

CHAP.  
X.

1808.

June.

means for securing himself. It was not long before, looking out at the window, he saw the Corregedor with an adjutant of Kellermann's and a party of horse coming to his house. He had just time to bid the servant say he was not within, and slip into the street by a garden door. He had got some distance, when the Corregedor saw him, and called after him, saying he wanted to settle with him concerning the quartering of some troops. Antonio Leite knew what his real business was too well to be thus deceived, and quickened his pace. The town has two gates, one of which was fastened, because the garrison was small; toward that however he ran, well knowing that if he were not intercepted at the other, he should be pursued and surely overtaken. Joaquim José de Matos, a Coimbra student, then at home for the vacation, met him, and offered to conceal him in his house; but the Juiz continued to run, seeing that the soldiers were in pursuit, dropt from the wall, escaped with little hurt, and then scrambled down the high and steep crag upon which it stands. Matos, thinking that he had now involved himself, ran also, and being of diminutive stature, squeezed himself through a hole in the gate; they then fled together toward Valencia de Alcantara, and had the satisfaction, at safe distance, of seeing a Swiss escort come round the walls to the place where the Juiz had dropt.

*Neves, iii.*  
333—337.

The Spanish frontier being so near, their escape was easy; but when they had been a few days at Valencia de Alcantara, Matos determined upon returning to his family, knowing that there was no previous charge against him, and thinking that the act of having spoken to the Juiz could not be punished as a crime. In this he was mistaken. The governor of Marvam was a worthy instrument of the French. He not only arrested Matos, but his father also, an old man who was dragged from his bed, where he lay in a fit of the gout, to be thrown into a

*He returns,  
and seizes  
the town.*

CHAP. Portugueze prison ; and a physician, whom he suspected of  
 X. being concerned in the scheme of an insurrection. This news  
 1808. reached the Juiz ; it was added, that his own property had been  
June. sequestered, he himself outlawed, and all persons forbidden to  
 harbour him, and that a French escort had arrived to carry the  
 three prisoners to Elvas. He could not endure to think that  
 he should be, however innocently, the occasion of their death,  
 and therefore determined to attempt at least their deliverance  
 at any hazard. It was not difficult to find companions at a  
 time when all usual occupations were at a stand, and every man  
 eager to be in action against an odious enemy. With a few  
 Spanish volunteers he crossed the frontier, and there raised the  
 peasantry, who knew and respected him : with this force he pro-  
 ceeded to a point upon the road between Marvam and Elvas ;  
 the escort had passed, . . . but he had the satisfaction to learn that  
 it had not gone for the prisoners, only to bring away the am-  
 munition and spike the guns. This raised their spirits ; they  
 directed their course to Marvam, climbed the walls during the  
 night, opened the prison, seized the governor, and without the  
 slightest opposition from two hundred Portugueze troops, whom  
 he had just obtained from Elvas to secure the place, and who,  
 if they knew what was passing, did not choose to notice it, the  
 adventurers returned to Valencia in triumph with their friends,  
 and with the governor prisoner. The Junta of Valencia did  
 not now hesitate, in conformity to an order from Badajoz, to  
 June 26. give the Juiz regular assistance ; he entered Marvam in triumph  
 with this auxiliary force, and the Prince Regent was proclaimed  
 there by the rejoicing inhabitants, at the very time when Beja  
 was in flames. A few days afterwards a Spanish detachment  
 from Albuquerque entered Campo Mayor with the same facility.  
 Some jealousies which arose there, as well as at Marvam, from  
 the inconsiderate conduct of the Spanish officers in issuing

*Insurrec-  
 tion at  
 Campo  
 Mayor.  
 July 2.*

orders as if they were in their own territories, were put an end to by the formation of a Junta, of which the Spanish commander at Campo-Mayor was made president. The example of these places was immediately followed at Ouguela, Castello de Vide, Arronches, and Portalegre; and the insurrection thus extended throughout all that part of the province which is to the north of Elvas.

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June.*Neves, iii.*  
337—360.

Junot meantime was in a state of great anxiety at Lisbon. It was not known what was become of Maransin and the troops in Algarve; there was no news of Loison; the insurrection in the north had reached Coimbra, and was spreading in Estremadura, and there was a report, probable enough to obtain credit, that an expedition of 10,000 English was off the bar. He called a council, at which the generals of division, Comte de Laborde and Travot, were present, the chief of the staff, General Thiebault, Baron de Margaron, and other officers. The result of their conference was, that the army should be collected in and near Lisbon, leaving garrisons in only the three important places of Almeida, Elvas, and Peniche; that Setubal and the left bank of the Tagus should be maintained as long as possible; that when the English appeared they should occupy in succession three positions; one from Leiria to Ourem and Thomar; a second from Santarem to Rio-Mayor, Obidos, and Peniche; lastly, one from Saccavem to Cintra: finally, that they should defend Lisbon till the utmost extremity, and only leave it to retire upon Elvas, rest the troops there, and then force their way either to Madrid, Segovia, or Valladolid. In pursuance of this resolution, Kellermann was summoned from Alem-Tejo, and courier after courier dispatched to recall Loison from Beira. Junot's next measure was to put the church plate which he had secured in a portable form, and for this purpose what there was no time for coining was melted into ingots. To counteract the rumours, true and

*Measures of  
the French.*

June 28.

*Thiebault,  
Relation,  
128.**Observador  
Portuguez,  
321.*

CHAP. false, by which the Portugueze were encouraged, it was affirmed  
 X. that Napoleon had entered Spain, and that 20,000 men had  
 1808. reached the frontiers of Portugal to reinforce the French.

Alarmed and harassed by contradictory rumours, and dreading from the temper of the people an insurrection, which would be punished by a massacre, many families removed from Lisbon; those who had country estates to their *Quintas*, the greater number to the different places on the opposite side of the river, particularly Almada and Casilhas. They were however ordered to return; every head of a family who did not within four days obey this order was to be arrested, and all persons were prohibited from leaving Lisbon, unless they were provided with a passport from the police, . . an institution to which the Portugueze at this time applied the name of the Inquisition. It was of importance, the decree said, that good citizens should be secured against the ridiculous rumours which were promulgated, and that all notions of danger to the city of Lisbon should be put an end to; the French army would know how to maintain tranquillity there. This, however, was less a measure of policy than of extortion; those families who had retired were made to pay, in proportion to their means, for permission to remain where they were. They who had nothing to give suffered the whole inconvenience of this oppressive law.

*Observador  
 Portuguez,  
 343. n.  
 July 1.*

*Observador  
 Portuguez,  
 345.*

*They en-  
 deavour to  
 avail them-  
 selves of the  
 clergy's in-  
 fluence.*

The French commander tried to suppress the national feeling by the influence of religion. In the village of Varatojo, near Torres Vedras, there was a famous seminary for itinerant preachers of the Franciscan order, instituted by Fr. Antonio das Chagas, a man remarkable alike for his genius, for the profligacy of his youth, and the active, austere, enthusiastic piety of his after life. Junot sent for the guardian of this seminary, requiring his immediate attendance; the old man, in strict adherence to the rule of his order, which forbade him to travel by

any other means, obeyed the summons on foot, and arrived four-and-twenty hours later than the time appointed. He was then ordered to dispatch some of his preachers, as men who possessed great authority over the people, to Leiria and into Alem-Tejo, to preach the duty of submission and tranquil obedience. The Guardian excused himself by representing that his brethren who were qualified for such a mission were already on their circuits, and that there were then in the seminary none but youths engaged in preparing for the ministry, and old men, who being past all service, rested there from their labours, in expectation of their release. The dignitaries of the patriarchal church could not so well evade his commands; a pastoral letter was obtained from them denouncing excommunication against all persons who should directly or indirectly, either by writing, speaking, or acting, encourage the spirit of insurrection which had gone abroad. This was sent into the provinces, with a letter from the French intendant of police, Lagarde, in which the clergy and the heads of convents were informed, that wherever public tranquillity might be disturbed, they would be held responsible, because no disturbance would break out if they exerted themselves to prevent it, as the true spirit of religion required. The fate of Beja, he said, should be that of every city in Portugal which should have the guilty imprudence to revolt against the Emperor, now the sole sovereign of that country. And he asked the Portugueze, wherefore they would bring upon themselves the heavy weight of power at a moment when the Almighty authority, (such was the blasphemous expression,) thought only of putting in oblivion the rights of conquest, and of governing with mildness? Is it, said he, before a few handfuls of factious men in Portugal that the star of the great Napoleon is to be obscured, or the arm of one of his most valiant and skilful captains to be deadened? Deeply as the baneful superstition of the Romish church has

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*Neves, iv.*  
61—63.

July 2.

July 4.

*Observador*  
*Portuguez,*  
348—353.

CHAP. rooted itself in that country, the threat of excommunication excited nothing but contempt. The French could not derive any assistance from ecclesiastical interference while it was remembered that they had robbed the churches.

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*Insurrection at Thomar.*

It is not extraordinary that the intrusive government should have failed to deceive the people by its addresses; but that it should have attempted so to do; that it should have talked of benefits intended and conferred upon a nation on whom it had brought such wide and general misery, and inflicted injuries as unprovoked as they were enormous, indicated indeed an effrontery of which none but the agents of Buonaparte were capable. Their insolent language exasperated the Portugueze. One of these papers was lying upon a tradesman's counter in Thomar, and one of their very few partizans vindicated the manner in which the Prince was there spoken of, saying, that the country was now rid of him and of the Inquisition. A Franciscan who was present immediately took a knife from his sleeve, and struck it through the paper into the board, saying, that in that manner he would serve any one who dared speak against his Prince and his religion: and producing a pistol, he was only withheld by force from giving murderous proof of his sincerity. An information was laid against him, and a party of Portugueze soldiers sent from Abrantes to arrest him; he absconded in time, and the guardian of the convent, who was suspected of favouring his escape, was taken in his stead. Before they could carry him out of the town, the people rose and rescued him, and the restoration of the legitimate government was proclaimed with the same ceremonies as in other places.

*Neves, iv.*  
3—8.

*Insurrection at Leiria.*

About the same time a handful of students from Coimbra, collecting volunteers as they went, spread the insurrection at Condeixa, Ega, and Pombal, and approached Leiria, from which

city a small party of the French retired before them. This place was within easy reach of the enemy, and troops, arms, and ammunition were wanting to defend it. The people sent to Coimbra for all, as if Coimbra could supply either; the Bishop exerted himself to forward the preparations; and the people mustered tumultuously with that confidence which an ignorant multitude always feels of its own untried strength. The French had some small garrisons upon the coast, about twenty miles off, in the little forts of Nazareth, S. Giam, and S. Martinho, which communicated with each other by telegraphs, and drew rations every day from the adjoining country. The Juiz of Pederneira was compelled to furnish these; in this time of alarm he was called upon to store them with a convenient stock beforehand, and because this was not, and could not be done in a few hours, they began to pillage the neighbourhood. Provoked at this, the fishermen fell upon a Frenchman, who was going with dispatches from S. Martinho to Nazareth, and murdered him, crying, Down with the French! The sentinel at the signal-post had the same fate. . . the signal-post was broken, and the country round about was presently in insurrection. The enemy withdrew from S. Giam and S. Martinho, having hastily spiked two guns at the former place, and buried two barrels of powder. They fell back upon a detachment under General Thomieres, which watched the country between the Caldas, Obidos, and Peniche. Nazareth was blockaded by the insurgents; the report was, that a considerable Spanish army had arrived at Leiria, and incredible as this was, it was believed, and gave full confidence to these ignorant and zealous people. They sent thither for assistance, and the Coimbra students came with a party of peasants, those who could muster the best arms. The cannon were brought from S. Giam, and rendered service-

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the insur-  
gents at  
Nazareth.*

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July 5.

*Neves, iv.*  
14—30.*Margaron  
approaches  
Leiria.*

able; the two barrels of powder were discovered; a Portuguese artilleryman escaped from the fort to join his countrymen, and direct their operations; and the French, finding themselves now in serious danger, capitulated to save their lives. The victorious students and their party were far advanced on their return to Leiria, when they heard news of that miserable city, which rendered it necessary for them to strike into the pine forest, and conduct their prisoners by unfrequented ways to Figueira.

General Margaron had been sent from Lisbon with between 4000 and 5000 men, to check the progress of the insurrection in Estremadura, and learn some intelligence of Loison, from whom nothing had been heard for a considerable time. Though the disposition of the people was every where the same, they were kept down by the presence or by the neighbourhood of the enemy, every where within reach of the capital; and he met with no opposition till he approached Leiria. That city, which is the most considerable place on the road to Coimbra, is built upon the little rivers Liz and Lena, in a beautiful country, an hundred miles from Lisbon. It is believed to have been built from the ruins of Colippo, a Lusitanian city which the Romans destroyed; and it has been asserted, that Sertorius planted a colony there whom he brought from Liria in Spain. Affonso Henriquez fortified it as a strong hold against the Moors, who then possessed Santarem, and recovered it after they had captured it. Some of his successors occasionally resided there, and its fine castle was enlarged and beautified by Queen St. Isabel, wife of the magnificent King Diniz. At the beginning of the last century it contained 900 houses and 2150 communicants. Its population had increased, and might at this time have been estimated at about 5000. The adjacent country has been made the scene of pastoral romance by Francisco Rodriguez Lobo,



for which it is precisely adapted by its wild yet beautiful and peaceful character. CHAP.  
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The people of Leiria and the peasantry who had collected there had had little time for preparation when they heard that the French were approaching. They had paraded through their streets the banner of the city, bearing for its device a crow upon a pine tree; in memory of one which, when Affonso Henriquez attacked the city, perched there in the midst of his camp, and clapped its wings and croaked in a manner that was accepted as a good omen. They had proclaimed the Prince, restored and repainted the royal arms, and assisted at the performance of *Te Deum* in the cathedral; but school-boys in a rebellion could not have been more unprepared with any plan of defence, or unprovided with means for it. They were in an open city. They had not a single piece of cannon. Of some 800 men who were stationed at outposts and other points of danger, scarcely a fourth part were armed with muskets, and for these three or four round of cartridges were all that could be found. To persons unacquainted with the character and condition of the Portuguese it might appear almost incredible that resistance should have been attempted under circumstances thus absolutely hopeless. But the people were goaded by insult, and stung by the feeling of insupportable wrong. They had been wantonly invaded, . . . grievously, inhumanly, and remorselessly oppressed. They knew that the nation was rising against its oppressors: they felt instinctively what the strength of a nation is; and were too much exasperated to consider, or too little informed to understand, that without order and discipline numbers are of little avail, and even courage not to be relied on.

The higher orders were perfectly sensible of their imminent danger, but they would have exposed themselves to certain de-

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Preparation  
for defence.

Neves, iv.  
31—36.

The French  
enter the  
city.