

their misfortunes. In this imminent danger Vives made a formal resignation of the command, and Reding, upon whom it devolved, was enabled to save his life by letting him be put in confinement. The superior Junta, apprehensive alike of the populace and of a siege or an immediate assault, got out of the city as soon as they could (for the people had forbidden any person to leave it), and fixed themselves at Tortosa, leaving, however, two of their members to represent them in the Junta of that district. If while this insubordination prevailed the French had attempted to carry the place by a coup-de-main, they might probably have succeeded; but St. Cyr was not so well acquainted with the inability of the Spaniards as with the difficulties of his own position. A few days after the battle a strong detachment of French appeared before the city; the generale was beaten, the somaten was sounded from the Cathedral, one of the forts fired, and the place was in the utmost confusion, when a flag of truce arrived, with a request that an aid-de-camp of M. St. Cyr might be allowed to confer with General Vives. Reding, to whom the letter was delivered, suspected that the real intent must be to discover the state of the place; he communicated it to the Junta, and two of their members, with two officers, were sent out to know the purport of the mission. It was not without difficulty that these persons could get out of the gate, so fearful were the people of being betrayed; the general opinion was, that the French had sent to summon the town, and the universal cry was, that they would not capitulate, they would listen to no such proposals, they would die for their king, their religion, and their country. It proved, however, that the aid-de-camp came only to propose an exchange of prisoners. The impolicy of agreeing to this was obvious; but Reding knew how ill the prisoners on both sides were treated, and thought it due to humanity to exchange them. The advantage was wholly on the enemy's side; they received disci-

CHAP.  
XVIII.

1809.

*January.**Reding  
takes the  
command.*

CHAP.  
XVIII.

1809.

January.

*Cabanes,*  
*p. iii. c. 13.*

*The army*  
*reformed in*  
*Tarragona.*

plined soldiers, who had now been many months in the country, and had had opportunities since their capture of observing the state of the Spaniards, and even learning their intentions, for every thing like secrecy seemed to be despised; and they gave in return only men of the new levies, not exchanging a single dragoon or artilleryman, nor one of the Swiss troops.

Reding was fully sensible how injurious it was that the enemy should thus be enabled to fill up their ranks; he suffered it, however, for the sake of mitigating the evils of a war in which he considered success absolutely hopeless. From the same hopelessness he committed the greater error of suffering himself to be surrounded by persons, some of whom were suspected by the superior Junta, and others by himself: but with this there was a generous feeling mingled; he would not, because they were unpopular, cease to employ men of whom he had a good opinion, nor would he upon a strong suspicion of guilt dismiss others as if they were guilty. His despondency was rooted in the constitution of his mind, but it did not make him omit any efforts for enabling the army again to take the field; and it was one happy part of the Spanish character, that no defeat, however complete and disgraceful, produced any effect in dispiriting the nation. The very men who, taking panic in battle, threw down their arms and fled, believed they had done their country good service by saving themselves for an opportunity of better fortune; and as soon as they found themselves in safety, were ready to be enrolled and take their chance again. Such of the runaways as had reached the Ebro, when they could get no farther, turned back, and came in troops to Tarragona. They came in pitiable condition, and without arms: . . . Reding knew not where to look but to the English for money and muskets, and a failure of powder also was apprehended, the materials having hitherto been supplied from Zaragoza. It would have

been madness to have attempted punishing any of these fugitives; the better mode of impressing upon them a sense of military duty was to let them see that their superiors could not behave ill with impunity: Reding therefore degraded one colonel and several inferior officers for their conduct at Molins de Rey, and made them serve in the ranks; but by posting them in advanced parties gave them an opportunity of retrieving their character and their rank. The government never acted with so much energy as when it was refitting an army after a defeat: its efforts were then such as the danger required. Two regiments arrived from Granada, a Swiss one from Majorca; supplies were sent from Valencia; men came in from all quarters as the hopes of the people rose, and by the middle of January the force in Tarragona was not inferior to that which had been so shamefully dispersed at Granollers. The men recovered heart, and acquired confidence from frequent success in the desultory warfare wherein Reding practised them. But he himself continued \* to despond; and, in sad anticipation of defeat, deferred acting, when activity and enterprise might have found or made opportunities for success.

CHAP.  
XVIII.  
1809.  
January.

*Cabañes,*  
p. iii. c. 13.

It was their victories which made the French most sensible of the difference between this and the other wars wherein they had been engaged; . . . the spoils of the field were the only fruits of success. These indeed had been of signal consequence in Catalonia; they had enabled St. Cyr to relieve Barcelona, to refit his troops, and to strengthen himself with a park of field-pieces. He had profited by the first panic to dislodge the Spaniards

*Conduct of  
the French  
under St.  
Cyr.*

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\* M. Gouvion St. Cyr, who renders justice in other respects to General Reding, represents him as full of confidence at this time, and dreaming of a second affair of Baylen. It is upon the most indisputable authority, confirmed too by his own dispatches, that I have delineated his state of mind so differently.

CHAP. XVIII. from the pass of Bruch, which they had twice so gloriously de-  
 1809. fended; his troops had entered Igualada after the success, and  
January. the dangerous impression which his ostentation of justice and  
 his observance of the humanities of war were likely to produce  
 upon the wealthier classes, was seen by the conduct of the inha-  
 bitants, who seemed to think it a matter of indifference whether  
 their houses were occupied by the national troops or by the  
 French. But the system upon which Buonaparte carried on this  
 wicked war rendered it impossible for any general to persist in  
 a course of honourable conduct. The army which he had or-  
 dered into Catalonia was left to provide for itself, in a province  
 which had now been many months the seat of war, and which  
 never even in peace produced half its own consumption of corn.  
 It had also to store the places of Rosas, Figueras, and Barce-  
 lona; for no attempt was made to bring provisions from France  
 by land. . . (the pass indeed between Bellegarde and Figueras was  
 so dangerous to the French, that they called it the Straits of  
 Gibraltar); and it was seldom that a vessel could escape the  
 vigilance of the British cruisers. Eleven victuallers intended for  
 Barcelona were lying in the port of Caldaques under convoy of  
 a cutter and a lugger, when Lord Cochrane landed his men,  
 drove the French from the town, took their batteries, and cap-  
 tured the whole. St. Cyr, however humane by nature, however  
 honourable by principle, was engaged in a service with which  
 humanity and honour were incompatible: he could support his  
 army by no other means than by plundering the inhabitants, and  
 the Catalans were not a people who would endure patiently  
 to be plundered. The difficulty was increased by the Moorish  
 custom still retained in that part of Spain of preserving corn, not  
 in barns or granaries, but in mattamores. In the towns these  
 subterranean magazines were emptied before the French could  
 enter; in the country they were so easily concealed, that, after

long and wearying search, it was a rare fortune to discover one. And the Miquelets and Somatenes were so constantly on the alert, that frequently when the marauders had seized their booty they were deprived of it. In this sort of warfare their loss was generally greater than that of the natives, who on such occasions had them at vantage. How considerable it must have been may be in some degree estimated from the fact, that in the course of seven weeks St. Cyr's foraging parties fired away not less than two million cartridges.

CHAP.  
XVIII.

1809.

January.

St. Cyr,  
92—99.

But plainly as it would have been the policy of the Spaniards to confine themselves to the slow and sure method of weeding out their invaders, till they could bring their regular troops into a fit state for taking the field, the pressing danger of Zaragoza called for immediate efforts. Francisco Palafox, looking every where for that aid which was nowhere to be found, had gone to Cuenca, and proposing that Infantado should march the central army to his brother's relief, had been present at a council where the proposal was discussed, and had seen with his own eyes how utterly incapable that army was of engaging in such an attempt, or even of attempting such a march. Orders to undertake something for its relief had been dispatched from the Central Junta to the provinces of Valencia and Catalonia. The Valencians were offended with Palafox for having detained General St. Marc with a division of their army; no man contributed more by his military talents to the defence of the city than that general, but he and his men were now cooped up to die of pestilence, when they might have effectually served the Zaragozans in the field. Want of will therefore made the Valencians take only half measures, and these so tardily as to be of no avail. Neither did Reding manifest the feeling which he ought to have partaken upon this subject, partly because the sense of his own difficulties possessed him, and partly perhaps from a personal dislike to the Palafox family. One

Orders to  
attempt the  
relief of Za-  
ragoza.

Infantado,  
Manifesto,  
87.

CHAP.  
XVIII.

1809.

*January.**Tardiness  
in obeying  
them.**Defeat of  
the pea-  
santry.**Alcaniz oc-  
cupied by  
the French.**Rogniat,  
17.**Movement  
in Navarre  
and Aragon*

natural consequence of thus delaying succour in quarters where there was most ability was to produce premature and rash attempts on the part of those who felt more generously. Palafox had written to say, that as long as provisions lasted, and there were ruins to shelter them, Zaragoza would not surrender. The place chosen for a depot was Mequinenza, and there, chiefly by the exertions of General Doyle, stores in considerable quantity were collected; but impatient of waiting, when time was so precious, till a well-concerted attempt to introduce supplies could be made, a Colonel who had several thousand peasants under his command moved to Belchite, within five leagues of Zaragoza, with a convoy under protection of this force, which was as unmanageable in a body, as it might have been efficient in its proper mode of warfare. The enemy, at the beginning of the siege, had stationed General Vathier at Fuentes with 600 cavalry and 1200 foot to command the country and collect provisions. This movement of the peasants was too near him to be concealed; he fell upon them, routed them with some slaughter, and got possession of all their stores. The pursuit led him as far as Ixar, and from thence he proceeded against Alcaniz. The peasantry whom Francisco Palafox had collected there drew up on the heights before the town, and withstood the attack with more firmness than might have been expected from such a force; but they were not equal to contend with disciplined troops; and Vathier occupied the towns of Alcaniz and Cuspe as long as the siege endured.

These misfortunes did not discourage the Spaniards, and the movements of the inhabitants both in Navarre and Aragon were formidable enough to excite some uneasiness in the besiegers. While the Navarrese bands interrupted their communication with Pamplona, the mountaineers of Soria threatened Tudela, and those of the Sierra de Muela endangered their hospitals and

establishments at Alagon. Lazan, meantime, with his brother Francisco, occupied the country from Villa Franca de Ebro to Licineña and Zuera, and sending detachments as far as Capavrosa to intercept the enemy's convoys, straitened Gazan's division in their camp. More than once the French were without meat, and upon half rations of bread; and they might have been foiled a second time before Zaragoza, more shamefully than the first, if the heroism of the inhabitants had been in any degree seconded from without, and if the want of capacity in the Spanish leaders had not been as glaring as the want of order in the field and of reason in their councils. The besiegers had felt some ill effects from the latter cause; but an end was put to jarring pretensions and contrariant views when Marshal Lasnes arrived on the 22d of January to take the command. He had previously ordered Mortier to leave Calatayud, and act with Suchet's division on the left of the Ebro; having dispersed the force which Francisco Palafox had collected there, they took possession of Zuera, and scouring the country as far as Pina, Sarineña, and Huesca, secured the besiegers from interruption on that side. The French Marshal hoped that this might abate the spirit of the Zaragozans as much as it had cheered them when they saw the force of their countrymen upon the surrounding heights; and he addressed a letter to Palafox, telling him that the force upon which he had relied for relief had been destroyed, that the English had fled to Coruña and embarked there, leaving 7000 prisoners, and that Romana had escaped with them, his army with their officers having yielded to the Emperor: that Infantado had been defeated at Ucles with the loss of 18,000 men; and that if after this true statement he persisted in withstanding a force more than sufficient for effecting its purpose, the destruction of the city and of its inhabitants must rest upon his head. Palafox replied, that M. Lasnes would cover himself with glory if he were

CHAP.  
XVIII.  
1809.  
January.

*M. Lasnes  
takes the  
command.*

*Rogniat,  
18, 20.*

*He summons Palafox to surrender.  
Jan. 25.*

*Cavallero,  
107.  
Seb. Hernandez, 14,  
15.*

CHAP. XVIII. to win the city by force of manly courage with the sword, and not by bombarding it; but that the Zaragozans knew their duty, and would not surrender.

January.

*The French enter the city, but with great loss.*

Jan. 26.

All the outworks had now been taken except the Castle of the Inquisition, which had never been seriously attacked, because its possession was of no importance to the enemy. The batteries against the city itself were completed, and on the day after the summons fifty pieces opened their fire upon the wall, and on the morrow three practicable breaches were made. One was by an oil-mill, a building standing alone, without the walls, and close to them; the enemy had established themselves in it during the night. The second was to the left of this, immediately opposite St. Joseph's; the third in the monastery of S. Engracia. All these were attacked. A column issuing from the oil-mill presently reached the first, and the explosion of two fougades at the foot of the breach scarcely appeared to impede their progress. But they found an inner intrenchment, well constructed and mounted with two guns; and when they attempted to carry this the bell of the Torre Nueva rang, the inhabitants manned the adjacent houses, and a fire was opened from roofs and windows which it was neither possible to return nor to withstand. Profiting, however, by the cover which the exploded fougades afforded them, they succeeded in lodging themselves upon the breach. On the left they were more successful; after gaining the ramparts, they made their way into the opposite house, which the artillery had breached, and into the two adjoining ones; their progress was then stopped, but they established themselves within the walls, and repaired and lengthened for their own use a double caponier, by which the besieged used to communicate with S. Joseph's. The attack upon the third breach was more formidable. After a severe struggle the enemy entered the convent of S. Engracia, obtained possession of its



ruins and of the nunnery of S. Joseph, which stood near, and of which little more than the mere shell was remaining. Piercing the walls of this, they enfiladed the curtain from S. Engracia to the bridge of the Huerba, and taking the *tête-de-pont* in reverse, became masters of the bridge, over which fresh troops joined them to follow up their success. They pushed on to the Capuchin convent of La Trinidad, which made part of the line; forty artillerymen, who were stationed there without support, as a place not in danger of attack, were cut to pieces at their guns, and the convent was taken. It was recovered by the Spaniards; but two battalions came to support the assailants, who took it a second time, and maintained their conquest, though at a dear price. The greater part of the French who occupied the curtain fell under the fire from the houses. They suffered also considerably in a vain attempt to possess themselves of a single house which defended an imperfect breach to the right of all their other attacks. Their whole loss was stated by themselves at 600, that of the besiegers at eight. The Spaniards, with better reason, believed that a much greater proportion of the enemy had fallen; and the French had in fact received so severe a lesson, that they determined not to risk any more direct attacks, but proceed always as much as possible under cover: there was danger otherwise that the troops would become impatient of so fatal a service, and even that all their efforts might be unavailing.

As it was now no longer necessary to carry on the false attack upon the Alfalaria, the engineers were called from thence to fortify the Trinidad convent, and establish a communication with it and with a house by the bridge; commanding in this manner the whole intermediate space. During the night the Spaniards endeavoured to recover the ruins of S. Engracia and the adjoining houses, but without success. They attempted

CHAP.  
XVIII.

1809.

January.

*Rogniat, 22,  
26.  
Cavallero,  
102—105.*

*The enemy  
establish  
themselves  
in the Tri-  
nidad con-  
vent.*