

out water; and as he had ascertained that Victor was moving upon Villar-robledo with the intention of cutting off the vanguard of the Carolina army at Villarta, he took measures for averting a blow, which, if it had succeeded, would have left the passes of the Sierra Morena open to the enemy. It had been intended that this detachment, consisting of 5000 men, should have co-operated with him in his projected movement upon Toledo, which had been so fatally frustrated at Ucles; they were therefore under his command. He now sent orders that they should instantly retire to S. Cruz de Mudela, or to El Viso; and while he hastened thither himself to join them, sent off 500 horse, divided into four parties, to act as *guerillas* in the rear of the French. They did this with great success, imposing upon them by their rapidity and boldness: and the Duke by forced marches reached S. Cruz de Mudela in time to save the Carolina troops, the enemy having just arrived in front of them. The French, seeing a force which they had not expected, and were not in strength to attack, retired toward Toledo, leaving the open country to the Spaniards: and Infantado then communicated with General Cuesta, that he might act in concert with the army of Extremadura.

CHAP.  
XVII.  
1809.  
February.

*Infantado,*  
120—189.

The troops had now recovered heart; the advanced guard, under the Duque del Alburquerque, gained some advantage at Mora, where, by a well-planned expedition, he surprised the French; and Infantado thought that he had performed no inconsiderable service to his country, in having gathered up the wreck of the central army, and brought it into an efficient state, when he received an order from the Supreme Junta to give up the command to the Conde de Cartaojal. He obeyed reluctantly, and with the feelings of an injured man. The government at that time perhaps, like the people, attributed too large a part of their disasters to the generals, and therefore appointed and dis-

*Infantado*  
*superseded*  
*by Cartao-*  
*jal.*  
Feb. 12.

Feb. 6.



CHAP. placed them upon no better ground than that of complying with  
 XVII. public opinion. The soldiers appear to have been well satisfied  
 1809. with the Duke; they indeed had seen the incessant exertions  
 February. which he had made for supporting them when the government  
 could send them no supplies: but the officers were divided into  
 cabals, and there was a strong party against him. His offended  
 pride did not however abate his desire of continuing to serve his  
 country in the field, and he requested permission to remain with  
 the army as Colonel of the Royal Spanish Guards; but he was  
 informed that this was incompatible with his elevated rank, and  
 therefore he was called to Seville. No inquiry concerning the  
 rout at Ucles was instituted; the opinion prevailed that it was  
 imputable to his error in exposing the advanced guard at such a  
 distance from the body of his army; but the faults with which  
 he charged Venegas were overlooked, and the government con-  
 tinued to place a confidence in that General, to which, in any  
 other capacity than that of a commander, his honourable cha-  
 racter and personal qualities entitled him.

Feb. 12.

*Calumnies  
 against  
 Castaños.*

The French, at the commencement of their revolutionary war, sent every unsuccessful general to the scaffold, the Convention in its bloody acts keeping pace with the bloodiest desires of a deceived and infuriated populace. The Central Junta contracted no such guilt, though humanity is not the characteristic of the Spaniards, and justice in state affairs had in that country for centuries been unknown. They gave no ear to vulgar or malignant accusations; but, on the other hand, they allowed their generals no opportunity of vindicating themselves. Upon this ground Castaños, as well as Infantado, had cause to complain. The order which called him from the command of the central army during its retreat intimated no dissatisfaction at his conduct; on the contrary, it summoned him to take the presidency of the Military Junta, saying that the fate of armies depended



upon the plans which were laid down for them. That restless intriguer, the Conde de Montijo, who had visited him at his head-quarters at Tudela, professed the warmest friendship towards him, and spoken of him in the language of unbounded admiration, left the army suddenly two days before the battle, and wherever he went reported that Castaños was a traitor, and had sold the country to the French. This nearly proved fatal to the General, when, in obedience to his summons, he set out to join the Central Junta, taking with him merely such an escort as his rank required: for he soon found that fifteen horse and thirty foot were not sufficient to protect him from imminent danger; the clamour which Montijo raised had spread far and wide, and they could not enter a village without preparations as serious as if they were about to engage in action. At Miguel-turra, in La Mancha, the Junta exerted themselves ineffectually to restrain the populace, who were crying out, Kill him! kill him! The members of that body, the better to secure him, gathered round his person, and accompanied him on foot; the rabble pressed upon them with blind fury, and their lives, as well as that of Castaños, would have been sacrificed, if his cavalry had not charged the multitude sword in hand, and opened the way. But the danger was not over when he had been housed; the house was beset, and it was only by the exertions of the better classes, and especially of a priest, that he was enabled to leave the place before daybreak the following morning. It became necessary for them to avoid all populous places, and take up their lodging in the smallest and most retired hamlets; and yet with these precautions his life was frequently threatened. In addition to this evil there was the uncertainty of knowing whither to direct his course: three times on his journey he found that the Central Junta had changed their place of residence; and when he finally made for Seville, it was with a belief that

CHAP.  
XVII.  
1809.



CHAP. XVII. 1809. they had removed to Puerto de Santa Maria. Upon approaching Seville, he was ordered to take up his abode in the monastery of S. Geronimo de Buenavista, and there await the farther determination of the government. Montijo had accused him as an instrument of Tilly, engaged with him in treasonable designs, and also in a scheme for rendering Andalusia independent, and making it the head of a confederacy of provinces. This was the mere fabrication of a man who scrupled at no means for promoting his own insane ambition, and as such the Junta received it; but they deemed it expedient to treat the General as if he were under their displeasure, lest a suspicion, which in its consequences might be most fatal to the country, should be raised against themselves.

*Castaños, Representacion, 15—18*

*His memorial to the Junta.*

*See vol. i. 613.*

Castaños was not aware of the accusation which had been thus preferred; least indeed of all men could he have supposed that a charge of federalism would have been brought against him, who had with so much decision and effect opposed the dangerous disposition of the provincial authorities to consult their own security alone. But he complained of the injurious restraint in which he was placed, and in an able and temperate memorial appealed to his past services, showed that the defeat at Tudela was not imputable to any error or indiscretion on his part (his opinion having been over-ruled by their representative, D. Francisco Palafox), and required that his conduct might be judged of by the circumstances in which he was placed, and the actual condition of his army, not as if he had commanded 80,000 effective men. An army in the field, he said, was like a musical instrument with many keys and many registers: if these did not answer to the touch, if many strings were wanting, and the others not in tune, the best musician would be deemed a sorry performer by those who heard the broken and jarring sounds which he produced, and knew not the state of the instru-



ment. Still, he maintained, the French were far from being able to subdue Spain. Castaños was not unsupported while he thus defended himself with the confidence of an innocent and injured man. The Junta of Seville honourably espoused his cause, and the government allowed him to remove to his own house at Algeciras, there to remain while the inquiry into his conduct which he demanded should be carried on.

CHAP.  
XVII.

1809.

Montijo was one of those men who in disordered times are intoxicated with ambition and vanity. His object in seeking the ruin of Castaños was to obtain a command for himself. He represented to the Junta that the resources by which the miracle of restoring the country might be effected could only be drawn from Andalusia; but that to call them forth activity, energy, patriotism, and above all the confidence of the public were required. Under any other circumstances he should have blushed to designate himself as the person in whom these qualifications were united, and unhappily the only person who possessed the last; but in such an emergency a good Spaniard must sacrifice even his modesty. Spain might still be saved if he were commissioned to take what cavalry he could raise, put himself at the head of the forces in La Mancha, and march upon Madrid; and he pledged his sacred word of honour that he would resign the command as soon as the French should be driven back to the Ebro. This proposal met with as little attention as it deserved; and Montijo then joined the army of Carolina, there to sow fresh intrigues, and meet with deserved humiliation.

*Intrigues of  
Montijo.*

The French themselves were at this time in such a situation, that the desultory and harassing warfare which the Junta of Seville advised at the commencement of the struggle might now have been pursued against them with great effect. A disposition in some of the marshals to disregard Joseph, and act without any deference to his wishes or commands, had shown itself

*Progress of  
the French  
in Castille  
and Leon.*



CHAP.  
XVII.

1809.  
January.

before Buonaparte left Spain; the attention of the French cabinet was directed toward Austria, and the affairs of Spain were left to the intrusive government, which had in fact no control over the armies by whom alone it was to be supported. But as there was no enemy in the field alert and able enough to take advantage of the fair occasions which offered, the French commanders believed the struggle was at an end, and that they had only to march over the country and receive the submission of the inhabitants. While Victor occupied Toledo, waiting only a convenient season to disperse the hasty levies which were brought together for the defence of Andalusia, General Dorneau marched against Zamora, scaled the walls of that ancient city, and put to death those inhabitants who, in the flagitious language of the French bulletin, were called the most guilty. Castille and Leon were overrun, and wherever they went those scenes of profanation, violence, and murder were exhibited, in which Buonaparte's soldiers were systematically allowed to glut the worst passions of corrupted and brutalized humanity.

*New levies  
raised by the  
Spaniards.*

Yet while the country was thus at the mercy of the French, the panic which their appearance every where excited extended nowhere beyond their immediate presence. In all places which were not actually occupied by the enemy, the local authorities acted as if no enemy had been at hand, and their own government had been as efficient as it was legitimate. The enlisting went on, and promises of speedy triumph and sure deliverance were held forth with a confidence which no reverses could shake. The fugitives from the different armies no sooner reached their own homes than they were again enrolled to be embodied, and exposed again to privations and sufferings such as those from which they had so hardly escaped. Before their strength was recruited, they were sent off to form new armies, neither better disciplined, better commanded, nor better provided than those



which had been routed and dispersed. They went hungered, half-naked, and cursing their fortune, without confidence in their officers, each other, or themselves, yet believing fully that the deliverance of Spain would be effected with a faith which seemed to require and perhaps very generally expected, miracles for its fulfilment. Human means indeed seem to have been provided as little as if they had not been taken into the account.

This unreasoning confidence brought with it evil as well as good. Many of those who had something to lose, and hoped that part at least might be saved by submission, took either side according as the scale inclined. When the enemy was absent, they joined the national voice, which expressed what were their real feelings: if the French appeared, they were ready to take the oaths, and act under them, as far as was necessary for their own safety or advantage, longing at the same time and looking for the day of deliverance and vengeance. In many places, the magistracy acted with no other view than that of averting from themselves and their immediate jurisdiction as much of the common misery as they could. This was particularly the case in those parts of Leon and Castille which lay most open to the enemy. The enrolment was rigorously enforced there, and men were hurried off: but any means of local defence were rather dreaded than desired. Offers of assistance were made from Ciudad Rodrigo to Ledesma and Salamanca, and both cities declined the proffered aid, as unnecessary; but in truth, because they believed it to be unavailing, and had determined not to provoke the enemy by resistance.

Ciudad Rodrigo had at that time become a point of great interest, owing to a well-timed movement of Sir Robert Wilson's with a small body of Portuguese volunteers. This adventurous officer had been rewarded by the Emperor of Germany with the order of Maria Theresa, for a brilliant affair in which the 15th

CHAP.  
XVII.  
1809.  
January.

*Temporizing conduct of certain magistrates.*

*Sir Robert Wilson.*



CHAP. regiment of dragoons was engaged during the siege of Landrecy.  
 XVII. He served afterwards in Egypt, and published a history of the  
 1809. British expedition to that country, in which work he charged  
January. Buonaparte with the massacre of his prisoners at Jaffa, and the  
 empoisonment of his own sick and wounded. The facts were  
 boldly denied at the time, and willingly disbelieved by Buona-  
 parte's admirers; they have since been substantiated by ample  
 evidence, and by his own avowal; but the merit of having first  
 proclaimed them was Sir Robert Wilson's, and it marked him  
 for an object of especial vengeance should he ever fall into the  
 hands of the tyrant, whose true character he had been the first  
 to expose. This rendered him more conspicuous than he would  
 have been for his rank, which was that of Lieutenant-Colonel.  
 Having, in pursuance of the convention, superintended the em-  
 barkation of the French at Porto, and by great exertions con-  
 tributed to save them from the just fury of the populace, he  
 applied himself with characteristic activity and enterprise to  
 raising and disciplining a Portugueze legion in that city. The  
 plan was entirely approved by Sir Hew Dalrymple, and zealously  
 forwarded by the Bishop. Two thousand men presently pre-  
 sented themselves, and that number might have been increased  
 five-fold could he have relied upon resources for them; for the  
 alertness with which they learned our discipline, the confidence  
 which they acquired, the pride which they felt at being dis-  
 played, and which their officers partook in displaying them, ex-  
 cited the emulation of their countrymen. Some jealousy was  
 felt at Lisbon, and some obstacles were thrown in his way, upon  
 the pretext that an invidious distinction would be occasioned  
 between these and the other Portugueze troops. Sir John Cradock,  
 however, when the command in that capital devolved upon him,  
 authorised Sir Robert to act according to his own judgement.  
 His first thought had been to embark for Carthage, and march

*He raises a  
 Portugueze  
 legion at  
 Porto.*



from thence to Catalonia. Afterwards, Asturias seemed a nearer and more important point. But after Blake's army had been dispersed, and before Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird had formed a junction, he resolved to march toward the frontiers, thinking that he might move from Miranda or Braganza, and so to facilitate the communication between them, and cover, as far as his means permitted, the approach to the northern provinces. With this intent he marched the first division of his legion, consisting of 700 men with six pieces of cannon; they were to be followed by the second, under Baron Eben, an Hanoverian officer in the British service; and this by the third. And Sir J. Cradock had ordered a battalion of Portuguese infantry and a regiment of cavalry to join him.

CHAP.  
XVII.  
1809.  
January.

When Sir Robert reached Lamego, he there found information, that a small British detachment which had been stationed in Ciudad Rodrigo, had, in consequence of the approaching danger, forsaken it. Always hopeful himself, and well aware of what importance it was that that position should be maintained, he left his troops, and hastened thither to consult with the Junta. It was a point from which he could act upon that division of the enemy who were then forcing their way into Extremadura, . . . or, co-operate with any Spanish force that might take the field from Salamanca. The people, on their part, declared their determination to defend the place resolutely; his aid, therefore, was accepted as frankly as it was offered, and the legion accordingly advanced from Lamego through a country almost impracticable at that season. By dint of human exertion, carts and artillery were drawn up steeps which hitherto had been deemed inaccessible for carriages. Sometimes men and officers, breast-deep in the water, dragged the guns through torrents so formidable, that cattle could not be trusted to perform that service. Sometimes, where the carriages would have floated and

*Sir Robert goes to Ciudad Rodrigo.*