

which took the road of Alcanar. Having, as he supposed, allowed a sufficient interval for this, he proceeded towards Ulldescona, and halted a little before five in the morning at a place called Hereu. Here he inspected his troops, and promised them a speedy triumph, when a messenger arrived from Porta, requesting that the signal for attack might be delayed, inasmuch as his division had not been able to get forward with the speed which they had calculated on. Bassecourt waited impatiently a full hour till day began to break; then, as success depended in great measure upon surprising the enemy, he sent his advanced parties forward to attack the French outposts, and directed his cavalry to gallop into the town as soon as the gun should be fired and the rocket discharged that were the signal for attack. General Musnier's division was quartered here; Bassecourt's made three attempts to force its position, but not hearing any firing either to the right or left, he perceived that on both sides his combinations had failed, and deemed it therefore necessary to retreat. He succeeded in reaching Vinaroz, . . . there Porta joined him with the right column; there he halted to give the harassed troops some rest, and to obtain some intelligence of his left; . . . and there the enemy surprised him. The men instantly took to flight, and all that his personal exertions could effect, was to keep a few of the better soldiers together, and, under protection of his cavalry, reach Peñiscola with them.

The disgrace of this affair was greater than the loss, which the French estimated at 3000 men. They were more elated by an advantage which they obtained shortly afterwards against an enemy over whom it was seldom that they had any real success to boast. The boats of the English squadron attacked a convoy of eleven vessels laden with provisions for Barcelona, and lying in Palamos Bay, the French having re-occupied that town. The batteries which protected them were destroyed, the maga-

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November.

*Captain
Fane taken
at Palamos.*

Dec. 13.

CHAP. zines blown up, two of the vessels brought out, and the rest
 XXXIII. burnt, . . and our men, having completely effected their object,
 1810. were retiring carelessly, when two Dutchmen, who were in the
December. British service, went over to the enemy, and told them that the
 sailors had but three rounds of ammunition left. The French
 were at this time joined by a party from S. Feliu, and the
 English, instead of retreating to the beach, where the ships
 might have covered their embarkation, took their way toward
 the mole, through the town, not knowing that it had been re-
 occupied. The boats made instantly to their assistance, and
 suffered severely in bringing them off, the loss amounting to
 thirty-three killed, eighty-nine wounded, and eighty-six pri-
 soners, Captain Fane among the latter. The enemy behaved
 with great inhumanity in this affair; they butchered some poor
 fellows who had stopped in the town and made themselves de-
 fenceless by drunkenness; . . and they continued to fire upon a
 boat after all its oars were shot away, in which a midshipman
 was hoisting a white handkerchief upon his sword, as the only
 signal that could be made of surrendering, till of one-and-
 twenty persons who could neither fight* nor fly, all but two
 were wounded, . . when another boat came to their assistance,
 and towed them off.

*Trenches
 opened be-
 fore Tor-
 tosa.
 Dec. 15.*

Macdonald now, whose army had been reinforced, took a
 position at Perillo and at Mora, to cover the siege against any
 interruption on the side of Tarragona, the only quarter from
 whence an effort in aid of Tortosa could be apprehended; and

* The French officers who went on board the frigate after this affair to propose
 an exchange walked along the main deck, where some of the wounded were lying
 between the guns for the sake of the air, and with a spirit perfectly worthy of the
 cause in which they were engaged, and the character they had acquired in it, asked
 them insultingly when they would be pleased to pay them another visit on shore!

Suchet, secure from all farther attempts either from Valencia or Aragon, passed twelve battalions across the river at Xerta to the left bank, and in one day completed the investment of the place. The besiegers had great difficulties to overcome, the soil being every where rocky, . . . so that the engineers were obliged to form parapets and sacks of earth, and in many places to work their way in the trenches by means of gunpowder. The trenches were opened on the night of December 20; and the siege from that hour was carried on with an alacrity and skill in which the French are never wanting. On the twelfth night the enemy had established themselves at the bottom of the ditch; they had then bombarded the city for four days, . . . two days they had been engaged in mining, and there were three breaches in the body of the place: but there were nearly 8000 troops within the walls; there was a brave and willing people, and there were the examples of Zaragoza and Gerona. They were in no danger of famine, for the place had been abundantly provided; there was no want of military stores, and the besieging army did not exceed 10,000 men.

Meantime O'Donell had concerted a bold and hopeful enterprise for its relief. He knew that there were provisions and ammunition sufficient for two months' consumption in the city; he had full reliance upon the disposition of the people, and the whole conduct both of the garrison and the governor from the time that the enemy appeared before the walls had given him reason to confide in both. With his own force he was aware that nothing could be done against the besieging army, covered as it was by Macdonald; but he proposed that Bassecourt should supply 3000 foot and 500 horse from the Valencian army; that the central army should detach 4000 foot and 200 horse; that these should unite under Carvajal with such forces as Aragon could furnish, make demonstration upon the Ebro as if their in-

CHAP.
XXXIII.
1810.
December.

*O'Donell's
plan for re-
lieving the
place.*

CHAP. tention was to succour Tortosa, but there turn off from the most
 XXXIII. convenient point, and by forced marches proceed to Zaragoza,
 1810. whither O'Donell would at the same time detach 4000 foot and
 December. 400 horse by way of Barbastro. It was believed that the French
 at this juncture had not more than 4000 men in the whole of
 Aragon, and the garrison of Zaragoza consisted almost wholly of
 convalescents and invalids. Bassecourt assented heartily to this
 well-devised plan ; from the central army a refusal was returned,
 . . perhaps it could not then have mustered even the small force
 that was required from it ; but upon receiving this reply Basse-
 court dispatched an officer to the Empecinado, and that intrepid
 and excellent partisan cheerfully engaged to co-operate. Carvajal
 held himself in readiness ; and at no moment during the war was
 it so probable that a great success might be obtained with little
 hazard. For it was not doubted that Suchet would precipitately
 break up the siege of Tortosa, rather than allow the Spaniards
 time to strengthen themselves in Zaragoza ; that they could
 enter it was certain, . . and no other possible event could have
 diffused such joy throughout all Spain. All arrangements having
 been concluded between the Empecinado, Carvajal, and Basse-
 court, O'Donell's aid-de-camp, who waited for this at Valencia,
 set off instantly for Tarragona by sea ; contrary winds delayed
 him a little while on the passage, . . and he arrived a few hours
 after the commander-in-chief had received intelligence that Lili
 had surrendered at discretion.

*Tortosa
 surrendered.*

1811.
 Jan. 2.

*Sentence on
 the Go-
 vernor for
 surrender-
 ing it.*

There was no treason here, as there had been at Lerida, but
 there was a want of honour, of principle, and of virtue. Seven
 thousand eight hundred men, not pressed by famine, not debili-
 tated by disease, with a brave and willing population to have
 supported them, laid down their arms and surrendered at dis-
 cretion to ten thousand French. The enemy indeed affirmed
 that the garrison could not have continued the defence an hour

longer without being put to the sword: the people of Spain thought otherwise; they remembered Palafox and Alvarez; they remembered that at Gerona a French army, not inferior to this of Suchet's in number, lay ten whole weeks in sight of an open breach which they did not venture to assault a second time, though it was defended only by half-starved men, who would have come from the hospitals to take their stand there. They remembered this, and therefore they thought that the governor who under such circumstances had hung out the white flag, ought himself to have been hung over the walls. Accordingly sentence of death was pronounced in Tarragona against the Conde de Alache for having, it was said, infamously surrendered a city which he ought to have defended till the last extremity; and his effigy was beheaded there in the market-place.

The fortress at Col de Balaguer, which commanded a strong pass about half way between Tortosa and Tarragona, was yielded a few days after Lili's surrender, by the treachery or cowardice of the men entrusted with its defence. Tarragona was now the only strong place that remained to the Catalans; it had been the seat of government since the fall of Mequinenza, the Provincial Congress, which was to have assembled at Solsona, having then been summoned thither, as the only place of safety; now its land communication with Valencia and the rest of Spain was cut off; and Suchet immediately prepared to follow up his success by investing it, with less apprehension of any obstruction from the Catalan army, because the wound which O'Donell had received at La Bisbal compelled him at this time to retire to Majorca. The Marquis de Campoverde, being second in command, succeeded him. In O'Donell the Catalans lost a commander who had raised himself by his services, and whose conduct had justified the public opinion, in deference to which he had been promoted. But the spirit of the people was not shaken:

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1810.

Col de Balaguer surrendered.

CHAP.
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1810.

*Commodore
Mends de-
stroys the
batteries on
the north
coast.*

they relied upon the strength of their country, even though the fortresses were lost, . . . upon their cause, and their own invincible resolution ; and they lived in continual hope that some effectual assistance would be afforded by England to a province which so well deserved it. The little which had been given had been gratefully received, and it had shown also how much might and ought to have been done.

Maritime co-operation of a similar kind had been carried into effect on the northern coast of Spain. About midsummer Commodore Mends of the *Arethusa* frigate consulted with the Junta of Asturias, who engaged to put what they called the armies of that province, and of the *Montañas de Santander*, in motion, if he would take *Porlier* and 500 men on board his squadron and beat up the enemy's sea-quarters. This it was deemed would draw the French troops toward the ports in their possession, calling them from the frontiers of *Galicia*, which they were then threatening, give the mountaineers opportunity to act with advantage, and favour the *Guerrillas* in *Castille*, whom the French were endeavouring to hunt down. The Commodore had no instructions for an expedition of this kind, but he saw that it offered a reasonable prospect of advantage, for if the Junta should fail in their part of the undertaking, or be disappointed in their hopes, he might nevertheless destroy the enemy's sea-defences, and cut off the supplies which they received coast-ways. Accordingly *Porlier* with his men embarked, and the squadron sailed from *Ribadeo*. The wind serving for *Santona*, they landed on the beach to the westward of that place. The garrison there, some 120 in number, retired with the loss of about thirty men ; and the French commander at *S. Sebastian* feared that it was their intention to establish themselves there, in a post which might easily have been rendered defensible, and would afford good anchorage during the prevalence of the

westerly gales upon that coast : the utmost efforts therefore were made to prevent this ; and on the second day after the landing, from seven to eight hundred French attacked them on the isthmus. This body was repulsed with considerable loss ; but finding that the enemy were collecting in greater force, the Commodore re-embarked his men on the following day, having destroyed the fortifications. Pursuing his object, he demolished all the batteries upon the coast between S. Sebastian's and Santander (those at Castro alone excepted), carried off or threw into the sea above an hundred pieces of heavy cannon, and laid that whole extent of coast bare of defence, without the loss of a single man ; and having made about two hundred prisoners and taken on board three hundred volunteers, all for whom room could be found, the squadron returned to Coruña.

The injury which had thus been done to the enemy was not easily remedied, because artillery could be carried only by sea to these places, the roads being so bad, and the country so mountainous, as to render the land carriage of heavy guns almost impossible. The people of the country were encouraged by the sight of their allies, and by hearing of a success which was reported every where, and every where exaggerated : and to profit by their disposition Porlier, who was one of the ablest partisans that this wild species of warfare produced, was again landed from the British squadron. The bay of Cuevas, between Llanes and Rivadesella, was chosen for the disembarkation, and arms and stores were landed with him, in large supply, and safely deposited, before he entered upon his operations. While this true Spaniard moved with rapidity from place to place, disappointing all the efforts of Bonnet to overpower him, surprising the enemy where they were weak, and eluding them where they were strong, it was determined by the Spanish government to avail themselves once more of the British squadron, and occupy

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XXXIII.
1810.

*Expedition
to Santona
under Re-
novales.*

CHAP. XXXIII.
 1810.
 Santona ; and Renovales, who had now the rank of Camp-Marshal, was sent from Cadiz to Coruña, to command the force appointed for this service. It consisted of 1200 Spanish and 800 English troops, four English frigates and one Spanish, three smaller ships of war, with twenty-eight transports of all sizes. Part of the plan was, that he should co-operate with Porlier in an attack upon the French at Gijon, 600 in number. Porlier and Brigadier Castañon collected their forces at Cezoso, and were on the heights in sight of Gijon when the squadron appeared ; the enemy, after some skirmishing, withdrew from the town when they saw that Renovales was disembarking ; the plunder which they endeavoured to carry with them was taken in their flight, the stores from the arsenal were put on board the Spanish transports, and the guns thrown into the sea. Before General Bonnet could collect a force to bring against the Spaniards the object had been effected ; and when he arrived, and thought to have surprised Porlier by a night attack, the Asturians had retreated to Cezoso, and he found only the fires which they had kindled in their encampment for the purpose of deceiving him.

Oct. 16.

The weather which had delayed the ships on their way to Gijon became more unfavourable after their departure from that place ; and though they reached Santona, and remained five days at anchor there, it was impossible to land ; the Spanish gun-boats suffered so much that it was necessary to take out the crews and destroy the vessels. To remain there was impossible, and it was deemed a fortunate deliverance when the expedition got into the port of Vivero. While they were laying there the wind recommenced, a heavy sea from the N.N.E. drove right into this insecure harbour, and in the violence of the storm the Spanish frigate parted from its cable and driving on board the Narcissus frigate completely dismasted it. The masts of the

Nov. 2.

Spanish ship were left standing, so that it was driven clear ; otherwise both must have perished, not having any other anchors to let go. Owing to the darkness and the tempest, it was impossible to afford any relief: the Spanish frigate was thrown upon the sand at the head of the harbour; when day broke, the beach appeared strewed with the wreck, and of nearly 500 souls on board, there were but two survivors. This was the fate of the Magdalena: the Spanish brig Palomo was wrecked at the same time, only the captain and nine men escaped out of two hundred; and some of the other vessels also were lost during the same dreadful night. The Estrago gun-boat had parted some little time before from an English brig which had taken it in tow, and with great difficulty made the coast at Bermeo. Seeing that the French were there, the Commander, Lieutenant Aguiar y Mella, preferred all hazards to the evil of falling into their hands, and proceeded along the coast to Mundaca, where a like danger awaited him. Standing off again, he took a desperate course, among shoals and islets; and escaping from shipwreck in a manner which excited his own wonder, anchored in the bay of Lanchove; where one of the crew swam to shore, and brought off a little boat, by means of which the men were just landed before their vessel went to pieces. Not knowing which way to bend their course, they past the night upon the mountains; and on the morrow, having been directed by a peasant, when they reached Sornoza, they learnt that forty of the enemy's cavalry were in pursuit of them. They kept together, however, and, choosing the most unfrequented ways, travelled by night, in that inclement season, by Uncaya and the mountains of Leon, Santander, and Burgos; till, at the end of five weeks, the Lieutenant brought his whole party safe to Ferrol, and presented himself, with them, to the Commandant of the marine; giving thus an example of fidelity and resolution, for which they were

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November.*The Mag-
dalena
wrecked.*