

in Frenchmen. The idlers were contented with a tub, and if the tub were large enough, three or four would stow themselves in it.

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1809.

May.

*Cruelties
exercised by
the French.*

The utmost efforts of the French were ineffectual against the spirit which had now been raised in Galicia. It was in vain that detachments were sent wherever the Spaniards appeared in a body: accustomed as the invaders were to the work of destruction, they were baffled by a people who dispersed before a superior force could reach them, and assembled again as easily as they had separated. The task of burning villages, erecting gibbets, and executing, as if in justice, such Spaniards as fell into his hands, was assigned to Loison, who discharged it to the utmost of his power with characteristic remorselessness. But it is not upon Loison, however willing and apt an agent of such wickedness, and however much of the guilt he may have made his own, that the infamy of these measures must be charged; it was the system of the French government, and the French Marshals had consented to act upon it; and that they were as ready to have acted upon it toward the British army, if fortune had enabled them, as toward those whom they called the Spanish insurgents, was evinced by their putting to death a handful of stragglers near Talavera, and by the manner in which the bulletins announced an act as disgraceful to the army which permitted it, as it was repugnant to all the laws and usages of war.

*See vol. i.
p. 745.*

While Soult was thus employed in the interior of the province, laying it waste with fire and sword, always in pursuit, but always baffled, and harassed always by a people whom his cruelty served only to exasperate, Ney proceeded to execute his part of their concerted operations, with a force of 8000 foot and 2500 horse. Upon his approach the Conde de Noroña retreated from Pontevedra to the Bridge of S. Payo, where, immediately after the recovery of Vigo, Morillo had broken down two of the arches,

*Defeat of
the French
at the bridge
of S. Payo.*

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and thrown up works for defending the passage. In this position, which had thus in good time been strengthened, Noroña resolved to make a stand for covering Vigo, from whence the Spaniards now received their stores. Boats were procured from Vigo and Redondela to form a bridge for the passage of the troops; enough could not be found to construct one in the usual form, and it was necessary to moor them broadside to the stream, fasten them together head and stern, and then lay planks along, torn from the neighbouring houses. The narrowness of this bridge considerably lengthened the time employed in passing, nevertheless the passage was effected before the enemy appeared. The troops were formed on the southern bank; they were now increased to between 6000 and 7000 men, besides 3000 who were without fire-arms; they had 120 horse, and nine field-pieces, and a battery of two eighteen-pounders planted on a height above the bridge. Captain M'Kinley, who was still in the port of Vigo, was informed of this on the evening of the 6th of June. Very early the following morning he went up in his barge to S. Payo, and while he was conferring with Carrera, the French appeared on the opposite bank. The Galician troops had undergone great fatigue, having been constantly exposed to continued and heavy rain: nothing, however, could exceed their spirit; it required all the efforts of their officers to prevent them from pushing across and attacking an enemy whom they had such cause to hate. Ney posted his troops in the houses on the right bank and in a wood a little below, and kept up his attack the whole day. During the night he erected a battery; some of his men also laid ladders upon the first breach, and got upon the brink of the second; but when daylight appeared they were soon driven back.

Captain M'Kinley passing safely within gun-shot of the enemy's field-pieces, returned to Vigo as soon as the action

commenced : with the assistance of Colonel Carol, he provided for the security of that place, and the Spanish commodore sent up three gun-boats to assist in the defence. One of these Captain Wynter manned under charge of Lieutenant Jefferson. A Spanish schooner and a Portugueze one went also upon this service. At daybreak the French battery opened both upon the troops and the boats ; but the latter, taking advantage of the tide, got near, and destroyed the battery. When the tide fell, the enemy made two desperate attempts with horse and foot to cross above the bridge ; the Spaniards steadily resisted, and both times drove them back with great slaughter. Baffled here, a detachment went up the river, thinking to cross at the ford of Sotomayor ; Morillo was sent to oppose them, and after they had vainly persevered in their attempt for an hour and half, compelled them to retire. They made another attack under cover of a thick fog ; this also was as unsuccessful as the former, and Ney being thus defeated by a new-raised army of inferior numbers, nearly half of whom were unarmed, retreated during the night, leaving some of his wounded, and 600 dead.

Marshal Ney had acted upon the same infamous system of cruelty as his brother Marshals. The peasantry from the beginning repaid their inhumanities : and although it was long before the Spanish officers could resolve upon resorting to the dreadful principle of retaliation, they also were at length compelled to it. It was not to be supposed that they could see their countrymen murdered without using those means of prevention and punishment which were in their hands. At Lourizon thirty religioners and forty-nine of the principal inhabitants had been hung by the French, who then set the place on fire : in return for this barbarity 130 prisoners taken at the Bridge of S. Payo were put to death. Barrios, while he commanded, had repeatedly remonstrated with Ney upon the atrocious system of warfare which he

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The Spaniards retaliate upon the French.

CHAP. pursued; his representations were treated with contempt, and at
 XXII. length he executed the threats with which he had vainly endea-
 1809. voured to enforce them, and threw at one time 700 Frenchmen
 June. into the Minho.

*Marshal
 Soult re-
 treats from
 Galicia.*

These terrible examples were not lost upon the enemy: if they did not make them abate of their barbarities, they made them eager to get out of a province where the people were able and determined to take such vengeance as their invaders had provoked. Marshal Ney indeed would have endeavoured yet to make a stand, if Soult would have continued to co-operate with him; but even if there had been no * ill will between them, views of more extensive measures, and necessity also, would have induced that General to form a different determination. He had received neither succours of any kind, nor instructions, nor even intelligence from Madrid for five months, so well had the Spaniards and Portugueze cut off all communication. There was not a place in Galicia where he could rest and supply his troops, or leave his sick in security, except the two great ports; and there he well knew they would be shut up between the Galician force and the English ships. He therefore refused to concur in any further movements, and began his retreat from Val-de-orras and Viana by the Portillas de la Cauda and Requejo to the Puebla de Sanabria. Ney, finding he was thus left to his own resources, immediately prepared to evacuate Coruña and Ferrol. He destroyed the magazines and stores of every

*Ferrol and
 Coruña
 evacuated by
 the French.*

* The writer of Marshal Soult's campaigns loses no opportunity of displaying this temper. According to him (p. 290) Marshal Ney concealed the fact of his defeat at S. Payo, and assured Soult that he found the position of the enemy too strong to think of attempting it. He has so represented this as to conceal the fact himself, his book not giving the slightest intimation of an action that effected the deliverance of Galicia.

kind, and the defences on the land side, spiked the guns, and completely disarmed both the place and the people. Ferrol was evacuated by the last division of the enemy on the 21st, Coruña on the following day, and Ney retreated through Lugo, Villafranca, and Astorga. He had formed an encampment between Betanzos and Lugo; and this, before his final retreat was known, kept the persons whom he had established in authority in fear or hope of his return, so that no communication was suffered with the British ships, except by flag of truce. The batteries and lines on the sea-side having been left uninjured, Captain Hotham of the *Defiance*, impatient of this conduct, landed a party of seamen and marines, and dismounted all the guns which bore upon the anchorage. When Noroña arrived a few days afterwards, he expressed some displeasure at this; but the propriety of the measure was so evident when the circumstances which occasioned it were explained, that this feeling was only momentary. Captain Hotham having thus opened a communication with Coruña, sent Captain Parker to Ferrol, where the joy of the people, at seeing an English officer in their streets, was manifested by the loudest acclamations, and by every possible mark of attachment. The Castle of S. Felipe was still held by a traitor whom Ney had appointed to the command. He had under him a legion which the French had raised while they were in possession of the two towns, and over these men he retained his authority as long as the real state of affairs could be concealed. This traitor gave orders to fire upon any English ships or boats that might attempt to pass: Captain Hotham, upon this, stood over to Ferrol in the *Defiance*, and landed the marines of that ship and of the *Amazon*, with a party of armed seamen under Captain Parker, who proceeded to attack the castle. But though the men who garrisoned it had been weak enough to suffer themselves to be enrolled in the *Intruder's*

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Marshal
Soutt com-
plains of
some of his
officers.

service, they refused to obey their commander, now that it was in their power to deliver themselves, and joyfully welcomed the English, who entered preceded by the Spanish colours.

The retreat of the French was conducted in what was now their usual manner. They are described by Romana as leaving every where marks of their atrocities, whole villages consumed by fire, victims of both sexes and all ages butchered, and committing enormities too dreadful to be recounted. The system had in reality been so wicked, that even some of the French themselves revolted at the course of crimes into which they had been led; and Marshal Soutt, in a dispatch to the intrusive government, complained of what he called a moral debility in some of his generals. "In the kind of war which we carry on," he said, "and with the sort of enemy whom we have to contend with, it is of great importance to the success of our operations that the chiefs who are at the head of the troops should be not only impassible, but that they possess a force of mind which places them in all circumstances above events even the most vexatious." It was evident from this that there were officers who were shocked at the atrocities which they were called upon to order, and to witness, and to execute. The moral debility which was complained of meant a lingering of humanity, a return of honourable feeling, an emotion of conscience, a sense of the opprobrium that they were bringing upon their country, and of the guilt and infamy they were heaping upon themselves. For such a service officers were wanted who should be *impassible*, . . . not merely unmoved at any effects, however horrible, of the system in which they were engaged, but incapable of any feeling whereby they could possibly be moved.

He recom-
mends a
plan for se-
curing Ga-
licia.

The dispatch in which this memorable avowal was contained was intercepted by one of those guerilla parties which now began to show themselves in different parts of Spain. It was written

from Sanabria, at a time when Soult was not acquainted with Marshal Ney's intention to evacuate Galicia. The war in that province, he said, was become very murderous, and infinitely disagreeable, and its termination was far distant. The only means of bringing it to a good conclusion would be to fortify seven or eight important posts, each capable of containing a garrison of 500 or 600 men, an hospital, and provisions for four months; by this means the people might be kept in check, the principal passes closed, and points of support provided for the columns acting in the province, in whatever direction they moved, where they might receive assistance and deposit their sick. This, he said, was a very powerful consideration; for it was not to be concealed that the present circumstances had a great effect upon the minds of the soldiers, knowing as they did, that if they were wounded or seized with fever at a distance from a place of safety, they were liable to perish for want of assistance, or to be put to death by the peasantry. A million of French money would suffice to put Galicia in this state of defence, and no money could be employed to better purpose, especially as a smaller number of troops would then suffice to occupy it. Lugo should be fortified, three block-houses erected on the line of Villa-franca in the Bierzo, and the fortifications of Tuy, Monforte, Monterey, Viana, and the Puebla de Sanabria restored, which might easily be done. A few other posts might be added if needful.

Some of these measures, Marshal Soult said, he had persuaded Marshal Ney to undertake. But when that dispatch was written Ney was on his retreat, and so harassed by the Spaniards, that he did not feel himself safe till he had got beyond Astorga into the plain country. Soult on his part proceeded to Zamora, and Galicia was thus delivered from its invaders. That kingdom was left in a state of dreadful exhaustion, and the anarchy

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*June.**Romana
summoned
to take his
place in the
Central
Junta.*

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to which all things tended was thereby increased. Men who had done their part in driving out the enemy, having now no means of providing for themselves, roamed about in armed parties, and lived as freebooters, so that the condition of the helpless inhabitants was little better than when they were under the French yoke. Romana appointed military governors in every province, and was taking measures for making its resources available to the general cause, when the Junta superseded him in the command. The pretext was that they required his presence among them; for upon the demise of the Principe Pio he had been chosen to succeed him as one of the deputies for Valencia, his native province; but the real cause was the complaints which were made against him by Jovellanos and his colleagues, for his interference in Asturias. Romana regarded not their accusations, knowing that he had acted with the best intentions, and believing that he had done what was best for the country: but he said to his friends that the Junta had never taken so false a step as in removing him at that time.

Before he left Coruña he erected a * temporary monument, in

* What he saw erected was a wooden model of what was afterwards to be executed in marble, with this inscription:

A LA GLORIA
DEL
EXMO. SR. D. JUAN MOORE, GENL. DEL EXTO. INGLES,
Y A LA DE SUS VALIENTES COMPATRIOTAS
LA
ESPAÑA AGRADECIDA.

On the other side:

BATALLA DE CORUNA A 18 DE ENERO,
AÑO 1809.

Marshal Soult also ordered the following inscription to be engraved upon a rock near the spot where Sir John Moore fell:

the name of his country, to the memory of Sir John Moore and the brave men who had fallen with him. And he published a farewell address to the remnant of those faithful soldiers whom he had brought from the Baltic, and who had accompanied him through all his dangers and privations. "Neither the marches of the Carthaginians in former times," said he, "nor of the French in latter, can be compared with those incessant ones which you have made among the mountains of Castille, Galicia, and Asturias, during six months of nakedness, hunger, and misery. You have fought no boasted battles, but you have annihilated one of the tyrant's proudest armies; aiding the national spirit, keeping up its noble excitement, wearying the enemy's troops, destroying them in petty actions, and circumscribing their command to the ground upon which they stood. You have fulfilled the highest duties of the soldier; and I owe to you the reward, which all my labours, and cares, and thoughts as a general have aspired to. Your country was long ignorant of your best services; but the actions of Villafranca, Vigo, the fields of Lugo, Santiago, and San Payo, free you from all reproach for having avoided to engage in fatal battles, and will make you terrible to those enemies who have been conquered and driven out, wherever the superiority of their forces was not too great to be overcome. Brave Spaniards, I acknowledge this day the want of that composure which I have always felt at your head. I am no longer your General. The government calls me from you to take a place in the Supreme Central Junta. Nothing but its irresistible will should separate me from you, nor make me renounce the right I have to partake in your future welfare, under your new com-

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*He orders
a monument
to be erected
to Sir John
Moore.*

*His fare-
well to the
army.*

HIC CECIDIT JOHANNES MOORE, DUX EXERCITUS,
IN PUGNA JANUARIJ XVI. 1809,
CONTRA GALLOS A DUCE DALMATIÆ DUCTOS.

CHAP. mander. Take, soldiers, the last farewell of your General, and
 XXII. reckon always upon the gratitude and paternal love of your
 1809. compatriot and companion in arms."

*Address of
 the Central
 Junta to the
 Galicians.*

The Central Junta, upon the deliverance of Galicia, addressed one of their animated proclamations to the inhabitants. "People of Galicia, they said, upon seeing you fall into the power of the enemy without resistance, your naval ports and arsenals occupied by them, and so powerful and important a province subjected from sea to sea, indignation and grief made your country break out in cries of malediction and reproach, like a mother who complains to heaven and earth of the degradation of a daughter in whom alone she had confided. At that time reverses followed each other, as successes had done before. After the battles of Espinosa, and Burgos, and Tudela, came the passage of the Somosierra, the capture of Madrid, and the rout at Ucles, and then to afflict the heart of the country, the ruin of Zaragoza, the defeat in Catalonia, and at Medellin. In all these memorable events, though fortune failed, our reputation was not lost, and Spain, suffering as she did, retained her confidence. But Galicia . . . Galicia, entered without resistance, subdued without opposition, and bearing tranquilly the yoke of servitude, . . . Galicia deranged all calculations of prudence, and was destroying the country by destroying hope. Who then in that night of misfortunes would have looked to Galicia for the first day-spring of joy? More glorious in your rise, than you had seemed weak in your fall, magnanimous Galicians! despair itself made you feel the strength of which you had not before been conscious. The cry of independence and vengeance was heard in your highways, your villages, your towns; the conquerors in their turn began to fear they should be conquered, and retired into their strong places; there they were pursued, and assaulted, and taken. Vigo delivered itself up with its oppressors, and Galicia, sending