

CHAP. delivering up the ruins, and provide for their safety. Such of the  
XXX. invalids as were best able mounted guard, the gates were closed,  
1810. and the drawbridges raised ; and in this state Mellado anxiously  
May. waited for what might happen. Half an hour before midnight,  
a brisk fire of musketry was poured in upon the flanks of the  
ravelin, and of St. Francisco. Mellado called out to the enemy  
to cease firing, for the fort was theirs ; and he requested them to  
wait till the morning, that he might deliver a letter from the go-  
vernor to the French general. They replied, they would suffer  
no delay, the gates must instantly be opened ; otherwise, they  
had ladders, and would enter and put every man to the sword.  
He, however, told them he would not open the gates till he had  
seen their general ; upon this they renewed their fire, setting up  
a loud shout, like men who were about to obtain possession of  
their prey. Mellado hastened to the bulwark of St. Barbara,  
where he apprehended the escalade would be made, and there  
he perceived that the enemy, who had found a rope-ladder in  
the covered way, were endeavouring to grapple the drawbridge  
with it ; but, either from the weight of the rope, which rendered  
it difficult to be thrown, or because the irons were not sufficiently  
sharp to lay hold, their attempts were frustrated. This Mellado  
could not foresee ; and knowing that no time was to be lost, he  
hastened out through a covered way to the nearest work of the  
enemy, and called out to the commandant, requesting him to  
stop the assault, and send him to the general, that he might  
deliver the governor's letter ; the party who were flanking the  
ravelin no sooner heard his voice, than they fired a volley to-  
wards it ; upon which, without waiting for an answer, he has-  
tened to the nearest sentinel of the French, and the captain of  
the guard conducted him to the French commandant in the  
town ; whom he entreated to have compassion upon the wounded  
in the fort, and call off the assailants. This officer was a man

of humanity, and instantly sent off to suspend the assault, while Mellado, who was now delivered from his fears for his poor defenceless countrymen, was escorted to the general. In the morning the gates were opened to the enemy. The French soldiers gave sufficient proof how little mercy the wounded would have found at their hands, had they been under no controul, for they stript the clothes and blankets from the beds of these helpless men. Mazzachelli gave orders that they should be conveyed to Gerona; and Mellado, having seen this performed, and perceiving that it was intended to detain him and his assistants as prisoners, took the first opportunity of making his escape.

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At the very time when the garrison of Hostalrich, after a four months' defence, and a bombardment, during which between three and four thousand shells were thrown into the place, thus gallantly effected their retreat, the Catalans suffered another loss. The islands and fortress of Las Medas, which were of material importance from their position on the coast, were surprised by a party of Neapolitan infantry, and given up in a manner which the French imputed to cowardice, though, by their own account, treason, on the part of the commander, was the only intelligible cause of the surrender. Lerida also was rather betrayed than yielded by Garcia Conde. The town was entered by assault; and the castle, where the works were uninjured, and which, under Alvarez or Estrada, might have rivalled Gerona, was surrendered the next day. For this there was no excuse; O'Donnell's last orders to the governor had been, that if the city should be taken, he was to defend the fortresses; and if no such orders had been given, his duty required him to hold out to the last extremity. The commander-in-chief, who rewarded the defenders of Hostalrich with a medal, stigmatized this conduct as it deserved; but he reminded the Catalans, that Tarragona, Tortosa, Cardona, Berga, Seu de Urgel, Coll de

*Las Medas  
and Lerida  
surrendered*

*May 13.*

CHAP. Ballaguer, and Mequinenza, still remained as bulwarks of the  
 XXX. principality ; that if all these were lost, there would be their in-  
 1810. accessible mountains ; and that when they began the war, they  
 had neither army nor fortresses, for all their fortified places had  
 been dismantled. A wound which he had received during the  
 siege of Gerona, and which had never been healed, because he  
 never allowed himself rest enough from the incessant and anxious  
 activity of his situation, became now so threatening, that he was  
 constrained for a while to withdraw from the command. Augereau  
 also, about the same time, was recalled. His success in  
 sieges did not expiate, in Buonaparte's eyes, for the loss in men  
 and reputation which he had sustained from an enemy who were  
 now become as wary as they were active and enterprising. Mar-  
 shal Macdonald, Duke of Tarento, succeeded him. The plunder  
 of Barcelona was sent into France under Augereau's escort ; and  
 a number of commercial adventurers from that country, who  
 being deceived by the French official accounts, had supposed  
 that Spain was actually subdued, and gone thither with the intent  
 of forming establishments, gladly seized the first opportunity of  
 returning in safety.

*Augereau  
 superseded  
 by Marshal  
 Macdonald.*

If the war was carried on by the Catalans with an unwearied and unremitting energy which was not displayed in other parts of Spain, it was not wholly owing to that enterprising and unconquerable spirit by which they have always been characterized, but in some degree to the natural strength of the province, and still more to the advantage which they derived from having many places in their possession which could not be reduced without a regular siege. Throughout Spain there existed the same feeling of indignation against the invaders, . . . but where the country, the villages, and the towns were alike open, there was not the same possibility of resistance ; plains could not be defended by peasantry ; nor could the contest be maintained by large bodies

against a superior enemy, when there were neither fortified towns nor natural fastnesses on which they could retire. In such parts the war was carried on by guerrilla parties, who made incursions from the mountainous districts into the plains, and whenever it was necessary to disperse, found friends every where. Wherever the French were nominally masters of the country, the guerrillas harassed their communication, cut off their small parties, and diminished their numbers by a mode of warfare as disheartening to the enemy as it was consuming and inglorious; while in the stronger parts of the kingdom, such as Asturias, and the province of Cuenca, and the mountains of Ronda, the inhabitants perseveringly defended their native soil.

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Cadiz, however, was the point whereon all eyes were at this time turned, in expectation of great events. Victor had been left to command the siege, if siege it may be called. The French occupied the shore of the bay, fortified their own position, and endeavoured to annoy the shipping and the town; a regular attack upon the isle was too perilous for them to attempt. Fort Matagorda was the only point from which it was thought possible that they could injure the town: it had been built for the defence of the arsenal, opposite to the broadest part of that tongue of land which connects Cadiz with the Isle of Leon. From thence it was apprehended they might with the largest land mortars throw shells to the gates of the city; Ormond indeed had planted his cannon there, in the fruitless attempt upon Cadiz in Queen Anne's reign. The fort, like the other land-works, had been dismantled upon their approach; but when it was seen that they were beginning to reconstruct it, it was deemed advisable that they should be dispossessed, and that the post should be maintained as long as possible against them. Accordingly they were compelled to abandon it, and the hasty works which could be re-erected were garrisoned by a party of

*Fort Matagorda taken by the French.*

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British soldiers and seamen under Captain Maclean. They defended it for nearly two months, till it was reduced to a heap of ruins; and having lost in the last two days sixteen killed and fifty-seven wounded, were brought off by the boats of the British squadron, under the fire of the enemy's batteries, with little loss. The manner in which this weak fort was defended taught the French what they might expect if they should attempt the Isle of Leon, for the defence of which a formidable line of works behind the Santi Pietri had now been executed under the direction of General Sir Thomas Graham, who had arrived from England to command the auxiliary forces there. These works extended to the ocean on the right, and on the left occupied the Caraccas as an advanced post. The French also were more intent upon securing themselves in their cantonments than upon annoying the Spaniards. They fortified Puerto Real, Puerto Santa Maria, and Chiclana, formed entrenched camps between these places, and strengthened the Trocadero, where they established batteries from whence to bombard the town. Having presently found the inefficiency of the field artillery, which was all that they had brought with them, they fished up the guns from the French and Spanish ships which had been wrecked upon that coast after the battle of Trafalgar. Most of the heavy pieces with which two-and-twenty batteries were now mounted were recovered in this manner from the sea.

*Storm at  
Cadiz.*

The French, though disappointed in their main object here by Alburquerque's sagacity, and the prompt assistance of the British forces, were in high spirits. They were in a fine country; their quarters were at once commodious and secure; and a few weeks after their arrival the winds and waves threw into their possession no inconsiderable booty. For during a tremendous gale, which continued four days with unabated violence, three line of battle ships, one frigate, and about forty merchantmen

were \* driven to the side of the bay which they occupied, and went on shore at the height of the spring tide. The men were taken out by the boats of the British squadron, and the ships were set on fire by the enemy's red-hot shot; but no small part of the lading fell into their hands. During the tempest the French on board the prison ships could not receive their supplies of provisions and water from the shore; their signals of distress were disregarded by the Spaniards; and if the British Admiral had not sent his boats to their relief as soon as the gale abated, very many more of these miserable men than actually perished must have fallen victims, the Spaniards being in no haste to encounter the swell for the sake of enemies whom they seem to have considered as out of the pale of humanity. In the case of these prisoners, indeed, they had cast off all compassion, and the obduracy of the national character was fully manifested towards them, the negligence of the government being in this instance hardly less criminal than the avarice and brutality of those whom it employed. Admiral Pickmore perceiving with how little care the pontoons were secured, proposed to the Spanish Admiral that chains should be used as bridles to their

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March.

*Cruel usage  
of the  
French pri-  
soners in the  
bay.*

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\* Some days after the storm the boats of the Triumph picked up about thirty tons of quicksilver, in leathern bags of fifty pounds each, which were cast on shore from the wreck. They were stowed below in the store-rooms and after-hold, and the bags having been thoroughly soaked in the sea, decayed and burst before the danger was perceived. As much of the quicksilver as possible was collected, but it insinuated itself every where, and not less than ten tons weight was supposed to have got between the timbers, which could only be cleared by docking the ship and removing a plank at the lowest part near the keel. The provisions were spoilt; two or three hundred of the crew were so severely affected, that it was necessary to remove them immediately, many of them being in a state which left little chance of recovery; and the ship was sent to Gibraltar to have all her stores taken out, and undergo a thorough clearance.

CHAP. cables ; application was made to the Admiral in command at  
 XXX. the Caraccas ; they were promised from time to time, but never  
 1810. sent ; and, as the British Commander had foreseen, the pri-  
 May. soners in the Castilla, nearly 700 in number, and mostly officers,  
 May 15. cut the cable one night, when wind and tide were in their fa-  
*Escape of* vour, and hoisting a sail which they had made from their ham-  
*two prison* mocks, ran for the opposite coast. English boats were presently  
*ships.* sent after them, while it was doubted whether the vessel had  
 not by accident parted from her anchor ; but when they reached  
 her it was impossible to board, the pontoon being light, her ports  
 all down, no steps on the side, nor ropes over it, and the French  
 prepared, not only with musketry, but with cannon-ball of  
 twenty-four and thirty-six pounders, which had been used for  
 ballast in the vessel : two hundred men were stationed to throw  
 these by hand, and the boats were presently disabled when such  
 missiles were showered upon them. Fort Puntales and the gun  
 and mortar boats opened their fire upon the pontoon, the vessel  
 was burnt, but the fugitives, with little loss, effected their escape\*.

A week later the French had nearly obtained possession of  
 a rich prize. The S. Elmo, line of battle ship, with 250,000*l.*  
 on board, in attempting to work out of the bay, got under their  
 battery of S. Catalina. She was saved by the exertions of the  
 officers and men in all the boats of the British squadron.  
 Having turned her head round, the greater part of them went  
 on board, and fought her guns with good effect till out of the  
 enemy's reach. The French had better fortune with the Argo-  
 nauta pontoon ; the prisoners on board that vessel, about six

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\* A minute and interesting account of this escape was published at Lausanne, 1817, with this title, *Relation du Séjour des Prisonniers de Guerre Français et Suisses sur le Ponton la Castille, dans la Baie de Cadix, et de leur Evasion le 15 May, 1810. Par L. Chapuis, de Lausanne, Chirurgien major.*

hundred in number, followed the example of their comrades in the Castilla; a third of these were killed by the fire which was kept up upon them; the remainder escaped from the burning hulk. But though the Spaniards had taken no precautions for rendering such attempts impracticable, they felt how dangerous it was to keep so large a body of prisoners in the bay while a French army was in possession of the shores. Two ships of the line were at this time under orders to carry part of them to the Canaries; and more would have been sent to Majorca and Minorca, whither 5000 had been transported in the preceding year, if the inhabitants had not at this crisis been in a state of excitement, which would have rendered a farther importation dangerous both to the prisoners themselves and to the government. Serious disturbances had broken out in both islands, not from any spirit of disaffection, but from distress, and indignation that so many of these unhappy persons should be cast among them, and no adequate means provided for their subsistence. The Minorcans were less likely to be patient under such misgovernment than any other Spaniards, remembering the prosperity and good order which they had enjoyed while their island was in possession of the English: with them, however, the ebullition of popular feeling past harmlessly off, while Majorca became the scene of a disgraceful and dreadful tragedy. Some fugitives landed at Palma from those parts of the south which had lately fallen under the French yoke; they brought horrible tales concerning the invasion of Andalusia and the conduct of the invaders; and the people, excited by these horrors, cried out for vengeance upon the prisoners. Troops were called out to protect these unfortunate men, but the soldiers would not act against their countrymen; and when the commander, General Reding, as the only means of saving the prisoners, consented that they should be sent to the desert island of Cabrera,

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1810.  
May.

*Insurrection  
against the  
prisoners at  
Majorca.*



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1810.

May.*Prisoners  
sent to Ca-  
brera.**Their inhu-  
man treat-  
ment there.**Mémoires  
d'un Officier  
Français,  
Prisonnier  
en Espagne,  
255, 287.*

many were butchered in his presence, in spite of his entreaties and exertions, and many thrown into the sea, before the embarkation could be effected; nor could it have been effected, if the soldiers had not at length been provoked to fire upon the mob.

Five thousand at first, and afterwards half as many more, were landed upon Cabrera, a rocky island about fifteen miles in circumference, with no other inhabitants than a handful of soldiers, who were stationed there to prevent the Barbary corsairs from making it a place of rendezvous. A few tents were provided for the superior officers, the remainder were left to shelter themselves as they could. There was but one spring on the island, and in summer this was dry: they discovered some old wells, which had been filled up, and which, when cleared, yielded bad water, and very little of it. The supplies from Palma were sent so irregularly, sometimes owing to the weather, but far more frequently to inhuman negligence, that scores and hundreds of these miserable creatures died of hunger and thirst; many were in a state of complete nakedness, when in mere humanity clothing was sent them by the British commander in the Mediterranean: and at other times they were kept alive by barrels of biscuit and of meat which the English ships threw overboard for them, to be cast on shore. But in the third year of their abode, the captain of a Spanish frigate, whose name ought to have been recorded, remonstrated so effectually upon the manner of their treatment, that from that time they were regularly supplied with food. He gave them potatoes and cabbage and tobacco seed, from which they raised sufficient for their consumption; and having by persevering labour, without any other tools than a single knife, broken six feet into a rock, on the surface of which there was appearance enough of moisture to excite their hopes, they obtained a supply of water. Some of them used the skulls of their own dead, for want of other vessels, to contain it; . . . and others,

with no such excuse of necessity, manufactured buttons from their bones! About 1500 entered the Spanish service rather than endure a banishment to which no end could be foreseen; and some 500, chiefly officers, were in compassion removed to England. At the end of the war not more than 2000 remained in Cabrera, nearly half of those who had been landed there having sunk under their sufferings. The Spaniards departed from the straight path of probity when they broke the terms of capitulation which had been granted at Baylen. They committed that breach of faith in deference to popular outcry, and to the sophistry of one who soon proved himself a traitor, . . . the most odious of all those men whom the Revolution either found wicked or made so: and in the subsequent treatment of the prisoners humanity was as little regarded, as honour had been in detaining them. Many and grievous were the errors which the Spaniards committed in the course of the war; but this is the only part of its history which will be remembered for them as a national reproach.

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*See vol. i.  
p. 329.*

On the other hand, the French had as yet abated nothing of that insolent cruelty with which they began the contest, supposing that they could intimidate the Spanish nation. Soult, who had recommended that all the commanding officers employed in Spain should be *impassible*, . . . incapable of any feeling by which they might even possibly be moved to compunction, . . . issued at this time an edict not less extraordinary than Kellermann's. After various enactments, some of which were as impracticable as they were rigorous, imposing penalties upon the inhabitants of those districts in which the patriotic parties should commit any crimes, as this Frenchman was pleased to denominate their hostilities against the invaders of their country; he pronounced, "that there was no Spanish army, except that of his catholic majesty, King Joseph Napoleon; all parties, therefore, which existed in

*M. Soult's  
edict.*

*May 9.*

*See p. 334.*

CHAP.  
XXX.  
1810.

*Counter  
edict of the  
Regency.  
Aug. 15.*

the provinces, whatever might be their number, and whoever might be their commander, should be treated as banditti, who had no other object than robbery and murder; and all the individuals of such parties who might be taken in arms should be immediately condemned and shot, and their bodies exposed along the highways." When the Regency found that this decree was actually carried into effect, they reprinted it, with a counter decree by its side, in French and Spanish, declaring anew, "that every Spaniard capable of bearing arms was in these times a soldier; that for every one who should be murdered by the French, in consequence of the edict of the ferocious Soult, who called himself Duke of Dalmatia, the three first Frenchmen taken in arms should infallibly be hanged; three for every house which the enemy burnt in their devastating system, and three for every person who should perish in the fire." Soult himself they declared unworthy of the protection of the law of nations, while his decree remained unrepealed. They gave orders, that if he were taken, he should be punished as a robber; and they took measures for circulating both decrees throughout Europe, to the end that all persons might be informed of the atrocious conduct of these enemies of the human race; and that those inhabitants of the countries which were in alliance with France, or, more truly, which were enslaved by her, who were unhappy enough to have children, or kinsmen, or friends serving in the French armies in Spain, might see the fate prepared for them by the barbarity of a monster, who thought by such means to subdue a free and noble nation.