

CHAP. pieces ; a force manifestly insufficient for its object, if he had  
 XXX. not counted upon the success of his machinations in the capital.  
 1810. From thence he advanced to the Puig, and having fixed his head-  
 March. quarters on the spot where King Jayme el Conquistador had  
 encamped when he undertook the conquest of Valencia, he ad-  
 Suchet ad- dressed a letter to the Captain General Caro, saying, that he came  
 vances a- gainst Va- not to make war upon the happy capital of the finest kingdom  
 lencia. in Spain, nor to lay waste the delicious country which surrounded  
 March 6. it, but to offer protection and peace, such as Jaen, and Granada,  
 and Cordoba, and Seville were enjoying. Andalusia had sub-  
 mitted ; the army, having discharged its duty, had entered into  
 the service of King Joseph Napoleon ; and the militia, consist-  
 ing of men enlisted by force, and under the penalty of death  
 if they refused, had been dismissed. Religion was respected,  
 justice observed, private property untouched ; and General Caro  
 was now invited to open the gates of Valencia, that the French  
 might enter, and he might deserve the blessings of his country.  
 Wherefore should he prolong a contest, the issue of which the  
 Spaniards themselves could now no longer consider doubtful ?  
 They had done enough to prove their courage, and it was time  
 that their sufferings should have an end. The Captain General's  
 answer contained some stinging truths, and some remarkable  
 falsehoods. It contrasted the professions of General Suchet  
 with his actual conduct ; and it assured him that the French  
 had been completely defeated between Puerto Real and the Isle  
 of Leon, that they had evacuated Seville in consequence, and  
 were in full retreat toward the Sierra Morena. Authentic intel-  
 ligence was so irregularly communicated, and the most extra-  
 vagant reports so eagerly propagated and so readily believed,  
 that it is very possible the Captain General of Valencia believed  
 the incredible statement which he advanced. Suchet addressed  
 a summons also to the inhabitants of Valencia, calling upon



them as proprietors and parents to consult their own interest and their duty, by preserving their beautiful and flourishing city from the calamities of war. They returned for answer, that they were prepared to sacrifice every thing in the defence of their just cause; that having defeated Moncey in a similar attempt, they had good reason now to hope for the same success; and that it was for his Excellency, who so humanely deprecated the effusion of blood, to consider whether the best method of avoiding that evil was not to abstain from an attack?

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Suchet, in fact, had no intention of making one. It was, however, expected by the Valencians; and in that expectation the superior Junta, by Caro's advice, had removed to St. Felipe, a city to which it seems strange that its old name of Xativa should not have been at this time restored. There they were to exert themselves for supplying the capital and annoying the invaders, a military Junta being appointed meantime within the city, to dispose of the peasantry who had flocked thither, and to direct the labours of a willing people. A former Junta had been assembled after the dispersion at Alventosa, and in the course of the ensuing night every member had been arrested upon a charge of treason. An edict also was passed, confiscating the property of all who had fled from the city at this time, their absence being interpreted as proof either of cowardice or of treachery. Such severity was not without cause. Relying upon their intelligence in the city, the van of the French army entered the suburb of Murviedro, and occupied the College of Pius V. the Royal Palace, and the Zaidia, all which are without the walls on the farther bank of the Turia. From the palace they fired upon the bridge; and they exasperated, if it were possible to exasperate, the hatred of the Spaniards, by exposing the images which they had taken from the churches on their march and in the suburbs to the fire of the city, having stript some of

*He retreats  
from Va-  
lencia.*



CHAP. their taudry attire, and dressed up others in regimentals. But  
 XXX. finding their hopes fail, and not being in sufficient force to ven-  
 1810. ture upon an attack, they decamped during the night of the 11th,  
 March. retreating with such celerity, that they abandoned great part of  
 their plunder.

*A conspi-  
 racy disco-  
 vered in that  
 city.*

The Valencians imputed their deliverance on this occasion to their Patroness and Generalissima, the Virgin, under her invocation of Maria Santissima de los Desamparados, and to the Saints who were natives of Valencia. A deliverance it was ; for a plan had actually been formed to assassinate the Captain General, and proclamations in favour of King Joseph and his French allies were found upon the chief mover of this treason, Colonel Baron de Pozoblanco. This person, who appears to have been a revolutionary fanatic, suffered under the hangman ; his head was exposed upon a stake in the market-place, with an inscription under it, announcing his crime, and charging him also with belonging to the sect of the illuminated Egyptian freemasons, which was said to be extending itself from Madrid into La Mancha, Murcia, and Valencia, and to have converted the different appellations of the Virgin into distinctive names for its own organization.

*The French  
 boast of suc-  
 cess.*

Suchet's expedition was not made without loss ; some of his garrisons and smaller parties were cut off by the Arragonese troops in his rear, under D. Pedro Villacampa. The Castle of Benasque had been taken before he marched against Valencia, and that capture completed his military possession of the north of Arragon ; but the people, when deprived of their fortresses, found fastnesses in their mountains, and waged from thence a wearying and wasting war against their oppressors ; and Mina's prisoners were escorted from the frontier of Navarre to Lerida, through a country of which the French called and fancied themselves masters. This desultory warfare was carried on in Cata-



lonia also with no less skill than success. Augereau had supposed, that after the reduction of Gerona little more was necessary for the complete subjugation of the province; he boasted of a victory in the plain of Vich, the most glorious, it was said, which the French had yet obtained, wherein O'Donnell had lost 7000 men, with the whole of his baggage, and after which he could find no place of safety till he had taken refuge under the walls of Tarragona. Souham in like manner proclaimed that the famous Rovira had fled before him, notwithstanding his vaunts of the incursions, robberies, and assassinations upon which he prided himself. It was presently seen with what little foundation the invaders boasted of these triumphs.

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O'Donnell's movements were not in consequence of a defeat. Having experienced the superiority which the enemy's discipline gave them in the management of large bodies, he had immediate recourse to that system of warfare, in which enterprise, celerity, and the ardour of the soldiers, are of more avail than tactics. Therefore he retreated rapidly from Moya to Terrasa, leaving Manresa uncovered: the inhabitants of that city forsook it on the approach of the French; and O'Donnell continuing to lead the invaders on, fell back, first to Villa-franca del Panades, then to Torre-dembarra, finally under the walls of Tarragona, executing these movements in good order, and without loss. The enemy, in pursuit, as they believed, of a flying army, occupied Manresa with 1500 men, left 900 in Villa-franca, and proceeded till they also came in sight of Tarragona. One division occupied Vendrell, and extended to Arco de Barra, upon the high road to Barcelona; but in a few days this division joined the main body, which was at Coll de Santa Cristina, and they immediately advanced towards Valls. O'Donnell, profiting by this movement, sent Camp Marshal D. Juan Caro against

*O'Donnell's  
successful  
operations.*

*March 16.*

*March 28.*



CHAP. Villa-franca ; Caro proceeded by forced marches, and surprised  
 XXX. the enemy on the following morning ; between 200 and 300 were  
 1810. killed, and 640 made prisoners, not a man escaping. Caro him-  
 March. self was wounded ; the command of his detachment devolved  
 March 30. upon Brigadier D. Gervasio Gasca, and they proceeded toward  
 Manresa, to attack the enemy, who occupied that town.

A body of 500 or 600 had already been sent to reinforce the  
 French in Manresa, and had effected their junction, though not  
 without the loss of two carts of ammunition, and forty killed, in  
 an action with a party of somatenes and of expatriates, as those  
 Spaniards were called whose homes were occupied by the enemy.  
 Augereau no sooner heard of the loss in Villa-franca, than, ap-  
 prehending a similar attack upon Manresa, he ordered a farther  
 reinforcement of 1200 men from Barcelona, to proceed thither  
 with the utmost celerity. Gasca, receiving timely intelligence of  
 their movement, instead of proceeding upon Manresa, marched  
 April 3. to intercept this column, and fell in with it between Esparra-  
 guera and Abrera ; 400 were left upon the field, 500 made pri-  
 soners, and the remainder fled toward Barcelona, not more than  
 200 reaching that city. The Spaniards, after this second success,  
 prepared to execute their projected attack upon the enemy in  
 Manresa, and the Marquis de Campoverde took the command  
 for this purpose : but the men had exerted themselves too much  
 in forced marches and in action to perform a third enterprise with  
 the same celerity as the two former ; and on the night before  
 the attack should have been made, Schwartz, who headed the  
 French detachment, evacuated the town, and took the road to  
 Barcelona by Santa Clara, Barata, and Marieta. He began his  
 retreat at eleven on the night of the 4th. Brigadier D. Francisco  
 Milans, who was stationed at San Fructuos, passing the night  
 under arms, to be ready for the attack at seven on the following



morning, was apprised of the enemy's retreat between four and five, and dispatched the corps of expatriates, under Rovira, in pursuit, while the rest of the division followed as fast as possible. CHAP.  
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1810. Rovira, whom the French had lately reviled as a wretch who was flying before them, passing in two hours over a distance which was the ordinary journey of four, in their pursuit, overtook them at Hostalet, and attacked them with his usual intrepidity. Schwartz, whose force consisted of 1500 men, formed them into a column, and continued to retreat, fighting as he went: Rovira, however, so impeded his movements, that he gave time for Milans to come up with them near Sabadell; the Spaniards then charged with the bayonet; 500 of the French fell, 300 were made prisoners; Schwartz himself was wounded, and owed his life to the swiftness of his horse. Some of the French, after having surrendered, were said to have fired upon the Spaniards, and this was assigned as the cause why the number of the slain exceeded that of the prisoners.

The amount of the killed and taken in these actions falls far short of the sum of the French loss; for the desertion was very great, every defeat giving the Germans, who were forced into their wicked service, an opportunity of escaping from it. The whole loss which they sustained from these well-planned enterprises was not less than 5000. O'Donnell hoped that he should now be enabled to relieve Hostalrich; but the main body of the French returning toward Barcelona from Reus, which they had taken possession of a few days before, compelled Campoverde's division to fall back, and thus prevented the attempt. In Catalonia, indeed, though more military talent and far more energy were displayed than in the other provinces, it was less a war of armies than of the people against a great military force. Wherever the French moved in large bodies, the Catalans could not resist them, or resisted in vain; in general actions and in sieges,



CHAP. the enemy were sure to be successful ; the French, therefore, and  
XXX. they in this country who would have had us abandon the Pen-  
1810. insula to their mercy, concluded that the party which won battles,  
February. and captured fortresses, must necessarily soon become masters  
of the country ; and they reasoned thus, because they never took  
into their calculation the national character, the natural strength  
of Spain, and the moral strength of man.

*Siege of  
Hostalrich.*

The effect of that moral power was shown not less admirably at Hostalrich than it had been at Zaragoza and Gerona, though the three sieges differed from each other in all their circumstances. The little town of Hostalrich was not included within the works, and the fortress contained no other inhabitants than its garrison. The bombardment began on the 20th of February. The adjutant, D. Jose Antonio Roca, was writing a dispatch for the governor to the commander-in-chief, when a shell burst so near them, that one of the fragments entered the room and swept away every thing from off the table : Roca picked up his paper, and, remarking that the sand which it carried with it might save him the trouble of telling the general they were bombarded, continued his dispatch. A private soldier, who went out of the works for water, received a musket-ball in his groin as he was returning ; he laid one hand upon the wound, and carrying in the pitcher steadily with the other, met his serjeant, to whom he delivered it ; then groping in the wound for the ball, which probably had not gone deep, he pulled it out with his fingers, and gave it to the serjeant, saying, “ I deposit this ball in your hands ; keep it for me, and as soon as I am cured, this very bullet shall revenge me upon the first Frenchman at whom I can get a shot.” And as he went to the hospital he charged his comrades, in case he should not live to take vengeance for himself, that they would take it for him. Such was the spirit with which Hostalrich was defended. “ Let every circumstance of the siege



be made known!" said this brave garrison; "if we are successful, the detail will give hope, and confidence, and joy to every true patriot; if we are unfortunate, it will excite a different feeling, but it will never produce shame or dismay."

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Verdier, who now commanded the besieging force, addressed a new summons to the governor at the time of O'Donnell's retreat to Tarragona, representing that movement as the consequence of a total defeat. "The wreck of the Spanish army," he said, "was seeking a moment's shelter in Tarragona and Tortosa, vigorously pursued by Augereau in person, who would immediately commence the siege of both places. The siege of Lerida was already far advanced, and its fall inevitable. Hostalrich was a fort of no other use than as it interrupted the communication between Gerona and Barcelona; and this purpose it no longer effected, the French having made a new road, and communicating freely between those cities. The object, therefore, for defending it, no longer existed; and longer resistance, instead of adding to the governor's glory, would be called a vain obstinacy, draw upon him the reproaches of posterity, and make him responsible for the blood which should be shed." Considering these circumstances, the French general summoned him to surrender, and offered him the honours of war. The Marshal Duke of Castiglione, Augereau, he added, revoking his former declaration, had authorized him to propose these terms. "You will do well, sir," he continued, "to accept them with glory; if you delay, they will without doubt be refused to you; and you will then be obliged to suffer conditions, which, however rigorous they may appear, are dictated by justice, seeing that a protracted resistance is neither justified by honour nor by reason." Estrada replied, by simply referring him to his former determination, and to the conduct of the garrison.

The situation of the fortress, upon a craggy height, secured



CHAP. it against an assault, while there were any resolute men to defend it. The bombardment continued till every building within  
XXX. the walls had been destroyed, except a casemate, which served  
1810. as an hospital, and was only large enough to hold one-and-  
May. twenty beds; the remainder of the sick and wounded were secured in a mine, and the garrison also had their quarters underground. Supplies had been introduced about the middle of the siege; all other attempts had been defeated, and would have been of no avail at length had they succeeded, because the cisterns were destroyed. Estrada had the example of O'Donnell's retreat from Gerona before him, and determined to make his way through the enemy's lines, rather than capitulate. This he concerted with O'Donnell, who, for the purpose of deceiving the besiegers, ordered some vessels to approach Arenys de Mar, the nearest part of the coast, sent one detachment to call off their attention on the side of Orsaviña and Monnegre, and another on the southern skirts of Monseny toward Breda. Augereau, who had come to witness the capture of a fortress which had resisted him for four months, sent in a last summons on the evening of the 11th of May, offering the same terms which had been granted to Gerona; he allowed the governor two hours for consideration, and declared, that if the fort was not then delivered up, the whole of the garrison should be put to the sword. Estrada laid this before his officers, and with one consent they returned for answer, that they thanked the Marshal for thinking them worthy of being thus named with Gerona, but that they were not yet in a condition which should make them yield. On the following morning, the men, to their great joy, were informed of the resolution which had been taken.

*Retreat of  
the garrison.*

The French expected such an attempt, and judged, from the stir which they beheld in the fort, that it would be made in the ensuing night. That evening, therefore, they strengthened



their post at Tordera on the right, thinking, as the men themselves did, that the governor would make for Arenys de Mar, where the ships were awaiting him. At ten, the garrison descended the glacis on the side of the high road of St. Celoni, and crossed the road and the space between the fort and the heights of Masanas. It was broad moonlight. Two advanced parties, to the right and left, fell upon the enemy's picquets with the bayonet; those, however, who escaped gave the alarm; but the garrison had gained the start, ascended to St. Jacinto, and hastened toward St. Feliu de Buxaleu. A league from Hostalrich they fell in with an enemy's encampment, and routed them; this gave the alarm to another body of 2000 French, whose station was near, on the road to Arbucias; but they were received so resolutely, that they soon gave over the pursuit. Thus all was effected which could be done by skill and courage; one division lost its way, and many of the men dropt on the road, their strength failing them on this great exertion, from the want of rest and food, which they had long endured. Among them was the noble Julian de Estrada, who thus fell into the hands of the enemy: this was a heavier loss to his country than that of the fortress which he had defended so well; for in the course of the war, Catalonia had but too much cause bitterly to regret the loss of such men as Estrada and Alvarez. Five hundred men reached Vich in safety on the following day, 132 joined them on the next, being part of the battalion of Gerona, who had lost their way and fallen in with the enemy; stragglers continually came in, and on the evening of that day, the number who had accomplished their retreat amounted to 800, though the French asserted, that every man was either killed or taken.

In such an enterprise, it was impossible to bring off the sick and wounded; the comptroller of the hospital, D. Manuel Miguel Mellado, remained with them to go through the form of

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