became, therefore, a grave question for his consideration, whether to return, in pursuance of his plan of co-operating with Cuesta, when he should have driven the enemy out of the north of Portugal, . . . or push with greater eagerness for the entire destruction of Soult's army, instead of leaving him to retreat, unite with Ney, and become again formidable by the junction of this force from Aragon. Upon mature deliberation he determined not to vary from his first purpose, because, though the intelligence was announced as indubitable, no tidings of this division had been transmitted from Ciudad Rodrigo, Braganza, or Chaves, quarters where it might have been expected to be known, and because his instructions enjoined him to make the protection of Portugal his principal object. If it were not necessary, therefore, to remain for that object in the northern provinces, he conceived that he should act in the best manner both for Portugal and Spain, by joining Cuesta with all speed, and commencing active operations against Victor. Thus he had determined before he advanced from Coimbra, and therefore he

*Movement
of troops
from Ara-
gon.*

*Reasons for
not continu-
ing the pur-
suit.*

CHAP.
XXII.

1809.

May.

Naplies,
123.

Col. Jones,
vol. i. 204-
7.

*Victor en-
ters Portu-
gal by way
of Alcan-
tara, and
speedily
retreats.*

now desisted from the pursuit, satisfied with having done, if not all that he wished, all that was possible, and more than he had expected. Had the Portugueze at Chaves been active in obeying their instructions, and occupying the defiles near Salamonde, the French, who had abandoned their ammunition and their guns, must have been irretrievably lost; the very cartridges which the men carried, and which constituted their whole stock, were rendered useless by the rain, and they could no otherwise have escaped the fate they deserved from the hands of the Portugueze than by surrendering to the British. As it was, they had lost not less than a fourth of their army since Sir Arthur attacked them on the Vouga.

If Sir Arthur had not made this previous determination, and if it had been possible for the commissariat, imperfect as it then was, to have kept up with a longer pursuit in a country which could supply neither food, nor carriages, nor beasts of draught, the tidings which he now received of Victor's movements would probably have recalled him toward the south. That Marshal, having been joined by Lapisse, had at length made the movement which Soult had so long and anxiously expected; he had broken up from the Guadiana, and marched for the Tagus at Alcantara. Colonel Mayne occupied this important point with 600 of the Lusitanian Legion, 1100 Portugueze militia, and fifty Portugueze cavalry. With this far inferior force he withstood 10,000 infantry and 1000 horse for six hours, and then effected his retreat without losing a single gun, though not without a heavy loss in killed and wounded, the Legion alone losing 170 men. He had endeavoured to blow up the bridge; the attempt failed, and the enemy, being thus masters of the passage, advanced a little way into Portugal in the direction of Castello Branco. But no sooner had Victor learnt that Sir Arthur had recrossed the Douro, than he retired by the same

course, evacuated Alcantara, and concentrated his army between the Tagus and the Guadiana, in the neighbourhood of Caceres. CHAP. XXII.

When Soult's army had re-entered Spain, and found that the pursuit was not continued, their hopes rose, and they rejoiced in the thought of communicating with the other corps of their countrymen. The red uniform of the Swiss again led to a serviceable mistake, . . . they were taken for British soldiers at Allariz, and the inhabitants, under that delusion, hastened to bring them provisions and wine, blessing them as their deliverers. On the following day they reached Orense, and there learnt that the French in Lugo were at that time besieged, and that both Ney and Romana had marched into Asturias. 1809.
May.

Soult reaches Orense.

May 19.

Ney lies, 132.

Romana, after he had succeeded in surprising the enemy at Villa Franca, had received information that Ney was collecting a considerable force at Lugo for the purpose of attacking him. Upon this he turned into Asturias, crossing the mountains at the passes of Cienfuegos, and descending upon Navia de Suarna; there he left his army under the command of D. Nicolas Mahy, and went himself to Oviedo, in the hope of rendering the resources of the principality more efficient than they had hitherto been found. The Junta of that province had received larger assistance of every kind from England than any other provincial government, and were said to have made less use of it in the general cause. They were accused of looking only to the establishment of their own indefinite authority, their own interest and that of their followers, and the destruction of all who were not subservient to them. Complaints to this tenor had reached Romana in Galicia, and he found upon inquiry that the greater part of the supplies which they had received were consumed in the support of idle and ostentatious offices; and that the corps which were raised, and which he wished to serve as a nursery for his army, *Romana enters Asturias, and displaces the Junta.*

CHAP. XXII.
 1809. May.

drafting volunteers from them to fill up his regiments from time to time, were rendered useless by the want of capacity or conduct in the officers, who either remained in their houses, or did not support with any firmness the points to which they were ordered.

Abuses of every kind were complained of in the misapplication of money, the disposal of offices, the contempt of public orders, the neglect of the laws, and the interception not only of private correspondence but of official papers. Romana was persuaded that these accusations were well founded; and by virtue of the authority of which he believed himself possessed, as Captain-General of that province, he dismissed the members of the Junta, as unworthy of their station, and nominated others in their place, among whom were the first deputies who had been sent to England, D. Andres Angel de la Vega, and the Visconde Materosa, now by the death of his father Conde de Toreno.

May 2.

*Combined
 movements
 of the
 French
 against
 Romana.*

In consequence of this movement of Romana's, a combined operation was concerted between the French generals Ney, Kellermann, and Bonnet, for the purpose of cutting off him and his army, and subjugating Asturias. Proclamations in French and Spanish were printed at Coruña, wherein Ney assured the Asturians that almost all Spain had now submitted, Zaragoza having surrendered after losing three-fourths of its inhabitants, Valencia having opened its gates without resistance, and the Central Junta having taken refuge in Cadiz, which could not long serve as an asylum. He bade them rely upon his word, that their persons and their property should be respected, and prayed Heaven to enlighten them, that he might not be under the necessity of putting in force against them the terrible rights of war. Having sent abroad these threats and falsehoods, he, who had collected about 12,000 men at Lugo, entered Asturias by the Concejo de Ibias, a traitorous priest guiding him by roads

May 8.

which were unsuspected because they were almost impassable. Bonnet at the same time advanced along the coast from the east, and Kellermann with some 6000 men entered by Pajares.

CHAP.
XXII.

1809.

May.

This was an occasion upon which the Spaniards acted with as much alertness as their enemies. Mahy was apprised in time of Ney's approach, and effectually disappointed one part of his scheme by returning into Galicia, there to profit by his absence. When the Marshal reached Navia de Suarnia he found the troops had escaped him; but deeming the single person of Romana of more importance than his army, and learning that he was in Oviedo, he hastened toward that city with such celerity, and by such a route (the priest still guiding him), that the enemy were in Salas and Cornellana as soon as it was known in Oviedo that they were on the march. Not an hour was to be lost. Romana sent the single regiment which was with him to join Ballasteros at Infiesto, withdrew to Gijon, and there embarked for Galicia with his staff and the Bishop of St. Andero. Before he had embarked the French had entered Oviedo; having pilaged that city, they proceeded to Gijon, but too late for securing the prey of which they were most desirous.

Romana
escapes by
sea.

May 19.

But though Romana had been thus nearly surprised, the Asturians, under Generals Worster and Ballasteros, prevented the enemy from deriving any benefit from their transient success. Barcena, who commanded a division of the corps under Worster, by rapid marches upon Teberga and Grado, prevented the French from uniting their forces, and defeated them in three partial actions. Worster then collecting his whole army, advanced toward Oviedo; but Kellermann, perceiving that he could not maintain possession of the city, evacuated it in time, and retreated precipitately into Leon. Ballasteros meantime, who was on the eastern frontier of the principality, finding that Bonnet was between him and Worster, turned rapidly

Ney returns
into Galicia.

CHAP. upon St. Andero, chiefly with a view of drawing Bonnet out
 XXII. of Asturias. He attacked the French garrison in that city,
 1809. killed 800, made 600 prisoners, and won the place. The ill
May. conduct of part of his army, which he had stationed in the
 passes near, deprived him of the fruits of his victory; they
 suffered themselves to be surprised by Bonnet's whole force;
 the remainder of his men in consequence had no other alter-
 native than to abandon the city and disperse, while he himself,
 like Romana, had just time to escape by sea. These move-
 ments on the part of the two Asturian commanders compelled
 Ney to hasten his return to Galicia, where indeed he rightly
 judged his presence was necessary. He retreated therefore
 along the sea-coast by Castropol, and found in that province
 intelligence of a nature which more than counterbalanced the
 temporary triumph he had obtained.

*The French
 in Lugo re-
 lieved by
 Soult.*

May 19.

Mahy, when he turned back from Asturias, hastened toward Lugo, where the greater part of the French then in Galicia had been left. At first the enemy despised his ill-provided numbers, and relying upon their artillery and discipline, went out against him; but having been baffled in two skirmishes, and suffered considerable loss at Puente-nuevo, where many of the Germans deserted, they were glad to take shelter within the walls of Lugo, which, old as they were, were an effectual defence against men who had neither scaling ladders nor cannon. There, however, he blockaded them; and the French must soon have been compelled to surrender, if Soult had not arrived to their relief. That commander, knowing their danger, allowed his troops only one day's rest at Orense, and hastened for Lugo, sending a detachment forward to reconnoitre the besiegers, and assure the garrison of speedy support. Mahy then, in pursuance of Romana's system, withdrew; but the appearance of the French was such, after the sufferings which they had endured, that the

garrison suspected a stratagem, and could not be persuaded that any French troops could appear in so miserable a state of clothing and equipments, till some of the officers were personally recognized.

CHAP.
XXII.

1809.

May.

The force with Mahy consisted of about 10,000 men. Knowing that the troops before whom he retired had been driven from Portugal, he counted with reason upon the speedy deliverance of the province, and withdrew toward Mondoñedo, to receive supplies and reinforcements, and be ready for acting as opportunity might offer, against Coruña or Ferrol. The remainder of the regular forces then in Galicia consisted of 8000 men at Vigo under Brigadier D. Martin de la Carrera, to whom Barrios had given up the command. That officer, as soon as he received advices of Soult's arrival on the frontier with the intent of joining Ney, took the field in the hope of intercepting him and preventing the junction. But finding when he reached Pontevedra that Soult had hastened on toward Lugo, and was two or three days' march distant, he perceived that pursuit must be unavailing; and resolving to profit by the time, he advanced upon Santiago to strike a blow against the French in that city, prevent them from joining their countrymen, and distract the attention of the enemy.

Mahy re-
tires to
Mondoñedo.

May 21.

The garrison consisted of about 1900 men and 200 cavalry. Aware of the approach of the Spaniards, and despising them as usual, they advanced to meet them on the Campo de Estrella. The Spanish vanguard, under D. Ambrosio de la Quadra, withstood them, till Morillo arrived to charge their right flank; the reserve came to the support of the van; Carrera advanced against them in front; they were twice driven from the positions where they attempted to make a stand; and a reinforcement of 800 men arrived in time only to share their defeat. They were driven into the city, and through it, and pursued more than a

The French
driven from
Compostello

May 23.

CHAP. league beyond it, till night came on : the loss of the Spaniards
 XXII. was 130 in killed and wounded ; the French had more than
 1809. 400 killed, . . they left only thirty-eight prisoners, of whom the
 May. most part were wounded ; but very many wounded were carried
 to Coruña. The conquerors did not fail to remark, that this
 success had been obtained on the day of Santiago's apparition,
 and on the field where his body had been discovered by the star
 which rested on his grave.

*Combined
 operations
 of Marshals
 Ney and
 Soult in
 Galicia.*

This was the intelligence which Marshal Ney found when he reached Lugo on his return from Asturias ; and though Lugo itself had been saved by the unexpected arrival of the army from Portugal, the appearance of that army, and the recital of its adventures, were alike discouraging. The two Marshals had not parted upon good terms, they met upon worse, and the ill feeling that existed between them extended to their troops. Ney's soldiers talked of the Portugueze campaign in terms which provoked resentment, and quarrels arose, in which the officers took part. This, however, was no time for reproaches and bickerings ; all fear of pursuit from the English being over, a plan was concerted for destroying Romana's army, and recovering what had been lost in Galicia. For this purpose Ney was to act against Carrera and Morillo, and having defeated them, and retaken Vigo, to send a column upon Orense ; while Soult was to pursue Romana's army in the valley of the Sil, and disperse it, after which he was to march upon the Puebla de Sanabria, and there observe the Portugueze frontier, threatening to re-enter it, and keeping up a communication with Ney by Orense, and with the corps under Mortier by Zamora. In pursuance of this plan Ney hastened to Coruña ; and Soult, having been supplied from that fortress with field pieces and stores, commenced a pursuit little resembling that from which he had so recently escaped.

*Naylies,
 134.*

*Operations
 de M. Soult,
 276.*

The day on which Carrera drove the enemy from Santiago Romana* landed at Ribadeo, and joined his army at Mondoñedo. Here he was informed of Soult's arrival at Lugo, and apprehending immediately that an effort would be made by the two Marshals to enclose him, he marched by the Valle de Neyra to Orense, and there took up a defensive position, covered by the Minho and the Sil. The Conde de Noroña, D. Gaspar Maria da Nava, had just at this time arrived in Galicia, with the appointment of second military and political chief, and had taken the command at Santiago: him he directed to withdraw from that city and retire upon Pontevedra, and he applied to Silveira for assistance; but the Portuguese general could not move without orders from Marshal Beresford. It was believed by the Galician army, that if the Portuguese had continued the pursuit two days longer, even without the British, Soult's men were in so helpless and miserable a state, that they would gladly have surrendered, Lugo must have fallen, and the remainder of the enemy have been shut up in Coruña. If the event was less advantageous to the common cause, it was more honourable to the Galicians.

CHAP.
XXII.

1809.
May.

*Romana
rejoins his
army.*

Soult had remained eight days at Lugo, and had sent off for France 1100 men, who were completely broken down by the sufferings of the campaign. Still his troops were in such a state that when he reached Monforte it was found necessary to give them some days more of rest. They were in one of the finest parts of Galicia, and in the most delightful season of the year; but there was the dreadful feeling for those whose hearts were

*Proceedings
of Soult.*

* The historian of Marshal Soult's campaigns in 1809 describes Romana's *land journey* from the Asturias (p. 276) with a precision worthy of notice . . . because it shows what credit is due to such a writer. My statement is taken from Romana's own letters.

CHAP. not completely hardened, that every inhabitant of that country
 XXII. was their mortal foe. Into whatever town or village they en-
 1809. tered, not a living soul was to be found, except those who from
 May. infirmity were unable to follow their countrymen. They who
 had arms were gone to join the army; the others, with the women
 and children, had taken refuge in the wild parts of that wild
 region, and were on the watch for every opportunity of weaken-
 ing their invaders by putting a straggler to death. During the
 five days that they halted, the French suffered considerable loss;
 and when they attempted to cross the Sil, they found it not so
 practicable for them to effect a passage in the face of an enemy,
 as it had been for the English at Porto. That sort of war was
 kept up which, under the circumstances of Spain, tended to the
 sure destruction of the invaders. The Spaniards never exposed
 themselves, and never lost an opportunity of harassing the
 enemy. They availed themselves of their perfect knowledge of the
 country to profit by every spot that afforded cover to their marks-
 men; and leaving their fields to be ravaged, their property to be
 plundered, and their houses to be destroyed, they applied them-
 selves, with a brave recklessness of every thing except their
 duty, to the great object of ridding the country of its invaders.
 Wherever the French bivouacked, the scene was such as might
 rather have been looked for in a camp of predatory Tartars than
 in that of a civilized people. Food, and forage, and skins of
 wine, and clothes and church vestments, books and guitars, and
 all the bulkier articles of wasteful spoil, were heaped together
 in their huts with the planks and doors of the habitations which
 they had demolished. Some of the men, retaining amid this
 brutal service the characteristic activity and cleverness of their
 nation, fitted up their huts with hangings from their last scene
 of pillage, with a regard to comfort hardly to have been ex-
 pected in their situation, and a love of gaiety only to be found