

must act for himself. He desired, however, that the officers who were in the place might be directed to bring off the troops during the night, saying that he would cover their retreat by bringing down a greater force upon Outeiro Joam. The movement was made on his part; but he looked in vain for any attempt on the part of the garrison, and on the following morning they surrendered prisoners of war.

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

March.

Diario Off.
Cor. Braz.
112.

It was now seen what motives had influenced the promoters of this mock defence, for all the staff-officers offered their services to the Emperor Napoleon; the troops of the line followed their example, but with a very different intention, and took the first opportunity to escape. Marshal Soult could spare no force for marching off his prisoners, nor for securing them at Chaves; he therefore required an oath from the militia and peasants that they would never again bear arms against the French, and dismissed them. This conduct excited murmurs among those who would rather, after the example of their Emperor, have made sure work. If Junot had commanded the army, they said, the place would have been stormed as soon as they appeared before it. Marshal Soult was not a jot more scrupulous than his predecessor; but at this time the treasonable disposition which had been manifested by a few officers led him to suppose that it might be more easy to conciliate the Portugueze than he had found it to coerce their neighbours, and under this persuasion he established his hospital at Chaves; accordingly the sick and wounded were once more removed, and about 1400 were left there with a small force for their protection under the *chef de bataillon* Messenger. The Marshal then announced his appointment as Governor-general of Portugal, . . . the rank which Junot (whom the Portugueze called the Duke *in partibus*) had held, and proceeded on his march.

The French
establish
their hospi-
tal there.

Operations
de M. Soult,
118-124.

His effective force consisted at this time of 21,000 men, the

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

March.

*Prepara-
tions for
defence at
Porto.*

country through which he had to pass is one of the most defensible in Europe, nor would it be possible any where to find a peasantry better disposed to defend their hearths and altars, nor better able, had there been common prudence to direct their willing strength. But the military profession had fallen in Portugal to the lowest point of degradation; and governments which weaken every thing for the miserable purpose of rendering a corrupt and anile despotism secure, find themselves powerless and helpless at the first approach of danger. The Portuguese in these provinces were aware that invasion would be attempted, though they knew not on what side; and the effect was to produce tumults among the people, insubordination in the soldiers, apprehension, vacillation, and confusion among the chief officers and rulers, and a state of suspicious excitement which predisposed the public mind equally for impulses of furious cruelty or of unreasonable panic. The Bishop of Porto applied to the Regency for succours; but Lisbon at that time was itself as likely to be attacked, nor indeed had the government any troops upon whom the slightest confidence could be placed. How capable the Portuguese were of becoming good soldiers, though well understood by those who knew the people, and indeed not to be doubted by any who had any knowledge of human nature, had not yet been tried: with excellent qualities and the best disposition they were perfectly inefficient now. The Bishop had been offended with Sir Robert Wilson for having passed into Spain with a body of Portuguese troops. The consequences of Sir Robert's movement to Ciudad Rodrigo had been more important than he himself could have anticipated, and yet in leaving Porto he lost one of the fairest occasions that was ever presented to an active and enterprising spirit. Acting as he did there with the full concurrence of the Bishop, and possessing his confidence, there was time to have disciplined a force which might have im-

peded the passage of Soult's army through the strong defiles it had to pass, and have presented a resistance at Porto as successful as that of Acre, and more fatal to the enemy. The means of defence were in abundance, order and intelligence for directing them alone were wanting. The population of the city may be estimated at 80,000, and there were 2000 troops of the line there, 3000 militia, and 15,000 *ordenanças*; the latter half armed, and the greater part without discipline. A line of batteries was erected round the city and suburbs, extending from the Castle of Queijo on the coast to the village of Freixo on the Douro; the line was about three miles in extent, and between two and three hundred pieces of artillery were mounted there in thirty-five batteries. Had it been well constructed, a large force would have been necessary to defend it: but there had been as little skill in the formation as in the plan; the batteries were without parapets, and the houses and trees which might afford cover to an enemy were not taken down.

Soult meantime, as soon as he had entered Chaves, thought to cut off Silveira; but that general frustrated his intent by retiring first to the mountains of Oura and Reigaz, and then to Villa Pouca, where he took a position with the determination of defending it. The French, however, did not think this little force of sufficient consequence to delay their march; and sending out parties in different directions, in the hope that the report of their entrance spreading on all sides, might reach the Generals who were to co-operate with them, but with whom they had no means of communicating, they proceeded by the Braga road. The resistance which they found evinced the brave spirit of the people, and the incapacity of those who commanded them. The villages were abandoned, stragglers were cut off, they were fired upon by the peasantry from the heights and the cover of crags or trees; any military attempt to impede them was conducted

CHAP.
XIX.
1809.
March.

*Advance of
the French
from
Chaves.*

March 13.

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

March.*Operations
de M. Soult,
128.**Tumults at
Braga.**Dialogo en-
tre Braga e
o Porto,
19 - 21.**March 15.*

with so little skill or order, that it served only to confirm their contempt for the nation upon whom they had brought and were about to bring such unutterable miseries; but sometimes a handful of Portugueze stood their ground with a spirit like that of their ancestors; and sometimes an individual would rush upon certain death, so he could make sure of one Frenchman, knowing that if his countrymen would act upon the same principle of life for life, the kingdom would soon be delivered from its unprovoked invaders.

Bernardim Freire, not knowing whether the enemy would take the way by Braga or by Villa-real, had given orders to secure the positions of Ponte de Cavez and Salto on the latter road, Ruivaens and Salamonde on the other: his head-quarters were at Braga, a city which had long been in a state of strange confusion. The clergy with whimsical indecorum had embodied themselves to serve as a guard of honour for the Primate till their services should be needed for the defence of the place; and part of the exercise of this ecclesiastical corps was with one hand to take off the hat at the Ave Maria bell, and present arms with the other. Men lose their proper influence when they go out of their proper sphere; and the extraordinary circumstances which justified the clergy in taking arms, and even increased their authority while they acted individually either in the ranks or in command, did not save them from ridicule when they thus exposed themselves to it as a body. At any time this would have been an evil; it was especially so when the bonds of authority had been loosened, and envy, cupidity, and hatred were under no restraint. General Freire had neither the talents nor the character to command respect; and on his return from inspecting the positions at Ruivaens and Salamonde he had been insulted and menaced by the rabble at S. Gens. On the following day, having received intelligence that the enemy were on the

way to Ruivaens, he went to the heights of Carvalho d'Este, with the intention of occupying a strong position there, not indeed in any expectation of defeating the enemy, for having just military knowledge enough to see all the difficulties of his situation, he knew himself and the men under his command too well to entertain any hope; but time he thought might be gained for removing the stores from Braga, and whatever else could be saved. It was soon understood that the pass of Ruivaens had been forced, and this intelligence was presently followed by the fearful tidings that the French had won the defiles of Salamonde also. His only thought now was of retiring upon Porto; and having dispatched in the night an order written in pencil to his adjutant-general for removing the military chest from Braga, and advising Parreiras, who commanded at Porto, of the enemy's approach, he entered the city in the morning, and found it in a state of complete anarchy. His dispatches had been seized and opened by the mob, and some of his messengers murdered. Conceiving that his only course now was to provide for the defence of Porto, he gave orders accordingly. The populace were of a different opinion; they thought the position at Carvalho d'Este ought to be defended, and considered it either an act of cowardice or of treason to let the French advance without resistance. Freire, however, left the city without receiving any injury, and took the high road to Porto. At the village of Carapoa the peasants detained him as a traitor; he was rescued by the timely arrival of a commandant of brigade, and proceeded with a guard of twenty men for his protection; but falling in presently with a party of *ordenanças*, they seized him, and insisted upon taking him back to Braga.

Meantime the peasantry from all sides had flocked to that city, some retreating before the French, some hastening to meet them; some armed with pikes, those who had fowling-pieces

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.

March.

March 17.

Sentença sobre as Atrocidades, &c. Corr. Braz. iv. 521—531.

General Freire murdered.

CHAP.

XIX.

1809.

March.

looking for ammunition, all demanding to be embodied and led out against the enemy. At this juncture Baron d'Eben arrived on his retreat, in obedience to the General's instructions. This Hanoverian nobleman, who was then a major in the British service, and equerry to the Prince of Wales, commanded the second battalion of the Lusitanian legion, and after Sir Robert Wilson's departure for the frontier had continued to train his men with a diligence and success which won the confidence of the people. The populace crowded round him, seized the reins of his horse, exclaimed that they were determined to defend the city, reviled the General for not leading them against the invaders, and insisted upon his taking the command. Baron d'Eben promised to assist their patriotic exertions in the best manner he could, but said it was necessary that he should first speak with the General. By thus complying with their wishes he hoped to obtain an ascendancy which might enable him to prevent excesses; and for the moment he seemed to have succeeded, for they allowed him to leave the city for that purpose with an escort of an hundred *ordenanças*. They had not proceeded far before they met Freire on foot between two ruffians, who held him by the arms, and followed by a ferocious mob, who threatened to fire upon D'Eben when he attempted to interfere. Yielding to a rabble whom he was unable to oppose, he turned his horse toward Braga; the rabble then cheered him, and when he reached the house where his quarters were, thither the unfortunate General was brought. Freire called upon him for protection; but when the Baron endeavoured to lead him into the house, one of the infuriated multitude thrust at the General with a sword, and wounded him slightly under D'Eben's arm. He got, however, within the door, and D'Eben hoping to save him by employing the people, went out and ordered the drum to beat, and the *ordenanças* to form in line. The mob continued to fire upon the

house where Freire was sheltered ; and D'Eben then, as the only means of saving him, proposed that he should be put in prison. This was done : and seeing him as he thought safe there, he yielded to the clamours of the people, who required to be led against the enemy. Accordingly he formed them in such order as he could, and set out. Presently a firing was heard in the city, and he was informed that the rabble had dragged out the General from the prison, and murdered him with circumstances of atrocious cruelty. Men, like wild beasts, when once they have tasted blood, acquire an appetite for it. The cry of treason, while it served as a pretext for old enmities and private designs, deceived the ignorant and inflamed the furious ; and several persons of rank, as well as many of Freire's officers, were butchered in the city and in the neighbouring villages.

The command was now a second time forced upon Baron d'Eben by acclamation, and to him the papers of the murdered General were brought. He sealed them up, dispatched them to Porto, and prepared as well as he could to put his tumultuary force in order. The bells from all the churches were ringing the alarm, and the *ordenanças* were coming in at the call : no preparation had been made for supplying them with food when they were ordered to their stations, nor were there any cartridges which would fit their pieces. A single mould was at length found of the just size, lead was taken from the churches, and bullets were made during the night as fast as this slow process would allow. Meanwhile the French vanguard under Generals Franceschi and Laborde, with the brigade of General Foy, arrived before the position of Carvalho, which a part of this tumultuary force had occupied, about five miles in front of Braga. During three days frequent attacks were made, and the Portuguese kept their ground. By this time the other divisions of the French had come up, and D'Eben had collected about 23,000

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.
March.

The Portuguese routed before Braga.

March 20.

CHAP. men; 2000 consisted of regular troops, the legion and the
 XIX. Braga militia; of the remainder only 5000 were armed with fire-
 1809. arms, and most of these had only three rounds of ammunition.
March. Such a multitude was little able to withstand the well-concerted
 and well-sustained attack of a disciplined force nearly equal in
 numbers. They were presently routed, and the French having
 found one of their fellow-soldiers horribly mutilated by some
 ferocious persons into whose hands he had fallen, showed little
 mercy in the pursuit. D'Eben and some of his officers at-
 tempted in vain to rally the fugitives, that they might defend
 the city; the answer to all his exhortations was, that there was
 no ammunition. The last act of the rabble was to murder those
 remaining objects of their suspicion whom D'Eben had hoped
 to save by putting them in prison.

*Operations
 de M. Soult,
 142.*

*The French
 enter Braga*

The French might impose upon the world by representing
 the dispersion of this tumultuous assemblage as a splendid vic-
 tory; but they could not deceive themselves concerning the
 temper of the nation, when upon entering the city they found it
 deserted by all its inhabitants, and stripped of every thing which
 could be carried away. If their light vanity could be elated
 with the vaunt that in the course of eleven days they had won
 many battles, taken two towns, and forced the passage of a chain
 of mountains, there was enough to abate their pleasure, if not
 their pride, in the fact that empty houses were all that they had
 gained; that they were masters of no more country than their
 troops could cover, and only while they covered it; and in the
 ominous apprehension excited by knowing how deeply and how
 deservedly they were hated by the people whom they had invaded.
 They consoled themselves with the thought that the rich mer-
 chants of Porto would not abandon their property as the people
 of Braga had done their dwellings; and Marshal Soult was not
 sparing of professions, that it was with regret he had been com-

pelled to employ force, when his only object in entering Portugal was to deliver that fine country from the ruinous yoke of the English, the eternal enemies of her prosperity. Some of the inhabitants were induced to return, and one was found timid or traitorous enough to take upon himself the office of Corregidor by Marshal Soult's appointment. The most important business which this wretched instrument of the enemy was called upon to perform was to provide them with food; for which purpose he was instructed to assure his countrymen that if they did not bring in provisions, the French would take them; that in that case the officers could not control the men; it would therefore be for their own interest to act as they were required to do, and for all which they supplied they should receive receipts, payable in a manner afterwards to be explained.

After resting his army three days, and leaving 700 sick and wounded in the hospitals, Soult proceeded on his march. One division, which found the bridge over the Ave at Barca da Trofa broken down, and the ford guarded too well to be passed without loss and difficulty, succeeded in winning and repairing the Ponte de S. Justo over the same river, higher up. The Ponte de Ave also was forced by Colonel Lallemand in a second attempt; and the officers who defended it were murdered by their men, who, feeling in themselves no want of courage or of will, imputed every reverse to treachery in their leaders. Without farther opposition the enemy advanced upon Porto, and the Marshal sent in a summons to the Bishop, the magistrates, and the General, in the usual French style, protesting that the French came not as enemies to the Portugueze, but only to drive away the English; and that the rulers of the city would be responsible before God and man for the blood that would be shed, and the horrors which must ensue, if they attempted to oppose an army accustomed to victory. It was not without danger that the summons could be

CHAP.
XIX.

1809.
March.

Operations,
§c. 146—8.

They appear before
Porto.
March 24.

March 28.

CHAP. delivered; and General Foy, who either being deceived by the
 XIX. gestures of a party of soldiers, or mistaking them, advanced to
 1809. receive their submission, was surrounded and carried into the
 March. city. A cry was set up that they had taken Loison; and Foy
 would have been torn to pieces, in vengeance for Loison's crimes,
 if he had not possessed presence of mind enough to lift up both
 hands, and thus prove to the people that he was not their old
 one-armed enemy.

Operations,
 &c. 159—
 168.

Oliveira
 murdered.

Vol. i. p.
 447.

The persons in authority had sufficient influence to save his life, and put him in confinement for security; but they were unable to protect Luiz de Oliveira, who having been deservedly thrown into prison in June, had been left there as if forgotten, with that iniquitous neglect of justice which had long been usual in Portugal. He was murdered and dragged through the streets by the rabble; and a few other victims perished in this last explosion of popular fury. The Bishop, who appears to have been at that time in the battery of S. Francisco encouraging the troops, saw now what had been represented to him vainly, though in time, that the works were too extensive, as well as too weak. He had been advised to strengthen them by throwing up works *en flèche*, to place 1500 of the best troops in their rear, as a reserve for supporting the point which should be attacked, and to throw up a second line close under the suburb, and have the houses loop-holed, in preparation for that sort of defence which the inhabitants were in a temper to have maintained, had there been spirits to have directed them, as at Zaragoza. None of these things had been done; and the Bishop, sensible when too late of the errors which had been committed, and the value of the time which had been lost, and perceiving also too many proofs of that confusion which insubordination always produces, crossed to the left bank of the Douro during the night, leaving the ill-planned and ill-constructed works to be defended by an inade-

The bishop
 leaves the
 city.