

by which Portugal could be saved he had laid down for himself, and from that plan no circumstances, however painful to his own feelings, or however derogatory in appearance to his reputation, could induce him to swerve. He was in communication with Romana at Badajoz; but in the state of the Spanish armies, any plan of co-operation for the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo was impossible. It was, however, of great importance that the place should be resolutely defended to the last extremity, and in this hope Romana and the English general were not disappointed. The minds of the people had been prepared for this extremity; they had their patriotic writers and their poets; the exploits of Julian Sanchez excited the emulation of the youth, and the conduct of the old governor gave confidence to all. The examples of Zaragoza, and Gerona, and Hostalrich, and Astorga, animated the women and children, as well as those who bore arms; for in a cause like theirs they had seen their countrymen acquire a glory when unsuccessful, which could not have been greater had they been victorious. The women and children, when they saw their houses burning, gave way neither to fear nor lamentation, but exerted themselves to quench the flames, and carried refreshment and ammunition to the troops amid the hottest fire. There were two blind beggars in the city: no one supposed that these unfortunate men could render any service during the siege, but zeal taught them how to be serviceable; they carried water to the walls by day, and ammunition by night, with such unwearied activity, that it was the intention of the governor and the Junta, if the town had been saved, to have rewarded them with pensions for life.

It was of great consequence to the Spaniards to keep possession of those buildings without the walls, which would otherwise afford protection to the besiegers, but which also afforded such means for annoying them while they could be defended, that it had not

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*Spirit of the
inhabitants.*

*The nun-
nery of S.
Cruz at-
tacked.*

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been thought advisable to demolish them before the siege. The nunnery of Santa Cruz was the most important of these buildings. D. Ramon Castellanos was posted there with a company of sixty men, when three hundred of the enemy's grenadiers, with a party of sappers, assailed it in the night, half the party attacking it in the rear, the other in the front. They blew up the first and second gates; hand grenades were thrown on both sides; the Spaniards, having the advantage of the building, kept up a most destructive discharge of musketry; the commander of the one party was killed, the captain of engineers, who commanded the other, wounded, but he did not retire till he had set fire to the convent. Seeing the flames, the governor made signal for Castellanos to abandon the post, who accordingly let down his men from a window into one of the inner courts of the convent, and descending himself the last, they forced their way with the bayonet. It was a little after midnight when they reached the gate of La Colada; but seeing, while they took food and rested after the action, that the enemy had extinguished the flames, Castellanos went to the governor, and represented to him that his honour was concerned in recovering the post. He led his men at three in the morning, after only two hours' respite, to the assault, and surprising the French, drove them from their dearly purchased conquest, where they left 158 dead, and 45 wounded behind them, the remainder of the wounded having been removed during the short time that they retained possession.

*Convent of
St. Domingo
recovered.*

July 2.

They were driven from the convent of St. Domingo in a manner not less worthy of remembrance. After they had won the building, Herrasti was very desirous of recovering it, and yet hesitated at giving orders for the attempt, knowing the exhausted state of the garrison, and how ill any loss of men could be afforded. A serjeant, by name Manuel Martin, happened to hear what was the state of the governor's feelings upon this sub-

ject. This man, who was a native of Zamora, had made himself well known to the French: they called him *agua y vino*, water and wine, the words which he always used when engaged in action with them; wine being his signal for attack, and water that for retreat. He had distinguished himself greatly during the siege, and had at this time a wound in his arm, which however did not prevent him from going to the governor, and soliciting permission to make an attack upon the enemy in this convent, saying, that if he could not drive them out, at least he could annoy them there. Accordingly, choosing out five-and-twenty comrades, he attacked the convent with such well-directed vigour, that the enemy, though greatly superior in numbers, were terrified and took to flight, many of them leaving their knapsacks and muskets behind them. This was so signal an exploit, that Manuel Martin was deservedly promoted for it, and a badge of distinction was given to each of the soldiers.

But against such a force as surrounded them, all that the Spaniards could do was to hold out to the uttermost, and sell the fortress as dearly as possible. Massena boasted of having 100,000 men in the field; he had 66,000 infantry and 6000 horse, of whom as many as could be advantageously employed carried on the siege, while the others kept the British army in check, Lord Wellington having only 51,000 under his command, including 3000 cavalry, and half this force composed of Portuguese, who were as yet untried, and consequently in whom little reliance could then be placed. They were, however, brigaded with the British in the proportion of one battalion to two, and were every day acquiring confidence and character. The siege was less murderous than that of Zaragoza, because the city was much smaller and less populous, and, having the advantage of regular works, did not require the same kind of defence. When Herrasti and the Junta saw that it was not possible to hold out

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Julian Sanchez effects his escape from the city

CHAP. much longer, they ordered Julian Sanchez and his lancers to
 XXXI. make their escape while it was yet practicable, reminding San-
 1810. chez how important it was that his services should still be con-
 July. tinued, and telling him he would be of more assistance to Ciudad
 Rodrigo in the field than he could now be within the walls. A
 little before midnight Sanchez collected his troops in the plaza ;
 the two of his company who were married men took their wives
 behind them : they sallied out, and their leader, in the spirit of
 Scanderbeg, instead of contenting himself with merely effecting
 his own retreat, charged a post of cavalry, routed them, and
 carried away eight prisoners with their horses. The two women
 were armed with pistols, and one of them, by name Marta Fraile,
 saved her husband, by shooting a dragoon who was about to
 attack him on one side.

*State of the
 British
 army.*

The British army meantime, though it could render no as-
 sistance, was far from being idly or ill employed. There had
 been a prevailing feeling of despondency before the siege began,
 and an expectation that the town would surrender as soon as the
 enemy should have opened their fire. The progress of the siege
 produced more respect for the Spaniards, and the active service
 in which the men soon found themselves engaged produced cheer-
 fulness and hope. The picquets occupied the line of the Azava
 from Carpio on the right to its junction with the Agueda ; the
 enemy had 8000 men on the left bank of the Agueda, behind
 that river and the Azava, which was fordable in many places.
 The head-quarters of the light division, under Major-General
 Craufurd, were at Gallegos, a short league distant, in an open
 country ; the greatest alertness, therefore, was necessary, and
 the men slept at their horses' heads, the horses bridled and
 the reins in hand. The Germans were selected for the out-
 post duty, being at that time the only troops in the army who
 were acquainted with it : the 16th light dragoons requested to be

intermixed with them on duty, men and officers; a compliment which gratified the brave men to whom it was paid, and the greatest harmony was always preserved. The picquets were brought to the greatest perfection, and the division soon attained that alertness which could only be learnt in such service. The Portugueze behaved well on the first opportunity which was afforded, and obtained the good opinion of their allies; so that every thing went on satisfactorily in the allied army, except that in a trifling and ill-executed affair Colonel Talbot fell, a gallant officer, who had distinguished himself at Talavera, and was deservedly and greatly lamented.

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The French general, to whom time was of more consequence than any cost of lives, pressed the siege with the utmost vigour, but with heavy loss, owing to the repeated sallies of the garrison, and the excellent manner in which the artillery of the Spaniards was served. In hope of forcing the governor to surrender by the cries of the inhabitants, he bombarded the town, and almost destroyed it; but the people were not to be shaken in their purpose, the names of Numantia and Zaragoza were in every mouth, and they were resolved in their turn to transmit a memorable example to posterity. Meantime the regular advances of the besiegers were carried on without intermission, and by the 2d of July a practicable breach had been opened in the Baluarte del Rey. The Spaniards made every exertion to defend it with sacks of earth, estacades, and whatever other obstacles they could oppose to the enemy; but the French did not yet venture an assault; they had so severely experienced the valour of their opponents, that they had determined not to storm the town till the works should be reduced to such a state, that they might avail themselves of the whole advantage of their numbers. They made three mines, one under the counterscarp, the other two under the curtain of the wall and part of the Calle del Seminario, or

A practicable breach made.

CHAP. College-street, near the Cathedral. The besieged were aware
 XXXI. of their progress, but all efforts at impeding it were useless, and
 1810. at three in the morning of the 10th, the counterscarp was blown
 July. up, forming not only an open breach, but such a way to it that
 carts might ascend from the glacis.

Immediately afterwards the French renewed the fire from all their batteries, and kept it up without intermission for twelve hours. During this time the cry of the soldiers and the inhabitants, women and boys, as well as their husbands and fathers, was, that they would beat off the enemy or die ; but the officers and the Junta were well aware, that any farther resistance would only afford the French a pretext for carrying their threats into execution, and putting all to the sword. Thirty thousand men were ready to storm the city that evening. It was not without much difficulty that the people could be induced to hear of a council of war, nor would they have suffered one to be held, had they not seen such undoubted proofs of the patriotism and courage of those who now told them that a surrender was become inevitable. There were some in the council who proposed to follow the example of Julian Estrada at Hostalrich, and force their way with the bayonet through their enemies ; but here, as at Astorga, it was urged that they were in different circumstances, and had therefore different duties ; their business now was to preserve 5000 inhabitants, who would else be exposed to the unrestrained vengeance and brutality of the enemy. Finally, it was resolved to capitulate, but not till the latest moment, when there was no longer the slightest hope or possibility of relief.

*The town
 capitulates.
 July 10.*

Massena's orders to Ney were to assault the town that evening ; the French advanced for this purpose, and were at the foot of the breach, in the act of mounting, when the white flag was hoisted : the officer who planted it in the breach descended with the terms of capitulation, and presented them to Ney, who

sternly told him it was now too late for any thing. The Spaniard, however, had recourse to Massena, who was at that time supposed to be more humane than Ney. The first article was, that the garrison should march out with the honours of war; the rest were in like manner such as are usual in the like circumstances. Massena having cast his eye over them, said, "Tell your governor, this is no time to ratify the terms in writing; but I grant all which he requires, and am going to give orders accordingly." He then sent his adjutant-general to bid Ney suspend the assault. Loison immediately marched through the breach, and took possession of the town; and General Simon, notwithstanding Massena's pledged word, made the garrison deposit their arms in the arsenal.

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The other terms were at the moment fulfilled; and when Herrasti, the next day, requested that the capitulation might be signed, in order that he might transmit it to his own government, Massena replied, that as he saw the articles observed, he neither could nor ought to require more. The people had escaped the horrors of an assault; but in other respects they soon found they were at the mercy of a conqueror who acknowledged no other law than his own pleasure. Herrasti had stipulated for the liberty of the civil officers; they, however, were declared prisoners of war. The members of the Junta were thrown into the vilest dungeon of the public gaol, from whence, after having endured for eight-and-forty hours every kind of insult and ill treatment, they were marched on foot to Salamanca, in company with the governor, who alone was permitted to retain his horse. The clergy were arrested and shut up for two days in the church of St. Juan; the old and infirm were then suffered to go to their houses, but forbidden the exercise of their functions; the lay brethren were ordered to serve in the hospitals, and all the others sent prisoners to Salamanca. The next measures were, to impose a

*Conduct of
the French.*

CHAP. contribution of 1,800,000 reales, and to set from six to eight hun-
 XXXI. dred men at work to destroy the batteries, fill up the trenches,
 1810. and repair the works, compelling them to labour like slaves,
 July. giving them no provisions, and allowing them little rest.

The account which the French published of their conquest was, according to their system, full of falsehoods. They asserted that the garrison had surrendered at discretion, which could only be contradicted, not disproved, because Massena had broken his word. This falsehood is worthy of remark, because it shows so strikingly the characteristic baseness of Buonaparte's generals. Ciudad Rodrigo was evidently at their mercy; a generous enemy would have rejoiced to show his sense of the merits of those who had opposed him, and would have known that in refusing them the honours of war, he deprived them only of a barren form; for the merit of their gallant and heroic defence it was not in his power to efface. Massena, not satisfied with thus injuring Herrasti's honour, cast upon him a fouler aspersion, making him say, that he and the garrison would have surrendered sooner, if they had not been intimidated by the inhabitants. In reality, such had been the noble spirit of the soldiers, that it was only by the entreaties, as well as the arguments of the superior Junta of Castille, whose residence was in that city, that they were prevailed upon to give up their intention of attempting to cut their way through the besiegers. The French general did not forget to insult the English, and endeavour by his falsehoods to exasperate the Spaniards against them. "Ciudad Rodrigo," he said, "fell in their presence; they promised to succour it; made the inhabitants prolong their defence by this deceitful hope; and suffered the place to fall without making the slightest effort for its relief. Thus they had excited against them the universal indignation of the garrison and the people, who united in exclaiming against their perfidy."

This justice, however, Massena did to Ciudad Rodrigo, that he admitted the defence had been most obstinate. It was impossible, he said, to form an idea of the state to which it was reduced. Every thing had been battered down; not a single house remained uninjured. The killed he estimated at more than 2000. The Spaniards stated it at only sixty-three of the inhabitants, and 237 of the garrison. Seven thousand soldiers, he said, laid down their arms: . . . the number at the commencement of the siege was 4950. Six hundred made their escape on the night of the capitulation, and more than 1500 before they reached Salamanca. Above two-and-forty thousand shells were thrown into the city, and nearly five-and-twenty thousand from it. The quantity of powder consumed by the garrison during the last sixteen days was 893 quintales, . . . the quintal being 132 lbs. The French gave no statement of their own loss; it was probably very considerable; the Spaniards estimated it at 3400. The capture, however, occasioned the greatest exultation in Paris, and the *Moniteur* mingled with its own insults the echoes of our factious journalists. "The good sense of the English people," it said, "enabling them to foresee the dishonour and destruction of their army in Portugal, they are convinced that the most fortunate event which could befall it would be a catastrophe like that of Moore's. They are too much accustomed to calculate chances and events not to know, that alone against France they can, in such a contest, meet nothing but disaster, and obtain nothing but disgrace." "Men of sound judgement, like Grenville or Grey, are numerous in England," said the *Moniteur*, "but they are at present without any influence there." Then, returning to its natural tone of insult, it ridiculed the strength of Lord Wellington's army, amounting to the dreadful number of 24,000 English. "The cries of the inhabitants of Ciudad Rodrigo," it said, "were heard in his camp, which was only six

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*July.**Speculations
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leagues distant: but all ears were shut against them; the English made no attempt to succour that city: . . . they were the laughing-stock of Europe; every coffee-house waiter knew their weakness on land, as well as their influence at sea. Ciudad Rodrigo was one of the last bulwarks of the insurrection; its capture made the catastrophe more imminent for England, who would now find it necessary to call to the helm more prudent men, better acquainted with the nature of the resources and of the strength of their country, and therefore more moderate."

In England, too, we were told, that if Ciudad Rodrigo were taken, the efforts of the English might be considered to be at an end; the French would then be able to advance without fear of a check; the harvest also being now begun, whatever grain there was in the country they would be able to secure for themselves, and so form magazines, the want of which had hitherto chiefly retarded their advance. At one time these politicians cried out, "that Lord Wellington could not permit the enemy quietly to prosecute the siege of so important a fortress." At another, "they would not suppose him capable of fighting a useless battle: for they trusted he was not so prodigal of the blood of his followers. They trusted that his operations would be justified by the event." Then again "they were not competent to speak from their own knowledge, yet certainly it did appear a doubtful policy to be patiently waiting till Massena had time to concentrate his troops, and make all his arrangements for an attack on the British position." "The plan of overwhelming Lord Wellington, by bringing an immense superiority to bear upon him, was one which obviously presented itself; there seemed no insurmountable difficulty in the execution; obstacles there might be, from want of provisions and other circumstances, but the skill and perseverance of the French in combating them forbade us to place much reliance upon such grounds." In this