

of Spain as well as Portugal being considered certain. Ney, meantime, was to occupy Galicia, and communicate with the army of Portugal. Leaving him in command of this province, which was said to be subjugated, Soult removed his head-quarters to Santiago, and ordered General Lahoussaye from Mellid to march upon Ribadavia and Salvatierra, obtain intelligence of Romana's movements, and ascertain what means might be found there for crossing the Minho. General Franceschi at the same time was dispatched with his light cavalry to take possession of Tuy, and examine whether the passage might not best be effected near that city; and General Merle with a division of infantry was sent from Betanzos to Pontevedra to support them. Franceschi fell in with a body of Spaniards at Redondela, and took from them four guns. Profiting by the panic which the fugitives were likely to impart, he sent a detachment to summon Vigo, and the governor was weak or treacherous enough to surrender a fortified and well-provided town at the first summons of a division of cavalry. Tuy also, which in former wars had been a place of great importance, the strongest upon that frontier, was entered without resistance. Somewhere below this city it was resolved to attempt the passage, and there accordingly the main body of the army was collected.

Two rivers, the Lama and Tamboga, which rise in the north-east part of Galicia, unite and form the Minho; but the Sil, which joins it with an equal body of waters, is believed to have been the Minius of the ancients. It is the boundary between Spain and Portugal along a considerable line; upon that line it is never fordable, except at one place above Melgaço, and there only after an unusual continuance of dry weather. There is no bridge over it below the city of Orense, and the Portuguese had been sufficiently aware of their danger to remove all the boats to their own side of the river. Just at its mouth it is joined

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

February.

Vigo and Tuy occupied by the French.

Preparations for crossing the Minho below Tuy.

CHAP. from the Portugueze side by the river Coura ; each stream has
 XIX. formed a bar, and upon an island between these bars the Por-
 1809. tugueze had a fortress and a small Capuchine convent. On the
 February. Spanish side, immediately at the mouth of the river, Mount St.
 Feb. 10. Thecla rises, a place of great local celebrity, because of an
 annual pilgrimage, and known to sailors as a sea-mark. On the
 other side of this mountain is the little port and town of S. Maria
 de la Guardia, and thither Soult went with the captain of a
 French frigate and some seamen who had been prisoners at Co-
 ruña, to reconnoitre and consult concerning the passage. Means
 of transport were found in the fishing-boats of Guardia ; but it
 would have been difficult to double the point in them when
 laden as they must have been for that service, and they would
 have been perilously exposed to the fire of the island. He
 determined, therefore, to carry the boats overland a distance
 of about three miles to a lake or broad, from which the little
 river Tamuga issues, and enters the Minho above the village
 of Campos Ancos. There was great difficulty in removing
 them, and still more in conveying two pieces of artillery to the
 same place. Means, however, for transporting three hundred
 men at once were collected, and the troops appointed for this
 service were exercised in embarking and disembarking on the
 lake, where it could be done in safety. The attempt was to be
 made at high-water, and under favour of the night, though little
 danger was apprehended from the old frontier fortress of Ca-
 minha, in the face of which they were to cross ; for the works,
 originally ill planned and ill situated, had long been neglected,
 and the French held in equal contempt the place and the people
 by whom it was garrisoned. However, in order to deceive
 them, the troops were withdrawn from the opposite shore, and a
 feint made of marching up the river. The flotilla descended
 Feb. 15. the Tamuga easily and in good order ; but when they came into

*Failure of
the attempt.*

the great stream the want of sailors was felt. The boats separated; those that were best manned reached the shore; but the Portugueze were upon the alert. General Bernardim Freire, who had been appointed to the command of Porto and of that province, had sent a detachment with two six-pounders to this point. They kept up a fire with good effect; the tide turned; the other boats unable to stem it, or approach the shore, where they could assist their comrades, found it necessary to return; some were sunk, and about forty men were made prisoners.

Four days had been consumed in preparations for this vain attempt. It was impossible to wait till the river should have fallen so as to render the passage practicable, for the troops could not be supplied where they were, and they were beginning to suffer from inaction. Soult therefore left General Lamartiniere to command at Tuy, with 350 men, besides 900 who were on the sick list. Some public money had been found in that city, and six-and-thirty field-pieces were left there, besides some guns and ammunition which had been brought from Vigo. It was thought a position of some importance at this time, and this force sufficient to maintain it. He then marched for Orense, making this long circuit to cross the river with less unwillingness because he had received intelligence from Lahoussaye that the peasantry were in a state of insurrection in consequence of Romana's proclamations.

Romana indeed had not been inactive during the short respite which had been allowed him. Had the French rightly appreciated his unconquerable spirit, and apprehended the effect which such a man was capable of producing upon a brave and generous peasantry, they would have deemed his single destruction of more importance to their cause than the capture of Ferrol and Coruña. By this time he had collected some 9000 men; to form an efficient army was in his circumstances impossible, ut-

CHAP.
XIX.
1809.
February.

*Soult
marches
by way of
Orense.*

*Operations
du M. Soult,
73, 80.*

*Romana
rouses the
Galicians.*

Feb. 13.

CHAP. terly destitute as he was of means ; but what was of more con-
 XIX. sequence, he had roused the country ; his presence was infinitely
 1809. important there, and his name and his example hardly less so in
 February. other parts of Spain, for in every part the people were encour-
 aged by a persuasion that their countrymen elsewhere were
 more fortunate than themselves. Every where except upon the
 spot it was believed by the Spaniards that Romana was at the
 head of a formidable army ; when his troops were so broken, a
 victorious enemy so close upon him, and his condition so hope-
 less in all human appearance, that he himself must have consid-
 ered his escape from captivity, and the death to which he would
 then have been condemned, as manifestly providential. The Ga-
 licians at Lisbon (in which city there were always some thousands
 of those industrious men) were at that time embodied for the
 purpose of marching to join him ; and the Spanish minister
 wrote to desire that he would send officers to discipline and take
 charge of them. The dispatch found him on the Portugueze
 frontier : he represented in reply that his own force consisted
 chiefly of new volunteers, so that none of his officers could be
 spared : he could only send some who belonged to the provincial
 regiments of Tuy and Compostella. But of men there was
 no want ; for even if they had been less willing to take arms
 for their country and their cause, mere desperation would have
 driven them to it. Had the French been better disposed to
 observe what for the last century at least had been the common
 humanities of war, it would not have been possible when they
 were to support themselves as they could by preying upon the
 countries which they invaded. Free licence in one thing led to
 it in all, and when resistance was provoked by the most into-
 lerable outrages, it was punished with fire and sword. The little
 towns of S. Miguel de Zequelinos and S. Christobal de Mouren-
 tan, with their adjacent hamlets, were burnt by the invaders, and

*Opinion of
 his strength*

*Villages
 burnt by the
 French.*

more than 2000 persons, who were thus reduced to ruin and deprived of shelter, fled into the Portugueze territory, hoping to find refuge there.

The Portugueze General, Francisco da Silveira, had taken the command upon that frontier; his force consisted of 2800 regular troops, 2500 militia, and only fifty horse. Romana had an interview with him at Chaves, while the enemy were preparing for their vain attempt to pass the Minho; and they had resolved upon attacking the French at Tuy, when they learnt that Soult was advancing up the river. They then took up a position for the defence of Chaves, the Spaniards upon the right bank of the Tamega from Monterrey to that fortress, Silveira from the bridge of Villaça to Villarelho. The Portugueze were elated by the failure of the French in their attempt to cross the Minho, which indeed had in some degree dispirited the invaders; and Romana, though fully aware of the inefficiency of his own force, had yet an entire reliance upon the national character and the spirit which had been raised. The secular clergy as well as the monks were zealously aiding him; the monks of S. Claudio, of S. Mamed, and of S. Maria de Melon, and the parochial priest of the latter place, distinguished themselves especially in this good work. His orders were, that all should take arms who were capable of using them, and that the remaining part of the population wherever the French came should abandon their houses, and carry away all provisions.

These orders were very generally obeyed. The small parties of the French were harassed or cut off wherever they appeared; and when Soult approached Ribadavia a brave resistance was made in the village of Franzelos and before the town. The peasantry were not dispersed till great carnage had been made among them; and the invaders upon entering the town found only about a dozen persons remaining there. Detachments

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

February.

*Intended
plan of co-
operation
between Ro-
mana and
Silveira.*

Feb. 24.

*Difference
between M.
Soult and
M. Ney.*

CHAP. were dispatched against the peasantry on all sides, and the
 XIX. greater part of the artillery was sent back to Tuy, as much
 1809. because of the opposition which was experienced, as owing to
 February. the state of the roads. At Orense part of the people remained,
 Operations and the magistrates * submitting of necessity, came out to meet
 de M. Soult, the French. Here Marshal Soult received dispatches from Ney ;
 92—99. the contents were kept secret, but it was reported that Ney
 advised him not to pursue his intention of entering Portugal.
 The report considerably affected the superior officers, and those
 especially who, having belonged to Junot's army, understood
 the horrible sort of war in which they were again to be en-
 gaged. The two Marshals were upon ill terms with each other,
 and a spirit of dissension was thus introduced into the army.

*Rout of Ro-
 mana's ar-
 my.*

After remaining more than a week at Orense, endeavouring
 by force to suppress the peasants, and by allurements to seduce
 the higher classes from their duty, Soult resumed his march for
 Portugal, by way of Monterrey and Chaves. In this line he
 expected to find a road practicable for artillery, and he thought
 Romana would be so effectually crushed, that he should meet
 with no enemy capable of molesting him in that quarter. He
 had sent a trumpet to that general's outposts, requesting permis-
 sion for an officer to pass with a letter to the Marquis. It was
 granted. The letter merely contained an offer of honours and
 employments in the Intruder's name, if Romana would acknow-
 ledge him as King, and bring over his troops. Romana having

* The veracious historian of Marshal Soult asserts that Romana had compelled the Bishop to withdraw, knowing how much the example of his submission would influence the Galicians; as if he thought that to make a man sacrifice any thing to a sense of patriotism and of duty compulsion was necessary! and as if he were utterly ignorant of the part which that excellent Prelate sustained throughout these troubles. See vol. i. p. 319, for the character of the man who is thus traduced.

glanced at the contents, bade the bearer return, and say that the only answer to be given to such proposals was from the mouth of the cannon: but the real object of the overture was, that the officer who had been selected for this service might reconnoitre the position; and this the Spaniards, unaccustomed as they were to military precautions, gave him full opportunity of doing. On the following day General Franceschi was ordered to attack their right, which was posted to the south-east of Monterrey, on the heights of Orsona. The rout was so complete, that the actual loss did not amount to more than some 300 slain, and as many prisoners: the French considered the dispersion of the army which ensued as its destruction, and believed that Romana had fixed upon so remote a point as Asturias for the rallying place. While Franceschi was thus employed on the right, Laborde attacked the vanguard of the Portugueze at Villaça, who retired* at night, after a good resistance, losing one of their two guns.

The French had left 200 sick and wounded at Ribadavia; they had removed them to Orense, where nearly 500 were added to the number, and now the whole were ordered to Monterrey, in so insecure a state did Soult consider the country which he was leaving. The old works at Monterrey, he thought, might

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

February.

*The French
remove their
sick to Mon-
terrey.*

* Marshal Soult's historian represents this affair as of great importance, because it removed the impression which their failure in crossing the Minho had made upon the army. What is more curious, he finds in it a justification for their invasion of Portugal! *Les Portugais avaient fait trois lieues sur les terres d'Espagne pour venir attaquer l'armée Française engagée avec les Espagnols, mouvement hostile concerté avec la Romana pour faciliter sa retraite, et qui justifiait l'entrée que nous allions faire en Portugal.*—P. 106. If any thing can be more detestable than the avowed and exultant profligacy of these men during their season of triumph, it is the manner in which they have afterwards attempted to gloze over actions which public opinion (and still more the event) has made them feel are too nefarious to be openly defended.

CHAP. be so repaired as to render that place tenable, and make it serve
 XIX. as a base for his line of operations. There and in the little
 1809. town of Verin, on the opposite side of the Tamega, which con-
 February. tained about 2000 inhabitants, scarcely twenty persons had re-
 mained; and the French began to doubt the saying of Buona-
 parte, that men with bayonets could want for nothing. The
 fugitives, however, had left wine in Verin; and in order to pay
 some part of his establishment, Soult raised a few thousand
 pounds by a loan from the troops, . . part of the money which
 had been thrown away in Sir John Moore's retreat. General
 Merle was left to collect his division there, forming the reserve,
 and the rest of the army advanced down the Tamega, to enter
 Portugal, before any effectual preparations could be made for
 resisting them. Marshal Soult was so apprehensive lest the
 troops should suffer in health, that when they crossed the river
 by a ford little more than knee deep, he erected two temporary
 bridges there for the infantry.

*Operations
 de M. Soult,
 107—111,
 115.*

Chaves.

Chaves is the frontier town of Portugal on that side, as Mon-
 terrey is that of Spain; both are on the Tamega, a river which,
 rising in the Sierra de S. Mamed, and watering the fertile vales
 of Monterrey and Oimbra, enters Portugal at Chaves, turns again
 into Galicia among the mountains of Barroso, and re-entering
Tras os Montes, joins the Douro at *S. Miguel de Entre ambos os
 Rios* with a stronger and larger volume of waters than is borne
 to it by any other of its tributary streams. Chaves is known to
 have been the *Aquæ Flaviæ* of the Romans, so named because of
 its hot springs, and in honour of its founder Vespasian. The
 baths, when flattery in course of nature was out of date, sup-
 planted the memory of the Emperor; and the place then ob-
 tained the more appropriate name of *Aquæ Calidæ*, which in
 process of time was abbreviated and corrupted into Chaves.
 The springs are said to be more efficacious than any other in

Portugal; but the buildings which formerly served to accommodate invalids who came to seek relief from these waters were demolished by the Conde de Mesquitella, toward the close of the seventeenth century, in order that the guns might command the approach on that side without impediment: he has been censured for this as having committed a certain mischief for the sake of a frivolous precaution. At that time Chaves was considered a place of importance. The walls were now in many places fallen to decay, and though the citadel was in better repair, both it and the town were commanded from several points, and at short distances.

CHAP.
XIX.
1809.
March.

Whatever hopes Silveira might have entertained of opposing the French with the assistance of Romana's army, he was fully sensible after the rout of the Spaniards that he could neither stand his ground in the vale, nor defend the dilapidated works of the town with men of whom the greater number were half armed and wholly undisciplined. On the day therefore when the enemy entered Monterrey he gave orders for evacuating Chaves, and withdrew to the heights of Outeiro Joam, and S. Pedro de Agostem. Small as the regular force was which he commanded, Portugal, he well knew, could ill afford to lose it; opportunity for seriously annoying the invaders was likely to occur, but to expose his men now would be vainly and wantonly to sacrifice them. Thus he reasoned; but the spirit of insubordination was abroad. The peasantry, in ignorant but honest zeal, insisted upon defending the place, and they were supported by certain of his officers, who were actuated some by mere presumption, others by the intention of ingratiating themselves with the enemy, whom they thus should serve. To Chaves therefore these persons returned, and the vanguard which, having been stationed at Villarelho to observe the French, he had ordered to follow him, joined with this party, and prepared to defend the

Silveira retires from Chaves.

March 7.

Some mutinous officers resolve to defend it.

Diario Oficial. Correo Brasileiro, t. iii. p. 110
— 141.

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

March.

*Surrender
of Chaves.*

March 10.

town, in contempt of his authority. If Silveira's character had been any ways doubtful, or if he had been less esteemed and less beloved by the soldiers, he must at this time have fallen a sacrifice to popular suspicion.

Part of the enemy's advanced guard came in sight of Chaves the next day. On the following Silveira went into the town, and endeavoured, but in vain, to convince the refractory officers that it was not possible to oppose any effectual resistance. Again on the morrow he entered it, summoned all the superior officers to a council of war, and protested against the resolution which had been taken, explaining at the same time the grounds of his opinion. All the officers agreed with him except those who by aid of the populace had taken upon themselves the command. By this time the place was invested on three sides, and Soult summoned the general to surrender. Silveira returned a verbal answer, that he had nothing to do with the defence of Chaves, but only with the army which he commanded; he then retired to the Campo de S. Barbara. A letter from Marshal Soult followed him, requiring him to retain the army and govern the province in the Emperor Napoleon's name, and spare the effusion of blood which must otherwise follow. Silveira replied by word of mouth, that one who had the honour to command Portugueze could give ear to no such proposals; and that he would never listen to any except that of Marshal Soult's surrender. Meantime a fire was kept up from the place with as little effect as judgement, and the French suffered some loss from the peasantry and from small parties who were on the alert to seize every occasion. A second summons was now sent in; by this time the ardour of the refractory troops had begun to cool, and the self-elected commandant dispatched a messenger to Silveira, requesting orders. Silveira's reply was, that he who had taken upon himself to defend Chaves contrary to his orders