

Houston, with the seventh division, was posted on the extreme right of the line; and a body of Spanish cavalry, under Don Julian Sanchez, was placed in the village of Nava d'Aver, about two miles beyond it, to add to the security which that flank derived from the extreme difficulty of the ground in its rear. The first and third divisions were stationed on the height in rear of Fuentes d'Honore; their light infantry occupying the village. The sixth and light divisions were posted in rear of Almada, where the Duas Casas is crossed by a bridge. The fifth division formed the extreme left of the line, and guarded the great road to Almeida, with its flank resting on Fort Conception. The Portuguese brigade of General Pack, supported by a British battalion, was employed in blockading Almeida.

On the third of May the enemy appeared in front of the position, and took post on a ridge which overhangs the village of Fuentes d'Honore, nearly parallel to that occupied by the allies. A brisk skirmish took place between the light troops, followed by a heavy cannonade, and a desperate attack on the village. Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, with the light-infantry battalions of the first and third divisions, maintained this post

 1811.
 May.

May 3.

CHAP. IV. with great gallantry and resolution ; but fresh
 1811. numbers of the enemy pouring on to the attack,
 May. it was found necessary to support him succes-
 sively with the seventy-first, the seventy-ninth,
 and the twenty-fourth regiments. The contest
 was continued on both sides with great obsti-
 nacy and perseverance, till the approach of night,
 when the assailants, repulsed in all their efforts,
 took advantage of the darkness to retire.

May 4. On the fourth no engagement took place.
 Massena employed himself in reconnoitring the
 position of the allies ; and Lord Wellington, an-
 ticipating that he would endeavour to turn his
 right, by crossing the Duas Casas at Poço Vel-
 ho, moved the division of General Houston to-
 wards that point, with directions to defend the
 passage of the river.

May 5. The expectations of Lord Wellington were
 realized. On the morning of the fifth, the French
 army were observed to have made a general
 movement ; and the corps of Junot, with all the
 cavalry, appeared in two columns on the oppo-
 site side of the valley of the Duas Casas, in front
 of Poço Velho. Lord Wellington, in conse-
 quence, sent the light division and the cavalry
 to the support of General Houston, and the

first and third divisions also made a movement to their right. CHAP. IV.

1811.
May.

About seven o'clock the enemy drove in the advanced guard of the British, and took possession of the village of Poço Velho. The cavalry, under General Montbrun, having driven Don Julian Sanchez from Nava d'Aver, now executed a general charge, supported by infantry and guns, and forced the British cavalry to retire in some confusion beyond the infantry, which, opening fire, succeeded in checking the assailants.

Though this attack was repulsed, the numerous cavalry of the enemy were observed to be collecting on the right flank, while large masses of infantry were forming in front. Under these circumstances, Lord Wellington decided on withdrawing his army to a more concentrated position, and giving up the communication by Sabugal. The seventh and light divisions, therefore, supported by the cavalry, were directed to retire, and a new alignment was taken up, extending from the Duas Casas to the Turon, nearly at right angles with that in which the army had hitherto been formed. The seventh division was posted on a height beyond

CHAP. IV. the Turon, which commanded the whole plain
1811. to Frenada; and the cavalry and light division
May. were directed to form in reserve in rear of the
left of the first division.

This retrogressive movement was executed with the most perfect regularity, though pressed by the enemy's cavalry, which, strongly supported by artillery, made repeated charges on the retiring divisions. Their superiority in this arm was too decided to admit of contest; but, occasionally, a few squadrons charged through the intervals of the squares, and succeeded in checking for a moment the progress of the assailants. During this movement the chasseurs Britanniques, in particular, distinguished themselves. They repulsed a furious charge; and, by a well-directed flanking fire, compelled the French cavalry to retire with considerable loss. The conduct of the horse-artillery, commanded by Captain Bull, was also admirable. Nothing could exceed the skill and boldness with which it was manœuvred; and, thus supported, the infantry accomplished its retrogression in unbroken order, and with a loss far inferior to that of the enemy.

When the divisions reached their ground, the

cavalry, in passing through the intervals of the new alignment, occasioned some confusion ; and taking instant advantage of this circumstance, General Montbrun ordered his whole cavalry to charge. In order to protect the retiring divisions, the line of march had been flanked by two brigades of guns, which instantly opened fire on the approach of the enemy. The infantry likewise poured in several volleys ; and, thus severely handled, the French cavalry retreated in confusion, and Montbrun desisted from further effort.

CHAP. IV.
1811.
May.

In the meanwhile, the sixth corps, which, during these events remained opposite to Fuentes d'Honore, had made strenuous efforts to gain possession of that important post. About nine in the morning, several brigades of artillery were brought opposite to the village, and pointed in readiness to fire. At length, on a given signal, the whole of their guns opened fire on the village, and several columns of infantry moved forward to the attack. A struggle of the fiercest and most obstinate character ensued. The seventy-first, seventy-ninth, and twenty-fourth regiments defended the village with the greatest gallantry,

CHAP. IV, disputing every inch of ground. In this state
 1811. of things, Colonel Cameron of the seventy-
 May, ninth, commanding the brigade, was killed, and
 the enemy continuing to pour in fresh columns, at length succeeded in overpowering the defenders. No sooner, however, did the assailants attempt to form beyond the houses, than the eighty-eighth, seventy-fourth, and eighty-third regiments, advancing to the charge, drove them back into the village with the bayonet, where the contest recommenced, and continued to be kept up on both sides with great vigour and obstinacy, till the streets may be said literally to have been covered with dead.* To-

* Nothing could exceed the gallantry and devotion of the French troops in this part of the engagement. The forty-fifth French regiment in particular, distinguishable by their long red feathers, attracted the admiration of all who witnessed the contest. They came on to the sound of music in all the regularity of a field-day, and subsequently maintained their ground in spite of every effort made by the seventy-first and seventy-ninth to dislodge them. The eagle of the regiment was then planted on the outward wall of the village nearest to the British position, and maintained there while a sharp engagement was carried on with the eighty-third, which, animated by the hope of gaining so splendid a prize, fought with the greatest courage. The forty-fifth were at length forced to retire, and an incessant fire having been kept up on the eagle, nearly an hundred of their number were found dead within grasp of the pole.

wards evening the fire on both sides gradually slackened, and the village, as if by mutual consent, was divided by the combatants, the upper part being occupied by the British, the lower by the enemy.

CHAP. IV.
1811.
May.

The result of these repeated efforts convinced Massena that he had nothing to hope from continuing the contest. During the whole of the sixth an unbroken tranquillity reigned in both armies, and on the morning of the seventh he withdrew his troops from the front of the allied position. In order to repair as much as possible the reverse he had experienced, orders were secretly transmitted to the Governor of Almeida, directing him to blow up the works, and escape across the Agueda with his garrison, at Barba del Puerco or San Felices. On the seventh, Marshal Marmont arrived from Paris, with authority to assume the command of the army.

May 7.

With this event, the military career of Massena may be said to have closed for ever. The short period of his service in the Peninsula had considerably impaired his reputation, and the charm of his name, as a watch-word to victory, had been tried in vain. Though

CHAP. IV. his faculties were entire, it was evident that
1811. age had considerably impaired their activity.
May. He was no longer what he had been, when
celebrated as the hero of Zurich, the defender
of Genoa, and the unconquered opponent of
Souvaroff. At Busaco, at Guarda, at Sabugal,
and at Fuentes, he had not only been out-
fought but out-manceuvred; and he returned
to France, shrunk from the gigantic dimen-
sions with which men's opinion had invested
him, to the stature of a common man. At
Fuentes d'Honore, during the whole of the
third, his efforts were confined to the single
object of gaining possession of the village,—
a sort of nibbling hostility, which was unsuccess-
ful, and deserved to be so. His operations on
the morning of the fifth gave hope of better
things. By directing his efforts against the
right of the allied position, he took advantage
of the most vulnerable point; and in driving
a British army from ground which they attempt-
ed seriously to defend, he achieved a temporary
success, to which no parallel can be afforded in
the whole war.

His subsequent manœuvres are not equally

entitled to praise. The charges of his cavalry—CHAP. IV.
 in which arm his superiority was overpowering
 —were not supported by his infantry, and were
 therefore productive of little benefit. By some
 unaccountable timidity he appeared unwilling to
 commit the fate of his army to the chances of a
 battle, and no sooner did he perceive that Lord
 Wellington again fronted him in position, than
 he drew off his forces. He thus remained inac-
 tive at the very moment when having achieved
 an advantage, his troops felt something of that
 exhilaration, which the spectacle of a retiring
 enemy is certain to inspire. The position of
 the allies presented no feature of imposing
 strength. It was in many places unavoidably
 exposed, and open to the attack both of cavalry
 and artillery. The thick woods in front offered
 secure cover for the formation of his attacking
 columns; and thus favoured, he might have
 poured the full mass and volume of his force
 on any point of the position.

1811.
 May.

It is nothing to say that in such a powerful
 and concentrated effort he might have encoun-
 tered repulse. If Massena was not prepared to
 fight for the relief of Almeida, why did he ad-
 vance? If he was so prepared, was it possible

CHAP. IV. that he could have engaged his enemy under circumstances more favourable than those in which he gave up the contest?

1811.

May.

But the *gravamen* of the charge against Massena, is not that he did not attack his enemy's position, but that *he did nothing*. By throwing his cavalry across the Coa, a movement which, having lost Sabugal, it was no longer in the power of Lord Wellington to prevent; he might have penetrated to the rear of the allies, and compelled them to regain their communications, by crossing the Coa at points of great difficulty. Such a manœuvre must have utterly deranged the plans of the allies, and it was probably in reference to its adoption that Lord Wellington was currently believed to have declared, "That had Massena not been blind, he must have beaten him at Fuentes."

Of the manœuvres of Lord Wellington, little need be said. In the disposition and arrangement of his army, he displayed in an eminent degree that skill, sagacity, and confidence which marked him as a tactician of the highest order. His original position was too extended for his numbers, and Lord Wellington knew it to be so; but the communication with Sabugal was of

too much consequence to be lightly given up, and he therefore determined to maintain it, so long as he might find it compatible with the more important object of covering Almeida. When the enemy's movements, however, made it prudent that he should concentrate his army for the protection of Almeida, he at once boldly relinquished the preferable line of communication, relying on his own skill and the valour of his troops to prevent the necessity of retreat.

CHAP. IV.

1811.

May.

The loss of the allied army, in the actions of the third and fifth, amounted to about seventeen hundred men. That of the enemy, from their acting throughout as assailants, must have been considerably greater. In the village of Fuentes, the lanes, the church, the court-yards, and the gardens, were found literally piled with the dying and the dead. A considerable number of prisoners were likewise made by the allies.

The French had no sooner retired, than Lord Wellington, having received information that General Brennier intended to sally out with the garrison, made instant arrangements for a more vigorous blockade. General Campbell's division was accordingly ordered to invest the

CHAP. IV. place, a battalion was posted at Barba del Puerco, and a brigade on the high road to Rodrigo. These precautions, however, were insufficient. About midnight, on the eleventh, a tremendous explosion took place in the fortress, which blew down the *revetement* of two fronts, and General Brennier marched out with his garrison, taking the road to Barba del Puerco. He surprised and bayoneted a piquet; and, passing through the posts of the brigade on the Rodrigo road, was enabled to continue his march without serious molestation, and followed only by General Pack, who, with a few troops hastily collected, hung upon his rear, indicating, by the flashes of his musquetry, the direction taken by the enemy.

The object of Brennier was to reach Barba del Puerco; but mistaking his way, he followed a circuitous route which led him to some distance from the point of his destination. In the meanwhile the officer commanding the battalion at Barba del Puerco, imagining from the sound of the firing that the enemy were receding from his post, moved his corps to a ford higher up, in the hope of intercepting them. By this error, General Brennier, on reaching Barba del

Puerco found the town unoccupied; but the CHAP. IV.
detour he had made, having enabled several re-
giments to close on his rear, a heavy fire was
opened as his troops were in the act of crossing
the bridge, and about two hundred, including
ten officers, were made prisoners. A consider-
able number also were killed or wounded.
With the rest of his force, Brennier succeeded in
joining the French army, having performed an
exploit remarkable at once for its boldness and
its success.

1811.

May.

The intelligence of this unfortunate event was accompanied by a general feeling of mortification and disappointment throughout the army. At his particular request the conduct of the siege had been committed to General Campbell; and it is difficult to acquit that officer either of negligence, or unsound judgment in the discharge of his trust. Had proper precautions been adopted in the disposition of the blockading force, the fruits of the victory of Fuentes would not thus have been sacrificed, nor would the character of a British army have been lowered in the eyes of their opponents.

Marmont, on assuming the command, placed his army in cantonments in the neighbourhood

CHAP. IV. of Salamanca ; and Lord Wellington directed

1811.

May.

the works of Almeida to be repaired. It afforded a favourable point for the establishment of a general depôt of stores, whether he might still intend to remain on the defensive, or whether circumstances might enable him to penetrate into Spain. The information communicated by Marshal Beresford, determined him to detach two divisions to reinforce the southern army ; and setting out instantly in person, he reached Elvas on the nineteenth, where he received intelligence of the battle of Albuera. He also learned that the investment of Badajos had been renewed on the same day, and that Soult was in full retreat towards Seville, followed by the allied cavalry.

May 19.

Lord Wellington immediately assumed the personal direction of the operations on the Guadiana. In a few days the divisions detached from the northern army came up ; and on the

May 27.

twenty-seventh the place was completely invested, on the right of the river by General Houston's division, on the left by those of Picton and Hamilton. Trenches were opened on

June 5.

the night of the twenty-ninth ; and on the fifth of June, the breach made in Fort St. Christoval

was considered practicable. On the night following it was assaulted. Owing to a blunder of the engineers, the attack failed. It had not been judged necessary to secure the ditch; and from the moment it became dark, the garrison had been employed in removing the earth and rubbish from the bottom of the breach, so that seven feet of the wall remained clear. An obstacle was thus unexpectedly presented, which the assailants were in no condition to surmount. Their ladders were too short; and though the gallantry of the men led them to attempt climbing the wall, their efforts proved unsuccessful. The enemy, from the parapet, hurled down on the assailants a shower of shells, grenades, stones, and other missiles, which occasioned great havoc; and the party were compelled at length to retire, with the loss of half their number.

During the two following days the fire against the fort was continued, and on the ninth the breach was again judged practicable. At night a storming party of two hundred men, preceded by a forlorn-hope of twenty-five men, under Lieutenant Hunt of the engineers, advanced against the breach. The enemy, however, were better prepared for their reception than on the

CHAP. IV.

1811

June.

Jun. 9.

CHAP. IV. former occasion. Reinforcements had been thrown into the fort, and unfortunately Lieutenant Hunt was killed on the glacis when leading on his party. The troops thus left without a leader, continued to press on with their accustomed gallantry. But the breach was again found impracticable, from the same cause which had occasioned the failure of the former assault. After many ineffectual efforts, the party was at length withdrawn, with the loss of one hundred and forty-five men in killed and wounded.

1811.
June.
Jun. 10.

On the tenth, by an intercepted letter from Soult to Marmont, Lord Wellington received intelligence that these leaders were about to unite their forces, and advance against him. He, therefore, promptly determined on converting the siege of Badajos into a blockade; and on the night of the twelfth, the last of the guns and stores were withdrawn to Elvas, without molestation from the garrison.

By other channels Lord Wellington had learned that Drouet, with a corps of eight thousand men, had marched from Toledo to join Soult, and reached Cordova on the seventh. He was aware, also, that Marmont had put his army in motion towards the south, and that Soult was

advancing to Merida to meet him. Lord Wel-
 lington, therefore, advanced to Albuera, and
 took post with his army in order to fight Soult,
 should he venture to advance alone to the relief
 of Badajos. Soult, however, having drawn all
 the disposable troops from the various towns
 possessed by the French in Andalusia, and be-
 ing joined by Drouet, marched on the twelfth
 from Llerena, and on the eighteenth establish-
 ed a communication with Marmont at Merida.
 From thence Soult and Marmont directed their
 march on Badajos, when Lord Wellington cross-
 ed the Guadiana, and took up a line on the river
 Caya, covered on the left by Campo Mayor, and
 on the right by Elvas.

The combined force of the armies of Portu-
 gal and the south, amounted to about seventy
 thousand men, whereof ten thousand were ca-
 valry. That of Lord Wellington, including the
 corps of General Spencer, which had made a
 parallel movement with the enemy in its front, did
 not exceed fifty-six thousand, including four
 thousand cavalry. The smallness of this force
 may be accounted for by the unhealthiness of
 the army, upwards of twelve thousand British
 being in hospital. The Portuguese troops, ill

CHAP. IV.

1811.

June.

Jun. 12.

CHAP. IV. paid and ill supplied, were by no means in the same state of discipline and efficiency which had marked them at an earlier period. The regularity with which the British soldiers were paid and supplied, could not but tend to excite comparisons productive of discontent, and it was judged necessary that Marshal Beresford should resign his command, in order to restore discipline, and silence complaint.

1811.
June.

Under these circumstances, without dreading a battle, Lord Wellington determined not to court one. He resolved to limit his object to the defence of Portugal; and, with this view, he formed an encampment in the woods along the Caya, a small tributary of the Guadiana. This, forming the right of the army, was commanded by Sir Rowland Hill, who had recently returned from England. The left, under General Picton, occupied the heights in rear of Campo Mayor, which flanked the front of the position. The reserve, under Sir Brent Spencer, remained at Portalegre, ready, in case of need, to support the other divisions, or to cross the Tagus, should the movements of the enemy threaten danger in that quarter.

While the army was thus posted, Lord Wel-

lington induced General Blake, with a corps of CHAP. IV.
 about nine thousand Spaniards, to move into the 1811.
 Conde de Niebla, and thus at once to threaten June.
 Seville and the rear of the French army. Ac-
 cordingly that leader set out on the eighteenth
 from Juramenba, and on the twenty-second Jun. 22.
 reached Mertola. There he remained for two
 days to refresh his troops, then crossed the Gua-
 diana; but, instead of pushing for Seville, he ad-
 vanced against Niebla, an old and ruinous town,
 with a castle of considerable strength. Blake
 attempted to carry the latter by escalade, and, as
 might be expected, failed; and having fruitlessly
 spent three days before it, on receiving intelli-
 gence of the approach of a detachment sent in
 pursuit of him by Soult, he made for Ayamonte,
 where he embarked with all his artillery for
 Cadiz. From that city he soon after sailed to
 join the Spanish army, under General Freyre,
 in Granada.

In the meanwhile, Lord Wellington knew it
 to be impossible that the enemy could long sub-
 sist their forces when in a state of concentra-
 tion, and he patiently waited the moment when
 they should find it necessary to break up from
 the frontier of the Alentejo. This took place

CHAP. IV. about the middle of July, when Soult returned
 1811. to Seville; and Marmont, re-crossing the Ta-
 June. gus at Almaraz, marched on Salamanca. Lord
 Wellington, accordingly, leaving Sir Rowland
 Hill, with the second British division, and the
 Portuguese division of General Hamilton, and
 two brigades of cavalry to guard the Alente-
 jo, crossed the Tagus with the remainder of his
 army, and fixed his head-quarters at Fuente
 Guinaldo. The troops went into cantonments in
 the villages of Aldea de Bispo, Albergaria, Alma-
 dilla, and El Bodon. In these quarters the
 army remained upwards of a month, without
 disturbance from the enemy.

CHAPTER V.

OPERATIONS IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES.

DURING the summer of eighteen hundred and eleven, the country was quiescent and submissive to the intrusive government, in a degree unprecedented since the commencement of the struggle, and no advantage was taken of the powerful diversion by which the army of Massena was for so long a period withdrawn from the Spanish territory. Joseph remained at Madrid, endeavouring to organize a system of equitable government, by which the aversion of the people to their new sovereign might be gradually overcome. In this he did not succeed. The necessity of raising money, to meet the exigencies of the state, gave rise to numerous confiscations of property; and the cruelties and oppressive exactions of the French commanders, over whom

CHAP. V.

1811.

CHAP. V. he possessed little control, counteracted all his
 1811. views. The Spaniards held Joseph responsible for every act of atrocity, or oppression, committed by the supporters of his cause; and the flame of insurrection, though less violent, was not extinguished.

The Cortes, holding their sittings in a distant corner of the kingdom, and cut off from all intercourse with the interior, possessed little influence with the nation at large. It was owing, perhaps, to a consciousness of this circumstance, that their attention was chiefly devoted to matters of speculative legislation, while subjects of immediate and pressing importance were entirely overlooked. It may be well, however, at the present moment, to cast a cursory glance over the different provinces of the kingdom.

Biscay and the Asturias were occupied by the French; but in the latter, Porlier with his Guerrillas was in activity. On one occasion, by a sudden movement having appeared before St. Andero, he succeeded in capturing the garrison.

In Navarre, Espoz y Mina, allowed no opportunity to escape of harassing the French army,

and cutting off its communications. The rich valleys of Roncal and Roncevalles, were still held by the natives. Gallicia was free from the enemy; but its army, under General Abadia, was in a wretched state of equipment; and General Dorsenne, who had succeeded Bessieres in the north, was preparing to enter it.

CHAP. V.

1811.

In Arragon, Suchet had succeeded in allaying the storm of resistance which he had encountered in that kingdom. But numerous Guerilla parties were a-foot in the mountainous districts, and there was a small force of about four thousand regulars under Villa Campa.

In the two Castiles and Leon, the principal places were all held by the enemy. But in the province of Guadalaxara, the Empecinado allowed no opportunity to escape of inflicting punishment on the invaders. On one occasion, he succeeded in surrounding and cutting off a strong detachment of the enemy, employed in escorting eleven thousand Spanish prisoners. There were likewise bands of Guerillas in La Mancha, and in the province of Salamanca.

Murcia was in possession of the Spaniards. Their army, commanded by Blake, was nearly

CHAP. V. twenty thousand strong, but miserably wanting
 in equipment and munitions.

1811.

Granada was occupied by the French, who had garrisons in the sea-ports of Almeria, Malaga, and Marbella.

In Andalusia, the Guerillas were numerous and active; but the chief towns were held by the enemy, with the exception of Cadiz, Ayamonte, and Algesiras. The army before Cadiz remained under the command of Victor.

Estramadura, while the French held Badajos, might be considered in their power.

Of Catalonia and Valencia we shall now speak.

The courage and enterprise of the Catalans had not been tamed by misfortune. The Supreme Junta were dissatisfied with the inactivity of O'Donnel during the siege of Tortosa, and displaced him from the command. His successor was the Marquis de Campoverde, whose conduct on previous occasions had raised him to distinction. In the meanwhile, General Sarsfield had taken post, with about six thousand men, at Vals, from which station Macdonald detached his Italian division, under General Eu-

Jan. 16.

gene, and a brigade of cavalry, to dislodge him. Sarsfield then fell back, and took up another position on the heights of Pla and Fruencaldas, where he waited the approach of the enemy. Eugene, with greater gallantry than prudence, determined on immediate attack. His troops were received by a fire so destructive as instantly to arrest their progress. The Spaniards then charged with the bayonet, and drove back the assailants with great slaughter. Eugene was himself mortally wounded in the engagement; and the whole of his division would probably have been cut off, but for the timely support of a brigade of infantry and some cavalry, detached by Macdonald to his assistance. On the arrival of this force, the action was renewed with alternations of success on both sides, but without decisive advantage on either.

For several days after this check, Macdonald remained inactive, though the Spaniards still kept their position. At length, on the night of the sixteenth, taking every precaution to conceal his march from the enemy, he withdrew to Lerida, where he placed his troops in cantonments.

Of the defeat sustained at Vals, no notice was taken by the French journals. It was part of

CHAP. V.

1811.

January.

Jan. 16.

CHAP. V. Napoleon's policy to praise the Italian troops, and to infuse a taste for military glory into the people. He feared that a reverse so signal as that of Vals might create disgust at the conscription, and aversion to bear part in a war of extermination, such as that waged in Catalonia. A severe censure on the conduct of Macdonald, was transmitted by the secretary of war; and, to mark the Emperor's displeasure, he directed that the army about to besiege Tarragona, should be commanded by Suchet.

1811.
March.

About the end of March, Macdonald quitted Lerida for Barcelona. His route lay through a dangerous and difficult country, and Sarsfield was again on the alert. When Macdonald approached Manresa, an Italian brigade, which formed his advanced-guard, was assailed by a warm fire from a part of Sarsfield's corps, placed in ambush to receive it. It was immediately thrown into confusion, and driven back on the main body; and the Italians, enraged at these repeated disasters, during the night set fire to the town of Manresa, in which the Marshal had established his head-quarters. The town was consumed to ashes, and many officers who were quartered there, were able with difficulty to

rescue their baggage and horses from the flames. CHAP. V.

—At Montserrat, where Sarsfield had taken post, the conflagration was distinctly visible. The spectacle filled his soldiers with rage, and being joined by all the inhabitants of the surrounding country, Sarsfield, on the following day, encountered the French columns in the defiles of the Col d'Avic, with every advantage of position. The French, with great gallantry, dislodged the Spaniards from every rock and acclivity on which they took post; but the latter, retreating from height to height, kept up a most galling and destructive fire. No quarter was given by the enraged Catalans; and so much did the necessity of carrying off the wounded impede the march of the French, that they were six hours in reaching the summit of the mountain.

1811.
March.

In the meanwhile, Campoverde, having established his troops in a strong camp in front of Tarragona, made an unsuccessful effort to gain possession of Mont Jouy at Barcelona. He had endeavoured to prevail on some of the leading officers to betray the place; but his project becoming known to the governor, the garrison were prepared, and no sooner did his leading battalion enter the ditch, than it was almost annihi-

Mar. 19.

Mar. 20.

CHAP. V. lated by a tremendous fire from the garrison.

1811.

April.

The remainder of his force instantly retreated; but their march was intercepted by detachments of the enemy, which occasioned great loss.

Another and more fortunate effort was made for the recovery of Figueras. A colonel of Miquelets, named Rovira, who to his military title joined that of doctor of theology, being a person of active and enterprising mind, had long amused himself in devising projects for regaining some of the important fortresses held by the invaders. These had been proposed to the successive commanders in the province, but rejected by all as visionary and impracticable. Campoverde, however, was at length induced to lend a favourable ear to the scheme of Rovira, and appointed General Martinez as his colleague in command.

Apr. 10. Having collected about one thousand volunteers, these leaders approached Figueras with great secrecy, halting in the woods by day, and marching by night. On the tenth they arrived at Palau Surroco, a short distance from the fortress. Preparations were then made for the execution of the perilous enterprise in which they had embarked. The officers commanding