

deavoured to allay the general excitement by violent reprisals. CHAP. I.

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In the meanwhile, the situation of Upper Catalonia rendered it necessary that Macdonald should quit his position at Cervera. A convoy had assembled at Gerona, which required the presence of the whole French army for its protection. After much difficulty, the convoy reached Barcelona in safety; and Macdonald, Nov. 25. having received large reinforcements, returned to afford protection to the third corps in the siege of Tortosa.

The chief object, however, both of Suchet and Macdonald, was the reduction of Tortosa. Early in June, the former received orders to undertake the siege, and was informed that the Catalonian army would simultaneously commence operations against Tarragona. In pursuance of these instructions, Suchet began his preparations for this important siege. The command in Arragon was confided to General July. Musnier; and the brigade of General Buget was posted at Huesca to maintain tranquillity on the left of the Ebro. The brigade of General Verges occupied Doroca, Teruel, and Calatayud. A series of fortified posts was estab-

CHAP. I. lished on the different lines of communication ;
1810. and thus guarded, a division was pushed forward to blockade the *tête-de-pont* of Tortosa, on the right bank of the Ebro.

The mild and judicious administration of Suchet had brought the inhabitants of Arragon to a state of comparative tranquillity. Many had resumed their ordinary occupations, and the fields again bore marks of cultivation. Those whom terror alone had induced to take arms, returned with the hope of safety to their homes ; and the resistance to French power, though kept alive by the bold spirit of the Guerillas, had become less ferocious and pervading. This state of things, which a system of terror, however rigorously enforced, never could have produced, contributed to give greater security to the more distant operations in which the army was about to engage.

Many circumstances, however, combined to impede the progress of the besieging army. Near its confluence with the sea, the Ebro flows through a mountainous and barren country, affording no road practicable for artillery. By the droughts of summer the river had become too shallow for navigation ; and these obstacles,

which labour and perseverance could alone surmount, occasioned much delay. It was necessary too to establish a secure depot for the ammunition and provisions of the besieging army. With this view, *têtes-de-pont* were constructed at Mora and Xerta, and intrenchments thrown up, by which these towns would be protected from any sudden attack.

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During the progress of these events, the blockading force was annoyed by sorties from the garrison; and a body of Valencians, under General O'Donaju, advanced against the fort of Morella. A brigade was accordingly detached to convey provisions and ammunition to the garrison; in which operation, after a smart engagement, it was completely successful.

The situation of Suchet, however, was one of considerable difficulty. He had advanced to Tortosa, under the idea that the army of Catalonia would already have commenced the investment of Tarragona, as the despatches of the Major-General (Berthier) had authorized him to expect. This, however, was not the case, and Suchet found himself open to the attacks of the Catalan army, which, acting in concert with the Valencian forces and the garrison of Tortosa, might be ex-

CHAP. I. pected to make a strong effort for the relief of
 1810. the city. Under all its disadvantages, however, Suchet determined to maintain his position, in the conviction that any danger was preferable to the unfortunate consequences which must have resulted from retreat.

While the army thus waited the approach of Macdonald, in order to commence the siege, partial engagements almost daily took place. A more serious attempt, however, was made by the Valencian army, under Bassecourt, to relieve the town, but it was completely defeated by General Musnier, near Vineros, with the loss of two thousand five hundred of its number. Several encounters likewise took place with Villa Campa, who hovered on the frontiers of Arragon; but even an unbroken series of successful engagements did not relieve the French army from its state of almost perpetual annoyance.

Dec. 13. At length, on the thirteenth of December, Macdonald, with fifteen thousand men, arrived at Mora, on the Ebro, to cover the besieging army. On the fifteenth Tortosa was invested on both sides of the river, and General Suchet fixed his head-quarters at Xerta. On the eighteenth Macdonald moved to Perello, to keep

Dec. 18.

the enemy in check on the side of Tarragona. CHAP. I.
 —The operations of the siege were pushed on
 with vigour. On the eighteenth all the outposts
 were driven in, and the besiegers took possession
 of the heights in front of Fort Orleans; and
 on the following night, the first parallel was
 opened, on the ground between that fort and
 the river. At the same time a trench was opened
 on the right bank of the river, and batteries
 were erected to flank the principal attack. The
 covered way was crowned on the seventh night
 of the siege, before the completion of the bat-
 teries. Repeated sorties were made from the
 town, but without beneficial result. Alarm-
 ed by the rapidity of the enemy's approaches,
 the garrison determined, by a desperate attack, to
 attempt arresting his progress. At four o'clock
 on the twenty-seventh, a body of about three
 thousand Spaniards sallied from the Puerta del
 Rastro, and attacked the right of the French
 works on the height in front of Fort Orleans,
 while strong parties from the fort attempted to
 carry the trenches in the centre, and destroy
 the guns, then in the act of being conveyed into
 the batteries. One column succeeded in penetrat-
 ing to the works in the plain, overpowered the

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Dec. 19.

Dec. 27.

CHAP. I. guard in the trenches, burned the gabions in a
 1810. lodgement in the covered-way, and filled in a
 December. portion of the sap; but a strong body of the
 enemy coming up, they were driven back with
 considerable loss, and without effecting their ob-
 ject of spiking the guns.

The attack on the parallel opposite to the fort, was still less successful. In attempting to take them in reverse, they were attacked in flank by the brigade of General Habert, and compelled to retreat. In this affair the garrison lost nearly four hundred of their number, in killed and wounded.

Dec. 29. The enemy's batteries on both sides of the river were now completed, and at daydawn on the twenty-ninth, forty-five pieces of cannon from ten batteries opened a fire, which in the course of two hours silenced every thing opposed to them. On the following day the bridge was almost demolished; and in the course of the night the Spaniards abandoned the *tête-de-pont*.
 1811. The fire continued from the batteries, with little
 Jan. 1. return from the town; and on the first of January the counterscarp having been blown in, and two breaches effected in the walls, the Governor, Count de Alacha, sent a flag of truce to propose

a suspension of arms for fifteen days ; at the expiration of which period he offered to deliver up the town, if not relieved, under stipulation that the garrison, with arms, baggage, and four pieces of cannon, should be conducted to Tarragona.

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These terms were instantly rejected, and an officer was sent into the town to state that nothing but immediate and unconditional surrender could preserve the inhabitants from the impending horrors of assault. The Governor was irresolute, and no answer was returned. On the following morning the batteries renewed their fire, by which the breaches were enlarged, and soon rendered practicable. The columns of assault were in the act of forming, when three white flags were displayed from the ramparts. The fire of the besiegers, however, was not suspended, and two officers were despatched to the Governor, to demand, as a preliminary condition of any arrangement, the instant admission of a French garrison, into one of the forts, as a security against treachery. To this demand the Governor replied, that he could no longer reckon on the obedience of the troops, and that the military council had not consented to the proposed terms.

Jan. 2.

CHAP. I. Under these circumstances, Suchet determined on a bold measure. Accompanied by the generals and officers of his staff, with no larger escort than that of a company of grenadiers, he approached the walls and demanded to be conducted to the Governor. The latter was a weak man, and overpowered by the difficulties of his situation. A bold and well-timed address from the French leader determined him to surrender. He directed the garrison to lay down their arms, and a brief capitulation was signed on the spot.

Thus was Tortosa, after a siege of seventeen days, surrendered to the enemy. The garrison, amounting to about seven thousand five hundred men, were marched as prisoners of war to Zaragoza. One hundred and eighty pieces of ordnance, a large quantity of ammunition, and provisions of all kinds, were found in the place. The capture of Tortosa cost the French army not more than four hundred men.

Under a commander of greater talent and vigour than the Count de Alacha, the city would have made a better defence; for the garrison were animated by the best spirit, and in all their sorties displayed gallantry and resolution. That

the place was not adequately defended, is evident from the fact that the enemy were suffered to complete the covered way without a shot being fired from the batteries,—a circumstance which could only have arisen from the ignorance or pusillanimity of the Governor. The Spaniards were naturally indignant at this tame surrender of so important a stronghold. The Count de Alacha was sentenced to death by a court-martial assembled at Tarragona, for having traitorously given up the fortress committed to his charge, and he was beheaded in effigy in the market-place. On the part of the enemy the conduct of the siege was marked by an union of skill and boldness, highly honourable to the Baron de Rogniat, who commanded the engineer department of the army.

While Suchet carried on the operations against Tortosa, the Catalan forces were kept in check by Macdonald. No great effort was made to relieve the place, and the projects formed for this purpose were defeated by its premature surrender. Tortosa was the principal point of communication with the neighbouring provinces, and its fall carried with it the preclusion of all exterior co-operation except by sea. To com-

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CHAP. I. plete the insulation of Catalonia, preparations
 1811. were immediately made for the investment of
 January. Tarragona, the only stronghold of importance
 which remained to the Spaniards.

About this period the cause of liberty sustain-
 ed other misfortunes of minor importance. The
 Coll de Balaguer, a small fort on the coast, was
 surprised by a detachment of the French army,
 which succeeded in overpowering the garrison.

1810. In the bay of Palamos the boats of the Bri-
 Dec. 13. tish squadron attacked a convoy of eleven ves-
 sels, laden with provisions for Barcelona, anchor-
 ed under protection of the batteries on shore. A
 party of seamen were landed under Captain
 Fane of the Cambrian, who dislodged a French
 battalion, and succeeded in bringing out two of
 the vessels, and burning the remainder. Having
 defeated their enemy, however, order was at an
 end. Unaccustomed to the artifices of land war-
 fare, both men and officers entered the town,
 when the French, returning, charged through the
 streets, and thus taken at a disadvantage, one
 hundred and twenty-two of the seamen were
 killed and wounded, and eighty-six made pri-
 soners. The boats of the squadron succeeded
 with difficulty in bringing off the remainder.

CHAPTER II.

PORTUGAL.—RETREAT OF MASSENA.

IN Portugal the patriotic cause sustained a severe loss in the death of the Marques de la Romana. He died at Curtaxo on the twenty-third of January. Lord Wellington thus speaks of this distinguished patriot :—

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 January.

“ I am concerned to have to report to your Lordship, that the Marques de la Romana died in this town, on the twenty-third instant, after a short illness. His talents, his virtues, and his patriotism, were well known to his Majesty’s Government. In him the Spanish army have lost their brightest ornament, his country its most upright patriot, and the world the most strenuous and zealous defender of the cause in which we are engaged ; and I shall always ac-

CHAP. II. knowledge with gratitude the assistance I have
1811. received from him, as well by his operations as
by his counsel, since he had been joined with this
army." What pen shall presume to add aught
to such an epitaph?

In Andalusia no effort was made for the ex-
pulsion of the invaders, and the inhabitants of
Cadiz, satisfied with the security for which they
were indebted to their situation, gave little de-
monstration of activity or zeal. Under these
circumstances, Soult found himself in condition
to detach a portion of his army to invade
the Alentejo, and open a communication across
the Tagus with Massena.

About the end of December, Soult and Mor-
tier accordingly quitted Seville, with a force
about fifteen thousand strong, and advanced
into Estramadura. At Llerena, a division under
General Girard, was met by Mendizabel and
Ballasteros and compelled to retire; but having
effected a junction with the remainder of Mor-
tier's corps, Mendizabel in turn retreated on
Almandrelejo and Badajos, without attempting
to defend the passage of the Guadiana. On Mor-
tier's approach, the division of Ballasteros fell

back to the neighbourhood of Olivença, and subsequently to Salvatierra. CHAP. II.

Before attempting to penetrate to the Tagus, Soult deemed it necessary to secure his communication with the south by the reduction of Badajos and Olivença. The latter place was defended by a garrison of three thousand men; and Girard's division, with the artillery of the advanced guard, was directed to reduce it. The trenches were opened on the twelfth of January; and after a feeble and inadequate resistance, the place surrendered on the twenty-second. The fall of Olivença was immediately followed by the investment of Badajos.

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Intelligence of Soult's movements no sooner reached the British head-quarters, than Romana despatched the troops under his orders to the assistance of Mendizabel. They joined that leader at Elvas, on the sixth of February; and on the same day, the enemy's cavalry were driven beyond the Gebora; and a communication was established with Badajos through Fort St. Christoval, on the right bank of the Guadiana. Mendizabel then took up a position on the heights of St. Christoval; but a few shells thrown by the enemy from the opposite side of the river,

Feb. 6.

CHAP. II. unfortunately induced him to move his whole
 1811. force to its left, beyond the protection of the
 February. fort. Of this circumstance the besieging army
 immediately prepared to take advantage.

The overflowing of the Guadiana and the Ge-
 bora, secured Mendizabel from attack for several
 days, but the operations of the siege were
 prosecuted with vigour. On the night of the
 Feb. 11. eleventh the fort Pardaleras was carried by
 assault; and the waters having subsided on the
 eighteenth, the French forded the rivers during
 the night, and prepared to attack the Spanish
 army in its position.

Feb. 19. On the morning of the nineteenth, the cavalry
 crossed the Gebora, by a ford previously discovered,
 and advanced by the road leading from Badajos to
 Campo Mayor against the left flank of the enemy.
 The leading squadrons came suddenly in contact
 with the Spanish advance, and immediately dispersed
 it. The alarm of this attack spread through the
 army, and the troops flew to arms to engage an
 enemy of whose approach they had been ignorant.
 Day had already dawned, but a dense mist concealed
 the movements of the French army in the plain.
 Mortier took advantage of this, and by eight

o'clock his whole force was drawn up in order of battle. Shortly afterwards the sun broke forth, and the dense volume of vapour rolling upward like a curtain, both armies were seen drawn up in order of battle.

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The engagement commenced with a brisk cannonade; and three columns were seen simultaneously advancing against the Spanish line. Girard, with three battalions, was directed to turn the right flank of the Spaniards, by the height near Fort St. Christoval. Mortier in person led the column of attack on the centre, consisting of six battalions. Latour Maubourg, with the cavalry, manœuvred on the Spanish left, which he succeeded in turning. All these movements were executed with rapidity and precision; and Mendizabel, alarmed at beholding his army pressed and surrounded on all sides, hastily directed the formation of two large squares, which, for a time, received and repulsed the repeated attacks of the enemy with gallantry and firmness. The cavalry, however, at length came up, and by an impetuous charge succeeded in breaking the squares, and the victory was decided in a moment. The carnage was great. The army of Mendizabel was in

CHAP. II. fact annihilated. A few escaped into Badajos,
1811. —others, more fortunate, succeeded in reach-
February. ing Elvas; but the brigade of Portuguese ca-
valry, under General Madden, was the only
portion of the army which quitted the field
in a state at all approaching to organization.
Nearly nine hundred of the Spaniards were left
dead on the field; the prisoners are said to
have amounted to nearly eight thousand. The
French loss in this decisive victory did not ex-
ceed five hundred in killed and wounded.

The conduct of Mendizabel throughout these operations proves him to have been a person utterly destitute of military talent. From the moment of his arrival before Fort St. Christoval, he indulged in dreams of security from which the presence of the enemy alone awoke him. He courted battle, and yet was unprepared for it; and, in such circumstances, nothing can extenuate the disgrace of being surprised in a position commanding the whole country in his front, by an enemy who had to cross two rivers of very considerable breadth in their approach.

Perhaps the true policy of Mendizabel was to have left a sufficient garrison in Badajos, and with the remainder of his corps to have acted on

the enemy's rear, and cut off his communication with Seville. This would have forced Soult to divide his army, and detach a strong force to hold him in check. The operations against Badajoz would thus necessarily have been retarded, and Soult might even have been forced to relinquish the enterprise.

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During the progress of these events, Massena and Lord Wellington remained inactive in their positions. The circumstances of the two great armies, however, were very different. Lord Wellington had the capital behind him, with its noble port accessible to all the vessels which the power and wealth of England could freight, and his troops had to encounter no privations of any sort. The army of Massena, on the other hand, subsisted solely on the plunder of the surrounding country ; and as the resources of the nearer districts became exhausted, its supplies became necessarily more inadequate and precarious. The convoys, coming from a distance, were continually liable to be intercepted and cut off. Every where in rear, the militia were in full activity, and the nature of the country was peculiarly favourable for a warfare of this irregular description. On the first of February, a small body

Feb. 1.

CHAP. II. under Colonel Grant, made a spirited attack on
1811. the detachment of General Foy, about three
February. thousand strong. Taking post on a ridge commanding the road along which the enemy were proceeding, he assailed them with so warm and well-directed a fire, that, in the space of four leagues, above two hundred of their number were found dead, and but for the approach of night, the loss would have been greater. During the months of January and February, small parties from Abrantes succeeded in cutting off upwards of three hundred of the enemy. A single peasant alone, in the neighbourhood of Thomar, killed above thirty Frenchmen with his own hand, and took about fifty horses and mules.

While this incessant warfare was carrying on, not only on the rear of the French, but almost in their very position, disease also was at work. Every day the number in the hospitals was increased; the supplies of provisions were constantly diminishing, and forage could no longer be provided. The reinforcements received were barely sufficient to replace the severe losses occasioned by famine and the sword.

“In this state of things,” says the French

official report of the retreat, "the Prince of Essling had three measures only presented to his choice. The first was to attack the English in their lines before Lisbon ; but the principles of military tactics forbade, inasmuch as his heavy artillery could not be brought up. The second was to pass the Tagus, and form a junction with the army of Andalusia, and thus open a communication with Badajos, Seville, and Madrid, and subsequently change the plan of the campaign and the line of operation. The third measure was to repass the Mondego, bearing upon Guarda, and thence to Ciudad Rodrigo, where the necessities of the army would be supplied. The last measure was that which the Prince of Essling decided on adopting."

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In truth, it had become evident to Massena that the time for offensive operations had passed away. He saw that by retreat alone could his army be preserved ; and so great was the pressure of his immediate wants, that he found it impossible to await the result of the operations undertaken by Soult for his relief. Massena, likewise, knew that considerable reinforcements were daily expected by Lord Wellington, and

CHAP. II. that their arrival would place him, with an
 1811. army sickly and dispirited, in immediate danger
 March. of attack.

Preparations, therefore, were made for the retreat of his army with great secrecy and skill. The sick and wounded were moved gradually to the rear, followed by the baggage and a part of the artillery; and, at the beginning of March, exclusive of a few heavy guns, for which means of transport could not be procured, there remained in the French cantonments, only the men and horses fit for duty, and the munitions necessary for their use.

Mar. 5. On the night of the fifth of March, Massena broke up from his position, and put his army in motion for the frontier, by three routes. The right column moved by Thomar and Espinhel; the centre, by Anciao; and the third and largest, by the great road to Coimbra. As all of these routes, however, converged towards one common centre, it was apparently the intention of Massena to concentrate his army and offer battle.

Mar. 6. On the fourth, the long-expected reinforcement, of seven thousand men, arrived in the Tagus; and, on the morning of the sixth, the retreat of the enemy became known at British

head-quarters, and immediate measures were adopted for pursuit. General Houghton's brigade was directed to cross the Tagus, and, with the fourth, sixth, and part of the first divisions, under Marshal Beresford, to advance on Thomar, still occupied by the corps of Regnier. The light division, supported by the main body of the army, pushed forward by Leyria and Pombal.

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On the approach of Beresford, the French retreated from Thomar, along the foot of the Serra de Estrella, to Espinhel; but the remainder of their army, having concentrated at Pombal, seemed determined to maintain its ground. Lord Wellington, accordingly, made preparations for a general attack on the following morning. After a short but smart skirmish, the enemy's advanced posts were driven in, and about two hundred prisoners secured by the light division. During the night, however, the French, having previously set fire to the town, fell back on Redinha, where a strong rear corps was found posted, on the following day, along a ridge of easy heights at the extremity of a defile. It was immediately attacked by the leading divisions as they

Mar. 11.

Mar. 12.

CHAP. II. came up, and, after an obstinate resistance, compelled to retreat for support on the main body.

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The enemy's object, however, was gained,—the march of the British was delayed for several hours; and the baggage and artillery, which had been retarded by the difficulties of the road, were enabled to cross the Soure in safety.

The French army halted at Condeixa, where Massena again made demonstration of maintaining his ground. The position, thus occupied, consisted of a range of wooded heights of great strength, by which the road was completely commanded. An attack in front would have involved a great sacrifice of life; and Lord Wellington determined to dislodge the enemy

Mar. 13.

by a flank movement. Picton's division was accordingly directed by a considerable circuit to the eastward, to approach the only road open for his retreat. This manœuvre had the desired effect. Picton's movement was no sooner discovered, than the enemy broke up from his position, and fell back to Casal Nova.

On the day previous, Massena had detached a force of cavalry, under General Montbrun, with a few light guns, to summon Coimbra. That

place was occupied only by a small body of militia ; but the bold reply of the Governor to the message of Montbrun, led Massena to believe that the force in the city was considerable. Fearful, therefore, of committing his army, by waiting the reduction of the place, and pressed by the movement of Lord Wellington on his left, he gave up his intention of crossing the Mondego, and continued his retreat on the frontier by the road leading to the Ponte de Marcella. By the skilful manœuvres of Lord Wellington, therefore, the French were prevented from entering the strong and unexhausted country beyond the Mondego, and the communication of the allies with the northern provinces was opened.

The enemy now continued their retreat through a country presenting a succession of admirable positions, which continually afforded the means of retarding the pursuit. Of this circumstance they reaped the full advantage. At Casal Nova, the rear corps, under Marshal Ney, halted in a strong position, and on the following morning, their outposts were driven in by the light division. In order to dislodge them, Lord Wellington directed movements on their

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CHAP. II. flanks; and Ney withdrew his force to a ridge nearly parallel, where he again stood firm, till compelled by a similar manœuvre to retreat. The French retired in fine order, on Miranda de Corvo, maintaining a continued action throughout the day.

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At this point, the corps of Regnier, which had marched by Espinhel, connected its movements with those of the main body of the army. The manœuvres of Lord Wellington again forced the enemy to retreat. The division of General Cole had, on the day preceding, been detached to Panella, in order to secure the passage of the Esa. Near that place, it was joined by Nightingale's division which had followed Regnier; and Massena, on observing the approach of this column on his flank, abandoned his strong position at Miranda de Corvo, having previously destroyed a considerable quantity of ammunition and baggage, for which means of transport could no longer be found.

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On the following morning a thick fog retarded the march of the allies for several hours. About nine the day cleared up; and the troops, renewing the pursuit, passed through the smoking ruins of Miranda de Corvo. The French

army were found in a strong position on the Ceira, a tributary of the Mondego, with one corps at Foz de Aronse, on the left of the river. Lord Wellington immediately directed movements on the flanks of this corps, and attacked it briskly in front. By these measures it was driven rapidly back on the bridge in great confusion. The loss of the enemy was very considerable. Many of their number were trampled down, and many drowned; and the darkness which came on contributed to increase the disorder. It has even been asserted that the bridge was blown up by the enemy, while crowded by their own soldiers; and two divisions, misled by their fears, opened fire on each other. A considerable quantity of baggage, and some ammunition carriages, were taken by the allies.

During the night Massena continued his retreat, leaving the rear-guard to watch the ford. On the seventeenth the allies crossed the Ceira, having been compelled to halt a day to wait the coming up of supplies. The French army took post in a strong position behind the Alva, occupying the Ponte de Marcella, and the heights along the right bank of the river. Massena,

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deeming himself secure for several days, in this formidable position, sent out detachments to collect provisions from the neighbouring country. Lord Wellington, however, directed two divisions to ford the Alva near Pombeira, in order to take the enemy in flank, and threaten his communication with Celorico ; and having afforded sufficient time for their advance, made a front movement on the Ponte de Marcella.

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These manœuvres were successful. Massena fell rapidly back upon Mouta, without waiting to collect his foragers, many of whom were made prisoners ; and the greater part of the allied army crossed the river at Pombeira on the same evening.

Lord Wellington was at length compelled, by the want of provisions, to relax in the active pursuit he had hitherto maintained. The Portuguese troops, whose commissariat depended altogether on the supplies which could be purchased in the country through which they passed, were in a state approaching to famine ; and to enable them to move on, it had been found necessary to share with them the supplies intended for the British. A halt, therefore, was found necessary to give time for the arrival of forage

and provisions from the rear, while Lord Wel- CHAP. II.
 lington followed the enemy with the cavalry 1811.
 and light troops, supported by two divisions. March.
 Owing to this circumstance the enemy were en-
 abled to reach Celorico with little further mole- Mar. 21.
 station.

In the meanwhile, Lord Wellington had de-
 termined on detaching a strong corps for the
 relief of Badajos. The division of General Hill,
 with the exception of General Houghton's brig-
 ade, was already on the south of the Tagus;
 and the fourth division, and General de Grey's
 brigade of heavy cavalry, and General Hamil-
 ton's division of Portuguese, were directed to
 join it. General Hill having recently returned
 to England, the command, *ad interim*, of this
 considerable force was bestowed on Marshal
 Beresford. Of its operations we shall speedily
 have occasion to speak.

Massena, on reaching Celorico, instead of fall-
 ing back on Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, de-
 termined to take up a position in the neighbour-
 hood of Guarda, with the view of connecting his Mar. 23.
 operations with those of Soult on the Alentejo
 frontier.* After a few days halt the British

* Marshal Ney, at this period, "quitted the army. In his

CHAP. II. army resumed the pursuit, and on the twenty-
eighth reached Celorico. On the following day it
1811. moved forward in five columns, supported by a
March. division in the valley of the Mondego; the mi-
litia, under Trant and Wilson, covering the
movement at Alverca, against any attempt which
might be made on that side.

The position occupied by the enemy, was one of the most formidable strength. The town of Guarda is situated on the summit of a steep and isolated mountain, which forms part of the Estrella range, and commands the whole country by which it is surrounded. Massena availed himself of these natural advantages, and by their means expected to maintain his army within the frontier of Portugal. His officers, little apprehensive of attack in a position so secure, relaxed in their accustomed vigilance, and at length con-

opinion it should have moved on Almeida, and with his characteristic impetuosity he urged the necessity of this measure in the strongest manner. Massena was irresolute. Orders and counter-orders were issued during the whole of the twenty-second. At length he decided against the opinion of Ney, and that officer immediately resigned his command in disgust. Massena dreaded the responsibility of entering Spain without orders from the Emperor, and was anxious to maintain at least some portion of the Portuguese territory.