

CHAP.

IX.

1808.

July.

*They form
a bridge
over the
Ebro.*

ceived some scanty succours; yet, however scanty, they were of importance. Four hundred soldiers from the regiment of Estremadura, small parties from other corps, and a few artillerymen got in. Two hundred of the militia of Logroño were added to these artillerymen, and soon learnt their new service, being in the presence of an enemy whom they had such righteous reason to abhor. Two four-and-twenty-pounders and a few shells, which were much wanted, were procured from Lerida. The enemy, meantime, were amply supplied with stores from the magazine in the citadel of Pamplona, which they had so perfidiously seized on their first entrance, as allies, into Spain. Hitherto they had remained on the right* bank of the Ebro. On the 11th of July they forced the passage of the ford, and posted troops enough on the opposite side to protect their workmen while forming a floating bridge. In spite of all the efforts of the Aragonese, this bridge was completed on the 14th; a way was thus made for their cavalry, to their superiority in which the French were mostly indebted for all their victories in Spain. This gave them the command of the surrounding country; they destroyed the mills, levied contributions on the villages, and cut off every communication by which the besieged had hitherto received supplies. These new difficulties called out new resources in this admirable people and their general, . . . a man worthy of commanding such a people in such times. Corn mills, worked by horses, were erected in various parts of the city; the monks were employed in manufacturing gunpowder, materials for which were obtained by immediately collecting all

* In military language, you always describe the country by the current of water, and speak as if you were looking down the stream. It was requisite to explain this to the court upon Whitelocke's trial, and therefore the explanation cannot be thought unnecessary here.

the sulphur in the place, by washing the soil of the streets to extract its nitre, and making charcoal from the stalks of hemp, which in that part of Spain grows to a magnitude that would elsewhere be thought very unusual*.

By the end of July the city was completely invested, the supply of food was scanty, and the inhabitants had no reason to expect succour. Their exertions had now been unremitted for forty-six days, and nothing but the sense of duty could have supported their bodily strength and their spirit under such trials. They were in hourly expectation of another general attack, or another bombardment. They had not a single place of security for the sick and the children, and the number of wounded was daily increased by repeated skirmishes, in which they engaged for the purpose of opening a communication with the country. At this juncture they made one desperate effort to recover the Torrero. It was in vain; and convinced by repeated losses, and especially by this last repulse, that it was hopeless to make any effectual sally, they resolved to abide the issue of the contest within the walls, and conquer or perish there.

On the night of the second of August, and on the following day, the French bombarded the city from their batteries opposite the gate of the Carmen. A foundling hospital, which was now filled with the sick and wounded, took fire, and was rapidly consumed. During this scene of horror, the most intrepid exertions were made to rescue these helpless sufferers from the flames. No person thought of his own property or individual concerns, . . . every one hastened thither. The women were emi-

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*Distress of
the inhabit-
ants.*

*Foundling
Hospital
burnt.*

* "On this simple foundation," says Mr. Vaughan, "a regular manufactory of gunpowder was formed after the siege, which produced 13 arrobas of Castille per day; that is, 325 lb. of 12 ounces."

CHAP. nently conspicuous in their exertions, regardless of the shot and
 IX. shells which fell about them, and braving the flames of the
 1808. building. It has often been remarked, that the wickedness of
 August. women exceeds that of the other sex; . . for the same reason,
 when circumstances, forcing them out of the sphere of their
 ordinary nature, compel them to exercise manly virtues, they
 display them in the highest degree, and, when they are once
 awakened to a sense of patriotism, they carry the principle to
 its most heroic pitch. The loss of women and boys, during this
 siege, was very great, fully proportionate to that of men; they
 were always the most forward, and the difficulty was to teach
 them a prudent and proper sense of their danger.

*Convent
 of St. En-
 gracia.
 August 3.*

On the following day, the French completed their batteries
 upon the right bank of the Guerva, within pistol-shot of the gate
 of St. Engracia, so called from a splendid church and convent
 of Jeronimites, situated on one side of it. This convent was, on
 many accounts, a remarkable place. Men of letters beheld it
 with reverence, because the excellent historian Zurita spent the
 last years of his life there, observing the rules of the community,
 though he had not entered into the order; and because he was
 buried there, and his countryman and fellow-labourer, Geronymo
 de Blancas, after him. Devotees revered it, even in the neigh-
 bourhood of our Lady of the Pillar, for its relics and the saint
 to whom it was dedicated. According to the legend, she was
 the daughter of Ont Comerus, a barbarian chief, in the pay of
 the Romans, by whom the city of Norba Cæsarea, (situated
 near the Tagus, between the present towns of Portalegre and
 Alcantara) was given him, together with its district, for his
 service in recovering it from Cathelius, a chief of the Alemanni.
 His daughter, Encratis, or Encratide, (for from one of these
 names Engracia has been formed) was brought up a Christian,
 and espoused to a governor on the Gallic side of the Pyrenees,

to whom she was sent with a suitable escort. Their way lay through Cæsarea-Augusta, where the Præses, or Governor of Spain, Publius Dacianus, the bloodiest minister of the tenth persecution, was at that time endeavouring to extirpate Christianity. Engracia, either preferring martyrdom to her unknown spouse, or imagining that her rank would be her safeguard, visited the governor for the purpose of interceding in behalf of the Christians, and remonstrating against his cruelty. Thus much of the legend is probably fabulous; but certain it is, that a virgin of that name was tortured under that persecution; and, though she survived, was venerated as a * martyr in that city, before the close of the century in which she suffered. Just, however, as her claim is to pious remembrance, her church, and the

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* Martyrum nulli, remanente vitâ,
Contigit terris habitare nostris;
Sola tu morti propriæ superstes,
 Vivis in orbe,
Vivis ac pœnæ seriem retexis,
Carnis et cæsæ spoliū retentans,
Tetra quam sulcos habeant amaros,
 Vulnera narras.

Prudentius Περὶ Στεφανῶν. Hym. 4.

The poet goes on describing her torments with his usual love of live-anatomy... I know not whether it be possible that any person should have survived them; but that some may be found wicked enough to inflict equal tortures under the pretext, and others conscientious enough to endure them for the sake of religion, has been too often proved, and in few places more frequently than in Zaragoza itself, from which city many an inquisitor has gone to keep company with Dacianus. St. Engracia is invoked in diseases of the heart and the liver, in consequence of the circumstances of her martyrdom.

Vidimus partem jecoris revulsam,
Ungulis longe jacuisse pressis;
Mors habet pallens aliquid tuorum,
 Te quoque vivâ.

CHAP. divine honours which have been paid to her, were procured
 IX. by fraud. Angels are said to have descended at her death,
 1808. and to have officiated at her funeral, bearing tapers and thuri-
August. bules, and singing hymns of triumph. During the Moorish
 captivity, her relics disappeared; they were discovered towards
 the close of the fourteenth century, which was the great age
 for inventions of this kind. There stood at that time, upon
 the site of this memorable convent, an old church, dedicated
 to the Zaragozaan martyrs, of the tenth persecution, and called
 the *Iglesia de las Masas*, in memory of an early specimen of
 Catholic ingenuity. Dacianus, holding relic-worship in as much
 contempt as the Christians did his idolatry, in order to pre-
 vent them from indulging in it, burnt the bodies of the martyrs,
 together with those of some malefactors, thinking that their
 ashes would be undistinguishable; nevertheless, the Christians
 found their own, which had collected together in white balls or
 masses, separate from the rest. In 1389, the regular canons, to
 whom the church belonged, resolved to rebuild a part of it: in
 digging the foundation, two marble chests were discovered.
 The lid of the smaller was fastened down very firmly with a sort
 of pitch; when this was taken off, two sets of human bones were
 found in different compartments; over the one were the words
Lupercii Martyris, sculptured in the marble; over the other,
Engratie Virginis: these latter were of rose colour, which was
 admitted as proof of their authenticity. The larger chest con-
 tained a great assortment of anonymous bones, ashes, and the
 white masses, which had disappeared for so many centuries.
 The mine was very rich; the workmen went on till they had
 invented thirteen chests, and at last, a whole pit full of relics,
 not the less efficacious because it could not be ascertained to
 whom they had belonged. Seventy years afterwards, Juan II.
 of Aragon, one of the wickedest and most perfidious of men,

fancied or feigned, that, by St. Engracia's intercession, he was cured of a complaint in his eyes ; in consequence of which, he resolved to enlarge this church, and build a monastery adjoining it for the Jeronimites, . . an order which, during that and the succeeding age, was in great favour at the three courts of the Peninsula. He began his work, but died without completing it, leaving that charge by will to his son, Ferdinand, the Catholic king. He continued the building, but it was not finished till the reign of Charles the Fifth.

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Both the church and convent were splendidly adorned, but the most remarkable part of the whole edifice was a subterranean church, formed in the place where the relics were discovered, and having the pit, or well, as it was called, in the middle. It was divided by a beautiful iron grating, which excluded laymen from the interior of the sanctuary. There were three descents ; the widest flight of steps was that which was for public use, the two others were for the religioners, and met in one behind the three chief altars, within the grating. Over the midst of these altars were two tombs, placed one upon the other in a niche ; the under one containing the relics of Engracia's companions and fellows in martyrdom ; the upper, those of the saint herself, her head excepted, which was kept in a silver shrine, having a collar of precious stones, and enclosed in crystal. The altars on either side had their respective relics ; and several others, equally rich in such treasures, were ranged along the walls, without the grating. The roof was of an azure colour, studded with stars to represent the sky. The breadth of the vault considerably exceeded its length ; it was sixty feet wide, and only forty long. Thirty little columns, of different marbles, supported the roof. On the stone brink of the well, the history of the Zaragozan martyrs was represented in bas-relief ; and an iron grating, reaching to the roof, secured it from being profaned by idle curiosity, and from the pious

CHAP. larcenies which it might otherwise have tempted. Within this
 IX. cage-work, a silver lamp was suspended. Thirty such lamps
 1808. were burning there day and night; and, though the roof was
 August. little more than twelve feet high, it was never in the slightest
 degree sullied with smoke. The fact is certain*; but the useful
 and important secret, by which oil was made to burn without
 producing smoke, was carefully concealed; and the Jeronimites
 continued till this time to exhibit a miracle, which puzzled all
 who did not believe it to be miraculous.

The hospital set on fire.

On the 4th of August, the French opened batteries within pistol-shot of this church and convent. The mud walls were levelled at the first discharge; and the besiegers rushing through the opening, took the batteries before the adjacent gates in reverse. Here General Mori, who had distinguished himself on many former occasions, was made prisoner. The street of St. Engracia, which they had thus entered, leads into the Cozo, and the corner buildings where it thus terminated, were on the one hand the convent of St. Francisco, and on the other the General Hospital. Both were stormed and set on fire; the sick and the wounded threw themselves from the windows to escape the

* The Bollandists relate this miracle with a candid admission of doubt, because the writer, in whom they found it related, spoke upon the testimony of others, instead of boldly asserting it on his own authority. There are, however, testimonies in abundance, and that of M. Bourgoing will be admitted to be decisive. "The roof," he says, "though very low, is certainly not smoked. They invite those who are doubtful of it, to put a piece of white paper over one of these lamps. I tried this experiment, and I must confess, I saw, or thought I saw, that my paper was not blackened. I had still my doubts, but I took care to conceal them from my bigoted conductors. I was, however, tempted to say to them, God has not thought proper to work any striking miracle to accelerate the end of the French revolution, or to calm the passions which it has roused; and, do you think that he would condescend to perform here a miracle as obscure as your cavern, and as useless as your own existence?"

flames, and the horror of the scene was aggravated by the maniacs, whose voices raving or singing in paroxysms of wilder madness, or crying in vain to be set free, were heard amid the confusion of dreadful sounds. Many fell victims to the fire, and some to the indiscriminating fury of the assailants. Those who escaped were conducted as prisoners to the Torrero; but when their condition had been discovered, they were sent back on the morrow, to take their chance in the siege. After a severe contest and dreadful carnage, the French forced their way into the Cozo, in the very centre of the city, and, before the day closed, were in possession of one half of Zaragoza. Lefebvre now believed that he had effected his purpose, and required Palafox to surrender, in a note containing only these words: "Head-quarters, St. Engracia. Capitulation*!" The heroic Spaniard immediately returned this reply: "Head-quarters, Zaragoza. War at the knife's point†!"

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The contest which was now carried on is unexampled in history. One side of the Cozo, a street about as wide as Pall-mall, was possessed by the French; and, in the centre of it, their general, Verdier, gave his orders from the Franciscan convent. The opposite side was maintained by the Aragonese, who threw up batteries at the openings of the cross streets, within a few paces of those which the French erected against them. The intervening space was presently heaped with dead, either slain upon the spot, or thrown out from the windows. Next day the ammunition of the citizens began to fail; . . . the French were expected every moment to renew their efforts for completing the conquest, and even this circumstance occasioned no dismay, nor did any

War in the streets.

August 5.

* *Quartel-general, Santa Engracia. La capitulation.*

† *Quartel-general, Zaragoza. Guerra al cuchillo.*

CHAP. one think of capitulation. One cry was heard from the people,
 IX. wherever Palafox rode among them, that, if powder failed, they
 1808. were ready to attack the enemy with their knives, . . . formidable
 August. weapons in the hands of desperate men. Just before the day
 closed, Don Francisco Palafox, the general's brother, entered
 the city with a convoy of arms, and ammunition, and a reinforcement
 of three thousand men, composed of Spanish guards, Swiss,
 and volunteers of Aragon, . . . a succour as little expected by the
 Zaragozans, as it had been provided against by the enemy.

*The city re-
 ceives a re-
 inforcement*

*F. Santiago
 Sass.*

The war was now continued from street to street, from house
 to house, and from room to room ; pride and indignation having
 wrought up the French to a pitch of obstinate fury, little inferior
 to the devoted courage of the patriots. During the whole siege,
 no man distinguished himself more remarkably than the curate
 of one of the parishes, within the walls, by name P. Santiago
 Sass. He was always to be seen in the streets, sometimes
 fighting with the most determined bravery against the enemies,
 not of his country alone, but of freedom, and of all virtuous
 principles, wherever they were to be found ; at other times,
 administering the sacrament to the dying, and confirming, with
 the authority of faith, that hope, which gives to death, under
 such circumstances, the joy, the exultation, the triumph, and
 the spirit of martyrdom. Palafox reposed the utmost confidence
 in this brave priest, and selected him whenever any thing pe-
 culiarly difficult or hazardous was to be done. At the head of
 forty chosen men, he succeeded in introducing a supply of
 powder into the town, so essentially necessary for its defence.

This most obstinate and murderous contest was continued
 for eleven successive days and nights, more indeed by night
 than by day ; for it was almost certain death to appear by day-
 light within reach of those houses which were occupied by the
 other party. But under cover of the darkness, the combatants

frequently dashed across the street to attack each other's batteries; and the battles which began there, were often carried on into the houses beyond, where they fought from room to room, and floor to floor. The hostile batteries were so near each other, that a Spaniard in one place made way under cover of the dead bodies, which completely filled the space between them, and fastened a rope to one of the French cannons; in the struggle which ensued, the rope broke, and the Zaragozans lost their prize at the very moment when they thought themselves sure of it*.

A new horror was added to the dreadful circumstances of war in this ever memorable siege. In general engagements the dead are left upon the field of battle, and the survivors remove to clear ground and an untainted atmosphere; but here . . . in Spain, and in the month of August, there where the dead lay the struggle was still carried on, and pestilence was dreaded from the enormous accumulation of putrifying bodies. Nothing in the whole course of the siege so much embarrassed Palafox as this evil. The only remedy was to tie ropes to the French prisoners, and

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*Number of
the dead.*

* It is asserted by the French, in their official account, that, after many days fighting, they won possession of many cloisters which had been fortified, three-fourths of the city, the arsenal, and all the magazines; and that the peaceable inhabitants, encouraged by these advantages, hoisted a white flag, and came forward to offer terms of capitulation; but that they were murdered by the insurgents; for this is the name which the French, and the tyrant whom they served, applied to a people fighting in defence of their country, and of whatever could be dear to them. Unquestionably, if any traitors had thus ventured to show themselves in the heat of the contest, they would have been put to death as certainly as they would have deserved it; and, if the thing had occurred, it would be one fact more to be recorded in honour of the Zaragozans; but there is no other authority for it than the French official account, in which account the result of the siege is totally suppressed. The circumstance, had it really taken place, would not have been omitted in Mr. Vaughan's Narrative, and in the accounts published by the Spaniards.