

ed bands of smugglers which haunted the moun- CHAP. IX.
tains, succeeded in quelling all attempt at insur-
rection, and in establishing the ascendancy of
French dominion throughout the southern pro-
vinces.

1810.

May.

At this period, a new and unheard of principle of war was attempted to be established by the French leaders. It was declared by Marshal Soult, in a public edict, that none but regular armies had a right to defend their towns, their houses, and their families, from violence and plunder; and that as no legitimate Spanish army could exist but that of his Catholic Majesty, Joseph Napoleon, all bodies of armed Spaniards, of whatever number or description, which existed in the provinces, should be treated as banditti, whose object was robbery and murder. Every individual taken in arms was immediately to be condemned and shot, and his body exposed on the highway.*

* The utter and disgraceful recklessness of national law displayed by the French throughout the war in Spain, may here receive another corroboration. Prisoners of war were actually tried by a military tribunal, and put to death, on the simple charge of attempting to escape. Lest this most atrocious fact should not otherwise gain credit, the following extracts from

CHAP. IX. When it was discovered by the Regency that
 1810. this most infamous decree was actually carried
 May. into effect, they reprinted it with a counter de-
 cree, in French and Spanish, declaring, that in
 these times every Spaniard, capable of bearing
 arms, was a soldier; and ordaining, that for
 every person who should be murdered by the
 enemy, the first three Frenchmen taken in arms
 should be hanged; three should also be exe-
 cuted for every house burned, and three for
 every one who should perish in the flames.
 Soult himself they declared unworthy of the

orders on this subject are given. The originals are in the possession of Lord Wellington.

“(General Beliard. Madrid, 27 Novembre.)—L’intention du Roi est qu’il soit formé à Madrid une commission militaire, composée de sept membres, par-devant laquelle vous ferez traduire les prisonniers de guerre. Les jugemens de la commission emporteront la peine de mort, et seront sans appel.”

“(General Solignac. 5 Decembre.)—Il m’a été rendu compte que quelques prisonniers s’étaient échappés dans la marche. Faites les rechercher, et ordonnez à l’égard de ceux qui seront pris, qu’on met en exécution l’ordre du 27 Novembre.”

“(Ministre de la Guerre à Paris. 14 Decembre.)—Les Espagnols ont tant de facilité pour se déguiser, et ensuite pour se dérober à la surveillance, que malgré la sévérité qu’on exerce envers eux, on n’est pas toujours assuré de les garder, quoiqu’ils soient prévenus que les tentatives pour s’évader, leur font encourir la peine capitale, et que des nombreux exemples aient été faits.”—*Campaign of 1809.*

law of nations till this decree had been repealed; and orders were issued that, if taken, he should be treated like a common robber.

CHAP. IX.
1810.
May.

In the bands of Guerillas, which now existed in every mountainous district of the country, the Regency found willing agents in the execution of their retributive enactments. Few acts of outrage on the part of the enemy escaped without reprisal. In one instance, a Guerilla leader hung several Frenchmen on the trees bordering the high road near Madrid, in retaliation for several of his own men, whom the invaders had put to death; and made known his intention of treating in a similar manner all the superior officers who should fall into his power. Thus did blood beget blood, and cruelty on the one side generate exasperation on the other. Of this truth most of the French leaders, by degrees, became convinced; and, alarmed at the prospect before them, the system of extermination was happily allowed to sink into desuetude.

In the state of feeling which existed, however, between the hostile parties, it was impossible but that acts of cruelty and vengeance should take place on both sides. Indignant at the losses they sustained from the Guerillas, many indivi-

CHAP. IX. duals were summarily put to death by the
1810. French, on mere suspicion of being connected with those who annoyed them by a warfare so destructive and pertinacious. Yet it is but justice to record, that the measures we have just detailed, which cannot fail to cast a deep shadow of ignominy on those by whom they were projected or enforced, are in no degree understood to have emanated from him, whose regal authority they were intended to establish. Joseph, constitutionally mild, disapproved of all acts of gratuitous violence and bloodshed. But his personal influence, even in the affairs of his own kingdom, was small. The French commanders knew themselves to be amenable to a higher power, and were solely guided in their policy by its influence and control. The ministers of Joseph, aware that his amiable and placid character was appreciated by the people, were not without hopes, that he might eventually acquire a place in their affections, when the storm of resistance should have passed. But this expectation was never realized. Joseph, though not hated, was the object of popular derision. His indolence, his addiction to the pleasures of the table, his want of military qualities,

and his low origin, were all unfavourable to his acquiring any personal favour among a people so proud, so acute, and so haughty as the Spaniards. The higher and better qualities by which his character was honourably distinguished were seldom called into public and apparent action ; and Joseph, to the end of his career as a monarch, remained to the Spanish nation an object of unmitigated contempt.*

CHAP. IX.
1810.

After the defeat of Blake at Belchite, Suchet established his head-quarters at Zaragoza, and busied himself in preparations for the vigorous prosecution of the war. He established maga-

* Though somewhat out of place, the following passage from a letter to Napoleon, written in March, 1812, and which was intercepted by the capture of a convoy in the defile of Salinas, will exhibit the character of Joseph in a better light than that in which it has generally been regarded :—

“SIRE,—Les evenemens ont trompé mes esperances ; je n’ai fait aucun bien, et je n’ai pas l’espoir d’en faire. Je prie donc V. M. de me permettre de déposer entre ses mains, les droits qu’elle daigna me transmettre, sur la couronne d’Espagne il y a quatre ans. Je n’ai jamais eu d’autre but en l’acceptant, que celui de faire le bonheur de cette monarchie. Cela n’est point en mon pouvoir.”

Let it be remembered, that when Joseph signed this honourable renunciation of the crown, Spain was occupied by a numerous and triumphant army ; and that the Russian campaign, by which the throne of Napoleon was shaken to its base, had not yet commenced.—*Memoires du General Hugo.*

CHAP. IX. zines of all sorts, and disposed his army so as at
 1810. once to maintain his communication with France,
 and to keep in check the numerous bands
 which had lately been strongly reinforced by
 the fugitives from Belchite. "Thus it was,"
 Victoires et Conquetes. says a French writer, "that the Spaniards,
 always beaten but never subdued, animated
 by a courage which misfortune could not depress,
 because founded on the love of country, opposed
 to the French throughout the whole Peninsula,
 but especially in Arragon and Catalonia, the
 same resistance which their gallant ancestors had
 offered to the Romans, to the Goths, and to the
 Moors,—to Charlemagne, and Louis the Four-
 teenth." Thus it was, too, that even in defeat
 were sown the dragon's teeth, which afterwards
 sprung up into armed men.

Memoires
 de Suchet.

The difficulty of Suchet's situation was considerable. The Guerilla bands were in possession of all the valleys in the mountainous districts. Detachments of his army were continually cut off. His couriers and convoys of provisions were intercepted; the country was intimidated, and those who would willingly have remained neutral in the struggle, were forced by threats to join their countrymen in arms. The

French army were kept in a state of continual vigilance and alarm. Partial engagements took place on all hands, nor was it till the month of November that even the semblance of tranquillity could be restored. All the towns and strong places were then occupied by the French, and Suchet levied heavy contributions on the whole province.

CHAP. IX.

 1810.

Navarre too was far from tranquil, and Suchet next directed his efforts to the pacification of that kingdom. He accordingly repaired to Pampeluna, and rectified many of the abuses, which had been suffered to grow up under the administration of the Duke de Mahon, who had been sent as civil governor from Madrid. He published a severe edict, denouncing punishment on all inhabitants in whose possession arms should be found; and having dispersed the band of Mina, the flame of insurrection was for a time smothered.

Jan. 20.

Such was the situation of Arragon and Navarre, when Suchet received orders from Marshal Soult, in his capacity of Major-General, to march rapidly on Valencia in two columns, one proceeding by Teruel and Segorba, the other by Morella San Mateo, and the road leading along

CHAP. IX. the coast. Though these orders were at variance with his instructions from Paris, which directed, as preliminary measures, the siege of Lerida and Mequinenza, Suchet did not conceive himself at liberty to disobey. Accordingly, he repaired to Teruel, leaving General Musnier, with eight battalions and two hundred and fifty horse, to maintain tranquillity in Arragon. A column under General Habert proceeded by the coast. That under his own immediate command encountered the Valencian force at Alventosa. The Spaniards were strongly posted, with a ravine in front, along the bottom of which flowed the deep and sluggish river Minjares. The road leading along the left bank of the stream was broken up and obstructed, and on the other side the village of Alventosa extended round a precipitate and rugged height crowned by a ruined castle, which commanded the surrounding country.

Suchet determined to attack the left flank of this formidable position, and succeeded by a considerable detour in passing the river nearer to its source. The Valencians did not long withstand the attack of the French columns. They retreated with the loss of five guns and a portion of

their baggage. At Murviedro a junction was effected with Habert, and the army pushed on to Valencia.

CHAP. IX.

1810.

March.

The garrison of Valencia consisted chiefly of the soldiers who had fled disgracefully from Belchite. Suchet addressed a letter to General Caro, the Governor, in hope of inducing that officer to surrender the city. He assured him that he had not come to make war on the fine capital of the most beautiful of the Spanish provinces, but to offer peace and protection, such as Jaen, Granada, Cordova, and Seville, were at that moment enjoying. It was inhuman, he said, to prolong a contest, maintained at a vast expense of human suffering, where the issue was inevitable; and he called on General Caro to prove himself a benefactor to his country by surrendering the city of Valencia to the French arms. A proclamation was likewise issued to the people, declaring the anxiety of the French General to avoid effusion of blood, and exhorting the people to assist in the attainment of this humane wish.

Mar. 5.

To this an answer was returned, stating, that Valencia had repulsed Marshal Moncey, and was prepared to repulse General Suchet; and that if

CHAP. IX. the latter was sincere in the laudable desire he had expressed to avoid bloodshed, it was for him to consider, whether the best and surest method of attaining that object was not to abstain from attack.

1810.

In truth, the force of Suchet, consisting only of twelve thousand men, and thirty field-pieces, was altogether inadequate to the enterprize in which he had engaged; and, having remained for five days in front of Valencia, he found it necessary to retrace his steps to the Ebro. He then made preparations for a systematic reduction of the strong places held by the Spaniards, with the view to facilitate his future efforts for the reduction of the eastern provinces.

February. Blake having been appointed Governor of Cadiz, O'Donnel succeeded to the chief command in Catalonia. The skilful and daring operations in which he had successfully engaged, had acquired for him the confidence of the people. Augerau had supposed that little more remained, after the reduction of Gerona, than to complete and rivet the subjection of the province. In this he was mistaken. A combat took place, in the neighbourhood of Vich, between a body of Spaniards, under O'Donnel,

and the division of General Souham. The former CHAP. IX.
 bore themselves with courage, and assailed the
 enemy with a steadiness and resolution to which
 they were unaccustomed. Never, by the con-
 fession of their own officers, was the courage of
 the French army more severely tested than in
 this action. O'Donnel, however, at length
 judged it prudent to retire, leaving the enemy
 in possession of the field.

1810.
 February.

Souham, imagining the Spaniards had fled
 from fear, prepared to pursue. O'Donnel then
 commenced a series of skilful manœuvres, by
 which, having led his enemy forward, he suc-
 ceeded in achieving several brilliant and impor-
 tant successes. The French losses in these en-
 gagements were very heavy, and they were still
 further aggravated by desertions from the fo-
 reign troops, who went over to the enemy in
 considerable numbers.

In the meanwhile, the French prosecuted the
 siege of Hostalrich. The town had already
 fallen; but the fort, which is strongly situated
 on a craggy height, still held out, and the gar-
 rison were animated by the best spirit. An at-
 tempt was made by O'Donnel to afford relief

CHAP. IX. to the beseiged, but without success, and that leader fell back on Tarragona.

1810.

May.

May 12.

Disappointed in their hopes from without, the garrison still continued to defend the fort with the most honourable fortitude and zeal. The besiegers kept up a dreadful bombardment, and the walls were gradually demolished by the fire of the batteries. They still, however, continued successfully to contest the possession of the place till the twelfth of May, when, having undergone a siege of four months, and consumed the whole of their provisions, these brave men determined to cut their way through the enemy's lines. In this bold attempt, about three hundred fell, and among these the heroic Don Julian de Estrada, their commander. The remainder succeeded in effecting their escape.

These results were far from satisfactory to Napoleon. Marshal Augerau had boasted, in his despatches, that the Ampurdan was completely subdued; but the comment of succeeding facts on this assertion had not been favourable to its credit with the Emperor, and Augerau was superseded by Marshal Macdonald.

The loss of Hostalrich was succeeded by an-

other of some consequence. The islands and CHAP. IX.
 fortress of Las Medas, forming an important
 maritime post, were surrendered to the French
 without resistance, through treason or coward-
 ice. Lerida also yielded without adequate re-
 sistance. Suchet opened his batteries against it
 on the seventh of May. On the twelfth, a
 magazine exploded in the town, and formed a
 breach. By this the French assaulted the town
 and carried it. On the day following the castle
 surrendered. May. 13.

1810.

May.

Success followed the arms of Suchet, when-
 ever he was not induced to transgress the rules
 of his art. The fort of Mequinenza, notwith-
 standing its strength, became an easy prize. Af-
 ter five days resistance it capitulated, and the
 subjection of Arragon being now fully assured,
 Suchet found himself at liberty to extend the
 sphere of his operations.

June 8.

The peace with Austria having rendered dis-
 posable the greater part of the force employed
 in Germany, large bodies of troops were thrown
 into Spain, and every corps was augmented.
 That of Junot, composed of the troops liberated
 by the Convention of Cintra, consisted of three
 divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry, amount-

CHAP. IX. ing altogether to about twelve thousand men.

1810.

March.

Hitherto this force had been employed in dispersing the irregular bands which abounded in Biscay, Navarre, and Old Castile. But on receiving reinforcements, Junot advanced into Leon, with the view of protecting that kingdom from the incursions of the Gallician army. Astorga was garrisoned by about three thousand Spanish troops ; and an attack made upon it, in the preceding September, had been gallantly repulsed by Santocildes, who still acted as Governor. The city was not strong, yet considerable efforts had been made to improve and repair the works. The walls were ancient and massive, and the suburbs, to the north and south, were covered and connected with the body of the place by a line of retrenchment. Astorga contained large magazines of all sorts ; and its acquisition, at this period, was held of great importance to the intended operations in Portugal, as it commanded a *debouché* leading into the north of that kingdom.

Mar. 21.

On the twenty-first of March, Junot invested Astorga. The defence of the city was resolutely maintained for upwards of a month, when, at length, having repulsed their assailants at the

breach, the garrison surrendered, only when the CHAP. IX.
 near exhaustion of their ammunition rendered
 further defence hopeless. The French suffered
 heavily in this siege, though the amount of
 their loss has been variously represented. This
 is certain: The expense of life at which As-
 torga was acquired, and the gallantry of its de-
 fenders, had a greater effect in animating the
 people, than its reduction in depressing them.*

1810.
 April.

On the fall of Astorga, a detachment of Junot's corps reduced the castle of Sanabria, while the remainder proceeded to invest Ciudad Rodrigo. The Asturias had been reduced to submission; so that, at the end of April, of the whole western frontier of Spain, Galicia and Badajos alone remained free. The latter had been secured by the promptitude of Romana, when the corps of Mortier was approaching

* Long after the capture of Astorga, a song was popular among the middling and lower classes, recounting the achievements of the besieged, each stanza of which terminated in a sort of choral chant, declaring that "*Astorga was the tomb of Frenchmen.*" We merely allude to this, as an indication of that buoyancy of spirit, which enabled the Spanish people to bear up amid so many and severe reverses, and to discover matter of exultation even in disaster.

CHAP. IX. from Seville, in expectation of carrying it by a
 1810. *coup-de-main*. Baffled in this attempt, the
 April. French retired to Merida, Zafra, and Santa
 Marta, followed by a division, under Don Car-
 los O'Donnell.

CHAPTER X.

INVASION OF PORTUGAL BY MASSENA.

SINCE the commencement of the year, the campaign had hitherto been one of almost uninterrupted disaster. The Spaniards, had no army of any magnitude in the field; their most important fortresses were reduced or blockaded; and three-fourths of the kingdom had been overrun. The southern provinces had fallen, with scarcely the semblance of resistance. The wealth and resources of Andalusia had passed, without a struggle, into the hands of the enemy; and Spain beheld the chief nursery of her armies, the provinces from which fresh bands of patriots might still have gone forth to combat, if not to conquer, in her cause, at once torn from her grasp. The British army had been compelled to limit its exertions to the defence of

CHAP. X.

1810.

CHAP. X. Portugal; and it was already evident that a
1810. mighty effort would soon be made for the reduction of that kingdom.

Never at any period had the cloud which lowered on the cause of Spanish liberty shed a darker or more impenetrable gloom. Those whose confidence in the zeal, the devotion, the native and untamed energy of the Spanish people had led them to predict a successful termination to the contest, now wavered in their hope. The British government, urged by the enthusiasm of the people, had at first rushed blindfold into the contest. The vast resources of England had been ineffectually wasted; her utmost efforts had been found unequal to arrest the progress of the French arms; and the lamentable expedition to the Scheldt, had exposed the counsels of her rulers to the ridicule of Europe.

Under such reverses, the enthusiasm of the British nation had begun to subside. The bright and glowing colours, which in their eyes had beautified the prospect, gradually faded into fainter and more sober hues. True, indeed, the voice of England was still for war; there was no flinching or faintness of heart among her sons,—but it was not as heretofore, for sudden,

desultory, and ill-judged operations,—for hasty advance and precipitate retreat—for profuse expenditure of blood and money in pursuit of “*British objects*,”—objects indeed, generally so truly British that no other government on earth would have thought them worth the expense and hazard of pursuit.

CHAP. X.

1810.

Thus the blunders and incapacity of the ministry had in a great measure lost them the confidence of the country. Even their warmer partisans—those who exonerated the men, did not venture to vindicate their measures. The government had to encounter a strong and vehement opposition both in Parliament and in the country. The policy of withdrawing our army from the Peninsula,—of husbanding the resources of England, till time and circumstances should be more favourable for their efficacious exertion, found many advocates among the greatest and most enlightened statesmen of whom England could boast.

But party spirit was abroad in its violence; and the doctrine of opposition, though generally salutary, was scarcely applicable to the crisis at which England had arrived. At all events it was carried too far. Pertinacity on one side had gene-

CHAP. X.

1810.

May.

rated exaggeration on the other. Prudence is not a popular virtue ; and the tame doctrine of temporary inaction, though supported by a considerable body of the nation, was but little in harmony with the pugnacious appetite of the majority. The Whigs were distrusted and disliked ; and many who condemned the ministry, were still anxious to retain them in power. In Parliament a trial of strength took place on the debate on the Walcheren Expedition, and the Tories triumphed. The government, aware of the necessity of retrieving the disgrace of former failures, determined to prosecute the war with increased vigour. At the expense of nearly a million sterling, the Portuguese subsidiary force was augmented to thirty thousand men, and all the troops immediately disposable were sent out to augment the army of Lord Wellington.

In the meanwhile, strong reinforcements had crossed the Pyrenees, and the French at this period had a force in Spain, of not less than three hundred thousand men, distributed over the whole surface of the country; Galicia, Valencia, and Murcia, being the only provinces which remained free. Had even half of this force been concentrated, there was nothing in

the Peninsula which could oppose its progress ; but the nature of the warfare waged by the Spaniards, required its subdivision into numerous small bodies, to maintain the subjection of the conquered provinces, and to scatter the irregular bands which occupied the mountain strongholds, and rarely suffered an opportunity of successful action to escape. These objects were not to be accomplished without heavy and continual losses. The animosity of the people was working in silence the destruction of the invaders ; and Napoleon, in a country which his leaders had represented as *conquered*, beheld his armies gradually melting, and his efforts rendered nugatory, by the silent operation of causes which he could neither mitigate nor control.

But the most prominent and immediate obstacle to the success of his projects, was the presence of a British force in the Peninsula. Till the " Leopard should have been driven into the sea," a large army in Spain was required to watch its movements. The force thus employed could lend no aid towards the general object of extending and securing the submission of the people to French authority. Its efforts were necessarily directed to one sin-

CHAP. X.

1810.

May.

CHAP. X. gle and paramount object ; and till that had been
 1810. accomplished, it was for all other purposes en-
 May. tirely useless.

Lord Wellington, therefore, at once perceived that the force at his disposal was not strong enough for offensive operations ; and he knew, besides, that the loss attendant even on a victory, might be ruinous in its consequences. Determined to abandon the Peninsula only in the last extremity, he waited therefore the approach of the enemy, prepared to take advantage of every circumstance which might contribute to his security, and enable him to baffle the powerful efforts of a superior enemy.

In the beginning of May, Lord Wellington was apprized of some movements in the French army, which indicated their intention of advancing against Ciudad Rodrigo. He accordingly moved towards the frontier, establishing his head-quarters at Celorico, and his divisions at Pinhel, Alverca, Guarda, Trancoso, and along the valley of the Mondego, as far as Cea ; and on the opposite bank of that river, at Fornos, Mangualde, and Vizeu. The corps of Sir Rowland Hill remained in the neighbourhood of Abrantes, to check any operation on the part

of Regnier. In this position Lord Wellington CHAP. X.
determined to watch the movements, and await
the approach of the enemy. 1810.
May.

During the long period of tranquillity which had elapsed, both parties had been engaged in great and important preparations.* Under command of Massena, perhaps the most celebrated of the great captains of Napoleon, a powerful army was assembling for the invasion of Portugal. It consisted of the corps of Marshals Ney and Junot, and of General Regnier; while the corps of Mortier threatened an advance on the frontier of Alentejo. Besides these, General Montiniere was at Valladolid, with nine thousand infantry and four regiments of cavalry; and to give still greater importance to this imposing demon-

* At this period a change took place in the organization of the French armies. The first, fourth, and fifth corps, which had invaded Andalusia, formed the army of the south, and was commanded by Soult, having under him Victor, Sebastiani, and Mortier.

The army of the centre, under the immediate orders of Joseph, was composed of the Royal Guard, of several corps which had been raised in his service, and of the French garrisons within the district allotted for its occupation.

The army of Portugal consisted of the second, sixth, and eighth corps, under the command of Massena.

CHAP. X. stration, a strong body of the Imperial Guard
 1810. crossed the Pyrenees, and the remainder was
 May. held in readiness to follow,—circumstances conveying a strong intimation that Napoleon intended to assume the personal command. On his side, Lord Wellington directed the works of Almeida and Abrantes to be strengthened and repaired, and determined to obstruct the progress of the enemy by every means in his power. Though anxious as long as possible to prevent the tide of war from rolling onward from the frontier, he had determined, on the advance of the enemy, to fall back on his resources, and thus to add materially to the difficulties of his opponent, by compelling him to weaken his force in the occupation of distant provinces, and extend the line of his communications through a hostile country.

The numerical force of the hostile armies may be thus calculated :—

British and Portuguese Army.

The corps with Lord Wellington, 30,000

The corps with Lieutenant-General

Hill, - - - 14,000

Carried over, - 44,000

Brought over,	44,000	CHAP. X.
The reserve under Major-General Leith, - - - -	10,000	1810. May.
	<hr/>	
	54,000	
In co-operation with this force was		
A corps of Portuguese Militia, -	10,000	
The Spanish troops under Romana,	10,000	
	<hr/>	
Making a grand total of	76,000	
	<hr/>	

Army under Massena.

The infantry of the 2d, 6th, and 8th corps, - - - -	62,000
The Cavalry, - - - -	6000
The Artillery, &c. - - - -	4000
	<hr/>
Total,	72,000
To this were afterwards joined	
Two divisions of the 9th corps under Drouet, - - - -	10,000
The remaining division of this corps under General Claperede, -	8000
The corps of Mortier co-operating on the south of the Tagus, -	13,000
	<hr/>
Making a grand total of	103,000

CHAP. X.

1810.

May.

By those who would form a just estimate of the relative strength of these armies, the description of troops of which they were composed must be taken into calculation. The Portuguese were yet untried. By the exertions of Marshal Beresford, they had indeed been brought into a state of comparative discipline, but it was impossible to place any sanguine reliance on their conduct in the field. To give them confidence in themselves, Lord Wellington had directed the troops of the two nations to be brigaded together, in the proportion of one Portuguese to two British regiments. Of the regular troops, therefore, hopes might be entertained; but the Portuguese militia were so entirely defective in organization, as to be utterly unfit for the active operations of a campaign.

The French army, on the other hand, was composed of troops accustomed to conquer, and in the highest state of discipline; while that of Lord Wellington might be compared to a piece of tessellated Mosaic, pleasing to the eye, yet far inferior in strength to a surface composed of one uniform and unbroken material.

Lord Wellington had early foreseen that the

attack of the enemy would be on the eastern frontier of Portugal, by the way of Lower Beira. There were only two other routes by which it was practicable to penetrate into the kingdom: the one by Elvas and the Alentejo, the other through Galicia on the north. By the first of these it was impossible to reach Lisbon, from the intervention of the Tagus. The second was obstructed by impenetrable ranges of gigantic mountains, which crossed every possible line of march. That Massena would invade the kingdom by either of these lines was utterly improbable.

CHAP. X.

1810.

May.

Certain therefore of the route that would be followed by the enemy, Lord Wellington made his dispositions accordingly. Looking on Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida, as the points of which Massena must become master, before he could march either upon Lisbon or Oporto, he took up a position on the frontier mountains of Beira, in form of the segment of a circle, of which the convex part was presented to the quarter from which the enemy must approach. The defensive line was about thirty miles in extent, but its circular form gave it this advantage, that its several points were not distant from each other

CHAP. X in proportion to the length of its circumference.

1810.

June.

The several posts, moreover, were very strongly secured by the nature of the ground. The Coa, with its tributary streams, flowed along the front of the line through the greater part of its extent.

Jun. 11.

In the beginning of June, Massena advanced from Salamanca, to commence the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. He brought with him a considerable train of artillery; and the speedy surrender of the place was confidently anticipated. Notwithstanding the importance which had always been attached to this fortress, it was not in the best state of defence. The works were old, and in many points defective; there were no bomb-proofs; and the town itself, though built partly on a rock and washed by the Agueda, was not strong, being commanded from many points, and particularly by a height called the Teson. Some new works, however, had been added on the side on which it is most easily accessible; a ditch had been dug flanked by two bastions, and exertions made to render the convents without the walls available for the defence of the approaches. The garrison, under command of General Herrasti, consisted of four

thousand nine hundred and fifty men, chiefly of the new levies. The population of the town did not much exceed the garrison in number.

CHAP. X.

1810.

June.

The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was undertaken with two corps only, that of Regnier being detached to the left of the Tagus for the greater facility of procuring subsistence. Early in June the place was in a state of complete investment. The trenches were opened on the night of the eleventh, and the enemy continued to push on the parallels till the twenty-fourth. The convents of Santa Cruz and St. Francisco, situated without the walls, were carried by assault; and, on the morning of the twenty-fifth, the enemy opened a heavy fire on the body of the place from a battery of forty-six guns planted on the Teson. By this, and by riflemen stationed in pits, the fire of the garrison was kept down, and the sap was pushed to the glacis. The besiegers' batteries were then within sixty toises of the place, and the effects of the fire became infinitely more decisive. Nothing, however, could exceed the steadiness and resolution of the garrison. Every inch of ground was manfully disputed, and frequent sorties were made which occasioned great loss

Jun. 24.