

CHAP.  
XXVI.

1809.

*November.*

famishing populace. The enemy endeavoured to tempt the garrison to desert, by calling out to them to come and eat, and holding out provisions. A few were tempted; they were received with embraces, and fed in sight of the walls, . . . poor wretches, envying the firmer constancy of their comrades more than those comrades did the food, for lack of which their own vital spirits were well-nigh spent! None of that individual animosity was here displayed which characterized the street-fighting at Zaragoza, . . . the nature of the siege was not such as to call it forth; and some of those humanities appeared, which in other instances the French generals systematically outraged in Spain. The out-sentries frequently made a truce with each other, laid down their arms, and drew near enough to converse; the French soldier would then give his half-starved enemy a draught from his leathern bottle, or brandy-flask, and when they had drunk and talked together, they returned to their posts, scoffed at each other, proceeded from mockery to insult, and sometimes closed the scene with a skirmish.

*Report of  
the state of  
health.*

The only disgraceful circumstance which occurred during the whole siege was the desertion of ten officers in a body, two of whom were men of noble birth; they had been plotting to make the governor capitulate, and finding their intentions frustrated, went over to the enemy in open day. Except in this instance, the number of deserters was very small. Towards the end of November many of the inhabitants, having become utterly hopeless of relief, preferred the chance of death to the certainty of being made prisoners, and they ventured to pass the enemy's lines, some failing in the attempt, others being more fortunate. At this time Samaniego, who was first surgeon to the garrison, delivered in to Alvarez a report upon the state of health: as he gave it into his hands, he said something implying the melancholy nature of its contents; Alvarez replied, "this paper then, perhaps,

Nov. 29.

will inform posterity of our sufferings, if there should be none left to recount them!" He then bade Samaniego read it. It was a dreadful report. There did not remain a single building in Gerona which had not been injured by the bombardment; not a house was habitable; the people slept in cellars, and vaults, and holes amid the ruins; and it had not unfrequently happened that the wounded were killed in the hospitals. The streets were broken up; so that the rain-water and the sewers stagnated there, and the pestilential vapours which arose were rendered more noxious by the dead bodies which lay rotting amid the ruins. The siege had now endured seven months; scarcely a woman had become pregnant during that time; the very dogs, before hunger consumed them, had ceased to follow after kind; they did not even fawn upon their masters; the almost incessant thunder of artillery seemed to make them sensible of the state of the city, and the unnatural atmosphere affected them as well as humankind. It even affected vegetation. In the gardens within the walls the fruits withered, and scarcely any vegetable could be raised. Within the last three weeks above 500 of the garrison had died in the hospitals; a dysentery was raging and spreading; the sick were lying upon the ground, without beds, almost without food; and there was scarcely fuel to dress the little wheat that remained, and the few horses which were yet unconsumed. Samaniego then adverted with bitterness to the accounts which had been circulated, that abundant supplies had been thrown into the city; and he concluded by saying, "if by these sacrifices, deserving for ever to be the admiration of history, and if by consummating them with the lives of us who, by the will of Providence, have survived our comrades, the liberty of our country can be secured, happy shall we be in the bosom of eternity and in the memory of good men, and happy will our children be among their fellow-countrymen!"

CHAP.  
XXVI.  
1809.  
November.

CHAP.  
XXVI.

1809.

*November.**Some of the  
outworks  
taken by the  
French.*

The breaches which had been assaulted ten weeks before were still open; it was easier for the Geronans to defend than to repair them, and the French had suffered too much in that assault to repeat it. A fourth had now been made. The enemy, learning from the officers who had deserted that the ammunition of the place was almost expended, ventured upon bolder operations. They took possession by night of the Calle del Carmen; from thence they commanded the bridge of S. Francisco, which was the only means of communication between the old city and that part on the opposite side of the Ter; from thence also they battered Forts Merced and S. Francisco de Paula. During another night they got possession of Fort Calvary, which they had reduced to ruins, and of the Cabildo redoubt: this last success seems to have been owing to some misconduct, for the historian of the siege inveighs upon this occasion against the pernicious measure of intrusting boys with command, as a reward for the services of their fathers. The city redoubts fell next. The bodily strength as well as the ammunition of the Geronans was almost exhausted, and these advantages over them were gained with comparative ease. The enemy were now close to the walls, and thus cut off the forts of the Capuchins and of the Constable, the only two remaining out-works. The garrisons of both amounted only to 160 men; they had scarcely any powder, little water, and no food. These posts were of the last importance; it was resolved to make a sally for the sake of relieving them, and the garrison of the town gave up for this purpose their own miserable rations, contributing enough for the consumption of three days. The ration was at this time a handful of wheat daily, or sometimes, in its stead, the quarter of a small loaf, and five ounces of horse or mule's flesh, every alternate day.

*Last sally  
of the gar-  
rison.*

The few men who could be allotted for this service, or indeed who were equal to it, sallied in broad day through the Puerto

del Socorro, within pistol-shot of the redoubts which the enemy now possessed; they were in three bodies, two of which hastened up the hill toward the two forts, while the third remained to protect them from being attacked in the rear from the Calle del Carmen. The sally was so sudden, so utterly unlooked for by the besiegers, and so resolutely executed, that its purpose was accomplished, though not without the loss in killed and wounded of about forty men, which was nearly a third of those who were employed in it. This was the last effort of the Geronans. The deaths increased in a dreadful and daily accelerating progression; the burial-places were without the walls; it had long been a service of danger to bury the dead, for the French seeing the way to the cemetery always full, kept up a fire upon it; hands could not now be found to carry them out to the deposit-house, and from thence to the grave; and at one time 120 bodies were lying in the deposit-house, uncoffined, in sight of all who passed the walls.

CHAP.  
XXVI.  
1809.  
December.

The besiegers were now erecting one battery more in the Calle de la Rulla; it was close upon one of the breaches, and commanded the whole space between Forts Merced and S. Francisco de Paula. This was in the beginning of December; on the 4th Alvarez was seized with a nervous fever, occasioned undoubtedly by the hopeless state of the city. On the 8th the disorder had greatly increased, and he became delirious. The next day the Junta assembled, and one of their body was deputed to examine Samaniego and his colleague Viader, whether the governor was in a state to perform the duties of his office. They required a more specific question; and the Canon who had been deputed then said, it was feared that, in the access of delirium, the governor might give orders contrary to his own judgement, if he were in perfect sanity of mind, and contrary to the public weal, when the dreadful situation of the city was considered.

*Alvarez becomes delirious.*

CHAP. The purport of such language could not be mistaken; and  
 XXVI. they replied, that, without exceeding the bounds of their pro-  
 1809. fession, they could pronounce his state of health to be incom-  
 December. compatible with the command, and his continuance in command  
 equally incompatible with the measures necessary for his re-  
 covery.

Capitulation Samaniego and his colleague went after this consultation to  
 visit the governor, whom they found in such a state, that they  
 judged it proper for him to receive the *viaticum*, thinking it  
 most probable that, in the next access of fever, he would lose  
 his senses and die, . . for this was the manner in which the  
 disorder under which he laboured usually terminated. Being  
 thus delivered over to the priests, Alvarez, before the fit came  
 on, resigned the command, which then devolved upon Brigadier  
 D. Julian de Bolivar: a council was held during the night, com-  
 posed of the two Juntas, military and civil; and the result was,  
 that in the morning, D. Blas de Furnas, an officer who had  
 greatly distinguished himself during the siege, should treat for  
 a capitulation. The whole of the 10th was employed in adjust-  
 ing the terms. They were in the highest degree honourable.  
 The garrison were to march out with the honours of war, and  
 be sent prisoners into France, to be exchanged as soon as pos-  
 sible for an equal number of French prisoners then detained in  
 Majorca and other places. None were to be considered pri-  
 soners except those who were ranked as soldiers; the commis-  
 sariat, intendants and medical staff were thus left at freedom.  
 The French were not to be quartered upon the inhabitants; the  
 official papers were neither to be destroyed nor removed; no  
 person was to be injured for the part which he had taken during  
 the siege; those who were not natives of Gerona should be at  
 liberty to leave it, and take with them all their property; the  
 natives also who chose to depart might do so, take with them

their moveable property, and dispose as they pleased of the rest.

While the capitulation was going on, many of the enemy's soldiers came to the walls, bringing provisions and wine, to be drawn up by strings, . . . an honourable proof of the temper with which they regarded their brave opponents. During the night the deserters who were in Gerona, with many other soldiers and peasants, attempted to escape: some succeeded, others were killed or taken in the attempt, and not a few dropped with weakness upon the way. To those who remained, the very silence of night, it is said, was a thing so unusual, that it became a cause of agitation. At daybreak it was found that the soldiers had broken the greater part of their arms, and thrown the fragments into the streets or the river. When the garrison were drawn up in sight of the French, their shrunken limbs and hollow eyes and pale and meagre countenances sufficiently manifested by what they had been subdued. The French observed, not without admiration, that in the city, as well as at Monjuic, most of the guns had been fired so often that they were rendered useless; brass itself had given way, says Samaniego, before the constancy of the Geronans.

The first act of the French officer who was appointed governor was to order all the inhabitants to deliver in their arms, on pain of death, and to establish a military commission. *Te Deum* was ordered in the cathedral; it was performed with tears, and a voice which could difficultly command its utterance. Augereau would fain have had a sermon like that which had been preached before Lasnes at Zaragoza, but not a priest could be found who would sin against his soul by following the impious example. A guard was set upon Alvarez; he amended slowly, and the physicians applied for leave for him to quit the city, and go to some place upon the sea-shore; it was replied, that Marshal

CHAP.  
XXVI.

1809.  
*December.*

CHAP. XXVI.  
 1809. He chose Figueras, and having recovered sufficiently to bear  
 the removal, was hurried off at midnight without any previous  
 notice, and under a strong escort. The friars, who had been all  
 confined in the church of St. Francisco, with a cannon pointed  
 against the door, and a match lighted, were marched off at the  
 same time, in violation of the terms. The sick and wounded  
 Spaniards were hastily removed to St. Daniel; they were laid  
 upon straw, and being left without even such necessaries as they  
 had possessed in the city, except that they were better supplied  
 with food, many died in consequence. There was a grievous  
 want of humanity in this; but no brutal acts of outrage and  
 cruelty were committed, as at Zaragoza; and, when so many of  
 the French generals rendered themselves infamous, Augereau,  
 and the few who observed any of the old humanities of war,  
 deserve to be distinguished from their execrable colleagues.

*Death of  
 Alvarez.*

The Central Junta decreed the same honours to Gerona and  
 its heroic defenders as had been conferred in the case of Zارا-  
 goza. The rewards which Mariano Alvarez had deserved by  
 his admirable conduct were to be given to his family, if, as there  
 was reason to fear, he himself should not live to receive them.  
 The sad apprehension which was thus expressed was soon verified.  
 He died at Figueras. It was said, and believed, in Catalonia,  
 that Buonaparte had sent orders to execute him in the Plaza  
 at Gerona, and that the French, fearing the consequences if  
 they should thus outrage the national feeling, put him out of the  
 way by \* poison. His death was so probable, considering what

---

\* A man deposed that he had seen the body when it was buried hastily, by  
 night; the face, he said, was swollen, and the eyes forced out of their sockets. Sup-

he had endured during the siege, and the condition in which it left him, that no suspicion of this kind would have prevailed, if the public execution of Santiago Sass and of Hofer, and the private catastrophe of Captain Wright and of Pichegru, had not given dreadful proof that the French government and its agents were capable of any wickedness. In the present imputation they were probably wronged, but it was brought on them by the opinion which their actions had obtained and merited.

CHAP.  
XXVI.  
1809.  
December.

*Eroles  
escapes.*

About 600 of the garrison made their escape from Rousillon. Eroles was one; than whom no Spaniard rendered greater services to his country during the war, nor has left to posterity a more irreproachable and honourable name.

---

posing this testimony were true, the appearance would denote strangulation rather than poison; but that Alvarez should have been privately murdered is altogether improbable.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## PROCEEDINGS IN FRANCE AND IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

1809.

*Buonaparte  
divorces the  
Empress  
Josephine.*

THE year had thus closed in Spain as triumphantly for the invaders as it began ; and yet the French felt, and could not but feel, that the subjugation of that kingdom was more distant at this time than they had supposed it to be when they entered upon the invasion, in the wantonness of insolent power. Buonaparte, when he recapitulated the exploits of the year to his senate, intimated an intention of returning thither to complete the conquest. “ When I shall show myself beyond the Pyrenees,” said he, “ the frightened leopard will fly to the ocean to avoid shame, defeat, and death. The triumph of my arms will be the triumph of the genius of good over that of evil ; of moderation, order, and morality, over civil war, anarchy, and the evil passions.” He neither mentioned nor alluded to the battle of Talavera ; the circumstances of that well-fought field had been so completely concealed from the French nation, that they were fully persuaded the English had suffered a great defeat ; but the lesson had not been lost upon Buonaparte. That battle, and the repulse at Esling, made him for the first time feel the insecure foundation of his power ; it taught him that his armies were not invincible. His hatred for England, implacable as it was, had not prevented him from regarding with admiration the military genius of Marlborough, though he was incapable of appreciating the principles and feelings which induced that excellent commander on every occasion to mitigate by every means in his power the miseries of war. He despised the counsels, and egregiously miscalculated the resources of Great Britain ; but he was compelled in his heart

to render reluctant justice to the national spirit, which Vimeiro and Coruña, and the Douro and Talavera, had shown him could be displayed by her armies no less than by her fleets; and he could not but secretly and ominously apprehend, that such victories as those of Blenheim and Ramillies might be achieved by such soldiers. It is believed that this feeling determined him to connect himself by marriage with one of the great continental powers. Secret arrangements for this having been made with the house of Austria, he divorced the Empress Josephine at the close of the year by an act of his own government, and with her full acquiescence, reasons of state being made the plea, as they were the motives, for this measure. In the manner of the separation, in the provision which was made, and in the honours which were reserved for Josephine, due regard was shown her: she was a gentle and benevolent woman; and had Buonaparte in his moral nature been half as worthy of the throne, the world might have loved and revered the memory of both.

CHAP.  
XXVII.  
1809.  
December.

But triumphantly as the war with Austria had been concluded, the prospect of peace was yet far distant. The war-minister reported, that the French armies in Spain consisted of 300 battalions and 150 squadrons, and it would be sufficient, without sending any additional corps, to keep them at their full establishment: 30,000 men collected at Bayonne afforded means for accomplishing this, and for repulsing any force which the English might send to that country. In this state of things no other levy was necessary than such as would supply the contingent indispensably requisite for replacing in the battalions of the interior the drafts which were daily made from them. There remained from the conscription of the years 1806, 7, 8, 9, 10, more than 80,000 men, who, though ballotted, had not been called into actual service; it was proposed to call out 36,000, and then to declare those classes free from any future call.

*Farther requisition for the armies in Spain.*

CHAP. XXVII.  
 1809.  
 December.

“By these means, sire,” said the minister, “your armies will be maintained at their present strength, and a considerable number of your subjects will be definitively released from the conscription.” There were also at the Emperor’s disposal 25,000 men, afforded by the conscription for 1811; but upon these it was not proposed to call, unless events should disappoint his pacific intentions.

Thirty thousand men stationed at Bayonne to supply the constant consumption of his army in Spain, 36,000 to be raised for replacing the drafts from the interior, and 25,000 to be taken by anticipation, before the conscription in its regular course ought to have reached them, and to be held in readiness for farther demands of blood; this was the prospect held out at the conclusion of the Austrian war; these were the sacrifices which the French were called upon to make, not for defence, not for the interests, not for the honour of France, but to support a wanton and execrable usurpation, which had no other cause than the individual ambition of Buonaparte. . . He felt how needful it was to persuade the French that a war which they knew to be so destructive was not as inglorious as it was unjust, and for this purpose a parade was made of the victories which had been obtained in Spain. The flags taken at Espinosā, Burgos, Tudela, Somosierra, and Madrid, were presented to the legislative body; a detachment of the grenadiers of the imperial guard was introduced, and seated on the right and left of Buonaparte’s statue, that the stage might be full. Rhetorical speeches were delivered, and the session concluded like a stage spectacle, with a flourish of trumpets, and cries of Long live the Emperor! In this exhibition Buonaparte addressed himself to the ruling passion of the people over whom he reigned. “Without glory,” he said, “there could be no happiness for a Frenchman;” and the moral feeling of the nation had been so de-

*Display of  
 Spanish  
 flags.*