

ammunition, magazines, and military chests. 80 pieces of cannon they had landed, they had re-embarked no more than 12. 200,000 weight of powder, 16,000 muskets, and 2,000,000 of treasure (about £83,000) had fallen into the hands of the pursuers, and treasure yet more considerable had been thrown down the precipices along the road between Astorga and Coruña, where the peasantry and the soldiers were now collecting it. 5000 horses had been counted which they had slaughtered upon the way, . . . 500 were taken at Coruña, and the carcasses of 1200 were infecting the streets when the conquerors entered that town. The English would have occupied Ferrol and seized the squadron there, had it not been for the precipitance of their retreat, and the result of the battle to which they had been brought at last. Thus then had terminated their expedition into Spain! thus, after having fomented the war in that unhappy country, had they abandoned it to its fate! In another season of the year not a man of them would have escaped; now the facility of breaking up the bridges, the rapidity of the winter torrents, shortness of days, and length of nights, had favoured their retreat. But they were driven out of the peninsula, harassed, routed, and disheartened. The kingdom of Leon, the province of Zamora, and all Galicia, which they had been so desirous to cover, were conquered and subdued; and Romana, whom they had brought from the Baltic, was, with the wreck of his army, reduced to less than 2500 men, wandering between Vigo and Santiago, and closely pursued. . . . This was the most stinging of all the French reproaches. Wounded to the heart as we were that an English army should so have retreated, still we knew that wherever our men had been allowed to face the enemy they had beaten them; and that, however the real history of the battle of Coruña might be concealed from the French people, the French army had received a lesson there, which they would remember whenever

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CHAP. it might be our fortune to encounter them again. But that we  
 XVI. should have drawn such a force in pursuit of Romana, who, if he  
 1809. were taken prisoner, would be put to death with the forms of  
January. justice, by a tyrant who made mockery of justice, was of all the  
 mournful reflections which this disastrous expedition excited, the  
 most painful and the most exasperating.

*Pursuit of  
 Romana's  
 army.*

At this time indeed Romana's situation might have appeared  
 hopeless to any but a Spaniard, and few Spaniards would have  
 regarded it with such equanimity as this high-minded nobleman.  
 In the virtuous determination of doing his duty to the uttermost,  
 whatever might betide, he trusted Providence with the event, and  
 gave way to no despondent or repining thought. A detachment  
 under G. Franceschi had pursued his army after it had separated  
 from Sir J. Moore at Astorga, and according to the French state-  
 ments taken some 3000 men, and killed a great number before  
 he entered the Val de Orras. The charge of completing its de-  
 struction was then transferred by Soult to M. Ney, and he dis-  
 patched G. Marchand's division and a regiment of cavalry as  
 amply sufficient for the intended service. Romana left his van-  
 guard under D. Gabriel de Mendizabal to cover the Val de  
 Orras, and the Riberas del Sil; . . . one division was posted at  
 Pueblo de Tribes and Mendoya, to support him if he should  
 be attacked, and defend the bridge over the Bivey; the others  
 were distributed where they could find subsistence, and at the  
 same time afford support to the more advanced.

*Dismay in  
 Galicia.*

The country was in a state of the utmost alarm. The Viz-  
 conde de Quintanella, one of the deputies for Leon to the Central  
 Junta, had been sent to Romana's army, and disagreeing with  
 him before the retreat commenced, had preceded him, in the  
 hope of taking some measures which might be serviceable to the  
 common cause. Manifest as it was that Sir J. Moore had given  
 up that cause in his heart as hopeless, it had never been appre-



hended that he would retreat with such precipitation, and abandon Coruña and Ferrol to their fate; ports the maintenance of which was of so great importance to Great Britain as long as she took any part in the contest. Of all the Spaniards the Galicians had least reason to fear that the war would be brought to their own doors; and their consternation was extreme when they saw the enemy among them. Quintanilla repaired to Santiago, from which city the Archbishop had fled, having been insulted by the people, and dreading farther outrages from the insubordination which these dreadful times produced. As it seemed that nothing could be done for resisting the enemy, Quintanilla endeavoured at least to disappoint them of their expected booty, and proposed that the church plate should be removed. In such treasure that city was peculiarly rich, having been during many centuries more in vogue than any other place of pilgrimage in Europe; but his advice was rejected, upon the ground that the populace, who were suspicious of whatever was done, would not suffer it.

Romana's was a buoyant spirit, not to be depressed by any dangers. He had read the British General rightly, but his confidence in the British character was unshaken; and in the expectation that something would be attempted upon the coast, he moved one of his divisions from Mazeda to Taboada and other villages near Lugo, for the purpose of observing and harassing the enemy. This movement was ordered the day before the battle of Coruña. On the afternoon of the 17th he was apprised that 5000 French were at St. Esteban de Ribas del Sil, three leagues from Orense, and in the night advice came from Mendizabal that he had been attacked by a detachment moving upon that city. Romana reconnoitred this force; they were plainly waiting for reinforcements, but even in their present state he was not strong enough to resist them; for as soon as he entered Galicia, the whole of the new levies had dispersed: they belonged to that province,

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*Romana re-  
treats to-  
ward Mon-  
terrey.*



CHAP. and feeling themselves within reach of home, believed with some  
 XVI. reason that they could provide better for themselves than it was  
 1809. in the power of their general and their government to provide  
January. for them.

*Blake leaves  
the army.*

At his last interview with Sir J. Moore it had been arranged that the British army should make its stand at Villafranca, and there defend the entrance into Galicia, while the Marquis should endeavour to collect and reform his troops upon the river Sil. But because this resolution, fatally for Sir J. Moore, had been abandoned, Romana's left flank and rear were exposed to the enemy. They were at leisure to direct their efforts against him, and he saw that the only way of escape open for him was by Monterrey. In that direction therefore he moved, and fixed his head-quarters on the 21st at Villaza, a league from that town, on the side of Portugal. Here, to his surprise and displeasure, he found that Blake, who had continued with the army till this day, had left it without giving him any intimation of his departure, taken with him the officers whom he could trust, and left directions for others to follow him through Portugal. The camp-marshal, D. Rafael Martinengo, was missing also: his conduct, though irregular, was afterwards honourably explained; he had gone to collect stragglers. With regard to General Blake, serving only as an individual after he had been removed from the command, he was at liberty to retire whither and when he pleased, . . . but not thus, in a manner derogatory to the commander, subversive of discipline, and injurious to the army. His disappearance, and that of the officers who followed him, increased the distrust and despondency of the troops; and the reports which they spread to excuse themselves for thus withdrawing, contributed still farther to dishearten the people. "I assure your excellency," said Romana, when he communicated this to the war minister, "that I never gave a more trying proof of patriotism,



love to my King, and gratitude to the government which in his name has conferred so many honours upon me, than in taking upon myself the command of this army in such circumstances, and retaining it, though abandoned by those who ought to have assisted me. I know not wherein this patriotism consists which is so loudly vaunted . . . any reverse, any mishap, prostrates the minds of these people, and, thinking only of saving their own persons, they sacrifice their country, and compromise their commander."

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The next intelligence was of Sir J. Moore's death in action with M. Soult. The first thought which occurred to Romana was that this would not have happened if they had given battle to that very Soult at Saldaña. It was his firm persuasion that if the British force and his ill-fated troops had been united in October, they might have driven the French beyond the Pyrenees. The British had now actually embarked. Coruña and Ferrol were still points of hope; and if the governors there performed their duty, he could yet render them some service in the field. With this view he moved to cover the province of Tuy; but having reached La Guironda, he learnt in the night that the French with superior forces were at hand. His troops, though well equal to the business of harassing an enemy that should be otherwise employed, would have been lost if brought to action; he returned therefore to Oimbra, with the intention, if he should be pursued, of entering Portugal, and making through Tras-os-Montes for Ciudad Rodrigo, there to refit his army, or reinforce some other with the remnant that was left. A little respite was allowed him, for the French did not think the wreck of this army of sufficient consequence to fatigue themselves by pursuing and hunting it down. Where he and his handful of fugitives were secreting themselves they knew not, and on his part Romana knew as little what was passing in other parts of Spain.

*The French  
cease the  
pursuit.*



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*Buonaparte  
advised that  
Austria is  
arming.*

*De Pradt,  
211.*

Buonaparte had never appeared so joyous as when he left Madrid with the expectation of surprising Sir John Moore. He had intended to go to Lisbon, and the troops had actually received orders to hold themselves in readiness for beginning their march toward that capital, but the desire of encountering a British army made him change his intention; and Lisbon was thus doubly preserved from a second subjugation, for this movement interposed between the British and Portugal, and if Sir J. Moore had retreated thither, he would have abandoned Lisbon as he did Coruña. When there was no longer a hope of overtaking the English, Buonaparte stopped at Astorga; it was more consistent with his dignity that a detachment of his army should hunt them to the coast, than that he should continue the pursuit in person. Beyond that city, therefore, he would not have proceeded, even if dispatches had not reached him there which recalled him into France. He had designs against Austria, concerning which the Emperor Alexander had been deceived at Erfurt: his intention had been to complete the easy subjugation of Spain before he began to execute these further projects of insatiable ambition; but he was informed that Austria, instead of waiting for the blow, was preparing to avail herself of the advantage which the Spanish war afforded her. The news was not unwelcome to him; for he had now entertained a new train of ambitious and perfidious thoughts, which made him desirous of leaving Spain. From Astorga he turned back to Valladolid, and remained there a few days to make his last arrangements before he returned into France.

*Change in  
his views  
concerning  
Spain.*

An attachment to his family was almost the only human part of Buonaparte's character; but when any object of aggrandisement presented itself to his all-grasping desires, that attachment stood as little in his way as the obligations of truth, honour, and justice. He had been sincere in his intention of giving Spain to



Joseph, while he thought it an easy gift, and one which in its results would prove beneficial to the giver. The resistance which had been made to the intrusion, and the reverses which his arms had for a time experienced, disturbed and mortified him; and in that temper of mind which escapes self-condemnation by reproaching others, he imputed to Joseph's flight from Madrid, as a consequence, the very spirit of resistance which had rendered that measure necessary for his own preservation. For this reason there had been no cordiality at their meeting; he had treated Joseph with disrespect, as well as coldness, and leaving him in the rear, had issued edicts by his own authority, and in his own name. This had been resented by Joseph, as far as one who was the receiver of a stolen crown could resent it: having been made King, he represented it was proper he should appear to be such; to debase him was not the way of rendering him more acceptable to a proud and high-minded nation. In addition to this there was another cause of discontent between them. Whatever country Buonaparte entered, that country was made to support his army; war was to him no expense, . . . the cost fell always upon his enemies or his allies. Thus he had expected to proceed in Spain; . . . but even when he was master of Madrid the intrusive government had no other revenue than the duties which were paid at its gates, and Joseph, instead of paying his brother's armies, looked to him for the maintenance of his own court. Joseph had represented also the impolicy of continuing to exasperate the people by a system of military exactions; and Napoleon, impatient of any contradiction, instantly perceived that a King of Spain, whether of the Buonaparte or the Bourbon dynasty, must have a Spanish feeling, incompatible with that entire subserviency to himself which he expected and required. Having so lately and so solemnly guaranteed the integrity of Spain, and proclaimed his brother king, he could not at once subvert his

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CHAP. own arrangements ; but he avowed to M. de Pradt at this time  
 XVI. that when he had given that kingdom, he did not understand the  
 1809. value of the present : follies would be committed, he said, which  
 January. would throw it again into his hands, and he would then divide it  
 De Pradt, into five viceroyalties.  
 207—225.

*He returns  
 to France.*

He apprehended no difficulty in this : any military opposition which could be attempted he despised, the more entirely because of the ease with which the Spanish armies had been dispersed, . . . and the moral obstacles he was still incapable of appreciating. A dispatch reached him from Galicia, and upon reading it he said to those about him, " Every thing proceeds well. Romana cannot resist a fortnight longer. The English will never make another effort ; and three months hence the war will be at an end." One of the marshals hinted at the character of the people and of the country. " It is a La Vendée," he replied ; " I have tranquillized La Vendée. Calabria also was in a state of insurrection, . . . wherever there are mountains there are insurgents ; but the kingdom of Naples is tranquil now. It is not enough to command an army well, . . . one must have general views. The continental system is not the same as in the time of Frederick ; the great powers must absorb the smaller. The priests have considerable influence here, and they use it to exasperate the people : but the Romans conquered them ; the Moors conquered them ; and they are not near so fine a people now as they were then. I will settle the government firmly ; I will interest the nobles, and I will cut down the people with grape-shot. What do they want ? the Prince of Asturias ? Half the nation object to him : . . . besides he is dead to them. There is no longer any dynasty to oppose to me. They say the population is against us. Why Spain is a perfect solitude, . . . there are not five men to a square league. Besides, if it be a question of numbers, I will pour all Europe into their country. They have to learn

*Jones's Ac-  
 count of the  
 War, vol. i.  
 165.*



what a first-rate power can effect." With this flagitious determination the remorseless tyrant returned into France.

Before he left Madrid to march against the English, an address framed by the traitors of that city in the name of the magistrates and citizens was presented to him by the Corregidor. They thanked him for his gracious clemency, that in the midst of conquest he had thought of the safety and welfare of the conquered, and forgiven all which had been done during the absence of Joseph, their king: and they entreated that it might please him to grant them the favour of seeing King Joseph once more among them, to the end that under his laws that capital and the whole kingdom might enjoy the happiness which they expected from the benevolence of their new sovereign's character. The tyrant replied to this in one of his characteristic harangues. "I am pleased," he said, "with the sentiments of the city of Madrid. I regret the injuries she has suffered, and am particularly happy that, under existing circumstances, I have been able to effect her deliverance, and to protect her from great calamities, and have accomplished what I owed to myself and my nation. Vengeance has had its due: it has fallen upon ten of the principal culprits; . . . the rest have entire and absolute forgiveness." He then touched upon the reforms by which he thought to reconcile the Spaniards to a foreign yoke. "I have preserved the spiritual orders, but with a limitation of the number of monks: they who were influenced by a divine call shall remain in their cloisters; with regard to those whose call was doubtful, or influenced by worldly considerations, I have fixed their condition in the class of secular priests. Out of the surplus of monastic property I have provided for the maintenance of the pastors, that important and useful branch of the clergy. I have suppressed that court which was a subject of complaint to Europe and the present age. Priests may guide the minds of

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*Professions  
to the Spaniards at  
Madrid.*