

chief of Copons' staff, renders the French version the most credible.

*"We do not,"* said that officer, *"exceed nine or ten thousand men, extended on different points of a line running from the neighborhood of Reus along the high mountains to the vicinity of Olot. The soldiers are brave but without discipline, without subordination, without clothing, without artillery, without ammunition, without magazines, without money and without means of transport!"*

Copons, when he came down to the Campo, frankly told Murray, that as his troops could only fight in position he would not join in any operation which endangered his retreat in the high mountains. However, with exception of twelve hundred left at Vich under Eroles, all his forces, the best perhaps in Spain, were now at Reus and the Col de Balaguer, ready to intercept the communications of the different French corps, and to harass their marches if they should descend into the Campo. Murray could only calculate upon seven or eight hundred seamen and marines to aid him in pushing on the works of the siege, or in a battle near the shore, and he expected three thousand additional troops from Sicily. Sir Edward Pellew, commanding the great Mediterranean fleet, had promised to divert the attention of the French troops by a descent eastward of Barcelona; and the armies of Del Parque and Elio were to make a like diversion westward of Tortosa. Finally, a general rising of the somatenes might have been effected, and those mountaineers were all at Murray's disposal, to procure intelligence, to give timely notice of the enemy's approach, or to impede his march by breaking up the roads.

On the French side there was greater but more scattered power. Suchet had marched with nine thousand men from Valencia, and what with Pannetier's brigade and some spare troops from Tortosa, eleven or twelve thousand men with artillery might have come to the succor of Tarragona from that side, if the sudden fall of San Felipe de Balaguer had not barred the only carriage way on the westward. A movement by Mora, Falcet and Momblanch, remained open, yet it would have been tedious, and the disposable troops at Lerida were few. To the eastward therefore the garrison looked for the first succor. Maurice Mathieu, reinforced with a brigade from Upper Catalonia, could bring seven thousand men with artillery from Barcelona, Decaen could move from the Ampurdan with an equal number, and hence twenty-five thousand men might finally bear upon the allied army.

But Suchet, measuring from the Xucar, had more than one hundred and sixty miles to march; Maurice Mathieu was to collect his forces from various places and march seventy miles after

Murray had disembarked; nor could he stir at all until Tarragona was actually besieged, lest the allies should reembark and attack Barcelona. Decaen had in like manner to look to the security of the Ampurdan, and he was one hundred and thirty miles distant. Wherefore, however active the French generals might be, the English generals could calculate upon ten days' clear operations after investment, before even the heads of the enemy's columns could issue from the hills bordering the Campo.

Some expectation also he might have, that Suchet would endeavor to cripple Del Parque before he marched to the succor of Tarragona; and it was in his favor that eastward and westward the royal causeway was in places exposed to the fire of the naval squadron. The experience of Codrington during the first siege of Tarragona had proved indeed that an army could not be stopped by this fire; yet it was an impediment not to be left out of the calculation. Thus, the advantage of a central position, the possession of the enemy's point of junction, the initial movement, the good will of the people and the aid of powerful flank diversions belonged to Murray; superior numbers and a better army to the French; for the allies, brave and formidable to fight in a position, were not well constituted to move.

Tarragona, if the resources for an internal defence be disregarded, was a weak place. A simple revetment three feet and a half thick, without ditch or counterscarp, covered it on the west; the two outworks of Fort Royal and San Carlos, slight obstacles at best, were not armed nor even repaired until after the investment; and the garrison, too weak for the extent of rampart, was oppressed with labor. Here then, time being precious to both sides, ordinary rules should have been set aside and daring operations adopted.\* Wellington had judged ten thousand men sufficient to take Tarragona. Murray brought seventeen thousand, of which fourteen thousand were effective. To do this he had, he said, so reduced his equipments, stores and means of land transport that his army could not move from the shipping; he was yet so unready for the siege, that Fort Royal was not stormed on the 8th because the engineer was unprepared to profit from a successful assault.

This scarcity of stores was unreal; the equipments left behind were only draft animals and commissariat field-stores; the thing wanting was vigor in the general, and this was made manifest in various ways. Copons was averse to calling out the somatenes and Murray did not press the matter. Suchet had taken San Felipe de Balaguer by escalade; Murray attacked in form and without sufficient means; for if Captain Peyton had not brought up the

\* Appendix 1. 28.

mortars, an after-thought extraneous to the general's arrangements, the fort could not have been reduced before succor arrived from Tortosa: indeed the surrender was scarcely creditable to the French commandant, for his works were uninjured and only a small part of his powder destroyed. It was also said, that one of the officers employed to regulate the capitulation had in his pocket an order from Murray to raise the siege and embark, spiking the guns! At Tarragona, the troops on the low ground did not approach so near by three hundred yards as they might have done; and the outworks should have been stormed at once, as Wellington stormed Fort Francisco at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. Francisco was a good outwork and complete; the outworks of Tarragona were incomplete, ill-flanked, without palisades or casemates, and their fall would have enabled the besiegers to form a parallel against the body of the place as Suchet had done in the former siege: a few hours' firing would then have brought down the wall and a general assault might have been delivered. The French had stormed a similar breach in that front although defended by eight thousand Spanish troops; and the allies, opposed by only sixteen hundred French and Italian soldiers and seamen, were in some measure bound by honor to follow that example, since Skerrett at the former siege refused to commit twelve hundred British troops in the place, on the special ground that it was indefensible, though so strongly garrisoned. Murray's troops were brave, they had been acting together for nearly a year; and, after the fight at Castalla, had become so eager, that an Italian regiment which at Alicant was ready to go over bodily to the enemy now volunteered to lead the assault on Fort Royal. This confidence was not shared by their general.

Up to the 8th, Murray's proceedings were ill-judged; his after-operations were contemptible. As early as the 5th, false reports had made Suchet reach Tutoza, and put two thousand French in movement from Lerida. Murray then openly avowed his alarm and his regret at having left Alicant; yet he proceeded to construct two heavy counter-batteries near the Olivo, sent a detachment to Valls in observation of the Lerida road, and desired Manso to watch that of Barcelona. On the 9th, his emissaries said the French were coming from the east and from the west; and would when united exceed twenty thousand. Murray immediately sought an interview with the admiral, declaring his intention to raise the siege. His views changed during the conference, but he was discontented; Hallowel refused to join in a summons to the governor and his flotilla again bombarded the place.

On the 10th the spies in Barcelona gave notice that eight or ten thousand French with fourteen guns, would march from that city

the next day. Copons immediately joined Manso. But Murray, as if he now disdained his enemy, continued to disembark stores, landed several mortars, armed the batteries at the Olivo, and on the 11th opened their fire in concert with that from the ships of war. This was the first serious attack, and the English general, professing a wish to fight the column coming from Barcelona, sent the cavalry under Lord Frederick Bentinck to Altafalla, and in person sought a position of battle to the eastward. He left orders to storm the outworks that night, yet returned before the hour appointed, extremely disturbed by intelligence that Maurice Mathieu was at Villa Franca with eight thousand combatants, and Suchet closing upon the Col de Balaguer. His infirmity of mind was apparent to the whole army. At eight o'clock he repeated his order to assault the outworks, and at ten o'clock the storming-party was in the dry bed of the Francoli awaiting the signal, when a countermand arrived; the siege was then to be raised and the guns removed immediately from the Olivo. The commander of the artillery remonstrated, and the general promised to hold the batteries until the next night; but the detachment at Valls and the cavalry at Altafalla were called in without notice to Copons, though he depended on their support.

All the heavy guns of the batteries on the low grounds and the parc were removed to the beach for embarkation on the morning of the 12th, and at 12 o'clock Lord Frederick Bentinck arrived from Altafalla with the cavalry. It is said he was ordered to shoot his horses, but refused to obey and moved towards the Col de Balaguer. The detachment from Valls arrived next and the infantry marched to Cape Salou to embark, but the horsemen followed Lord Frederick, and were themselves followed by fourteen pieces of artillery; each body moved independently, and all was confused, incoherent, afflicting and dishonorable to the British arms. While the seamen were embarking the guns, the quarter-master-general came down to the beach with orders to abandon that business and collect boats for the reception of troops, the enemy being supposed close at hand; and notwithstanding Murray's promise to hold the Olivo until night-fall, fresh directions were given to spike the guns there and burn the carriages. Then loud murmurs arose on every side and from both services; army and navy were alike indignant, and so excited, that it is said personal insult was offered to the general. Three staff-officers repaired in a body to Murray's quarters to offer plans and opinions; but the admiral, who did not object to raising the siege though opposed to the manner of doing it, would not suffer the seamen to discontinue the embarkation of artillery; yet he urged an attack upon the column

coming from Barcelona, and opposed the order to spike the guns at the Olivo, offering to be responsible for carrying all clear off during the night.

Thus pressed, Murray again wavered. Denying that he had ordered the battering pieces to be spiked, he sent counter orders and directed a part of Clinton's troops to advance towards the Gaya river. In a few hours afterwards he reverted to his former idea, and peremptorily renewed the order for the artillery to spike the guns on the Olivo, and burn the carriages. Nor was even this unhappy action performed without confusion. The different orders received by Clinton in the course of the day had indicated the extraordinary vacillation of the commander-in-chief; and Clinton himself, forgetful of his own arrangements, with an obsolete courtesy took off his hat to salute an enemy's battery which had fired upon him; but this waving of his hat from that particular spot was also the conventional signal for the artillery to spike the guns, and they were thus spiked prematurely. The troops were however all embarked in the night of the 12th, and many of the stores and horses were shipped the 13th without the slightest interruption from the enemy; but eighteen or nineteen battering-pieces, whose carriages had been burnt, were, with all the platforms, fascines, gabions and small ammunition, in view of the fleet and army, triumphantly carried into the fortress! Murray seemingly unaffected by this misfortune, shipped himself on the evening of the 12th and took his usual repose in bed!\*

While the siege was thus precipitately abandoned, the French, unable to surmount the obstacles opposed to their junction, unable even to communicate by their emissaries, were despairing of Tarragona. Suchet did not reach Tortosa before the 10th, but a detachment from the garrison had on the 8th attempted to succor San Felipe, and nearly captured the Naval Captain Adam, Colonel Prevôt, and other officers, who were examining the country. Maurice Mathieu reached Villa Franca early on the 10th,† and deceiving even his own people as to his numbers, gave out that Decaen was close behind with a powerful force. To give effect to this policy, he drove Copons from Arbos the 11th, and his scouting parties entered Vendrills as if he was resolved singly to attack Murray. Pellew had however landed his marines at Rosas which arrested Decaen's march; and Maurice Mathieu, alarmed at the surcease of fire about Tarragona, knowing nothing of Suchet's movements and too weak to fight the allies alone, fell back in the night of the 12th to the Llobregat, his main body never having passed Villa Franca.

\* Admiral Hallowel's Evidence.

† Lafaille.

Suchet's operations were even less decisive. His advanced guard under Pannetier, reached Perillo the 10th. The 11th, not hearing from his spies, he caused Pannetier to pass over the mountains through Valdillos to some heights which terminate abruptly on the Campo above Monroig. The 12th that officer reached the extreme verge of the hills, being then twenty-five miles from Tarragona. His patrols descending into the plains met with Lord Frederick Bentinck's troopers, and reported that Murray's whole army was at hand; wherefore he could not enter the Campo, but at night kindled large fires to encourage the garrison. These signals were unobserved, the country people had disappeared, no intelligence could be procured, and Suchet could not with a large force enter those wild hills where there was no water. Thus on both sides of Tarragona the succoring armies were baffled at the moment chosen by Murray for flight.

Suchet now received alarming intelligence from Valencia, yet still anxious for Tarragona, he pushed on the 14th along the coast-road towards Felipe de Balaguer, thinking to find Prevôt's division alone; but the head of his column was suddenly cannonaded by the Thames frigate, and he was wonderfully surprised to see the whole British fleet anchored off San Felipe and disembarking troops. Murray's operations were indeed as irregular as those of a partisan, yet without partisan vigor. Hearing in the night of the 12th, from Prevôt, of Pannetier's march to Monroig, he, to protect the cavalry and guns under Lord Frederick Bentinck, sent Mackenzie's division by sea to Balaguer on the 13th, and followed with the whole army the 14th. Mackenzie drove back the French posts on both sides of the pass, the embarkation of the cavalry and artillery then commenced, and Suchet, still uncertain if Tarragona had fallen, moved towards Valdillos to bring off Pannetier.

At this precise period Murray heard that Maurice Mathieu's column, which he always erroneously supposed to be under Decaen, had retired to the Llobregat, that Copons was again at Reus, and Tarragona had not been reinforced. Elated by this information, he revolved various projects in his mind, at one time thinking to fall upon Suchet, at another to cut off Pannetier; now resolving to march upon Cambrills and even to menace Tarragona again by land, then to send a detachment by sea to surprise the latter; but finally he disembarked his whole force on the 15th, and being ignorant of Suchet's last movement, decided to strike at Pannetier. In this view, he detached Mackenzie by a rugged valley leading from the eastward to Valdillos, and that officer reached it on the 16th; but Suchet had already carried off Pannetier's brigade, and

the next day the British detachment was recalled by Murray, who had determined to re-embark.

This determination was caused by a fresh alarm from the eastward, for Maurice Mathieu, whose whole proceedings evinced both skill and vigor, hearing that the siege of Tarragona was raised and the allies re-landed at the Col de Balaguer, retraced his steps and boldly entered Cambrills the 17th. On that day, however, Mackenzie returned and Murray's whole army was thus concentrated in the pass. Suchet was then behind Perillo, Copons at Reus, having come there at Murray's desire to attack Maurice Mathieu; and the latter would have suffered if the English general had been capable of a vigorous stroke. It was fortunate for Mackenzie that Suchet, too anxious for Valencia, disregarded his movement upon Valdillos; but taught by the disembarkation of the whole English army that the fate of Tarragona whether for good or evil was decided, he had sent an emissary to Maurice Mathieu on the 16th, and then retired to Perillo and Amposta. He reached the latter place the 17th, attentive only to the movement of the fleet, and meanwhile Maurice Mathieu endeavored to surprise the Catalans at Reus.

Copons was led into this danger by Murray, who had desired him to harass Maurice Mathieu's rear with a view to a general attack, and then changed his plan without giving any notice. However, he escaped. The French moved upon Tarragona, and Murray was left free to embark or to remain at the Col de Balaguer. He called a council of war, and it was concluded, as already said, to re-embark, but then Pellew's fleet appeared in the offing, and Hallowel, observing a signal announcing Lord William Bentinck's arrival, answered with more promptitude than propriety, "*we are all delighted.*"

Murray's command having thus terminated, public discontent rendered it impossible to avoid investigation, yet the difficulty of holding a court in Spain and some disposition at home to shield him, caused great delay. He was at last tried in England. Acquitted of two charges, on the third he was declared guilty of an error in judgment and sentenced to be admonished, but even that slight mortification was not inflicted. This decision does not preclude the judgment of history, nor will it sway that of posterity. The court-martial was assembled twenty months after the event, when the war being happily terminated, men's minds were little disposed to treat past failures with severity. There were two distinct prosecutors, having different views; the proceedings were conducted at a distance from the scene of action, defects of memory could not be remedied by reference to localities, which opened a

door for contradiction and doubt upon important points. There was no indication that the members of the court were unanimous in their verdict; they were confined to specific charges, restricted by legal rules of evidence and deprived of the testimony of all the Spanish officers, who were certainly discontented with Murray's conduct and whose absence caused the charge of abandoning Copons' army to be suppressed. Moreover the warmth of temper displayed by the principal prosecutor, Admiral Hallowel, together with his signal on Lord William Bentinck's arrival, whereby, to the detriment of discipline, he manifested his contempt for the general with whom he was acting, gave Murray an advantage which he improved skilfully, for he was a man sufficiently acute and prompt when not at the head of an army. He charged the admiral with deceit, factious dealings, and disregard of the service; described him as being of a passionate overweening busy disposition, troubled with excess of vanity, meddling with everything and thinking himself competent to manage both troops and ships.

Nevertheless Sir John had signally failed both as an independent general and as a lieutenant acting under superior orders. On his trial indeed, blending these different capacities together with expert sophistry, he pleaded his instructions in excuse for his errors as a free commander, and his discretionary power in mitigation of his disobedience as a lieutenant; but his operations were indefensible in both capacities. Wellington's instructions, precise and founded upon the advantages offered by a command of the sea, prescribed an attack upon Tarragona with a definite object, namely, to deliver Valencia.

"*You tell me,*" said he, "*that the line of the Xucar, which covers Valencia, is too strong to force; turn it then by the ocean, assail the rear of the enemy and he will weaken his strong line to protect his communication, or, he will give you an opportunity to establish a new base of operations behind him.*"

This plan demanded promptness and energy, Murray possessed neither. The weather was so favorable, that a voyage which might have consumed nine or ten days was performed in two, the Spanish troops punctually effected their junction, the initial operations were secured, Fort Balaguer fell, the French moved from all sides to the succor of Tarragona, the line of the Xucar was weakened, the diversion was complete. In the night of the 12th the bulk of the army was again afloat, a few hours would have sufficed to embark the cavalry at the Col de Balaguer, and Murray might have sailed for Valencia while Suchet's advanced guard was still on the hills above Monroig, and himself, uncertain as to the



fate of Tarragona, one hundred and fifty miles from the Xucar. Murray had failed to attain the first object pointed out by Wellington's instructions, the second was within his reach; instead of grasping it he loitered about the Col de Balagner, and gave Suchet time to reach Valencia again, in manifest dereliction of the letter and spirit of Wellington's instructions.

What was his defence? That no specific period being named for his return to Valencia he was entitled to exercise his discretion! Did he then as an independent general perform any useful or brilliant action to justify his delay? His tale was one of loss and dishonor! The improvident arrangements for the siege of San Felipe, and the unexpected fortune which saved him from the shame of abandoning his guns there also, have been noted; and when the gain of time was success he neither urged Copons to oreak up the roads, nor push the siege of Tarragona with vigor.

The feeble formality of the latter operation has been imputed to the engineer Major Thackary;\* unjustly, because that officer had only to furnish a plan of attack agreeable to the rules of art; it might be a cautious one, and many persons did think he treated Tarragona with too much respect; but the general was to decide if the scheme of his operations required a deviation from the regular course; the untrammelled engineer could then have displayed his genius. Murray made no sign. His instructions and his ultimate views were alike withheld from his naval colleague, from his second in command, from his quarter-master-general; and while the last-named functionary was quite shut out from the confidence of his chief, the admiral and many others, both of the army and navy, imagined him to be the secret author of the proceedings which were hourly exciting their indignation. Murray however declared at his trial that he had rejected Donkin's advice; and indeed that officer had vainly urged him to raise the siege on the 9th and told him where four hundred draught bullocks were to be had to transport his heavy artillery. On the 12th also he opposed the spiking of the guns and urged Murray to drag them to Cape Salou, of which place he had given as early as the third day of the siege, a military plan, marking a position, strong in itself, covering several landing places, and capable of being flanked on both sides by the ships of war: it had no drawback save a scarcity of water, yet there were some springs and the fleet would have supplied the deficiency.

It is true that Donkin, unacquainted with Wellington's instructions and having at Castalla seen no reason to rely on Murray's military vigor, was averse to the enterprise against Tarragona.

\* Philpart's Military Calendar.

He thought the allies should have worked Suchet out of Valencia by operating on his right flank. And so Wellington would have thought if he had only looked at their numbers and not at their quality; he had even sketched such a plan for Murray if the attack upon Tarragona should be found impracticable. But he knew the Spaniards too well to like such combinations for an army, two-thirds of which were of that nation and not even under one head; an army ill-equipped and with the exception of Del Parque's troops unused to active field operations. Wherefore, calculating their power with remarkable nicety, he preferred the sea-flank and the aid of an English fleet. Here it may be observed, that Napoleon's plan of invasion did not embrace the coast-lines where they could be avoided. It was an obvious disadvantage to give the British navy opportunities of acting against his communications. He indeed seized Santona and Santander in the Bay of Biscay, because, being the only good ports on that coast the English ships were thus in a manner shut out from the north of Spain. He likewise worked the invasion by the Catalonian and Valencian coast, because the only roads practicable for artillery run along that sea-line; but his general scheme was to hold with large masses the interior of the country, and keep the communications aloof from the danger of combined operations by sea and land.

Murray, when tried, grounded his justification on the following points. 1. That he did not know with any certainty until the night of the 11th that Suchet was near. 2. That the fall of Tarragona being the principal object and the drawing of the French from Valencia the accessory, he persisted in the siege because he expected reinforcements from Sicily and desired to profit from the accidents of the war. 3. That looking only to the second object, the diversion would have been incomplete if the siege had been raised sooner or even relaxed; hence the landing of guns and stores after he despaired of success. 4. That he dared not risk a battle to save his battering-train, because Wellington would not pardon a defeat. Now, had he adopted a vigorous plan, or persisted until the danger of losing his army was apparent and then made a quick return to Valencia, this defence would have been plausible though inconclusive. But when every order, every movement, every expression discovered his infirmity of purpose, his pleading can only be regarded as the subtle tale of an advocate. The admiral was right in thinking the fault was not so much in the raising of the siege as the manner of doing it, and in the feebleness of the attack. For first, however numerous the chances of war are, fortresses expecting succor do not surrender without being vigorously assailed; and the arrival of reinforcements from Sicily was uncer-

tain. It was scarcely possible for the governor, while closely invested, to discover that no fresh stores or guns were being landed; still less could he judge so timeously of Murray's final intention by that fact, as to advertise Suchet that Tarragona was in no danger. Neither were the spies, if any were in the allies' camp, more capable of drawing such conclusions, seeing that sufficient artillery and stores for the siege were landed the first week; and the landing of more guns could not have deceived them, when the feeble operations of the general and the universal discontent furnished surer guides for their reports.

Murray designed to raise the siege as early as the 9th, and only deferred it after seeing the admiral from his natural vacillation. It was therefore mere casuistry to say, that he first obtained certain information of Suchet's advance on the night of the 11th. On the 8th and 10th through various channels he knew the French marshal was in march for Tortosa, and his advanced guard menacing the Col de Balaguer; the approach of Maurice Mathieu was also known; he should therefore have been prepared to raise the siege without the loss of guns on the 12th. Why were they lost? They could not be saved he said without risking a battle in a bad position, and Wellington had declared he would not pardon a defeat! This was the after-thought of a sophister, and not warranted by the instructions, which on that head referred only to Del Parque and Elio: but was it necessary to fight a battle to save the guns? all persons admitted they could have been embarked before mid-day on the 13th. Pannetier was then at Monroig, Suchet behind Perillo, Maurice Mathieu falling back from Villa Franca. The French on each side were therefore respectively thirty-six and thirty-four miles distant on the night of the 12th, and their point of junction was Reus. Yet how form that junction? The road from Villa Franca by the Col de Cristina was partially broken up by Copons; the road from Perillo to Reus was always impracticable for artillery, and from the latter place to Tarragona was six miles of very rugged country. The allies were in possession of the point of junction, Maurice Mathieu was retiring, not advancing. And if the French could have marched thirty-four and thirty-six miles through the mountains in one night, and been disposed to attack in the morning without artillery, they must still have ascertained the situation of Murray's army; they must have made arrangements to watch Copons, Manso, and Prevôt, who would have been on their rear and flanks; they must have formed an order of battle and decided upon the mode of attack before they advanced. It is true that their junction at Reus would have forced Murray to suspend his embarkation to fight; but not, as he said

in a bad position with his back to the beach, where the ships' guns could not aid him and where he might expect a dangerous surf for days. The naval officers denied the surf at that season; and it was not right to destroy guns and stores when the enemy was not even in march for Reus; coolness and consideration would have enabled Murray to see there was no danger. In fact no emissaries escaped from the town, and the enemy had no spies in the camp, since no communication took place between the French columns until the 17th. On the 15th Suchet knew nothing of the fate of Tarragona.

This reasoning leaves out the chance of falling with superior forces upon one of the French columns. It supposes however that accurate information was possessed by the French generals; that Maurice Mathieu was as strong as he pretended to be, Suchet eager and resolute to form a junction with him. Yet in truth Suchet knew not what to do after the fall of Fort Balaguer, Maurice Mathieu had less than seven thousand men of all arms, he was not followed by Decaen, and he imagined the allies to have twenty thousand men, exclusive of the Catalans. The position at Cape Salou was only six miles distant, and Murray might with the aid of the draft bullocks discovered by Donkin have dragged all his heavy guns there, still maintaining the investment; he might have shipped his battering-train, and when the enemy approached Reus, have marched to the Col de Balaguer, where he could, as he afterwards did, embark or disembark in the presence of the enemy. The danger of a flank march, Suchet being at Reus, could not have deterred him, because he did send his cavalry and field artillery by that very road on the 12th, and the French advanced guard from Monroig actually skirmished with Lord Frederick Bentinck. Finally he could have embarked his main body, leaving a small corps with some cavalry to keep the garrison in check and bring off his guns.\* Such a detachment, together with the heavy guns, would have been afloat in a couple of hours and on board the ships in four hours; it could have embarked on the open beach, or, if fearful of being molested by the garrison, might have marched to Cape Salou or to the Col de Balaguer; and if the guns had thus been lost, the necessity would have been apparent and the dishonor lessened. It is clear there was no military need to sacrifice the battering-pieces, those honored guns which shook the bloody ramparts of Badajos!

Wellington felt their loss keenly, Murray spoke of them lightly. *"They were of small value, old iron! he attached little importance to the sacrifice of artillery, it was his principle; he had approved*

\* Naval evidence on the trial.

*of Colonel Adam losing his guns at Biar, and he had also desired Colonel Prevôt, if pressed, to abandon his battering-train before the fort of Balaguer."* "Such doctrine might appear strange to a British army, but it was the rule with the continental armies and the French owed much of their successes to the adoption of it."

Strange indeed! Great commanders have risked their own lives and sacrificed their bravest men, charging desperately in person to retrieve even a single piece of cannon in a battle. They knew the value of moral force in war, and that of all the various springs and levers on which it depends, military honor is the most powerful. No! it was not to the adoption of such a doctrine that the French owed their great successes; it was to the care with which Napoleon fostered and cherished a contrary feeling. Sir John Murray's argument would have been more pungent, more complete, if he had lost his colors and pleaded that they were only wooden staves bearing old pieces of silk!

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## CHAPTER II.

Danger of Sicily—Averted by Murat's secret defection from the Emperor—Lord William Bentinck re-embarks—His design of attacking the city of Valencia frustrated—Del Parque is defeated on the Xucar—The Anglo-Sicilians disembark at Alicant—Suchet prepares to attack the allies—Prevented by the battle of Vittoria—Abandons Valencia—Marches to Zaragoza—Clausel retreats to France—Paris evacuates Zaragoza—Suchet retires to Tarragona—Mines the walls—Lord William Bentinck passes the Ebro—Secures the Col de Balaguer—Invests Tarragona—Partial insurrection in Upper Catalonia—Combat of Salut—Del Parque joins Lord William Bentinck who projects an attack upon Suchet's cantonments—Suchet concentrates his army—Is joined by Decaen—Advances—The allies retreat to the mountains—Del Parque invests Tortoza—His rear-guard attacked by the garrison while passing the Ebro—Suchet blows up the walls of Tarragona—Lord William desires to besiege Tortoza—Hears that Suchet has detached troops—Sends Del Parque's army to join Lord Wellington—Advances to Villa Franca—Combat of Ordal—The allies retreat—Lord Frederick Bentinck fights with the French general Myres and wounds him—Lord Williams returns to Sicily—Observations.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK arrived without troops, for having removed the queen from Sicily he feared internal dissension; and Napoleon had directed Murat to invade the island with twenty thousand men, the Toulon squadron being to act in concert; Sir Edward Pellew indeed acknowledged the latter might easily gain twenty-four hours' start of his fleet, and Lord William judged that ten thousand invaders would suffice to conquer. Murat however opened a secret negotiation, and thus, that monarch, Bernadotte

and the Emperor Francis, united to destroy a hero connected with them by marriage and to whom they all owed their crowns either by gift or clemency!\* This early defection of Murat is certain, and his declaration that he had instructions to invade Sicily was corroborated by a rumor, rife in the French camps before the battle of Vittoria, that the Toulon fleet had sailed and the descent actually made. Nevertheless there is some obscurity about the matter. The negotiation was never completed, Murat left Italy to command Napoleon's cavalry, and at the battle of Dresden contributed much to the success of that day. It is conceivable that he should mask his plans by joining the grand army, and that his fiery spirit should in the battle forget everything except victory; but to disobey Napoleon as to the invasion of Sicily and dare to face that monarch immediately after, was so unlikely as to indicate rather a paper demonstration to alarm than a real attack. And it would seem from the short observation of Wellington in answer to Lord William's detailed communication on this subject, namely, "*Sicily is in no danger,*" that he viewed it so, or thought it put forward by Murat to give more value to his defection. However it sufficed to hinder reinforcements going to Murray.

Lord William on landing was informed that Suchet was at Tortosa with from eight to twelve thousand men, Maurice Mathieu with seven thousand at Cambrils. To drive the latter back and re-invest Tarragona was easy, and the place would have fallen because the garrison had exhausted all their powder in the first siege; but this Lord William did not know, and to renew the attack vigorously was impossible, because all the howitzers and platforms and fascines had been lost; and the animals and general equipment of the army were too much deteriorated by continual embarkations and disembarkations to keep the field in Catalonia. Wherefore he resolved to return to Alicant, not without hope still to fulfil Wellington's instructions by landing at Valencia between Suchet and Harispe. The re-embarkation was unmolested, the fort of Balaguer was destroyed, and one of Whittingham's regiments, destined to reinforce Copons' army, being detached to effect a landing northward of Barcelona, the fleet put to sea. Misfortune still attended this unhappy armament; a violent tempest impeded the voyage, fourteen sail of transports struck upon the sands off the mouth of the Ebro, and the army was not entirely disembarked at Alicant before the 27th. Meanwhile Suchet, seeing the English fleet under sail after destroying the fort of Balaguer, marched with such extraordinary diligence as to reach Valencia from Tortosa

\* Appendix 23.

in forty-eight hours, thus frustrating Lord William's project of landing at Valencia.

During his absence Harispe had proved the weakness of the Spanish armies, and demonstrated Wellington's sagacity and prudence. That great man's warning about defeat was distinctly addressed to the Spanish generals, because the chief object of the operations was not to fight Suchet, but to keep him from aiding the French armies in the north; pitched battles were therefore to be avoided, their issue being always doubtful; the presence of a numerous and increasing force on the French front and flank was more sure to succeed. But all Spanish generals desired to fight great battles, soothing their national pride by attributing defeats to want of cavalry; it was at first doubtful if Murray could transport his horsemen to Tarragona, and if left behind they would have been under Elio and Del Parque, whereby those officers would have been encouraged to fight: hence the menacing intimation pleaded by Murray. Wellington also judged, that as Del Parque's troops had been three years active under Ballesteros, they must be more capable than Elio's in the dodging warfare suitable for Spaniards; Elio also best knew the country between the Xucar and Alicant; Del Parque was therefore ordered to turn the enemy's flank by Requena, and Elio to menace the front.

To trust Spanish generals was to trust the winds and clouds. Elio persuaded Del Parque to adopt the front attack, took the flank line himself, and detached Mijares to fall on Requena; and though Suchet had weakened his line the 2d, Del Parque was not ready until the 9th, thus giving the French a week for the success of Tarragona and the arrival of Severoli at Liria. Harispe had eight thousand men in front of the Xucar; the Spaniards, including Roche's and Mijares' infantry and Whittingham's cavalry, were twenty-five thousand; the Empecinado, Villa Campa, and Frayle Nebot waited in the Cuenca and Albaracyn mountains to operate on the French rear. The disproportion was great, yet the contest was short, and for the Spaniards disastrous. They advanced in three columns. Elio, by the pass of Almanza; Del Parque by Villena and Fuente de la Higuera, menacing Moxente; Roche and the prince of Anglona from Alcoy, by Onteniente and the pass of Albayda, menacing San Felipe de Xativa and turning Moxente. Harispe immediately took the line of the Xucar, occupying the entrenchments in front of his bridges at Alcira and Barca del Rey near Alberique; and during this retrograde movement Mesclop, commanding the rear-guard, when pressed by the Spanish horsemen wheeled round and drove them in great confusion upon the infantry.

On the 15th Mijares took the fort of Requeña, thus turning the line of the Xucar and securing the defiles of Cabrillas, through which the Cuenca road leads to Valencia; Villa Campa joined him there and so prevented Severoli from uniting with Harispe. Del Parque advanced towards Alcira in two columns, one moving by Cargagente, the other by Gandia. Habert overthrew the first with one shock, took five hundred prisoners and marched to attack the other, but it was already routed by Gudin. After this each side held their respective positions, while Elio joined Mijares at Requeña. Villa Campa then descended to Chiva and Harispe's position was becoming critical, when Suchet returned and Del Parque resumed the position of Castalla. Thus everything turned contrary to Wellington's designs. Elio operated by the flank, Del Parque by the front, and the latter was defeated. Murray had failed entirely. His precipitancy at Tarragona and his delays at Balaguer were alike hurtful, and would have caused the destruction of one or both of the Spanish armies but for the battle of Vittoria. For Suchet, detaching Musnier to recover the fort of Requeña and drive back Villa Campa, assembled the bulk of his forces in his old positions of San Felipe and Moxente before the return of the Anglo-Sicilian troops; and as Elio, unable to subsist at Utiel, had then returned towards his former quarters the French were on the point of striking a fatal blow against him or Del Parque, or both, when the news of Wellington's victory averted the danger.

Suchet's activity and coolness may be contrasted with the infirmity of purpose displayed by Murray. The last always mistimed his movements; the first doubled his force by rapidity. Suchet was isolated by Wellington's operations, his communication with Aragon was interrupted, that province was placed in imminent danger, and the communication between Valencia and Catalonia was exposed to the attacks of the Anglo-Sicilian army and the fleet;—nearly thirty thousand Spaniards menaced him on the Xucar in front, and Villa Campa, the Frayle and the Empecinado could bring ten thousand men on his right flank; yet he left Harispe with only eight thousand men to oppose the Spaniards while he relieved Tarragona, and yet returned in time to save Valencia.

When Lord William Bentinck brought the Anglo-Sicilian troops back to Alicant, his first care was to re-organize the means of transport. This was a matter of difficulty. Murray, with a mischievous economy, and strange disregard of Wellington's instructions which prescribed active field operations in Valencia if he should be forced to return from Catalonia, had discharged six



hundred mules and two hundred country carts, five-sixths of his field equipment, before he sailed for Tarragona. The army was thus crippled while Suchet gathered strong in front, and Musnier retaking Requeña forced the Spaniards to retire from that quarter. Lord William urged Del Parque to advance from Castalla, but he had not means of carrying even one day's biscuit, and Elio, pressed by famine, went off towards Cuenca. Lord William, however, commanded the Spanish armies as well as his own, and letters passed between him and Wellington relative to further operations. The latter again advised a renewed attack on Tarragona or on Tortosa if the ordnance still in possession of the army would admit of such a measure; but supposing this could not be, he recommended a general advance to seize the open country of Valencia, the British keeping close to the sea and in constant communication with the fleet. Lord William's views were different. He found the Spanish soldiers robust and active, but their regimental officers bad, and their organization generally so deficient they could not stand against even a small French force. The generals pleased him at first, especially Del Parque, that is, like all Spaniards, they had fair words at command, and he thought he could undertake a grand strategic operation in conjunction with them.

To force the line of the Xucar he deemed unadvisable, inasmuch as there were only two carriage roads, both blocked by Suchet's entrenched bridges; and though the river was fordable the enemy's bank was so favorable for defence as to render the passage dangerous.\* The Anglo-Sicilians were unaccustomed to great tactical movements, the Spaniards altogether incapable of them. Wherefore, relinquishing a front attack he proposed to turn the enemy's right flank by Utiel and Requeña, or, by a wider march, reaching Cuenca, gain the Madrid road to Zaragoza, communicate with Wellington's army and operate down the Ebro. In either case it was necessary to cross the Albaracyn mountains, and there were no carriage roads save those of Utiel and Cuenca; but the passes near Utiel were strongly fortified by the French, and a movement on that line would necessarily lead to an attack upon Suchet, which was to be avoided. The line of Cuenca was preferable though longer, and by moving in the harvest season provisions would not fail; the allies would thus force Suchet to cross the Ebro, or attack him in a position where Wellington could reinforce them if necessary, and if defeated they could retire upon his army. Wellington told him provisions would fail on the march to Cuenca even in harvest time, and without money he would get

\* Lord William Bentinck, MSS.

nothing; moreover by separating himself from the fleet, he would be unable to return suddenly to Sicily if that island should be really exposed to any imminent danger.

While these letters were being exchanged the Anglo-Sicilians had marched towards Villena on Del Parque's left, and Suchet was preparing to attack, when intelligence of the battle of Vittoria, reaching both parties, totally changed the aspect of affairs. The French general instantly abandoned Valencia and Lord William entered that city. Clausel was at Zaragoza and Suchet knew that he desired to hold it as a point for the junction of the army of Aragon with the King, if the latter should re-enter Spain. By relinquishing all the Valencian and some of the Catalan fortresses Suchet could have concentrated thirty thousand men, and Clausel who had carried off some small garrisons, had fifteen thousand; thus forty-five thousand excellent troops would have been established on Wellington's flank when he was hampered with the investment of two fortresses, and liable to be assailed in front by the re-organized and reinforced army of Vittoria. This prospect invited Suchet on one side, but on the other he wished to influence the general negotiation during the armistice in Germany by appearing strong in Spain, and therefore resolved to march on Zaragoza and keep large garrisons in Valencia, a fatal error.

He had thirty-two thousand men, six thousand were in the fortresses of Aragon, twenty-six thousand remained. From these he garrisoned Denia, Saguntum, Peniscola, Morella and Tortoza, which absorbed nearly seven thousand men, above twelve hundred being in Saguntum and five thousand in Tortoza; then destroying the bridges on the Xucar he marched himself by the coast-road on Tortoza while Musnier retired from Requeña. The Valencian people, grateful for good government, were friendly; but ere the army could reach Caspe, the point of concentration, Clausel, deceived by Mina, had fled to Jaca and the effect in Aragon was decisive. The partidas instantly united to menace Zaragoza, and Suchet sent Paris orders to abandon it and retire to Caspe, which Musnier had then reached, having picked up Severoli's brigade and the garrison of Teruel and Alcanitz in passing. On the 12th Suchet was again in military communication with Musnier, yet his army was extended along the Ebro from Caspe to Tortoza, and meanwhile, Mina having seized the Torrero, Paris evacuated Zaragoza in the night of the 9th, leaving five hundred men in the castle with much ordnance. He was encumbered with a great convoy, got entangled in the defiles of Alcubiere, was attacked, lost men, guns and baggage, relinquished Caspe and fled to Huesca, where he rallied the garrison of Ayerbe; then making for Jaca he reached

it on the 14th, at the moment when Clausel after another ineffectual effort to join the King had returned there. Duran then invested the castle of Zaragoza and the fort of Daroca.

This sudden and total loss of Aragon made Suchet resign that province as his field of operations, and he thereby exactly defined his own reputation. A good general not a great commander. About Tortosa, while Aragon was held by the enemy he could not feed, and the allies could land troops to seize the defiles in his rear; wherefore, fixing on the fertile country of Tarragona for a base, he passed the Ebro, sent Isidore Lamarque to fetch off the garrisons of Belchite, Fuentes, Pina, and Bujarola, and moving himself by the coast-road from Tortosa to Tarragona, reached that place with little hurt although cannonaded by the English fleet. In this position having mined the walls for destruction he awaited Lord William Bentinck. He thus established himself well for an isolated campaign, but let the great stream of war flow past, unheeded. Had he continued his march on Zaragoza he would have raised the siege of the castle, saved his garrison of Daroca, perhaps have given a blow to Mina, whose orders were to retire on Tudela where Wellington designed to offer battle. But Suchet could have avoided that battle, and his appearance on Wellington's flank for a fortnight would have changed the aspect of the campaign, as shall be hereafter shown. His previous rapidity had left the Valencian allies far behind, they could not have gathered in force time enough to meddle with him; nor was their pursuit so conducted but he might have turned and defeated them.

It was not until four days after Valencia was abandoned that Lord William entered it, and seven days he remained there to establish a place of arms; on the 16th moving by the coast, masking Peniscola and being in communication with the fleet, he approached the Ebro. But Suchet had that day passed that river and might have been close to Zaragoza; Del Parque's army was still near Alicant in a state of disorder; and Elio and Roche found the control of Valencia and the blockade of Saguntum and Denia more than their united forces could effect. On the 20th Lord William entered Vinaros and remained there until the 26th. Suchet might then have been at Tudela or Sanguessa, and it shall be shown that Wellington could not have met him at the former place as he designed.

During this march various reports were received. "*The French had vainly endeavored to regain France by Zaragoza.*" "*Tarragona was destroyed.*" "*The evacuation of Spain was certain.*" "*A large detachment had already quitted Catalonia.*" Lord William, who had little time to spare from Sicilian affairs, then became eager

he threw a flying-bridge over the Ebro at Amposta, embarked Clinton's division with a view to seize the Col de Balaguer, and followed Suchet with the remainder of his army, which now included Whittingham's cavalry. A detachment from Tortosa menaced his bridge, but the guard was reinforced and the passage of the Ebro completed the 27th. Next day Villa Campa arrived with four thousand men and the Col de Balaguer was secured. The 29th the cavalry was threatened by infantry from Tortosa, near the Col de Alba; but the movements generally were unopposed, and the army got possession of the mountains beyond the Ebro.

Suchet was then inspecting the defences of Lerida and Mequinenza and his escort was necessarily large, because Copons was hanging on his flanks in the mountains about Manresa; yet his position about Villa Franca was exceedingly strong. Tarragona and Tortosa covered the front, Barcelona the rear; the communication with Decaen was secure, and on the right flank stood Lerida, to which the small forts of Mequinenza and Monzon served as outposts. The Anglo-Sicilian troops did not exceed ten thousand effective men, and one division was on board ship from the 22d to the 26th. Elio and Roche were at Valencia, Del Parque's army, thirteen thousand, including Whittingham's infantry, was several marches in rear; it was paid from the British subsidy, but was ill-provided, and the Duke was now disinclined to obedience; Villa Campa did not join until the 20th, and Copons was in the mountains above Vich. Lord William therefore remained with ten thousand men and a large train of carriages, for ten days without any position of battle behind him nearer than the hills about Saguntum; his bridge over the Ebro was thrown within ten miles of Tortosa, whence detachments could approach him unperceived through the rugged mountains, and Suchet was within two marches. That marshal, however, was visiting his fortresses in person, and his troops quartered for the facility of feeding were unprepared to strike a sudden blow; judging his enemy's strength in offence what it might have been rather than what it was, he awaited Decaen's force from Upper Catalonia before he offered battle.

But Decaen was himself pressed. Pellew's fleet, menacing Rosas and Palamos, had encouraged a partial insurrection of the somatenes, which was supported by the divisions of Eroles, Manso, and Villamil. Minor combats had taken place on the side of Besala and Olot, Eroles invested Bañolas, and though beaten there by Lamarque the 23d of June, the insurrection spread. To quell it Decaen combined a double operation upon Vich. Designing to attack by the south himself he sent Maximilian Lamarque, with

fifteen hundred French troops and some French migueletes, by the mountain paths of San Felice de Pallarols and Amias. On the 8th of July that officer gained the heights of Salud, seized the road from Olot and descended upon Roda and Manlieu, in expectation of Decaen attacking from the other side. He perceived below a heavy body in march, and heard the sound of cannon and musketry about Vich; concluding this was Decaen he advanced confidently, thinking the Catalans were in retreat. They however fought him until dark without advantage on either side, and in the night an officer brought intelligence that Decaen's attack had been relinquished in consequence of Suchet's orders to move to the Llobregat. A previous despatch had been intercepted, all the Catalan force, six or seven thousand, was upon Lamarque's hands, and the firing heard at Vich was for Wellington's victories in Navarre. A retreat commenced, the Spaniards followed, the French got entangled in difficult ground near Salud and were forced to deliver battle; the fight lasted many hours, Lamarque's ammunition was expended, he lost four hundred men, and was upon the brink of destruction, when General Beurmann came to his succor with four fresh battalions and the Catalans were finally defeated with great loss. After this Decaen marched to join Suchet, and the Catalans, moving by the mountains in separate divisions, approached Lord William Bentinck.

When the allies passed the Ebro several officers conceived the siege of Tortosa would be the best operation. Nearly forty thousand men, that is to say, Villa Campa's, Copons', Del Parque's, Whittingham's, some of Elio's forces and the Anglo-Sicilians, could be united; the defiles on the left bank of the Ebro would enable them to bar succor on that side, and force Suchet on to the circuitous route of Lerida. Wellington leaned towards this operation, but Lord William resolved to push for Tarragona, and even looked to assail Barcelona; a rash proceeding, for Suchet awaited his approach with an army every way superior. It does not however follow that to besiege Tortosa would have been advisable. The battering-train, larger than Murray's losses gave reason to expect, was indeed sufficient, yet the operation was a serious one; the vicinity was unhealthy, it would have been difficult to feed the Spaniards, they were inexperienced in sieges, this was sure to be a long one, not sure of success, and Suchet seeing them thus engaged might have marched to Aragon.

Lord William was at this time misled, partly by Catalan reports, partly by Wellington's successes, to believe the French were going to abandon Catalonia. He did not perceive that Suchet, judiciously posted and able to draw reinforcements from Decaen, was stronger

than the allies.\* The two armies of Aragon and Catalonia numbered sixty-seven thousand men; twenty-seven thousand, including Paris' division then at Jaca, were in garrison, five thousand were sick, the remainder in the field. In Catalonia the allies were only accessories; they were there to keep Suchet off the flank of the allies in Navarre, and their defeat would have been a great disaster. So entirely was this Wellington's view, that Del Parque was to make forced marches on Tudela if Suchet should move or detach largely towards Aragon. Lord William should therefore have secured the defiles with his own and Villa Campa's troops, that is to say, twenty thousand men including Whittingham's division; he should have insulated the garrison of Tortoza, and made gabions and fascines, which would have placed Suchet in doubt as to his ulterior objects while he awaited the junction of Del Parque's, Copons', and the rest of Elio's troops. Then forty thousand men, three thousand being cavalry and attended by a fleet, could have descended into the Campo, still leaving a detachment to watch Tortoza. If Suchet offered battle, the allies, superior in numbers, could have fought in a position chosen beforehand.

It is indeed doubtful if all these corps would or could have kept together, but Lord William's actual operations were too headlong. He had prepared platforms and fascines for a siege in the island of Yvica, and on the 30th suddenly invested Tarragona with less than six thousand men, occupying ground three hundred yards nearer to the walls the first day than Murray had ever done. He thus prevented the garrison from abandoning the place, if, as was supposed, they had that intention; yet the fortress could not be besieged because of Suchet's vicinity and the dissemination of the allies. The 31st the bridge at Amposta was accidentally broken, three hundred bullocks were drowned, and the head of Del Parque's army, being on the left of the Ebro, fell back a day's march; however, Whittingham's division and the cavalry came up, and on the 3d, the bridge being restored, Del Parque also joined the investing army; Copons promised to bring up his Catalans, Sarsfield's division did arrive, Elio was ordered to reinforce it with three additional battalions, and Villa Campa observed Tortoza. Lord William then seeing Suchet's troops scattered, thought of surprising his posts and seizing the mountain line of the Llobregat; but Elio sent no battalions, Copons, jealous of some communications between the English general and Eroles, was slow, Villa Campa suffered the garrison of Tortoza to burn the bridge at Amposta, and Suchet suddenly returned from Barcelona and concentrated his army.

\* Imperial Muster-rolls, MSS.

Up to this time the Spaniards, giving copious but false information to Lord William and no information to Suchet, had induced faults on both sides balancing each other; a thing not uncommon in war, which demands all the faculties of the greatest minds. The Englishman thinking his enemy retreating had pressed rashly forward. The Frenchman, deeming from the other's boldness the whole of the allies were at hand, thought himself weak and awaited the arrival of Decaen, whose junction was retarded by the combined operations of the Catalans and the English fleet. In this state Suchet heard of fresh successes gained by Wellington, one of his Italian battalions was cut off at San Sadurni by Manso, and Lord William took a position of battle beyond the Gaya; his left was covered by Whittingham's division which occupied Braffin, the Col de Liebra, and Col de Cristina, while his right rested on the great coast-road. These were the only carriage ways by which the enemy could approach; but they were ten miles apart, Copons held aloof, and Whittingham shrunk from defending the passes alone. Hence when Suchet, reinforced by Decaen with eight thousand sabres and bayonets, finally advanced, Lord William, who had landed neither guns nor stores, decided to refuse battle. This must have been a painful decision. He had nearly thirty thousand fighting men, including a thousand marines; he had assumed the offensive, invested Tarragona, where the military honor of England had suffered twice before; in fine he had provoked the action which he now declined.

Suchet had equal numbers of a better quality; the banks of the Gaya were rugged to pass in retreat, much must have been left to the general officers at different points, Del Parque was an uneasy coadjutor, and if any part was forced the whole line would have been irretrievably lost. His reluctance was however manifest, for though he expected the enemy on the 9th, he did not send his field artillery and baggage to the rear until the 11th, the day on which Decaen reached Villa Franca. Suchet dreading the fire of the fleet, endeavored by false attacks on the coast road to draw the allies from the defiles beyond Braffin, towards which he finally carried his whole army; and those defiles were indeed abandoned, not as his Memoirs state because of these demonstrations, but because Lord William had previously determined to retreat. On the 16th finding the passes unguarded he poured through and advanced upon Valls, but the allies were then in full retreat towards the mountains, the left wing by Reus, the right wing by Cambrills. Lord Frederick Bentinck with the British and German cavalry covered the former so well that he defeated the fourth French

hussars with a loss of forty or fifty men, and it is said that Habert or Harispe was taken but escaped in the confusion.

Lord William now entrenched himself near the Col de Balaguer, and Del Parque marched with his own and Sarsfield's troops to invest Tortosa, but the garrison fell on his rear while passing the Ebro and inflicted some loss. Nor could Lord William have long held this new position for want of water, if Lieutenant Corbyn of the *Invincible*, uniting intelligence with energy, had not discovered a copious spring and by means of wooden spouts constructed with the slender pine trees of the mountains, conducted the waters across a deep valley and down the side of a steep mountain to the camp, a distance of seven miles. Suchet, contrary to the wishes of his army, then returned to Tarragona and destroyed the ancient walls, which from the hardness of the Roman cement was tedious and difficult: he afterwards resumed his positions on the Llobregat and sent Decaen to Upper Catalonia. The general result of these operations had been favorable to the allies; they had risked much but their enemy did not strike; Suchet was kept from Navarre and had lost Tarragona with its fertile Campo.

It is strange that such a general should have suffered his powerful army to be so paralyzed.\* Having twenty-seven thousand men in garrison, and thirty-thousand in hand, he was ostentatiously marching to and fro in Catalonia while the war was being decided in Navarre. Had he been in the latter province before the end of July Wellington would have been overpowered. What was to be feared? That Lord William would follow or attack one of his fortresses! Lord William could not abandon the coast, and if the French were successful in Navarre the loss of a fortress in Catalonia would have been a trifle, and it was not certain that any would have fallen. Suchet pleaded danger to France if he abandoned Catalonia. But to invade France, guarded as she was by her great military reputation, and to do so by land, leaving behind the fortresses of Valencia and Catalonia the latter barring all the carriage roads, was chimerical. Success in Navarre would also have made an invasion by sea pass as a partizan descent. Moreover France, wanting Suchet's troops to defend her in Navarre, was ultimately invaded by Wellington and in a far more formidable manner. This question shall be treated more largely in another place; it is sufficient to observe here, that Clarke, the minister of war, a man without genius or attachment to the emperor's cause, discouraged any great combined plan of action, and Napoleon absorbed by his own immense operations did not interpose.

Lord William, now intent to besiege Tortosa, wished Wellington

\* Imperial Muster-rolls MSS.



to attack Mequinenza with a detachment of his army, but this the situation of affairs did not permit; and he soon discovered that to assail Tortosa was beyond his own means. Elio, when desired to assist, demanded three weeks' preparation; all the Spanish troops were in want, Roche's division, blockading Murviedro, although so close to Valencia, was on half rations; and the siege of Tortosa was necessarily relinquished because no great or sustained operation could be conducted in concert with such generals and such armies. Suchet's fear was an illustration of Napoleon's maxim, that war is an affair of discrimination. It is more essential to know the quality than the quantity of enemies. Lord William did not apply his mind vigorously to the campaign he was conducting, because fresh changes injurious to the British policy in Sicily called him to that island, and his thoughts were still running upon the invasion of Italy; but as the Spaniards, deceived by the movements of escorts and convoys, reported that Suchet had marched with twelve thousand men to join Soult, he once more fixed his headquarters at Tarragona, and following Wellington's instructions, detached Del Parque's troops by forced marches upon Tudela.

On the 5th of September the army entered Villa Franca, and the 12th, detachments of Calabrese, Swiss, German and British infantry, a squadron of cavalry and one battery, in all twelve hundred under Colonel Adam, occupied the heights of Ordal. At this place, ten miles in advance of Villa Franca, being joined by three of Sarsfield's battalions and a Spanish squadron, they took position; it then appeared that very few French troops had been detached,—that Suchet had concentrated his whole force on the Llobregat—that his army was superior, because the allies, reduced by the loss of Del Parque's troops, had also left Whittingham's division at Reus and Valls to procure food. Sarsfield's division was feeding on the British supplies, and Lord William again looked to a retreat, yet thinking the enemy disinclined to advance, desired to preserve his forward position as long as possible.

He had only two lines to watch. One menacing his front from Molino del Rey by the main road, which Adam blocked at Ordal; the other from Martorel by San Sadurni, menacing his left; but on this route, a difficult one, he had pushed the Catalans under Eroles and Manso, reinforcing them with some Calabrese: there was indeed a third line by Avionet on his right but it was little better than a goat-path. He had designed to bring his main body up to Ordal the evening of the 12th, yet from some slight reason delayed until next day. He had however viewed the country in advance of the defile without discovering an enemy; his confidential emissaries assured him the French were not going to advance, and he

returned satisfied that Adam's detachment was safe, and so expressed himself to that officer. A report of a contrary tendency was made by Colonel Reeves of the twenty-seventh, on the authority of a Spanish woman who had before proved her accuracy and ability as a spy; she was now however disbelieved, and this incredulity was unfortunate. For Suchet thus braved, and his communication with Lerida threatened by Manso on the side of Martorel, was then in march to attack Ordal with the army of Aragon, while Dacaen and Maurice Mathieu, moving with the army of Catalonia from Martorel by San Sadurni, were turning the left of the allies.

#### COMBAT OF ORDAL.

(See Plan 8, page 299.)

Adam's position though rugged rose gradually from a magnificent bridge, by which the main road was carried over a deep impracticable ravine. The second battalion of the twenty-seventh was posted on the right,—the Germans, De Roll's Swiss, and the artillery, defended an old Spanish fort commanding the main road,—the Spaniards were in the centre, the Calabrese on the left,—the cavalry were in reserve. A bright moonlight facilitated the movements of the French, and a little before midnight, their leading column under Mesclop passed the bridge without let or hindrance, mounted the heights with a rapid pace and driving back the piquets gave the first alarm: the allied troops lying on their arms in order of battle were however ready, and the fight commenced. The first effort was against the twenty-seventh, then the Germans and the Spanish battalions were vigorously assailed in succession as the French columns got free of the bridge, but the Calabrese were too far on the left to take a share in the action. The combat was fierce and obstinate. Harispe who commanded the French constantly outflanked the right of the allies, and at the same time pressed their centre, where the Spaniards fought gallantly. Adam was wounded early, the command devolved upon Reeves, and that officer seeing his flank turned and his men falling fast; in short, finding himself engaged with a whole army on a position of which Adam had lost the key by neglecting the bridge, resolved to retreat.

He first ordered the guns to fall back, and to cover the movement charged a column of the enemy which was pressing forward on the high road, but he was severely wounded in this attack and there was no recognized commander on the spot to succeed him. Then the affair became confused. For though the order to retreat was given the Spaniards were fighting desperately, the twenty-

seventh thought it a shame to abandon them, the Germans and De Roll's regiment still held the old fort, and the guns came back. Colonel Carey now brought the Calabrese into line from the left, and menaced the right flank of the French, but he was too late,—the Spaniards in the centre were broken, the right was completely turned, the old fort was lost, the enemy's skirmishers got into the allies' rear, and at three o'clock the whole dispersed, the most part in flight: the Spanish cavalry were then overthrown on the main road by the French hussars, and four guns were taken in the tumult.

Captain Waldron with the twenty-seventh, reduced to eighty men, and Captain Müller with about the same number of Germans and Swiss, broke through several small parties of the enemy and effected their retreat in good order by the hills on each side of the road. Colonel Carey endeavored to gain the road of Sadurn on the left, but meeting with Decaen's people, retraced his steps, and crossing the field of battle in the rear of Suchet's columns made for Villa Nueva de Sitjes and embarked without loss save of a few stragglers, who fell into the hands of a flanking battalion of French infantry which had moved through the mountains by Begas and Avionet. The overthrow was complete and the prisoners were at first very numerous; yet the darkness enabled many to escape and two thousand of them reached Manso and Eroles.

Suchet pursuing his march came up with Lord William about eight o'clock. The latter retired skirmishing in excellent order beyond Villa Franca; some of the French horsemen assailed his rear-guard while others edged to their right to secure the communication with Decaen, who was looked for by both parties with great anxiety; but he had been delayed by the resistance of Manso and Eroles in the rugged country between Martorel and San Sadurni. Suchet's cavalry and artillery continued however to infest the rear of the retreating army until it reached a deep baranco, near the Venta de Monjos, where the passage being dangerous and the French horsemen importunate, that brave and honest soldier, Lord Frederick Bentinck, charged their right with the twentieth dragoons, and fighting hand to hand with the enemy's general Meyers wounded him and overthrew his light cavalry; they rallied upon their heavy horsemen and advanced again, endeavoring to turn the flank, but were stopped by the fire of two guns which Clinton opened upon them. The cuirassiers had mean time pressed the Brunswick hussars on the allies' right and menaced the infantry, yet were checked by the fire of the tenth regiment. This cavalry action was vigorous, the twentieth and the Germans fought desperately and though few in numbers lost more than ninety men. Nevertheless the baranco was safely passed and about three

o'clock the army having reached Arbos, the pursuit ceased: the Catalans retreated towards Igualada and the Anglo-Sicilians retired to Tarragona. It was now thought Suchet would make a movement to carry off the garrisons of Lerida and Tortosa: but this did not happen, and Lord William went to Sicily, leaving the command of the army to Clinton.

## OBSERVATIONS.

1. Lord William Bentinck committed errors, yet he has been censured without discrimination. "*He advanced rashly.*" "*He was undecided.*" "*He exposed his advanced guard without support.*" Such were the expressed opinions at the time. Their justness may be disputed. His first object was to retain all the French force in Catalonia; his second, to profit from Suchet's weakness if he detached largely. He could do neither by remaining inactive on the barren hills behind Hospitalet, because the Spaniards would have dispersed for want of provisions, and the siege of Tortosa was impracticable. It was therefore bold and skilful to menace the enemy, if a retreat was secure without danger of dishonor. The position of Villa Franca fulfilled this condition. It was strong in itself and offensive; Pellew's fleet was in movement to create diversions in Upper Catalonia, and all the emissaries and Spanish correspondents concurred in declaring, though falsely, that the French general had detached twelve thousand men. It is indeed one test of a sagacious general to detect false intelligence; yet the greatest are at times deceived, and all must act upon what appears true. Lord William's advance was founded on erroneous data, but his position in front of Villa Franca was well chosen; it enabled him to feed Whittingham's division about Reus and Valls; and there were short and easy communications from Villa Franca to the sea-coast. He could only be seriously assailed on two lines. In front by the main road, which, though broad, was from Molino del Rey to the heights of Ordal one continued defile. On the left by San Sadurni, a road still more rugged and difficult than the other; and the Catalans were launched on this side, because, without quitting the mountains, they protected the left and menaced the enemy's communication with Lerida. Half a march to the rear would bring the army to Vendrills, beyond which the enemy could not follow without getting under the fire of the ships; neither could he forestall this movement by a march through the Liebra and Cristina defiles, because the Catalans falling back on Whittingham's divisions could hold him in check.

2. Ordal and San Sadurni were the keys of the position. The last was well secured, the first not so, and there was the real error

It was none however to push an advanced guard of three thousand five hundred men, with cavalry and artillery, to a distance of ten miles for a few hours. He had a right to expect the commander would maintain his post until supported, or retreat without disaster; an officer of capacity would have done so; but whoever relies upon the capacity of Sir Frederick Adam in peace or war will surely be disappointed. In 1810 Lord Wellington detached General Craufurd with two or three thousand men to a much greater distance, not for one night but for many weeks. And that excellent officer, though close to Massena's immense army the very cavalry of which doubled his whole numbers; though he had the long line of the Agueda, a fordable river, to guard; though he was in an open country and continually skirmishing, never lost so much as a patrol, and always remained master of his movements, for his combat on the Coa was a studied and wilful error. It was no fault therefore to push Adam's detachment to Ordal, but it was a fault that Lord William, having determined to follow with his whole force, should have delayed for one night, or delaying, that he did not send some supporting troops forward. It was a fault not to do so because there was good reason to do it and to delay was to tempt fortune. Had Lord William been at hand with his main body when the attack on Ordal commenced, the head of Suchet's force, which was kept at bay for three hours by a detachment so ill commanded, would have been driven into the ravine behind, and the victorious allies would still have had time to march against Decaen by the road along which Colonel Carey endeavored to join Manso. In fine, Suchet's dispositions were vicious in principle and ought not to have succeeded. He operated on two distinct lines having no cross communications, and before an enemy in possession of a central position with good communications.

3. It was another fault that Lord William disregarded the Spanish woman's report to Colonel Reeves; his observations made in front of the bridge of Ordal on the evening of the 12th accorded indeed with the reports of his own emissaries, but the safe side should always be the rule. He also, although on the spot, overlooked the unmilitary dispositions of Adam on the heights of Ordal. The summit could not be defended against superior numbers with a small corps; that officer had nevertheless extended the Calabrese so far on the left they could take no share in the action, and yet could not retreat without great difficulty. A commander who understood his business, would have blocked up the bridge in front of the heights and defended it by a strong detachment, supporting that detachment by others placed in succession on the heights behind; keeping his main body always in hand, ready to fall on the

head of the enemy's column of attack or to rally the advanced troops and retreat in order. There were trees and stones to block the bridge, or its own parapet would have supplied materials; and the ravine was so deep and rugged the enemy could not have crossed it on the flanks in the dark. It is no defence to say Adam took ground in the evening after a march,—that he expected the main body up the next morning,—that Lord William assured him he was safe from attack. Every officer is responsible for the security of his post, and Adam placed no infantry piquet on the bridge, nor sent a cavalry patrol beyond it; and I have been informed by a French soldier, one of a party sent to explore the position, that they reached the crest of the heights without opposition and returned safely, whereupon Mesclap's brigade instantly crossed the bridge and attacked.

4. Ordal must be called a surprise, yet the troops were not surprised, they were beaten and dispersed because Adam was unskilful. Suchet's victory was complete; yet he has in his *Memoirs* exaggerated his difficulties and the importance of his success; his private report to the Emperor was more accurate. The *Memoirs* state that the English grenadiers defended certain works which commanded the ascent of the main road; and in the accompanying atlas a perspective view of well conditioned redoubts with colors flying is given. The reader is thus led to imagine these were regular forts defended by select troops; but in the private report they are correctly designated as ancient retrenchments;\* being the ruins of old Spanish field-works, and of no more advantage to the allies than any natural inequality of ground. Again in the *Memoirs* the attack of the French cavalry near Villa Franca is represented as quite successful; but the private report only says the rear was harassed by repeated charges, which is true, and moreover those charges were vigorously repulsed. The whole French loss was about three hundred men, that of the allies, heavy at Ordal, was lightened by escape of prisoners during the night, and ultimately did not exceed a thousand men including Spaniards.

\* Appendix 27.