



ANNALS
OF THE
PENINSULAR
CAMPAIGNS

V O L

III







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OF THE
PENINSULAR CAMPAIGNS;

FROM
MDCCCVIII TO MDCCCXIV.

BY THE AUTHOR OF CYRIL THORNTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH: AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
MDCCCXXXIX.

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1800

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CHAPTER I. sent representatives to the last assembly were to retain their privileges. The provincial Juntas were each empowered to elect a member, and the population of the provinces was to be re-

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CHAPTER I.

ANDALUSIA—ARRAGON—CATALONIA.

THOSE disposed to attribute to the imbecility of the government, the successive disasters which had befallen the Spanish armies, naturally looked forward with anxiety to the Convention of the Cortes. By decree of the Supreme Junta, before quitting Seville, that representative body was directed to assemble in the Isla de Leon, and a code of instructions was promulgated, directing the mode and principles of election. All cities which had

CHAP. I.

1810.

CHAP. I. sent representatives to the last assembly were to
1810. retain their privilege. The provincial Juntas were each empowered to elect a member, and the population of the provinces was to be represented by delegates, in the proportion of one to every fifty thousand inhabitants. Besides these, sixty-eight supplementary deputies were to be chosen in the different provinces as a representative *corps de reserve*, from which all vacancies by death or otherwise were to be filled up. Nobles, plebeians, and secular priests, were declared equally within the pale of election; and the only qualifications demanded were, that the person chosen should have attained the age of twenty-five years, and should hold no pension or office of emolument under government.

A temporary arrangement was made with regard to the representation of the American Colonies. It was agreed that twenty-six members should be added for that portion of the monarchy, including the Columbian and Philippine islands; and, in order to obviate delay, it was arranged that these should, in the first instance, be chosen from the natives of those dependencies then resident in Spain. It was the intention of the Supreme Junta to have balanced

the influence of this popular assembly, by another composed of the grandees, and dignitaries of the church, but this part of the project was not carried into effect.

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Many difficulties occurred in the election of members; nor was it till the twenty-fourth September that the meeting, so anxiously expected, took place. At nine in the morning of that day the deputies assembled at the Constitutional Hall in Cadiz, and walked in solemn procession to the Cathedral, where high mass was performed by the Cardinal Archbishop de Bourbon. The oath was then administered; and, after a discourse from the Bishop of Orense, the assembly at once entered on its high functions.

Sep. 24.

One of the first acts of the Cortes was a decree declaratory of their own character and privileges, and of the indefeasible rights of Ferdinand to the throne of Spain. They pronounced the invalidity of any cession of the crown in favour of the French Emperor, and ordained that no member of the Cortes should accept of pension, honour, or reward from the Executive.

In the proceedings of this assembly, a disposition was speedily evinced to engage in matters of abstract and speculative legislation, little ap-

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1810.

plicable to the circumstances of the crisis. On the motion of the eloquent and patriotic Arguelles, the state of the press in Spain became the subject of discussion, and a decree emanated from the assembly, removing many of the restrictions under which it had laboured. A committee was appointed to inquire into the best means of accelerating the despatch of causes before the tribunals. It was ordained, that all prisoners accused of crimes should be brought to trial, without the intervention of any unnecessary delay. The judicial authorities were directed frequently to visit the prisons within their jurisdiction, and every two months to transmit, through the Regency to the Cortes, an accurate account of the causes pending in the courts of law, and of prisoners charged with criminal offences.

Such matters of legislative enactment are unquestionably, in every civil community, of the first importance; but the moment when the armies of the enemy extended from Cadiz to the Pyrenees, was scarcely the most proper for their calm and deliberate consideration. At such a crisis, to animate the courage of the people, to organize the irregular levies of the provinces, to consolidate their strength and direct their efforts,

should have been the paramount, if not the exclusive objects of the Spanish Government. CHAP. I.

1810.

In the preceding year, the Duke of Orleans then resident at Palermo, made offer of his services to the Central Junta. This had been declined; but the Regency soon after their installation invited him to assume the command in the provinces on the northern frontier, imagining that the presence of a Bourbon Prince, of acknowledged talent, courage, and activity, would contribute to animate the population, and occasion considerable embarrassment to the French government.

The Duke of Orleans immediately prepared to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded. He sailed for Malta, and from thence to Tarragona, where he issued a proclamation, inviting all true Frenchmen as well as Spaniards, to rally round the standard raised by a Bourbon for the subversion of that tyrannical usurpation by which both nations were oppressed. The Duke then proceeded to Cadiz, and was received with all the honours due to his rank, but the Cortes refused to sanction the appointment of the Regency, and he shortly afterwards returned to Palermo.

August.

October.

CHAP. I. Towards the end of October a change took
1810. place in the council of Regency. The Cortes
displaced them, alleging as a cause, the repeated
solicitations they had made to be relieved from
office. Their successors were Blake, at that
time commanding in Murcia; Don Pedro Agar,
a naval officer; and Don Gabriel Cisgar, gover-
nor of Carthagena. Neither Blake nor Cisgar
were then present; and the Marques del Palacio
and Don Joseph Maria Puig were selected, *ad
interim*, for the vicarious exercise of their func-
tions. At the ceremony of installation, Palacio
ventured to express some scruples with regard
to the inaugural oath, which he deemed inconsis-
tent with the perfect allegiance due to Ferdin-
and the Seventh. The Cortes then declared him
to have forfeited the confidence of the nation,
and appointed the Marques de Castellar to fill
his place in the Regency.

Till the close of the year, few discussions
of importance took place. A project for regu-
lating the representation of the colonies was
passed into a law. It was unanimously voted
that a public monument should be erected to the
British monarch, as a testimony of the national
gratitude; and it was proclaimed that the Span-

ish people would never lay down their arms while a Frenchman remained within the Pyrenees, nor till they had secured the independence and absolute integrity of the monarchy in both hemispheres. CHAP. I.

 1810.

While such occurrences were passing within the walls of Cadiz, the city was still leaguered by the French army. Early in October, Marshal Soult received intelligence that an expedition was preparing to alarm the coast near Malaga; and orders were sent to Sebastiani directing him to be in readiness to repulse the meditated attack. On the twelfth, a corps of nearly four thousand British and Spanish troops, under Major-General Lord Blayney, sailed from Cadiz, and on the fourteenth landed to the westward of Frangirola, about four leagues from Malaga. The object of this expedition was to gain possession of the fort, which was occupied only by a small detachment. Had Lord Blayney succeeded in this object, he was then to have garrisoned the fort, and have re-embarked the remainder of his troops, in order to induce Sebastiani to attempt its re-capture. The expedition was subsequently to have been joined by a re-

Oct. 12.

CHAP. I. inforcement from Gibraltar, with the view of
 carrying Malaga by a *coup-de-main*.

1810.

This project, in many respects faulty, experienced a complete failure. Had Lord Blayney succeeded in gaining possession of the fort, the distance from Malaga to Frangirola was too small to have enabled him to accomplish the main object of the expedition. As it was, the troops were disembarked about three leagues to the westward of Frangirola, and were delayed many hours on their march by the badness of the roads. The Governor of the fort perceiving that the assailants were unprovided with the means of taking it by storm, declined all parley, and Lord Blayney did not deem it advisable to attempt an escalade. During the night some guns from the ships were placed in battery, but there was no time for a siege. On the follow-

Oct. 15. ing morning, Sebastiani, at the head of a superior force, came up, and at the moment of his appearance the garrison made a sortie. The result was, that Lord Blayney, and a great part of his force, were made prisoners, and the remainder with difficulty effected a retreat to their ships. The wonder is, that Lord Blayney, having failed in his object of carrying the castle,

should, instead of re-embarking his troops in the night of the fourteenth, have thought it advisable to await the arrival of Sebastiani. CHAP. I.
1810.

In Murcia, and on the frontiers of Granada, several partial encounters took place between the French army and that of Blake. While the Spaniards were content to engage the enemy in a warfare of partisans, their efforts were frequently successful; but whenever they attempted to assume a fixed position, defeat followed their imprudence. In the centre and north of Spain the system of Guerilla warfare was steadily pursued. The Empecinado in Castille, and Mina in Arragon and Navarre, were indefatigable in seizing every opening for successful attack, and occasioned continual annoyance to the enemy. The hostility thus waged, was, on both sides, marked by features of the most barbarous atrocity. No quarter was given or expected by either party; and the waste of human life in the constant succession of desultory conflicts, was perhaps greater than would have resulted from the systematic operations of regular armies.

Porlier was busy in the Asturias and Gallicia. An expedition of five British frigates, and about

CHAP. I. five hundred Spaniards under that leader, sailed
1810. from Corunna, with the view of attacking the
French defences on the coast, and was completely successful. Nearly the whole of the
Jul. 9. enemy's batteries, from St. Sebastian to St. Andero, mounting upwards of an hundred pieces of heavy cannon, were taken and destroyed without loss on the part of the assailants; and the port of Santona was completely dismantled.

October. A subsequent expedition, however, was less fortunate in result. A squadron of three British frigates, accompanied by one Spanish frigate, several brigs and gun-boats, and above thirty sail of transports, with a considerable body of Spanish troops, under the distinguished partisan Renovales, sailed from Corunna, to occupy and fortify the town of Santona. The squadron had reached its destination when a storm came on, which drove the vessels from their anchorage in the roadstead, and, increasing in fury, the Spanish frigate, an English brig, and five Spanish gun-boats, were wrecked on the coast. Many of the transports were driven ashore; others were compelled to seek refuge in ports occupied by the enemy; and upwards of one thousand men were thus lost. The English frigates suc-

ceeded with difficulty in weathering the tempest. CHAP. I.
—The operations in Catalonia were generally

1810,
unconnected with those in the other provinces
of the Peninsula. In a mountainous country,
containing fortresses of great strength, which
it was necessary to garrison and maintain,
amid a fierce and hostile population, the esta-
blishment of large magazines was indispensable
to the success of the invaders. The British
flag was seen everywhere on the coast, and
supplies could only be procured by means of
land convoys, at best slow, precarious, and
insufficient. Thus was the French army in
Catalonia narrowed, cramped, and hampered in
all its movements; and its operations were ne-
cessarily confined within a narrow circle, which
the activity of the native troops was contributing
still further to circumscribe.

The first object of Macdonald was to provi-
sion Barcelona, which, from the commencement
of the war, had been in a state of blockade, more
or less rigorous. No stronger illustration can
be afforded of the fragile and precarious tenure
by which the French army maintained its hold
in Catalonia, than the fact, that it was found
necessary to array their whole force for the es-

CHAP. I. cort of a convoy. While Macdonald was en-
1810. grossed by this service, O'Donnel was not inac-
July. tive. He attacked the French force on its
march near Granollers, and succeeded in gaining
an advantage which would have been more de-
cisive had the Somatenes, who received orders
to attack the enemy in rear during the heat of
the engagement, obeyed their instructions. As
it was, the convoy succeeded in reaching Bar-
celona.

The system at first pursued by Marshal Mac-
donald was worthy of his reputation. Sparing of
the blood of his soldiers, he avoided engagements
which, though almost certain to be crowned with
immediate success, could exercise no influence
on the ultimate result of the war. His first ob-
ject was to strengthen and provision the forti-
fied places occupied by his army, and he endeav-
oured, like St. Cyr, to conciliate the good-will
of the inhabitants. In this respect, he formed
an honourable contrast to his immediate prede-
cessor. After the fall of Gerona, Augerau
imagined that measures of the greatest severity
were necessary to intimidate the people. Act-
ing under this detestable delusion, all peasants,
taken with arms in their hands, were executed,

and a system of ferocious intimidation was adopted throughout the principality.

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1810.

Macdonald at first acted on a sounder and better policy. He endeavoured to allay, by conciliatory proclamations, the fierce passions of the people, and substituted a system of mercy and mildness for one of bloodthirsty vengeance. The formation of magazines did much to prevent the necessity of pillage, and all abuses of authority were severely repressed. Yet even a policy so wise and generous failed of success. It is not at the moment when the wind abates, that the waves become still. The memory of past cruelties cannot suddenly be obliterated; and the ardent, haughty, and suffering Catalans, were rather disposed to attribute to fear, than to more generous motives, any increase of lenity discernible in the measures of the invaders.

Having relieved Barcelona, Macdonald took up a position near Cervera, as a central point, which would enable him at once to cover the siege of Tortosa, and menace the line of the Llobregat. O'Donnel was no indifferent spectator of this movement. On the sixth of September he quitted Tarragona, at the head of a

September.



CHAP. I. strong division, and marched on Mataro. The
 1810. artillery went by sea, under convoy of the Cam-
 Sep. 14. brian frigate, and a small Spanish squadron. On
 the tenth he reached Mataro, and on the four-
 teenth, succeeded, by a skilful manœuvre, in sur-
 prising the brigade of General Schwartz, which
 occupied Bisbal and the neighbouring villages.
 The French, thus taken at unawares, and sur-
 rounded by a force greatly superior in number,
 made a gallant though vain resistance. All who
 escaped the sword were made prisoners, and
 Schwartz himself was in the number of the latter.
 They were immediately embarked for Tarragona.
 This was the last achievement of O'Donnell
 in Catalonia. He received a wound in the en-
 gagement, which made it necessary he should
 resign the command, and the Marques de Cam-
 poverde was appointed his successor. The suc-
 cess of Bisbal diffused energy and spirit through-
 out the whole population of the province.
 Those who had hitherto been restrained by fear,
 now gave full vent to their sentiments of hatred
 and revenge. The war, on both sides, became
 one of bloodthirsty vengeance; and the French
 leader, departing from the system of lenity and
 forbearance which he had hitherto followed, en-