

CHAPTER IV.

Operations south of the Tagus—Eroles and Codrington seek to entrap the Governor of Tarragona—They fail—Sarsfield and Villa Campa unite, but disperse at the approach of Pannetier and Severoli—Suchet's position—Great force of the allies in his front—The younger Soult engages the Spanish cavalry in La Mancha—General Daricau marches with a column towards Valencia—Receives a large convoy and returns to La Mancha—Absurd rumors about the English army rife in the French camp—Some of Lord Wellington's spies detected—Soult is recalled—Gazan assumes the command of the army of the south—Suchet's position described—Sir John Murray takes the command of the Anglo-Sicilian troops at Alicant—Attacks the French post at Alcoy—His want of vigor—He projects a maritime attack on the city of Valencia, but drops the design because Lord William Bentinck recalls some of his troops—Remarks upon his proceedings—Suchet surprises a Spanish division at Yecla, and then advances against Murray—Takes a thousand Spanish prisoners in Villena—Murray takes a position at Castalla—His advanced guard driven from Biar—Second battle of Castalla—Remarks.

OPERATIONS SOUTH OF THE TAGUS.

IN December, 1812, Copons became Captain-General of Catalonia instead of Eroles, but his arrival being delayed, the province was not relieved from Lacy's mischievous sway until February, 1813, when Eroles, taking the temporary command, re-established the head-quarters at Vich. The French, being then unmolested save by the English ships, passed an enormous convoy to France, but Eroles was not long idle. Through a double spy he sent a forged letter to the governor of Tarragona, desiring him to detach men with carts to transport stores from Sitjes; at the same time pretending a design to invade the Cerdaña, which brought a movable column to that quarter, he, with Manso and Villamil, by forced marches reached Torre dem barra, and met the British squadron. The intention was to cut off the French detachment on its march to Villa Nueva, and then to attack Tarragona; but fortune rules in war: the governor received a letter from Maurice Mathieu of a different tenor from the forged letter, and, with all haste regaining his fortress, balked this well-contrived plan.

Sarsfield, at enmity with Eroles, was then combining his operations with Villa Campa, and they menaced Alcanitz in Aragon; but Pannetier, who was at Teruel to watch Villa Campa and protect Suchet's communications, immediately marched to Daroca, Severoli came from Zaragoza to the same point, and the Spaniards, alarmed by their junction, dispersed. Sarsfield then returned to Catalonia, Bassecour and the Empecinado remained near Cuença, and Villa Campa, as usual, hung upon the northern skirts of the Albaracin mountain, ready to pounce on the Ebro or the Guadal-

qu岸ir, as advantage might offer. Suchet was disquieted. He could not draw reinforcements from Catalonia, because Napoleon, true to his principle of securing the base of operations, forbade him to weaken the army there, and Montmarie's brigade was detached from Valencia to preserve the communication between Saguntum and Tortosa. Aragon, his place of arms and principal magazine, being infested by Mina, Duran, Villa Campa, the Empecinado, and Sarsfield, was becoming daily more unquiet, wherefore Pannetier's brigade remained between Segorbé and Daroca, to aid Severoli. Thus, although the armies of Aragon and Catalonia mustered more than seventy thousand men—that of Aragon alone having forty thousand, with fifty field pieces—Suchet could not fight with more than sixteen thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and perhaps thirty guns, beyond the Xucar. His right flank was always liable to be turned by Requeña, his left by the sea, and his front was menaced by fifty thousand men, of which three thousand were cavalry, with fifty pieces of artillery.

The component parts of this force were the Anglo-Sicilian army, eighteen thousand, including Whittingham's and Roche's divisions, Elio's army, twelve thousand, exclusive of the divisions of Bassecour, Villa Campa, and the Empecinado, which, though detached, belonged to him, Del Parque's army, reinforced by new levies from Andalusia, on paper twenty thousand. Numerically this was a formidable power, if it had been directed in mass against Suchet; but on his right Soult, from Toledo, watched Del Parque, and the defection of the latter was then being negotiated with the King. A column from Madrid was also sent to Cuença, which drew off Bassecour and the Empecinado, and those chiefs harassed Joseph's positions. Early in January, Soult's brother, seeking to open a communication with Suchet by Albacete, defeated some of Elio's cavalry with the loss of fifty men, and pursued them until they rallied on their main body under Freyre, and offered battle with nine hundred horsemen in front of the defile leading to Albacete. Soult, disliking their appearance, then turned off to the right and joined a French post established in Valdapeña, at the foot of the Morena, where some skirmishes had also taken place with Del Parque's cavalry. The elder Soult thus learned that Freyre, with two thousand five hundred horsemen, covered all the roads leading from La Mancha to Valencia and Murcia; that Elio's infantry was at Tobará and Hellin, Del Parque's head-quarters at Jaen; that the passes of the Morena were guarded, and magazines formed at Andujar, Linares, and Cordoba, while on the other side of La Mancha, the Empecinado had come to Hinojoso with fifteen hundred

horsemen, and the column sent from the army of the centre was afraid to encounter him.

These dispositions, and the strength of the Spaniards, not only prevented the younger Soult from penetrating into Murcia, but delayed the march of a column under Daricau, destined to communicate with Suchet, and bring up the detachments, baggage, and stores which the armies of the south and centre had left at Valencia. The scouting parties of both sides, however, met at different points, and on the 27th of January, a sharp cavalry fight happened at El Corral, in which the French commander was killed, and the Spaniards, though far the most numerous, were defeated. Meanwhile Daricau, whose column had been reinforced, reached Utiel, opened the communication with Suchet by Requena, cut off some small parties of the enemy, and then continuing his march, received a great convoy, consisting of two thousand fighting men, six hundred travellers, and the stores and baggage belonging to Soult's and the King's armies. This convoy had marched for Madrid by the way of Zaragoza, but was recalled when Daricau arrived; and under his escort, aided by a detachment of Suchet's army, placed at Yniesta, it reached Toledo the latter end of February safely, though Villa Campa came down to the Cabriel river to trouble the march.

During these different operations, numerous absurd reports, principally originating in the Spanish and English newspapers, obtained credit in the French armies; such as, that Sir Henry Wellesley and Infantado had seized the government at Cadiz—that Clinton had, by an intrigue, got possession of Alicant—that Ballesteros had shown Wellington secret orders from the Cortes not to acknowledge him as generalissimo, or even as a grandee—that the Cortes had removed the Regency because the latter permitted Wellington to appoint intendants and other officers to the Spanish provinces—that Hill had devastated the frontier and retired to Lisbon, though forcibly opposed by Morillo—that a nephew of Ballesteros had raised the standard of revolt—that Wellington was advancing, and troops had been embarked at Lisbon for a maritime expedition, with other stories of a like nature, which seem to have disturbed all the French generals save Soult, whose information as to the real state of affairs continued to be sure and accurate. He also detected four or five of Wellington's emissaries, one, a Portuguese officer on his own staff; another, called Piloti, who served and betrayed both sides; and an amazon called Francisca de la Fuerte, who, though only twenty-two years old, had already commanded a partida of sixty men with some success, and was now a spy. But in the latter end of February he was

recalled, and his command fell to Gazan, whose movements belong rather to the operations north of the Tagus. Wherefore, returning to Suchet, an exact notion of his resources and of the nature of the country shall be given.

Valencia, though nominally his stronghold, was not really so. All the defences constructed by the Spaniards were razed, and only the old walls and a small fortified post within the town, sufficient to resist a sudden attack, and capable of keeping the population in awe, were preserved; the place of arms was Saguntum, and between that and Tortosa he had two fortresses, Oropesa and Peniscola. Another line of communication, but for infantry only, was through Morella, a fortified post, to Mequinenza; and there were roads from Valencia and Saguntum, leading through Segorbé to Teruel, a fortified post, and from thence to Zaragoza by Daroca, another fortified post: these roads were eastward of the Guadalaviar.* Westward of that river Suchet had a line from Valencia to Madrid by Requeña, which was also fortified. Now if the whole command be looked to, the forces were very numerous, but that command was wide, and in the field his army was not very numerous. Valencia was merely a point on hostile ground, maintained with a view of imposing upon the allies and drawing forth the resources of the country as long as circumstances would permit.

The proper line for covering the city and the rich country immediately around it, was on the Xucar, or rather beyond it, at San Felipe de Xativa and Moxente; where a double range of mountains afforded strong defensive positions, barring the principal roads leading to Valencia.† There Suchet had formed an intrenched camp, much talked of at the time, yet slighter than fame represented it; the real strength was in the natural formation of the ground, which was very rugged. In front of his left flank the coast road was blocked by the castle of Denia, but his right could be turned from Yecla and Almanza, through Cofrentes and Requeña; and he was forced to keep strict watch and strong detachments always towards the defile of Almanza, lest Elio's army and Del Parque's should march that way. His intrenched camp was the permanent position of defence, but he sought to keep his troops more advanced; because the country in front was full of fertile valleys, or rather coves within the hills, which run in nearly parallel ranges and are remarkably rocky and precipitous, like walls. It was of great importance to command these coves, and as the principal point in front was the flourishing town of Alcoy, he occupied it, and from thence threw off smaller bodies to Biar, Castalla,

* Plan 6.

† Plan 5.

Ibi, and Onil, which were on the same strong ridge as the position covering the cove of Alcoy. On his right there was another plain, in which Fuente La Higuera, Villena and Yecla were delineated at opposite points of a triangle; and as this plain and the smaller valleys ministered to Suchet's wants, because of his superior cavalry, the subsistence of the French troops was eased, while the cantonments and foraging districts of the Sicilian army were contracted: the outposts of the allied army were, in fact, confined to a fourth and fifth parallel range of mountains, covering the towns of Eldar, Tibi, Xixona, and Villa Joyosa, on the sea-coast.

Suchet thus assumed an insulting superiority over an army apparently more numerous than his own. But outward appearances are deceitful in war; he was really the strongest, because want, ignorance, dissension and even treachery, were in his adversary's camps. Del Parque's army remained behind the Morena, Elio's was at Tobarra and Hellin, and of the Anglo-Sicilian army, the British only were available in the hour of danger. When Campbell quarrelled with Elio, the latter retired for a time towards Murcia, but after Wellington's journey to Cadiz, he again came forward; his cavalry entering La Mancha, skirmished with the younger Soult, and communicating with Bassecour and the Empecinado, delayed the progress of Daricau towards Valencia. Campbell then remained quiet, in expectation that Lord William would come with more troops; but in February, fresh troubles broke out in Sicily, and in the latter end of that month, Sir John Murray assumed the command at Alicant. Thus in a few months, five chiefs, with different views and prejudices, had successively arrived, and the army was still unorganized and unequipped for vigorous service. The Sicilians, Calabrese, and French belonging to it were eager to desert; one Italian regiment had been broken for misconduct by Maitland, the British and Germans were humiliated in spirit by inactivity; and the Spaniards under Whittingham and Roche were starving; for Wellington, knowing how the Spanish government, though receiving a subsidy, would, if permitted, throw off the feeding of their troops, forbade their being supplied from the British stores, and the Spanish intendants neglected them.*

Murray improved the equipment of the troops, and with the aid of Elio, put them in better condition. The two armies together furnished thirty thousand effective men, of which three thousand were cavalry, and they had thirty-seven guns; yet very inadequately horsed, and Whittingham's and Elio's cavalry were, from want of forage, nearly unfit for duty. The transport mules were hired at the enormous rate of one hundred and thirty thousand

* Appendixes 16, 17.

pounds annually; and yet the supply was bad, for here, as in all other parts of Spain, corruption and misuse of authority prevailed.* The rich sent their fine animals to Alicant for sanctuary, and bribed the alcaldes; the mules of the poor alone were pressed, the army was ill provided, and the country was harassed. But the troops of Whittingham and Roche could not be relieved, save by enlarging their cantonments; wherefore Murray, after some hesitation, resolved to drive the French from the mountains in his front, and following the plan of his Quartermaster-General, Donkin, designed, as the first step, to surprise fifteen hundred men which they had placed in Alcoy.

Five roads led towards the French positions. 1st. On the left the great road from Alicant, passing through Montforte, Elda, Sax, Villena, and Fuente de la Higuera, where it joins the royal road from Valencia to Madrid, which runs through Almanza. This way turned both the ridges occupied by the armies. 2d. A good road leading by Tibi to Castalla, from whence it sent off two branches on the left hand, one leading to Sax, the other through the pass of Biar to Villena; two other branches on the right hand went, the one through Ibi to Alcoy, the other through Onil to the same place. 3d. The road from Alicant to Xixona, a bad road leading over a steep rugged ridge of that name to Alcoy. At Xixona also there was a narrow way on the right hand through the mountains to Alcoy, which was followed by Roche when he attacked that place in the first battle of Castalla. 4th. A carriage-road running along the sea-coast as far as Villa Joyosa, from whence a narrow mountain-way leads to the village of Consentayna, situated in the cove of Alcoy, and behind that town.

On the 6th of March, the allied troops moved in four columns. On the left, one moved by Elda to watch the great Madrid road; on the right, one composed of Spanish troops moved under Colonel Campbell from Villa Joyosa to get to Consentayna, behind Alcoy; a third, under Lord Frederick Bentinck, issuing by Ibi, was to turn the French right; the fourth was to march from Xixona straight against Alcoy, and pursue the remainder of Habert's division, which was behind the town. Lord Frederick attacked in due time, but as Campbell did not appear the surprise failed; and when the French saw the main body winding down the Sierra in front of Alcoy, they retired, pursued by Donkin with the second battalion of the twenty-seventh regiment. The head of Lord Frederick's column was already engaged, the rear had not arrived, and the whole of Habert's division being concentrated a mile beyond Alcoy, offered battle; Murray, instead of pushing briskly forward, halted;

* General Donkin's papers.

and it was not until several demands for support had reached him that he detached the fifty-eighth to the assistance of the troops engaged, who had lost about forty men, chiefly of the twenty-seventh. Habert, fearing to be cut off by Consentayna, and seeing the fifty-eighth coming on, then retreated, and the allies occupied Alcoy. Murray's want of vigor did not escape the notice of the troops.

After this affair the armies remained quiet until the 15th, when Whittingham forced the French posts with some loss from Albayda; and Donkin, taking two battalions and some dragoons from Ibi, drove back their outposts from Rocayrente and Alsafara, villages situated beyond the range bounding the cove of Alcoy.* He repassed the hills higher up with the dragoons and a company of grenadiers of the twenty-seventh under Captain Waldron, and returned by the main road to Alcoy, having in his course met a French battalion, through which the gallant Waldron broke with his grenadiers. Then Murray, after much vacillation, at one time resolving to advance, at another to retreat; thinking it impossible to force Suchet's intrenched camp and his second line behind the Xucar, a difficult river with muddy banks, believing also that the principal French magazines were at Valencia, he conceived the idea of seizing the latter by a maritime expedition. He thought the garrison, estimated at eight hundred infantry and one thousand cavalry, would be unable to resist, and that the inhabitants would rise; Suchet could not then detach men enough to quell them without exposing himself to defeat on the Xucar, and if he moved with all his force he could be closely followed by the allies and driven upon Requeña.

On the 18th, Roche's division, reinforced by some troops from Elio's army, and a British grenadier battalion, was selected for the maritime attack; the rest of the army was concentrated at Castalla, with the exception of Whittingham's troops, who remained at Alcoy, for Suchet was said to be advancing, and Murray resolved to fight him. But to form a plan, and to execute it vigorously, were with Murray very different things. An able officer in the cabinet, he had no quality of a general in the field. His indecision was remarkable. On the morning of the 18th he resolved to fight in front of Castalla, in the evening he assumed a weaker position behind that town, abandoning the command of a road running from Ibi, in rear of Alcoy, by which Whittingham might have been cut off: when the strong remonstrances of his Quartermaster-General induced him to relinquish this ground, he adopted a third position, neither so strong as the first nor so defective as the last. In this manner affairs wore on until the 26th, when Roche's division and the grenadier battalion marched to Alicant to embark, with orders

* Plan 5.

if they failed at Valencia, to seize and fortify Cullera, at the mouth of the Xucar; and if this also failed, to besiege Denia. But now the foolish ministerial arrangements about the Sicilian army worked out their natural results. Wellington, though permitted to retain the Anglo-Sicilian army in Spain beyond the period assigned by Lord William, had not the full command; he was clogged with reference to the state of Sicily until the middle of March; then he became master, but this was still unknown to Lord William and to Murray. Thus there were three commanding officers—Wellington for the general, Murray for the particular operations, and Lord William was empowered to increase or diminish the troops, and even upon emergency to withdraw the whole. And now continued dissensions in Sicily, the King having suddenly resumed the government, made him recall two thousand of the best troops, and amongst them the grenadier battalion designed to attack Valencia, wherefore that enterprise fell to the ground.

Treating of this event, Murray, or some person writing under his authority, makes the following observations: "The most careful combination could not have selected a moment when the danger of such authority was more clearly demonstrated, more severely felt. Had these orders been received a very short time before, the allied army would not have been committed in active operations; had they reached Sir John Murray a week later, there is every reason to believe that the whole country from Alicant to Valencia would have passed under the authority of the allied army; and that Marshal Suchet, cut off from his magazines in that province and in Aragon, would have been compelled to retire through a mountainous and barren country on Madrid. But the order of Lord William Bentinck was peremptory, and the allied army, which even before was scarcely balanced, was now so inferior to the enemy that it became an indispensable necessity to adopt a system strongly defensive, and all hope of a brilliant commencement of the campaign vanished."*

Upon this curious passage it is necessary to remark: 1st. That Suchet's great magazines were not at Valencia, but at Saguntum; 2d. That from the castle of Denia the fleet would have been descried, and the strong garrison of Saguntum could have reinforced the troops in Valencia; Montmarie's brigade, also, would soon have come up from Oropesa. These were doubtless contingencies not much to be regarded in bar of such an enterprise; but Suchet would not have been forced to retire by Requeña upon Madrid; he would have retired to Liria, the road to which steered more than five miles clear of Valencia. He could have kept that

* Philippart's Military Calendar.

city in check while passing, in despite of Murray; and at Liria he would have been in his natural position, that is to say, in full command of his principal lines of communication. Moreover, however disagreeable to Suchet personally it might have been to be forced back upon Madrid, that event would have been extremely detrimental to the general cause, as tending to reinforce the King against Wellington. But the singular part of the passage quoted, is the assertion that the delay of a week in Lord William's order would have insured such a noble stroke against the French army. Lord William only required the troops to proceed in the first instance to Mahon. What a dull flagging spirit then was his, who dared not delay obedience to such an order even for a week!

The recalled troops embarked for Sicily the 5th of April, and Suchet, alarmed at the offensive position of the allies, which he attributed to the general state of affairs, because the King's march to Castile permitted all the Spanish armies of Andalusia to reinforce Elio, resolved to strike first; and with the greater avidity, because the Spanish General, Mijares, had been pushed with an advanced guard of three or four thousand men to Yecla, and was quite unsupported. This movement had been concerted in March with Murray, who was to occupy Villena, and be prepared to fall upon the French left if Mijares was attacked at Yecla; in return, the Spaniards were to fall on the French right if Murray was attacked.* Elio neglected to strengthen his division at Yecla with cavalry, which he had promised to do, nor did Murray occupy Villena in force; nevertheless Mijares remained at Yecla, Elio, with the main body, occupied Hellin, and the cavalry were posted on the side of Albacete until the departure of the troops for Sicily; Roche then joined the army at Castalla, and Elio's main body occupied Elda and Sax, to cover the main road from Madrid to Alicante. Wherefore on the night of the 11th, Suchet suddenly assembled sixteen battalions of infantry, ten squadrons of cavalry, and twelve pieces of artillery, at Fuente la Higuera, and marched straight upon Caudete, while Harispe's division, by a cross road, endeavored to surprise the Spaniards at Yecla. The latter retired fighting towards Jumilla, by the hills, but the French artillery and skirmishers followed close, and the Spaniards were pierced in the centre; one part broke and fled, the other part surrendered. Two hundred were killed, and fifteen hundred, including wounded, fell into the hands of the victors, who lost eighty men and officers.

Souchet's movement was known on the night of the 10th at

* Donkin, MSS.

Castalla. All the Anglo-Sicilian army was in position, because Whittingham had come from Alcoy, leaving only a detachment on that side; and while Harispe was defeating Mijares at Yecla, Suchet remained at Caudete with two divisions and the heavy cavalry, in order of battle, lest Murray should advance by Biar and Villena. The latter town, possessing an old wall and a castle, was occupied by the regiment of Velez-Malaga, a thousand strong, and in the course of the day Murray also came up with the allied cavalry and a brigade of infantry. Here he was joined by Elio without troops, and when towards evening, Harispe's fight being over, and the prisoners secured, Suchet advanced, Murray retired with the cavalry through the pass of Biar, leaving his infantry, under Colonel Adam, in front of that defile. He wished also to draw the Spanish garrison from Villena, but Elio would not suffer it, and yet during the night, repenting of his obstinacy, came to Castalla, entreating Murray to carry off that battalion. It was too late; Suchet had broken the gates of the town the evening before, and the castle, with the best equipped and finest regiment in the Spanish army, had already surrendered.

Sir John Murray's final position was about three miles from the pass of Biar. His left, entirely composed of Whittingham's Spaniards, was intrenched on a rugged sierra, ending abruptly above Castalla, which, with its old castle crowning an isolated sugar-loaf hill, closed the right of that wing, and was occupied in strength by General Mackenzie's division.

A space between Whittingham's troops and the town was left on the sierra for the advanced guard, then in the pass of Biar. Castalla itself, covered by the castle, was prepared for defence, and the principal approaches were commanded by strong batteries, for Murray had concentrated nearly all his guns at this point. The cavalry was partly behind, partly in front of the town, on an extensive plain which was interspersed with olive plantations.

The right wing, composed of Clinton's division and Roche's Spaniards, was on comparatively low ground, and extended to the rear at right angles with the centre, but well covered by a "*bar-ranco*" or bed of a torrent, the precipitous sides of which were in some places one hundred feet deep.

Suchet could approach this position through the pass of Biar, or turn that defile by the way of Sax; but he supposed Elio to be on the last road, which was also uninviting because it involved a flank march along the front of Murray's position; and that General, possessing the defiles of Biar and Alcoy, might have safely pushed to the Xucar by Fuentes la Higuera or by Alcoy, seeing that Alicant was secure and that Elio could easily have escaped. The allies

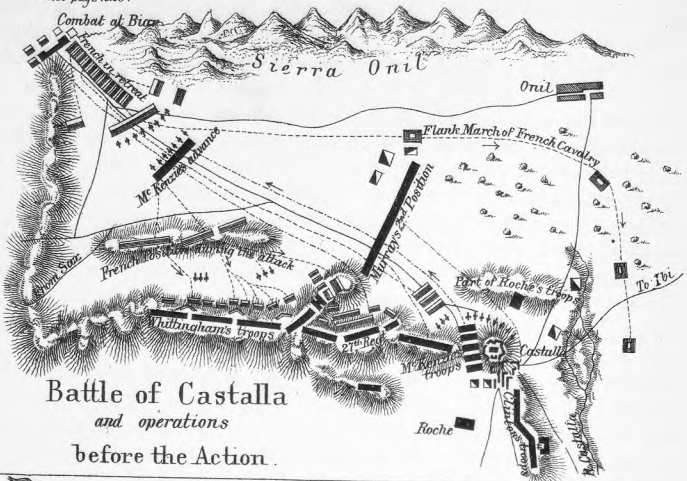
were far too inactive to take the initial, yet Suchet advanced cautiously, for the ground offered many means to strike a decisive blow. Murray had no such thought, his advanced guard remained on the defensive in the pass of Biar, being composed of two Italian regiments, and a battalion of the twenty-seventh, two companies of German riflemen, a troop of foreign hussars and six guns, four being mountain-pieces; it occupied strong ground, but at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 12th, the French skirmishers swarmed up the steep rocks on either flank with surprising vigor and agility, and when they had gained the summit the supporting columns advanced. The allies fought with resolution for two hours and then abandoned the pass with the loss of two guns and thirty prisoners, retreating however in good order to the main position, for they were not followed beyond the mouth of the defile. Next day about one o'clock, the French cavalry issued cautiously from the pass extending to their left in the plain as far as Onil, and they were followed by the infantry, who immediately occupied a low ridge about a mile in front of the allies' left; the cavalry then gained ground to the front, skirted the right of the allies and menaced the road to Ibi and Alcoy.

Murray had only occupied his ground during the night, but he had previously studied and intrenched it in parts. His right wing was quite refused, and so protected by the barranco that nearly all the troops could have been employed as a reserve to the left wing; which was also strongly posted and presented a front about two miles in extent. But notwithstanding the strength of his position he shrunk from the contest, and while the head of the French column was advancing from the defile of Biar, he thrice gave Donkin orders to put the army in retreat; twice that officer remonstrated, but the last command was so peremptory that obedience must have followed, if at that moment the firing between the piquets and the French light troops had not begun.

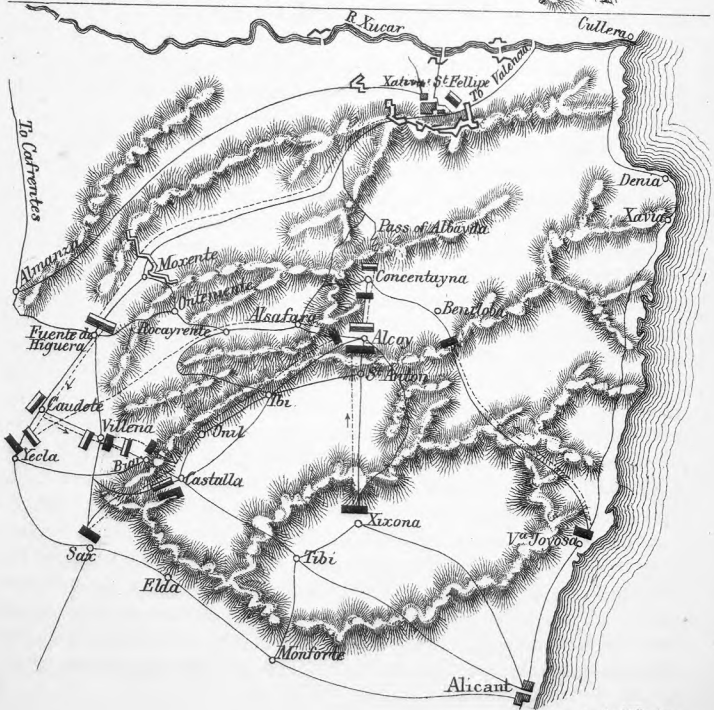
BATTLE OF CASTALLA.

Suchet's dispositions were slowly made, as if he also was indisposed to fight; and as a crooked jut of the sierra hid all the British troops and two-thirds of the whole army, his first measure was to send a column to turn it and discover the conditions of the position. Two other heavy columns were formed opposite the left wing, and his strong cavalry gradually closed on the barranco. The right of the allies was impregnable, and Suchet, keeping his reserve in the plain and the exploring column near Castalla to protect his left from a sally, opened his guns against the centre and right, while several columns of attack assailed their left on both sides of the





Battle of Castalla
and operations
before the Action.



Drawn by Genl Napier.

jut before mentioned. Whittingham's ground being rough and steep the battle there resolved itself into a skirmish of light troops; but though the summit was intrenched and the Spaniards fought not amiss, their left was beaten from the mountain. Meanwhile on the other side of the jut the French ascended slowly, yet so firmly that it was evident good fighting only would send them down again. Their skirmishers, spreading over the mountains and here and there attaining the summit, were partially driven down again, but where the main body met the second battalion of the twenty-seventh there was a terrible crash. The ground had an abrupt declination which enabled the French to form line under cover, close to the British, who were lying down in wait for the movement of charging; a grenadier officer seized the occasion to advance and challenge Waldron, also captain of grenadiers, to a duel. That agile vigorous Irishman instantly leaped forward, the hostile lines looked on, the swords of the champions glittered in the sun, the Frenchman's head was cleft in twain, and the twenty-seventh, rising up with a deafening shout, fired a deadly volley and charged with such a shock that, maugre their bravery and numbers, Suchet's men were overthrown, and the side of the sierra was covered with killed and wounded. Murray erroneously attributed this brilliant exploit to Colonel Adam; it was both the design and work of Colonel Reeves.

When this column was overthrown, two secondary attacks were made to cover its retreat, but they also failed, and the French army was thus separated in three parts; namely, the beaten troops who were in disorder, the reserve in the plains, the cavalry far on the left, fended off by the bed of the torrent, the only bridge over which was commanded by the allies. A vigorous sally from Castalla, and a general counter-attack, would have driven the French infantry upon the defile of Biar before their cavalry could have aided them; but Murray, who had remained during the action behind Castalla, gave them full time to rally and retire in order; for filing by the right through that town, and there changing his front with tedious pedantry, he formed two lines across the valley covered by his cavalry. Mackenzie only, breaking out by the left of Castalla, with three British and one German battalion, and eight guns, followed the enemy briskly. Meanwhile, Suchet plunged into the pass, infantry, cavalry, and tumbrils, in one mass, leaving only a rear-guard of three battalions with eight guns to cover the passage. Answering gun for gun they stood their ground, the clatter of musketry commenced, and one vigorous charge would have dashed them upon the army then wedged in the defile: but Mackenzie's advance had been ordered by Donkin without Mur-

ray's knowledge, and the latter, instead of supporting it, sent repeated orders to withdraw, and despite of all remonstrance compelled the troops to come back. Suchet, thus relieved, took a position across the defile, with his flanks on the heights; and though Murray sent some companies to menace his left, he retained his ground and in the night retreated to Fuente de la Higuera, first blowing up the castle of Villena. The 14th Murray marched to Alcoy, where some of Whittingham's force had remained to watch a French detachment holding the pass of Albayda, by which he proposed to intercept Suchet's retreat; but his movements were slow, his arrangements bad, the troops got into confusion, he halted the 15th at Alcoy, and a feeble demonstration towards Albayda terminated his operations.

In the battle the allies, including Roche's division, had seventeen thousand combatants; the French had fifteen thousand, if a detachment left beyond Biar to watch the Spaniards at Sax be reckoned. Suchet says, the action was forced on by the light troops against his wish, and that he lost only eight hundred men.* This statement is confirmed by the historian Vacani; but Murray called it a pitched battle, and said the French lost three thousand; the reader may choose: but in favor of Suchet's version, neither the time nor the mode of attack was conformable to his talent and experience if he had designed a pitched battle. And though the action was strongly contested at the principal point, it is scarcely possible that so many as three thousand men could have been killed and wounded. Yet eight hundred seems too few, because the loss of the victorious troops with all advantages of ground was more than six hundred. If Suchet had lost three thousand men, that is to say a fourth of his infantry, he must have been so crippled, that what with the narrow defile of Biar in the rear and the distance of his cavalry in the plain, to have escaped at all was extremely discreditable to Murray's generalship. An able commander having a superior force, and the allies were certainly the most numerous, would never have suffered the pass of Biar to be forced on the 12th; or if it were forced he would have had his army well in hand behind it, ready to fall upon the head of the French column as it issued into the low ground. But so little vigor had Murray that he resolved if the French again advanced to abandon the field and retire to Alicant!

Suchet violated several maxims of art. For without an adequate object he fought a battle, having a defile in his rear and on ground where his cavalry, in which he was superior, could not act. Neither the general state of the French affairs nor the particular

* Suchet to the King, MS.

circumstances invited a decisive offensive movement at the time: wherefore he should have been contented with his first successes against the Spaniards and against Colonel Adam, unless some palpable advantage had been offered to him by Murray. But the latter's position was very strong indeed, and the French army was cooped up between the pass of Biar and the allied troops. Had Elio executed a movement which Murray proposed in the night of the 12th, namely, to push troops into the mountains from Sax to strengthen Whittingham's left and menace the right flank of the enemy, Suchet's position would have been very dangerous; Elio, however, kept his army aloof and acted without concert though only a few miles distant. This might have been avoided if the castle and town of Villena had been in a good state of defence and the pass of Biar occupied in force behind it: the two armies would then have been secure of a junction in advance, and the plain of Villena would have been commanded. To the courage of the troops therefore belongs all the merit of the success obtained, for there was no generalship, and though much blood was spilt no profit was derived from victory.

CHAPTER V.

Operations north of the Tagus—Position of the French armies—Palombini marches from Madrid to join the army of the North—Various combats take place with the partidas—Foy fails to surprise the British post at Bejar—Caffarelli demands reinforcements—Joseph misconceives the Emperor's plans—Wellington's plans vindicated against French writers—Soult advises Joseph to hold Madrid and the mountains of Avila—Indecision of the King—He goes to Valladolid—Concentrates the French armies in Old Castile—A division under Leval remains at Madrid—Reille sends reinforcements to the army of the north—Various skirmishes with the partidas—Leval deceived by false rumors at Madrid—Joseph wishes to abandon that capital—Northern insurrection—Operations of Caffarelli, Palombini, Mendizabel, Longa, and Mina—Napoleon recalls Caffarelli—Clausel takes the command of the army of the north—Assaults Castro, but fails—Palombini skirmishes with Mendizabel—Introduces a convoy into Santona—Marches to succor Bilbao—His operations in Guipuscoa—The insurrection gains strength—Clausel marches into Navarre—Defeats Mina in the valley of Roncal and pursues him into Aragon—Foy acts on the coast—Takes Castro—Returns to Bilbao—Defeats the Biscayan volunteers under Mugartegui at Villaro, and those of Guipuscoa under Artola at Lequitio—The insurrectional Junta flies—Bermeo and Isaro are taken—Operations of the partidas on the great line of communication.

OPERATIONS NORTH OF THE TAGUS.

On this side, as in the south, one part of the French fronted Wellington's forces, while the rest warred with the partidas, watched the English fleets on the coast, and endeavored to maintain a free intercourse with France; but the extent of country was greater, the lines of communication longer, the war altogether more difficult, and the various operations more dissevered.

Four distinct bodies acted north of the Tagus.

1. The army of Portugal, six divisions under Reille, observed the allies from behind the Tormes, the Gallicians from behind the Esla.

2. That part of the army of the south which observed Hill from behind the Tietar, and the Spaniards of Estremadura from behind the Tagus.

3. The army of the north under Caffarelli, whose business was to watch the English squadrons in the Bay of Biscay, to scour the great line of communication with France, and protect the fortresses of Navarre and Biscay.

4. The army of the centre under Drouet, whose task was to fight the partidas in the central part of Spain, to cover Madrid, and connect the other armies by means of movable columns radiating from that capital. If the operations of these armies be followed in the order of their importance, and their bearing on the main action of the campaign marked, it will gradually be understood how it was,

that in 1813, the French, although apparently in their full strength, were suddenly, irremediably, and, as it were by a whirlwind, swept from the Peninsula.

D'Armagnac's and Barrois' French divisions, Palombini's Italians, Casa Palacio's Spaniards, Trielhard's dragoons, and Joseph's French guards, formed the army of the centre; which, in returning from the Tormes, had one hundred and fifty men, from the rash use of alcohol, frozen to death in the Guadarama pass.* Palombini had been at first detached to forage the country towards Guadalaxara, and he brought abundance of provisions to the capital; he would then have gone to Zaragoza to receive recruits and stores just arrived from Italy, but the army of the north was so pressed that he finally marched to its succor; moving, however, by the circuitous route of Valladolid and Burgos to scour the country. The King's guards replaced his division at Alcala, and sharp excursions were made on every side against the partidas, who, being now recruited and taught by French deserters, were very wary and fought obstinately.

On the 8th of January Espert, governor of Segovia, beat Saornil not far from Cuellar. On the 3d of February, General Vichery, marching upon Medina Celi, routed a regiment of horse called the volunteers of Madrid, and took six hundred prisoners. The Empeinado, with two thousand infantry and a thousand cavalry, intercepted him on his return, but Vichery beat him with considerable slaughter, and made the retreat good with a loss only of seventy men. The guerilla chief was then reinforced by Saornil and Abril in the hills about Guadalaxara; and when Drouet sent fresh troops against him, he attacked a detachment under Colonel Prieur, killed twenty men, took the baggage, and recovered a heavy contribution. The French were also continually harassed in the valley of the Tagus, notably so by a chief called Cuesta, who was sometimes in the Guadalupe mountains, sometimes on the Tietar, sometimes in the Vera de Placentia, and was supported at times on the side of the Guadalupe by Morillo and Penne Villemur. Hill's vicinity, however, disquieted them most on that side; his enterprises had made a profound impression, and the slightest change of his quarters, even the appearance of an English uniform beyond the line of cantonments, caused a concentration of troops to meet one of his sudden blows.

Nor was the army of Portugal tranquil. The Gallicians menaced it from Puebla Senabria and the gorges of the Bierzo—Silveira from the Tras os Montes—the mountains separating Leon from the Asturias were full of bands—Wellington was on the Agueda, and Hill,

* Vacani.

moving from Coria by the pass of Bejar, might make a sudden incursion towards Avila. Finally, the communication with the army of the north was to be kept up, and on every side the partidas were enterprising, especially the horsemen in the plains of Leon: Reille, however, warred down these last.

Early in January Foy, returning from Astorga to relieve Leval, then at Avila, killed some of Marquinez' cavalry in San Pedro, and more of them at Mota la Toro; and on the 15th of that month, Captain Mathis killed or took four hundred of the same partida, at Valderas. A convoy of guerilla stores coming from the Asturias, was intercepted by Boyer's detachments; and one Florian, a celebrated Spanish partisan in the French service, destroyed the band of Garido in the Avila district. The same Florian on the 1st of February defeated the Medico and another inferior chief, and soon after passing the Tormes captured some Spanish dragoons who had come out of Ciudad Rodrigo. On the 1st of March he crushed the band of Tonto, and at the same time Mathis, acting on the side of the Carrion river, again surprised Marquinez' band at Melgar Abaxo, which was thus reduced to two hundred men, and ceased to be formidable. Previous to this, some Gallician troops at Castro Gonzalo, on the Esla, were attacked by Boyer, who beat them through Benevente with the loss of one hundred and fifty men, and then driving the Spanish garrison from Puebla Senabria, raised contributions with a rigor and ferocity said to be habitual to him. His detachments afterwards penetrated into the Asturias, menaced Oyiedo, and vexed the country in despite of Porlier and Barceña, who were in that province. Foy also, being at Avila, and uneasy about Hill, endeavored on the 20th of February to surprise Bejar with the view of ascertaining if any large body was collected behind it, but he was vigorously repulsed by the fiftieth regiment and sixth caçadores. This attack, and the movements of Florian behind the Tormes, induced Wellington to bring up another division to the Agueda, which by a reaction made the French believe the allies were ready to advance.

As Caffarelli could not induce Reille to send him reinforcements, the insurrection in the north gained strength, and the communications were entirely intercepted until Palombini, driving away Mendizabel and Longa from Burgos, enabled the great convoy, and all Napoleon's despatches, which had been long accumulating there, to reach Madrid in the latter end of February. Joseph then reluctantly prepared to abandon his capital and concentrate the armies in Castille, but he neglected those essential ingredients of the Emperor's plan, rapidity and boldness. By the first, Napoleon proposed to gain time for the suppression of the insurrection in the

northern provinces; by the second, to impose upon Wellington and keep him on the defensive. Joseph did neither, he was slow, and assumed the defensive himself. He and the other French generals expected to be attacked, for they had not fathomed the English General's political difficulties; and French writers since, misconceiving the character of his warfare, have attributed to slowness in the man what was really the long-reaching policy of a great commander. The allied army was not so lithe as the French army. The latter carried on occasion ten days' provisions on the soldiers' backs, or it lived upon the country, and was in respect of its organization and customs a superior military machine; the former never carried more than three days' provisions, never lived upon the country, avoided the principle of making the war support the war, paid or promised to pay for everything, and often carried in its marches even the corn for its cavalry. The difference of this organization, resulting from the difference of policy between the two nations, was a complete bar to any great and sudden excursion on the part of the British General, and must always be considered in judging his operations.

If Wellington had passed the upper Tormes with a considerable force, drawing Hill to him through Bejar, and moving rapidly by Avila, he might have broken in upon the defensive system of the King, and beat his armies in detail; and much the French feared such a blow, which would have been quite in the manner of Napoleon. But his views were directed by other than mere military principles. Thus striking, he was not certain his blow would be decisive, his Portuguese forces would have been ruined, his British soldiers seriously injured by the attempt; and the resources of France would have repaired the loss of the enemy sooner than he could have recovered the weakness which must necessarily have followed such an unseasonable exertion. His plan was to bring a great and enduring power early into the field, for, like Phocion, he desired to have an army fitted for a long race, and would not start on the short course.

Joseph conceived and dreaded such a sudden attack, but could not conceive the spirit of his brother's plans. It was in vain Napoleon, while admitting the bad moral effect of abandoning the capital, pointed out the difference between flying from it and making a forward movement at the head of an army; the King maintained that Madrid was a better military centre of operations than Valladolid, because it had lines of communication by Segovia, Aranda de Duero and Zaragoza. Nothing could be more unmilitary than this view, unless he was prepared to march direct upon Lisbon if the allies marched upon the Duero. His extreme reluctance to quit

Madrid induced slowness, and the actual position of his troops at the moment likewise presented obstacles to the immediate execution of the Emperor's orders; for as Daricau's division had not returned from Valencia, the French outposts towards the Morena could not be withdrawn, nor could the army of the centre march upon Valladolid until the army of the south relieved it at Madrid. Moreover Soult's counsels troubled the King's judgment; for that Marshal, agreeing that to abandon Madrid was to abandon Spain, endeavored to reconcile possession of the capital with the Emperor's views.

He proposed to place the army of Portugal and the army of the south in position along the slopes of the Avila mountains and on the upper Tormes, menacing Rodrigo, while the King with the army of the centre remained at Madrid in reserve. In this situation they would be an overmatch for any force the allies could bring into the field, and the latter could not move by the valley of the Tagus or upon the Duero without danger of a flank attack. Joseph, deceived by his Spanish ministers, said that the feeding of such a force would ruin his people; but the comfortable state of the houses and the great plains of standing corn seen by the allies in their after march from the Esla to the Carrion proved that the people were not much impoverished. Soult, well acquainted with the resources of that country and a more practised master of such operations, looked to the military question rather than a conciliatory policy, and positively affirmed the armies could be subsisted; yet he does not appear to have considered how the insurrection in the northern provinces was to be suppressed, which was the principal object of Napoleon's plan. He no doubt expected the Emperor would send troops for that purpose, but Napoleon knew that all the resources of France would be required in another quarter.

Hatred and suspicion would have made Joseph reject any plan suggested by Soult, and he was galled that the Marshal should declare the troops could exist without money from France; yet his mind was unsettled by the proposal and the coincidence of ideas as to holding Madrid; for even when the armies were in movement he vacillated, at one time thinking to stay at Madrid, at another to march with the army of the centre to Burgos instead of Valladolid.* However, upon the 18th of March he quitted the capital, leaving the Spanish ministers Angulo and Almenara to govern there in conjunction with Gazan. The army of the south then moved in two columns, one under Conroux across the Gredos mountains to Avila, the other under Gazan upon Madrid to relieve the army of the centre, which immediately marched to Aranda de

* Marshal Jourdan's Official Correspondence, MS.

Duero and Lerma with orders to settle at Burgos. Villatte's division and all the outposts withdrawn from La Mancha remained on the Alberche, and the movements north of the Tagus were only molested by the bands. In La Mancha the retiring troops were followed by Del Parque's advanced guard under Cruz Murgeon, but the French cavalry checked it roughly at the bridge of Algorbar. Cruz Murgeon then retired, and the Empecinado was defeated on the side of Cuenca in an attempt to cut off some cavalry who were escorting the Marquis of Salices to collect his rents previous to quitting Madrid. When the stores were removed from Madrid, Villatte marched on Salamanca, Gazan entered Arevalo, and the army of the south was cantoned between the Tormes, the Duero, and the Adaja, with exception of ten thousand chosen men left to hold Madrid under Leval. His orders were to keep guards at Toledo and on the Alberche, lest the allies should suddenly turn the left; and as roads beyond the Alberche led over the Gredos mountains in rear of the French advanced posts on the upper Tormes, these last were withdrawn from Pedrahita and Puente Congosto.

Reille now gradually reinforced Caffarelli, and concentrated his remaining force about Medina de Rio Seco with cavalry posts on the Esla; but the men recalled by the Emperor were then in march, the French were in confusion, and the people instigated by Wellington's emissaries and expecting great events, withheld provisions. The partida warfare also became as lively in the interior as on the coast, but with worse fortune. Captain Giordano, a Spaniard of Joseph's guard, killed one hundred and fifty of Saornil's people near Arevalo, and the indefatigable Florian, defeating Morale's band, seized a dépôt in the valley of the Tietar and beat the Medico; then crossing the Gredos mountains he destroyed near Segovia the band of Purchas: the King's Spanish guards also crushed some smaller partidas, and Renovales with his whole staff was captured at Carvajales and carried to Valladolid. The Empecinado coming to the hills above Sepulveda joined Merino and compelled the people of the Segovia district to abandon their houses; but being menaced by the French those chiefs regained their ancient haunts and Drouet then removed his head-quarters to Cuellar.

In April Leval became so uneasy that he gave several false alarms, which caused an unreasonable concentration of the troops at Valladolid, and Drouet abandoned Cuellar and Sepulveda.* Del Parque and the Empecinado were said to have re-established the bridge of Aranjuez, Elio to be advancing in La Mancha, Hill to be in the valley of the Tagus advancing by Mombeltran to seize

* Joseph's Papers, MSS.

the Guadarama. All this was false. The Empecinado, Abuelo, and Del Parque, were indeed at Aranjuez; and Firmin, Cuesta, Rivero, and the Medico were collecting near Arzobispo to mask the march of the Spanish divisions from Estremadura and the reserve from Andalusia. The Prince of Anglona also had entered La Mancha with his cavalry, but it was to cover the movement of Del Parque upon Murcia; and when the true state of affairs became known, Leval drove away the Empecinado, chased Firmin from the valley of the Tagus, and re-established his posts in Toledo and on the Alberche. Joseph was then only restrained from abandoning Madrid altogether by his fear of the Emperor, and his hope of still getting some contributions from thence to support his court. With reluctance also he obeyed Napoleon's reiterated orders to cross the Duero with the army of the centre, and replace the detached divisions of the army of Portugal. He wished Drouet rather than Reille to reinforce the north, and nothing could more clearly show how entirely the subtle spirit of his brother's instructions had escaped his perception. For it was essential to hold Madrid, to watch the valley of the Tagus and enable the French armies to fall back on Zaragoza if the case arose; more essential to give moral effect to the offensive front shown towards the north of Portugal. For the last reason it was proper also that Reille and not Drouet, who was still in Madrid, should reinforce Caffarelli; because the latter's march from that capital would seem a retreat and disclose its object; whereas his movement ought to mask the object and bear the appearance of an offensive one towards Portugal.

In the contracted positions now occupied, the difficulty of subsisting was increased, each general was dissatisfied, disputes multiplied, and the court clashed with the army at every turn. Leval also inveighed against the Spanish ministers and minor authorities left at Madrid; and no doubt justly, since their conduct was precisely like that of the Portuguese and Spanish authorities towards the allies. Joseph's letters to his brother became daily more bitter. Napoleon's regulations for the troops' subsistence clashed with his, and though his budget showed a deficit of many millions, the Emperor, disregarding it, reduced the French subsidy to two millions per month, and forbade its application to any purpose save the pay of the soldiers. When Joseph asked how he was then to find resources? he was, with a just sarcasm on his political and military blindness, desired to seek what he wanted in the north which was rich enough to nourish the partidas and insurrectional juntas. Thus pushed to the wall, Joseph prevailed on Gazan secretly to lend him fifty thousand francs from the military chest; but with the other gener^{als}

he could not agree, and for the vigor necessary to meet the coming campaign discord was substituted.

All the movements for concentration displeased the Emperor. He condemned the army of the centre for stealing out of Madrid by the road of Lerma, as only calculated to expose the real views, and draw the allies on before the communications with France were restored. The manner in which the King held the armies on the defensive in his new position discontented him still more. The allies he said were thus told they might without fear for Portugal embark troops to invade France; whereas by a confident offensive movement backed with the formation of a battering-train at Burgos, indicating the siege of Rodrigo, Wellington would have been alarmed, France secured from the danger of insult, and the measures for suppressing the insurrection in the northern provinces have been masked. To quell that insurrection was of vital importance, yet it had now existed for seven months, in five of which the King, having ninety thousand men, was unmolested by Wellington, and had only chased some inferior bands of the interior while this warfare was consolidating in his rear, and his great adversary was organizing the most powerful army which had yet taken the field in his front. It is thus kingdoms are lost. The progress of this northern insurrection shall now be shown. Neglected by the King, it was to the last misunderstood by him; for when Wellington was actually in movement, when the dispersed French armies were crowding to the rear to avoid the ponderous mass the English general was pushing forward,—even then the King, who had done everything to render defeat certain, was urging upon Napoleon the propriety of first beating the allies and afterwards reducing the insurrection by the establishment of a Spanish civil government beyond the Ebro!

NORTHERN INSURRECTION.

In the latter end of 1812 all the French littoral posts, Santona and Gueteria excepted, had been taken by the Spaniards, and Mendizabel attacked Bilbao the 6th of January; being repulsed by Rouget, he rejoined Longa and reduced the little fort of Salinas de Anara near the Ebro, and that of Cuba in the Bureba. While bands from Logroño invested Domingo Calçada in the Rioja. On the 26th of January, Caffarelli detached Vandermaesen and Dubreton to drive the Spaniards from Santander; they seized many stores there, yet neglected to make any movement in aid of Santona which was again blockaded by the partidas. Meanwhile the convoy with the Emperor's despatches was stopped at Burgos until Palombini re-opened the communications. But he

had not more than three thousand men, and as the detachments belonging to the different armies were then in march to the interior, and the regiments recalled to France were also in movement, together with many convoys and escorts for marshals and generals quitting the Peninsula, the army of the north was reduced as its duties increased, and the young French soldiers died fast of a peculiar malady which especially attacked them in small garrisons. The Spaniards' forces increased, and in February Mendizabel and Longa were again in the Bureba, intercepting the communication between Burgos and Bilbao, and menacing Pancorbo and Briviesca. This brought Caffarelli from Vittoria and Palombini from Burgos. The latter, although surprised by Longa near Poza de Sal and only saving himself by his courage and firmness, finally drove the Spaniards away; but then Mina, returning from Aragon after his unsuccessful action near Huesca, surprised and burned the castle of Fuenterrabia in a daring manner; after which, assembling five thousand men in Guipuscoa he obtained guns from the English fleet at Motrico, invested Villa Real within a few leagues of Vittoria, and repulsed six hundred men who came to its succour. This brought Caffarelli from Pancorbo. Mina then raised the siege and Palombini drove the partidas towards Soria. The communication with Logroño being thus re-opened the Italians marched by Vittoria towards Bilbao, where they arrived the 21st of February; but Caffarelli returned with gens-d'armes and imperial guards to France, leaving the Spanish chiefs masters of Navarre and Biscay. The people now refused war contributions in money or kind, the harvest was not ripe and the French were sorely distressed, because the weather enabled the English ships to hug the coast and intercept supplies from France by sea. The communications were all broken; in front by Longa who was again at the defile of Pancorbo; in rear by Mina who was in the hills of Arlaban; on the left by a collection of bands at Caroncal in Navarre. Abbé, Governor of Pampeluna, severely checked these last, but Mina soon restored affairs; for leaving the volunteers of Guipuscoa to watch the defiles of Arlaban he assembled all the bands in Navarre, destroyed the bridges leading to Taffalla from Pampeluna and from Puente la Reyna, and though Abbé twice attacked him he got stronger, and bringing up two English guns from the coast besieged Taffalla.

Napoleon, discontented with Caffarelli, gave Clausel the command in the north with discretionary power to draw troops from the army of Portugal as he judged fitting. He was to correspond directly with the Emperor to avoid loss of time, but was to obey the King in all things not clashing with Napoleon's orders, which

contained a complete review of what had passed and what was fitting to be done. "The partidas," the Emperor said, "were strong, organized, exercised and seconded by the exaltation of spirit which the battle of Salamanca had produced. The insurrectional juntas had been revived, the posts on the coast, abandoned by the French and seized by the Spaniards, gave free intercourse with the English; the bands enjoyed all the resources of the country and the system of warfare had hitherto favored their progress. Instead of forestalling their enterprises the French awaited their attacks, and were always behind the event; they obeyed the enemy's impulsion and the troops were fatigued without gaining their object. Clausel must attack suddenly, pursue rapidly, and combine his movements with reference to the features of the country. A few good strokes against the Spaniards' magazines, hospitals or dépôts of arms would inevitably trouble their operations; and after one or two military successes political measures would suffice to disperse the authorities, disorganize the insurrection and bring the young men who had been enrolled by force back to their homes. Block-houses were to be constructed on well-chosen points, especially where many roads met; the forests would furnish the materials cheaply, and these posts should support each other and form chains of communication. With respect to the greater fortresses, Pampeluna and Santona were the most important and the enemy knew it; for Mina was intent to famish the first and the English squadron to get hold of the second. To supply Pampeluna it needed only to clear the communications as the country around was rich and fertile. Santona required combinations. The Emperor wished to supply it by sea from Bayonne and St. Sebastian, but the French marine officers would never attempt the passage even with favorable winds, and when the English squadron were away, unless all the intermediate ports were occupied by the land forces.

"Six months before these ports had been French, Caffarelli had lightly abandoned them while he marched with Souham against Wellington. Since that period the English and Spaniards held them. For four months the Emperor had unceasingly ordered the retaking of Bermeo and Castro; but whether from the difficulty of the operation or the necessity of answering more pressing calls, no effort had been made to obey and the fine season now permitted the English ships to aid in the defence. Castro was said to be strongly fortified by the English, no wonder, Caffarelli had given them sufficient time and they knew its value. In one month every post on the coast from the mouth of the Bidassoa to St. Ander should be again re-occupied, and St. Ander garrisoned strongly.

Simultaneous with the coast operations should be Clausel's attack on Mina, and the chasing of the partidas in the interior of Biscay. The administration of the country also demanded reform, still more did the organization and discipline of the army. The north was the pith of the French power, all would fail if that failed, whereas if it were strong, its administration sound, its fortresses well furnished, its state tranquil, no irreparable misfortune could happen in other parts."

Clausel assumed command the 22d of February, Abbé was then confined to Pampeluna, Mina, master of Navarre, was besieging Taffalla; Pastor, Longa, Campillo, Merino and others ranged through Biscay and Castille unmolested; and the spirit of the country was so changed, that fathers sent their sons to join partidas hitherto composed of robbers and deserters. Clausel demanded twenty thousand men from Reille, but Joseph, who was then in Madrid, proposed to send Drouet with the army of the centre instead. Clausel would not accede; twenty thousand troops were, he said, wanted beyond the Ebro; two independent chiefs could not act together; and if Drouet was only to remain at Burgos he would devour the resources without aiding the operations in the north. The King might choose another commander but the troops must be sent. Joseph yielded, yet it was the end of March before Reille's divisions moved, three upon Navarre and one upon Burgos. Meanwhile Clausel repaired to Bilbao, where Rouget had eight hundred men in garrison besides Palombini's Italians.

This place was blockaded by the partidas. The Pastor with three thousand men was in the hills of Guernica and Navarnis, between Bilbao and the fort of Bermeo; and Mendizabel having eight or ten thousand men in the mountains menaced Santoña and Bilbao and protected Castro. However the French garrison in Durango was strong, new works round Bilbao were in progress, and on the 22d Clausel moved with the Italians and a French regiment to assault Castro. Campillo and Mendizabel came to its succor and the garrison made a sally, but the former after some sharp fighting regained the high valleys in disorder. The escalade of Castro would then have ensued, if Mendizabel had not come to Trucios, only seven miles from the French camp, and the Pastor with the volunteers of Biscay and Guipuscoa menaced Bilbao. Clausel marched with his French regiments to the latter place, leaving Palombini to oppose Mendizabel, but finding Bilbao in safety he sent Rouget with two battalions to reinforce the Italians, who then drove Mendizabel from Trucios into the hills about Valmaceda.

Castro was now to be attacked in form. Palombini occupied the

heights of Ojeba and Ramales, from whence he communicated with the garrison of Santofia, introduced a convoy of money and fresh provisions there, received ammunition in return, and directed the Governor Lameth to prepare a battering-train of six pieces for the siege. But then he returned hastily to Bilbao which was menaced by El Pastor, whom he thought too strong to be meddled with until promised a reinforcement from Durango, when he gave battle and was defeated with a loss of eighty men. Two days after the reinforcement joined and he beat the Pastor, whose men dispersed, some to collect again on Palombini's rear while others went to the interior. One column however retired by the coast on the side of St. Sebastian, and Palombini pursued it, expecting troops from the fortress to line the Deba and bar retreat, but an English squadron carried the Spaniards off from Lequitio. Meanwhile El Pastor, having rallied, descended the Deba and drove the French back to St. Sebastian; Palombini was thus compelled to make for Bergara, on the Vittoria road, where he left his wounded men and a garrison, and on the 9th fell on the volunteers of Guipuscoa at Ascotyia, but was repulsed and fell back to Bergara.

Next day he took charge of an artillery convoy going from St. Sebastian for the siege of Castro; yet he left Bilbao in great danger, for the Biscayan volunteers made on the 10th a false attack at a bridge above the entrenched camp, while Tapia, Dos Pelos, and Campillo fell on seriously from the side of Valmaceda. However, Mendizabel who commanded the whole made such bad dispositions that he was repulsed by Rouget, and then Palombini, who heard the firing, hastily deposited his convoy and returning followed the Biscayan volunteers to Guernica driving them upon Bermeo, where they also got on board the English ships.

During these events Clausel remained at Vittoria to arrange the general plan, and Mina on the 1st of April defeated one of his columns near Lerim with a loss of six hundred men; he was also disappointed about his reinforcements; for though four of Reille's divisions and some unattached regiments joined him, they only supplied seventeen instead of twenty thousand men; and as the regiments merely replaced men which had marched to rejoin their own armies in front, this succor dwindled to thirteen thousand. Hence, notwithstanding Palombini's activity the insurrection was in April more formidable than ever; the line of correspondence from Torquemada to Burgos was quite unprotected for want of troops, and the line from Burgos to Irun was not so well guarded that couriers could pass without powerful escorts, nor always then. The fortifications of Burgos were to have been improved but there was no money to pay for the works; the French could not collect

provisions for magazines ordered by the King, and two generals, La Martiniere and Rey, were disputing for the command. Forty thousand Spanish partisans were in action, Taffalla surrendered to Mina, and he and Duran, Amor, Tabueca and the militia of Logroño, holding both sides on the Ebro between Calahorra, Logroño, and Guardia, could in one day unite eighteen thousand foot and a thousand horsemen. Mendizabel, Longa, Campillo, Herrera, El Pastor, and the volunteers of Biscay, Guipuscoa, and Alava, in all sixteen thousand, were on the coast acting in conjunction with the English squadrons; Santander, Castro, and Bermeo were still in their hands, and maritime expeditions were preparing at Coruña and in the Asturias.

This partisan war thus presented three distinct branches, that of Navarre, that of the coast, and that on the lines of communication. The last alone occupied above fifteen thousand French; namely, ten thousand from Irun to Burgos, fifteen hundred to restore the line of correspondence between Tolosa and Pampeluna, which had been destroyed; and four thousand between Mondragon and Bilbao, the garrison of the latter place included. Nearly all the army of the north was appropriated to the garrisons and lines of communication; but the divisions of Abbé and Vandermaesen could be used on the side of Pampeluna, and there were disposable, Palombini's Italians and the divisions sent by Reille. But one of these, Sarrut's, was still in march, and all the sick of the armies in Castile were now pouring into Navarre, where, from the loss of the contributions there was no money to provide for them. Clausel had however ameliorated the civil and military administrations, improved the works of Gueteria, commenced block-houses between Irun and Vittoria, and shaken the bands about Bilbao. Now dividing his forces he sent Palombini to besiege Castro, and directed Foy and Sarrut to cover the operation and oppose disembarkations.

This field force and the troops in Bilbao furnished ten thousand men, and in the middle of April Clausel beat Mina from Taffalla and Estella and assembled at Puente de la Reyna in Navarre the remainder of the active army, composed of Taupin's and Barbout's divisions of the army of Portugal, Vandermaesen's and Abbe's divisions of the army of the north, in all thirteen thousand men. He urged L'Huillier, who commanded the reserve at Bayonne, to reinforce St. Sebastian and Gueteria and push troops of observation into the valley of Bastan; and he also warned the commander of Zaragoza to watch Mina on that side. From Puente la Reyna he made some excursions, but lost men uselessly, for the Spaniards would only fight at advantage; and to hunt Mina without first barring all his passages of flight was to destroy the French soldiers

by fatigue. Here the King's dilatory warfare was seriously felt, because the winter season, when the tops of the mountains being covered with snow, the partidas could only move along the ordinary roads, was most favorable for the French operations and it passed away; Clausel now despaired to effect anything, and was even going to separate his forces and march to the coast when, in May, Mina took post in the valley of Ronçal. The French general instantly sent Abbé's and Vandermaesen's divisions and the cavalry against him at once by the upper and lower parts. Suddenly closing upon the guerilla chief they killed or wounded a thousand of his men and dispersed the rest; one part fled from the mountains on the side of Sanguessa with the wounded, whom they dropped at different places in care of the country people, but Chaplangarra, Cruchaga, and Carena, Mina's lieutenants, going off, each with a column, in the opposite direction and by different routes to the valley of the Aragon, passed that river at St. Gilla and made their way towards the sacred mountain of La Peña near Jaca. The French cavalry following them by Villa Real, entered that town the 14th on one side while Mina with twelve men entered it on the other; yet he escaped to Martes where another ineffectual attempt was made to surprise him. Abbé's columns then descended the smaller valleys leading towards the upper valley of the Aragon, while Vandermaesen's infantry and the cavalry entered the lower part of the same valley, and the former approaching Jaca sent his wounded men there and got fresh ammunition.

Mina and the insurgent junta trying to regain Navarre by the left of the Aragon river were like to have been taken, but again escaped towards the valley of the Gallego, whither also the greater part of their troops now sought refuge. Clausel forbore to force them over that river, lest they should remain there and intercept the communication from Zaragoza by Jaca, the only free line the French now possessed and too distant to be watched. Abbé therefore returned to Ronçal in search of the Spanish dépôts, and Vandermaesen entered Sos at one end as Mina, who had now one hundred and fifty horsemen and was always intent upon regaining Navarre, passed out at the other. The light cavalry overtook him at Sos Fuentes and he fled to Carcastillo; but there, unexpectedly meeting some of his own squadrons which had wandered over the mountains after the action at Ronçal, he gave battle, was defeated with the loss of fifty men and fled once more to Aragon, whereupon the insurrectional junta dispersed and dissensions arose between Mina and the minor chiefs under his command. Clausel, anxious to increase this discord, sent troops into all the valleys to seek out the Spanish dépôts and attack their scattered men; and he was

well served by the Aragonese, for Suchet's wise administration was still proof against the insurrectional juntas.

During these events four battalions left by Mina in the Amescos were chased by Taupin, who had remained at Estella when the other divisions marched up the valley of Ronçal. Soon however Mina re-assembled at Barbastro in Aragon a strong column, crowds of deserters from the other Spanish armies augmented his force; and so completely had he organized Navarre, that the presence of a single soldier of his in a village sufficed to have any courier without a strong escort stopped. Many bands also were still in the Rioja, and two French battalions rashly foraging towards Lerim were nearly all destroyed. In fine the losses were well balanced, and Clarcel demanded more troops, especially cavalry, to scour the Rioja. Nevertheless the dispersion of Mina's troops lowered his reputation, and the French general so improved this advantage by address, that many townships withdrew from the insurrection and recalling their young men from the bands commenced the formation of eight free Spanish companies to serve on the French side. Corps of this sort were raised with so much facility in every part of Spain that it would seem nations as well as individuals have an idiosyncrasy, and in these changeable warriors we again see the Mandonius and Indibilis of ancient days.

Joseph, urged by Clausel, now sent Maucune's division and some light cavalry of the army of Portugal to occupy Pampleiga, Burgos, and Briviesca, and to protect the great communication, which the diverging direction of the operations had again exposed to the partidas. But the French had not been less successful in Biscay than in Navarre. Foy reached Bilbao the 24th of April, and finding all things ready for the siege of Castro marched to Santona to hasten the preparations at that place; he attempted also to surprise Campillo and Herrera in the hills above Santona, but was worsted in the combat. The two battering-trains then endeavored to proceed from Bilbao to Santona by sea to Castro; the English vessels, coming to the mouth of the Durango, stopped those at Bilbao and compelled them to proceed by land, but thus gave an opportunity for those at Santona to make the sea-run in safety.

SIEGE OF CASTRO.

This place, situated on a promontory, was garrisoned by twelve hundred men under the command of Pedro Alvarez; three English sloops of war commanded by the Captains Bloye, Bremen, and Tayler, were at hand, some gun-boats were in the harbor, and twenty-seven guns were mounted on the works. An outward wall with towers extended from sea to sea on the low neck which con-