

of Cabrera as volunteers; though, if free-will had influenced them, they would, like the Swiss, have entered the Spanish service upon the first opportunity, instead of remaining two years in that miserable place of confinement. Majorca itself supplied so few willing soldiers, that criminals who had been transported thither from Catalonia and Valencia were enlisted, . . . fellows of such a description, that those who were not deemed capable of service were kept in prison: discipline, however, and equitable treatment, of which even bad men are sensible, made them better than was expected. Cuesta sent to this division all who were discharged from the hospitals; and as runaways from the routs in Valencia and Murcia could be collected or caught, they were shipped for Majorca, and incorporated in this hopeful force. No officer however was appointed without secret and strict inquiry into his character. Other difficulties, which might not so probably have been anticipated, impeded the equipment of this division. The plan was unpopular in the island, the more so, perhaps, because it was set on foot by an Englishman who was also invested with the command. Upon Cuesta's death, the situation of affairs was critical; the authorities withheld all supplies from the troops, who were also threatened as well as insulted in pasquinades: convents had been converted into barracks for their use, and this may possibly have been one cause of offence. An agreement had been concluded with the Dey of Algiers for a supply of horses, but it was broken off for want of money, the Superior Junta of Majorca disregarding all orders from the Regency. The institution of a military academy was another cause of dislike, owing to the habits of insubordination which prevailed in Majorca, as in every other part of the Spanish dominions. By prudent conduct, however, impediments were removed, and dislike softened or overcome;

CHAP.  
XLII.

1812.

*August.*

CHAP. the troops were clothed and armed by Great Britain, and their  
 XLII. hospital supplied: and when the expedition from Sicily called  
 1812. for them at Palma, 4500 men embarked, in a state of efficient  
 discipline.

July 24.

*The expedi-  
 tion arrives  
 on the coast  
 of Cata-  
 lonia.*

The fleet made for the eastern coast of Spain, and on the first of August anchored in the bay of Blanes, at the mouth of the Tordera. The enemy occupied Tosa, and had a redoubt there which covered the town and protected the coast. On that and the following day, demonstrations of landing were made; but upon an interview with Eroles, it was found that any such measure would be worse than useless, with so inadequate a force. That able Spaniard saw that it was better for the Catalans to be left as they had so long been to their own exertions, than to give the French an opportunity of bringing superior numbers against a British expedition: and it was agreed that the best service which such a force could then perform was to secure the city of Alicante, at that time endangered in consequence of a defeat which Joseph O'Donell had suffered in its vicinity. He had endeavoured to drive the vanguard of Marshal Suchet's army, under General Harispe, back upon the Xucar, from the line which it occupied at Castalla and Ibi, and other points of the mountainous country; but as usual, when the Spaniards were brought forward in regular war, against well-disciplined and well-commanded troops, some of the officers either misunderstood their orders or executed them ill, and some of the men losing courage as soon as they lost hope, threw into confusion those who were braver than themselves; their loss amounted to 4000 men, being little less than the whole number which they attacked, and they left more than 10,000 muskets in their flight. Suchet, who was the most enterprising and successful of all the French generals in Spain, would have taken advan-

*Defeat of  
 the Spa-  
 niards at  
 Castalla.*

June 21.

tage of this shameful defeat, and endeavoured to obtain possession of Alicante, if the force at his disposal had not been greatly diminished. Buonaparte had withdrawn all the Poles in his service from the peninsula, for the Russian campaign; and this deprived him of six thousand of his best troops, at a time when his army was otherwise greatly weakened by sending succours to Caffarelli in Navarre, and by the increased exertions which it was necessary to make against Duran and the Empecinado, Villacampa and Bassecourt. Before the battle of Salamanca, the Intruder, in his dreams of triumph, informed Suchet that he must prepare for marching towards Madrid, and then accompanying him to the Tagus; and he ordered him to form a camp of 8000 men between Albaceyte and San Clemente; such a force it was impossible for him to spare; he could not venture to weaken himself farther than by detaching 1500 men to Requeña and Cuenca, to relieve General Darmagnac, and he represented to Joseph that he could not move for Madrid with one of his divisions, unless he received orders to evacuate Valencia. The last orders from Paris were to direct all his efforts to the preservation of the countries under his command, and to keep his force concentrated. General Maitland knew less of Marshal Suchet's actual strength, than of his relative superiority to any force that could be brought against him; the best course, therefore, seemed to be that upon which he resolved; to secure the important fortress and port of Alicante, both as a place of arms from whence future operations might be undertaken, and as a rallying point for the wreck of Joseph O'Donell's army. Thither accordingly the Anglo-Sicilian expedition sailed: contrary winds and bad weather retarded it some days upon the passage, but on the evening of August the 9th they anchored in the harbour, and on the following day the troops were landed.

The French who were in sight of the fortress retired upon

CHAP.  
XLII.

1812.

August.

*The expedition lands at Alicante.*

CHAP. this, and formed their line in Chichona, Ibi, Castalla, Biar and  
 XLII. Villena. But Suchet saw that this position would not be tenable  
 1812. against General Maitland's corps; he concentrated his divisions,  
 therefore, about St. Philippe; fixed his head quarters in that  
 city; threw up field works there, and upon the high road from  
 Valencia to Madrid; and constructed a bridge of boats over the  
 Xucar, near Alberique, which he secured with a *tête-du-pont*.  
 His intention was not to fall back without fighting, provided the  
 allies should attack him only in front, and were not too greatly  
 superior in numbers. But the superiority was soon on his own  
 side: the allies took the field on the 14th, and occupied the  
 country from which the enemy retired; on the 18th they re-  
 ceived intelligence that the Intruder with the force which he  
 could bring together was about to join the army of Valencia,  
 and then it became necessary for General Maitland to fall back  
 to his position in front of Alicante.

August.

The French  
 fall back to  
 the Xucar.

The expedition which was to have effected a diversion in  
 the east of Spain, was thus for the time rendered useless, not  
 having been upon a sufficient scale to accomplish the purpose  
 for which it was designed. Meantime the squadron on the  
 north-east coast proceeded successfully, acting in concert with  
 some of the ablest Guerrilla leaders. Caffarelli found it pru-  
 dent to withdraw his garrisons from Torrelavega and Santander,  
 lest they should be made prisoners; the latter place was entered  
 by Porlier; the constitution was proclaimed there while salutes  
 of joy were fired by the Spanish troops and the British vessels;  
 and Renovales made good his word to General Rouget by driving  
 him from Bilbao, and defeating him in an attempt at recovering  
 it. There also the constitution was proclaimed. The *Te Deum*  
 was performed in Santiagos church, and the Cid Campeador in the  
 theatre; and all the unmarried men from the age of 17 to 45,  
 were enrolled for Mendizabal's army. On that side there had

The French  
 withdraw  
 from San-  
 tander.

August 2.

They are  
 driven from  
 Bilbao.

been no want of exertion, and no disappointment; but the Galician army, from which more might have been looked for, considering the resources of the province, served for little more than to manifest the gross incapacity or negligence with which affairs of the greatest moment were conducted: nominally it amounted to 30,000 men, and nearly that number were supposed to be mustered, paid and fed, and yet 11,000 infantry and 350 horse were all that Santocildes had under his command, and these were badly disciplined and miserably equipped.

CHAP.  
XLII.  
1812.

August.

*State of the  
Galician  
army.*

On the night of the eighth day after the entrance of the allies into Madrid, the news of that event reached Cadiz, where it excited among the inhabitants the joyful hope of being speedily delivered from the blockade; and deeper emotions in those exiles who had left their houses and families in the metropolis. On the 24th, the French broke up the siege; they threw shells during the preceding night; those which were filled with lead and discharged from howitzers with a velocity of about 2000 feet per second, ranged to the astonishing distance of three miles. They burst their guns by overcharging them, placing their muzzles one against another and exploding them by means of portfires and trains; and thus almost the whole of their artillery between Chiclana and Rota, consisting of 600 pieces, were rendered unserviceable. Many, however, were left uninjured for the Spaniards to take possession of, as well as thirty gun-boats, and a great quantity of stores. The necessity of this retreat had been foreseen by Soult as soon as he was informed of the battle of Salamanca. Before that action he had been meditating another attack upon Tarifa, as a place from whence he could easily communicate with Tangiers and the Barbary coast, and thus secure supplies for feeding the army under his command. Sir Rowland Hill's movements withdrew him from this project: and after Marmont's defeat he

*The French  
break up the  
siege of Ca-  
diz.  
August 20.*

*Sir How-  
ard Doug-  
las's Naval  
Gunnery,  
p. 61.*

CHAP. prepared to abandon Seville, but to hold the Carthusian con-  
 XLII. vent there, which he occupied as a citadel. Strong working  
 1812. parties were employed in adding to its defences, while at the  
 same time the French packed up their public documents and  
 their private plunder for removal. But on this occasion the  
 Spaniards were on the alert.

*Movement  
 of La Cruz  
 Mourgeon  
 and Col.  
 Skerrett  
 upon Se-  
 ville.*

As early as the middle of August the enemy had blown up the Castle of Niebla, and retired from the whole county of that name; and on the very day that they broke up from before Cadiz, Camp Marshal D. Juan de la Cruz Mourgeon, in concert with Colonel Skerrett, judged it advisable to make a forward movement on Seville, and for this purpose to force the corps of observation at San Lucar la Mayor, consisting of 350 cavalry and 200 foot. Brigadier-General Downie was second in command of the Spanish force. This officer was born in Stirlingshire, and commenced his military career by accompanying Miranda in his first expedition to Venezuela, an adventure for which those foreigners who were taken in it paid the forfeit of their lives. He joined Sir J. Moore's army as Assistant Commissary-General, was with Sir Arthur Wellesley in the campaign of 1809, and in the ensuing year, having entered the Spanish service, raised with the approbation of his own government, the loyal legion of Extremadura, and was appointed Colonel-Commandant thereof. The legion was armed and clothed by the British Government, and he revived in it the old Spanish costume, . . . or something resembling it; and several of the young nobility are said to have entered it on that account. By this and by his character, which in some respects resembled their own, he made himself popular among the Spaniards; insomuch, that the Marquesa de Conquista, the representative of the Pizarros, presented him with the sword of her ancestor, the famous or infamous conqueror of Peru.

They marched from Manzanilla with 800 men, consisting of the 1st regiment of guards, the 87th, and a Portugueze regiment, accompanied by 600 Spanish troops: the Spaniards attacked on the right, the British and Portugueze on the left: the enemy were driven through the streets, leaving some killed, wounded, and prisoners, and the allies took post at San Lucar without the loss of a man. Leaving his advance in that town, and the British and Portugueze on the right bank of the river San Lucar, the Spanish general returned to Castilleja del Campo, being the place whither the persons from whom he received intelligence directed their communications. Various and contradictory accounts were brought thither on the morning of the 26th concerning the intentions of the enemy in Seville; but in the afternoon he received positive information that Soult, with the greater part of his force, was about to move by way of Alcala upon Marchena. Arrangements were immediately made, that the troops should collect at San Lucar, and after two hours' rest there, proceed towards Seville at three on the following morning, in the hope that by this movement they might accelerate the retreat of the French, and save Seville from being plundered. On arriving at Espartinas, they ascertained that Soult had left the city with 5000 foot and 500 horse. General Mourgeon, upon this, sending out some Guerrillas to cover his flanks, proceeded, and arrived on the heights of Castilleja de la Cuesta, immediately above Seville, at six in the morning. The French occupied some olive grounds close to the village, and some forty infantry garrisoned the redoubt of Santa Brigida from which the guns had been withdrawn. They were driven from the olive grounds into the plain, where for awhile the cavalry, 100 in number, protected the retreat of the foot, some 150: but they were so pressed by the Spanish vanguard and annoyed by an English field-piece, that they took to flight, and many of the

CHAP.  
XLII.

1812.

*August.**August 27.*

CHAP. men were made prisoners. The redoubt was attacked at the  
 XLII. same time, with more bravery than judgement, and the Spaniards sustained some loss; the columns then advanced into the plain, by which the redoubt was turned and its communication cut off: and Colonel Skerrett ordered it to be masked by a detachment of Portugueze.

1812.

August.

*The French  
 driven from  
 Seville.*

The Spaniards then made a detour to the right, in order to reach the bridge of Triana by the road of S. Juan de Alfarache, and thus intercept the retreat of the enemy and prevent them from cutting or burning the bridge. Skerrett, meantime, advanced a field-piece to keep in check the enemy's fire at one of the gates opposite; and after allowing time for the Spanish column to arrive, the British and Portugueze advanced to the attack in front, the cavalry and artillery at a gallop, supported by the grenadiers of the guards and the infantry following. The enemy abandoned the gate; the British and Portugueze entered the suburb, and advanced near to the bridge as rapidly as possible; they were checked at the turn of the street by a fire of grape-shot and musketry; the grenadiers advanced to their support; the Spanish cavalry under D. José Canterac, (whom Mourgeon, foreseeing the necessity, had ordered to leave the column and hasten straight through the suburb, arrived at this point of time,) and the allies, drove every thing before them. They advanced to the bridge under a heavy fire. The enemy had retired from the plain in three columns, with two pieces of artillery and 200 horse; and had taken a position with the river on their right, and their rear resting on the suburb; two guns were brought to bear on them by Captain Roberts of the artillery; they were driven from their position, and then made a stand upon the bridge, which they hoped to defend long enough to gain time for destroying it. Downie with his legion twice attempted to force a passage, and was twice repulsed, and each



time wounded. In a third attempt, he leaped over the chasm which the enemy had then made; and at the same moment a grape-shot shattered his cheek-bone and destroyed one of his eyes. He fell from his horse, stunned by the wound; when his recollection returned he found himself a prisoner, but in time to throw Pizarro's sword among his own people. On their part the attack was kept up with so much spirit, aided as they now were by some guns well placed and well worked, that the enemy could not extend the breach which they had made: and the inhabitants, even while their fire continued, set all the bells ringing, displayed hangings from their balconies as for a festival, hastened to the bridge and laid planks across the chasm, and enabled their deliverers to pass. The French then retired to the Triunfo and there again made a stand; but soon retreated through the city, and leaving it by the Puerta Nueva and the Puerta de Carmona took the direction of Alcala. They left there two pieces of artillery, many horses, much baggage, and some two hundred prisoners. The deliverers could make no speed in pursuing them, for the streets were crowded with rejoicing multitudes, and their previous exertions as well as their want of cavalry would have made it imprudent to continue the pursuit. Downie was treated with great barbarity by his captors. Miserably wounded as he was, he was tied upon the carriage of a gun, and in that condition dragged along with them in their retreat; and this is said to have been done by General Villatte's direction. Having taken him some forty miles, and not expecting him to survive, they left him in a hut, taking, however, his parole not to serve again in case of recovery, till he should have been regularly exchanged.

By this well-timed enterprise, Seville was saved from the contribution which would have been exacted from it, and the

CHAP.  
XLII.

1812.

August.