

manner, always presaging evil, and consistent in nothing but despondency, sometimes borrowing the tone of the *Moniteur*, and sometimes setting it, did these journalists of a disappointed party labour to deaden the hearts and hopes of their countrymen; while their more daring, but hardly more mischievous, coadjutors addressed their weekly invectives to the readers and auditors in pot-houses and tap-rooms, abusing their ignorance, appealing to, and inflaming their worst passions, and crying out against the measures of their own government, while upon the crimes of Buonaparte they observed a silence which sufficiently indicated their sympathy with his system, their wishes for the extension of his tyranny, and their hopes of his eventual success.

CHAP.  
XXXI.  
1810.  
*July.*

The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo enabled Massena to detach a force for the relief of Astorga, where General Mahy, who commanded in Galicia, was blockading the French garrison. This object was easily effected. General Taboada at this time occupied Puebla de Sanabria, where he was exerting himself to organize a body of troops for the field: General Echavarria was engaged in like manner at Alcañizas. In such feeble, uncombined efforts the spirit of the country was spent, and its resources frittered away; for as soon as men enough were brought together to attract the enemy's attention, they were either dispersed or destroyed. This was the fate of Echavarria's corps; it was surprised by a French detachment under General La Croix, and nearly annihilated. The alarm spread to Silveira's head-quarters at Braganza, and Colonel Wilson (his second in command) hastened with the advanced guard to Echavarria's support; but he arrived only to find the ground covered with dead and wounded Spaniards, the enemy having retired to Carvales, after completely accomplishing the purpose of their expedition. Massena boasted soon afterwards of a like success at Sanabria; but the results

*La Puebla  
de Sanabria  
occupied by  
the French.*

CHAP. were very different. The French magnified the importance of  
 XXXI. this post, saying that it commanded the entrance into Portugal,  
 1810. and shut up the communication with Galicia. They said also,  
 July. that Lord Wellington had enjoined the Spanish governor to  
 make an obstinate defence; but that the governor reproached  
 him in reply for having deceived the commandant of Ciudad  
 Rodrigo, and broken his word with him; told him it was evident  
 he intended to do nothing for Spain, but only, for the sake of  
 fomenting divisions, held out hopes of assistance which were  
 never realized; yet nevertheless offered to shut himself up in  
 the fortress, and bury himself in its ruins, if the English general  
 would send him one Englishman for two Spaniards, to assist in  
 its defence. The answer of Lord Wellington, the French papers  
 said, might easily be conceived; and the Spanish general there-  
 fore abandoned the town, where General Serras found twenty  
 pieces of artillery, and provisions for 3000 men for six months.  
 After this the French made no farther mention of the Puebla de  
 Sanabria.

*The Portu-  
 gueze re-  
 take it.*

D. Francisco Taboada Gil, the officer who was thus falsely  
 represented as insulting the English general, had communicated  
 not with him but with the Portugueze commander, Silveira, at  
 Braganza, with whom it was agreed that he should evacuate  
 the place if it were attacked by a superior force. Taboada  
 accordingly fell back upon the Portillas de Galicia; Silveira,  
 having ascertained that Serras had returned with the greater  
 part of his troops to Mombuey, concerted measures with the  
 Spanish general for surprising the garrison which the French had  
 left in Sanabria, and on the fourth day after they had taken pos-  
 session of their boasted conquest, the enemy found themselves  
 invested in the fort. They were summoned; but the commander  
 replied, that he had men and ammunition to defend himself with,  
 and that he expected speedily to be succoured by Marshal Mas-

*Aug. 3.*

sená. On the following morning a detachment of about seventy French cavalry came on to attack the advanced guard of the Portugueze, under Captain Francisco Texeira Lobo, whose force was about equal ; but while he charged them in front, another small party of Portugueze, by his instructions, wheeled round and attacked them in the rear: they were instantly broken, and twenty-eight were left upon the field, thirty prisoners, and forty horses taken. The remainder of that day was spent in vain endeavours to force an entrance into the fort: the assailants burnt the gates, but the enemy blocked them up effectually with stones; the Portugueze and Spaniards then got possession of a house adjoining, from whence they attempted to make a way through, but the enemy soon battered it down. On the morrow, one mortar and one three-pounder were planted against them; the first became useless after a few discharges, and Silveira, the next morning, sent for a six-pounder from Braganza. He was now apprized that Serras was advancing in force to relieve the garrison. Silveira left the Spaniards to maintain the blockade, and drew up in order of battle upon the river Tera; but Serras, having reconnoitred his force, thought proper to retire upon Mombuey. The six-pounder, from Braganza, was an iron gun, in such a state, that when it arrived it was of no avail; and a twelve-pounder, which on the 8th was brought from the same place, proved in the same condition: this was a serious disappointment, for Silveira was now apprized that Serras was collecting reinforcements. Six hundred horse had entered Zamora, on their way to him, and two battalions of Italian troops were joining him from Benevente, Leon, and Astorga. Unable to batter the place, because of the wretched state of his artillery, which had been long left to rust in a dilapidated fortress, he tried the effect of mining; here experience and skill were wanting, and only the face of the curtain was thrown down. The garrison,

CHAP.  
XXXI.  
1810.  
*August.*

*Aug. 9.*

CHAP. however, who were Swiss, dreaded that a second attempt might  
XXXI. prove more successful; and their commandant, pleading that  
1810. he and his men were not French, proposed and obtained good  
August. terms, delivering up the place on condition that they should  
be allowed to embark from Coruña, and return to their own  
country, on their parole, not to bear arms against the allied  
powers. The artillery of the place, and the stores, were re-  
stored to the Spaniards; but Silveira retained for the Portugueze  
an eagle, the first which they had taken from their enemy. Sixty  
of the Swiss entered into the service of the allies.

Serras was in sight of Silveira's advanced posts when this  
capitulation was concluded; he had with him from 4000 to 5000  
foot, and about 800 cavalry. The allied Portugueze and Span-  
iards were inferior in number, and still more in discipline, and  
with this unequal force pressing hard upon them they broke up  
from Sanabria, at a time when the prisoners were come three  
hours march on the way to Coruña. Colonel Wilson, who had  
been ordered on an important duty to head-quarters, returned  
in time to assume the command of the rear-guard, and with it  
cover their retrograde movement. He checked the French in a  
sharp affair of cavalry, after which he took the open road to  
Braganza, Silveira retreating with the foot upon the heights of  
Calabor, where the enemy, if they should continue the pursuit,  
could derive no advantage from their horse. But having arrived  
too late for saving the garrison, they advanced no farther than  
Pedralva, and from thence returned to Sanabria, then to Mom-  
buey. This was the termination of General Serras's success at  
the Puebla de Sanabria; the whole of the garrison which he  
left there were taken prisoners, and the eagle which was taken  
with them was deposited with proper triumph in the cathedral  
at Lisbon, as the first trophy of the regenerated Portugueze.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

CAPTURE OF ALMEIDA. CONDUCT OF THE PORTUGUEZE GOVERNMENT. BATTLE OF BUSACO. RETREAT OF THE BRITISH AND PORTUGUEZE TO THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS. THE KING'S ILLNESS.

FROM Ciudad Rodrigo Massena addressed a proclamation to the Portugueze. "Inhabitants of Portugal," he said, "the Emperor of the French has put under my orders an army of 110,000 men, to take possession of this kingdom, and to expel the English, your pretended friends. Against you he has no enmity: on the contrary, it is his highest wish to promote your happiness, and the first step for securing it is to dismiss from the country those locusts who consume your property, blast your harvests, and palsy your efforts. In opposing the Emperor, you oppose your true friend; a friend who has it in his power to render you the happiest people in the world. Were it not for the insidious counsels of England, you might now have enjoyed peace and tranquillity, and have been put in possession of that happiness. You have blindly rejected offers calculated only to promote your benefit, and have accepted proposals which will long be the curse of Portugal. His majesty has commissioned me to conjure you that you would awake to your true interests; that you would awake to those prospects which, with your consent, may be quickly realized; awake so as to distinguish between friends and enemies. The King of England is actuated by selfish

1810.  
July.  
*Massena's  
proclamation  
to the  
Portugueze.*

CHAP. and narrow purposes ; the Emperor of the French is governed  
 XXXII. by principles of universal philanthropy. The English have put  
 1810. arms into your hands, arms which you know not how to use : I  
 July. will instruct you. They are to be the instruments of annihilation  
 to your foes : . . and who those foes are I have already shown.  
 Use them as you ought, and they will become your salvation !  
 Use them as you ought not, and they will prove your destruction !  
 Resistance is vain. Can the feeble army of the British general  
 expect to oppose the victorious legions of the Emperor ? Already  
 a force is collected, sufficient to overwhelm your country. Snatch  
 the moment that mercy and generosity offer ! As friends you  
 may respect us, and be respected in return ; as foes you must  
 dread us, and in the conflict must be subdued. The choice is  
 your own, either to meet the horrors of a bloody war, and see your  
 country desolated, your villages in flames, your cities plundered ;  
 or to accept an honourable and happy peace, which will obtain  
 for you every blessing that by resistance you would resign for  
 ever."

*The French  
 invest Al-  
 meida.*

On the same day that Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered, the enemy's cavalry appeared on the plains of Almeida. Lord Wellington's head-quarters at this time were at Alverca : his position was a defensive line, about thirty miles in extent, along the frontier mountains of Beira ; but as the line formed a segment of a circle, the points were not distant from each other in proportion to its length. The infantry extended from Celorico to Guarda on the one side, and to Fort Conception, one of the out-works of Almeida, on the other. The cavalry were in advance near Fort Conception, and at Sabugal, and on the Coa. The enemy's superiority in horse was very great, but the nature of the ground deprived them of the advantage which this must otherwise have given them. They now proceeded to invest Almeida. The operations of the siege were conducted by the

second corps, under Marshal Ney. Junot, with the 8th, had his head-quarters at S. Felices, and his cavalry at Villar de Porco, Fuente Guinaldo, and Fuentes d'Onoro, ground which had not then been rendered memorable in military history. While this portion of the army covered the siege, Serras with a division of 7000 men at Benevente threatened Tras os Montes, and Bonnet with 8000 at Astorga was ready to enter Galicia and the province of Entre Douro e Minho.

CHAP.  
XXXII.  
1810.  
July.

Dumouriez, forgetting Elvas at the time, has called Almeida Almeida. the strongest place in Portugal. It is perhaps more important from its situation, but very far inferior to it in strength. This town was founded by the Moors, and is said to have been one of those which Ferrando the Great won from them while the Cid served under him, in his first wars. When the tide of success was for a while turned by the entrance of the Almoravides into Spain, Talmayda, as it was then called, fell again into the hands of the misbelievers, from whom it was finally reconquered, in 1190, by King Sancho I. of Portugal. Payo Guterres, distinguishing himself in the conquest, obtained from it the appellation of *O Almeydam*, the Almeydan, and transmitted to his descendants the surname of Almeyda, conspicuous in Portuguese and Indian history, but disgraced at this time by the representative of the family, who was then engaged in Massena's army as a traitor. King Diniz, the ruins of whose magnificent works are to be seen in every part of Portugal, rebuilt the city, and is supposed to have removed it from a valley, a little way north of its present site. The castle was built by him, and repaired by King Emanuel. In the later wars between Spain and Portugal, Almeida has always been considered a place of great importance, being the bulwark of the latter country on its most accessible side; but, like other things of more essential consequence to the strength of a kingdom, it had long been neglected. In 1809

CHAP. there were not a dozen gun-carriages fit for service, nor any  
 XXXII. wood in store for the construction of others; the embrasures were  
 1810. falling to decay, and the palisades of the covert-way had been  
 August. mostly broken, or carried away for fire-wood. The works were  
 originally ill constructed, and the place had the great disadvantage of being commanded on one side by a hill. Its population in 1747 was 2463; and Almeida is not one of the few places in Portugal which have been progressive since that time.

*Fort Con-  
 ception  
 abandoned.*

The same causes which rendered it impossible for Lord Wellington to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo, made it necessary for him to leave Almeida to its own means of defence; but the works had been repaired, the garrison was strong, and Brigadier Cox, an English officer in the Portugueze service, was appointed to the command. With the example of Ciudad Rodrigo before it, there was no reason to doubt that Almeida would make a vigorous resistance, and probably hold out so long as materially to derange the plans of the enemy. Fort Conception was abandoned and blown up at the enemy's approach. General Craufurd, however, continued to occupy a position near Almeida with 3200 British and 1100 Portugueze troops, eight squadrons of cavalry included. The chain of his cavalry outposts formed a semicircle in front of the town, their right flank resting on the Coa, near As Naves, about three miles above this fortress, and their left, in like manner, resting upon the same river, about three miles below it, near Cinco Villas. The centre was covered by a small stream, and on the right and centre, where it was expected that the enemy would advance, the cavalry posts were supported by piquets of infantry. There was but one road by which the artillery and cavalry could retreat, that leading from Almeida to the bridge, which is about a mile west of the town. The nature of the ground made it difficult for the enemy to approach this road on the left of the allies, and on the south the infantry were placed



to cover it, having their right flank resting on the Coa above the bridge, their front covered by a deep rocky ravine, and their left in some enclosures near a \* windmill, on the plain, about 800 yards south of the town.

CHAP.  
XXXII.  
1810.  
July.

On the morning of July 24th, the centre of the British line of piquets was attacked; they were supported by the 14th light dragoons and two guns, but were withdrawn when a considerable column of the enemy appeared with artillery, and began to form on the other side of the rivulet. The force which Marshal Ney, who directed these movements, brought into the field, consisted of 20,000 foot and between 3000 and 4000 horse, being in fact his whole corps. Fifteen squadrons of cavalry crossed the rivulet as soon as the piquets retired, and formed with artillery in front, and about 7000 infantry on their right; other troops meantime were advancing upon the right of the British position, the side on which they might best expect to cut off the retreat of the allies to the bridge. General Craufurd now perceived that it was impossible for him to prevent the investment of Almeida, and that he was on the wrong side of the Coa. The artillery and cavalry were therefore ordered to retreat along the only road which was practicable for them; the infantry from the left to move off in *echelon*; the right it was necessary to hold till the last, to prevent the enemy from approaching the bridge by a road coming from Junca, which runs in the bottom of the valley by the river side.

Affair on  
the Coa.

On the left, the men had to retreat through thick vineyards, intersected with deep trenches, and with walls six or seven feet high; they could not take advantage of this ground, for the

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\* Upon this windmill the governor intended to mount a gun, and the gun was lying in it, but not as yet mounted, and consequently useless; another dismantled gun was lying near the mill. These guns of course could be of no use in the action which ensued, but they figured in Marshal Massena's account of it.

CHAP. enemy were in such force, that there was imminent danger of  
XXXII. being overpowered, and cut off before they could reach the  
1810. bridge. One of these walls General Craufurd had considered as  
a complete defence against cavalry; it enclosed a vineyard, in  
which some companies had been stationed, but there had been  
a heavy rain during the whole of the preceding night, and the  
troops had pulled down this wall in many places to make use of the  
stones for forming a shelter; through these openings the enemy's  
horse entered, and here they made most of the prisoners who  
were taken in the action. To retire in order over such ground  
was impossible, but the retreat was made with characteristic  
coolness. On the other side the bridge, the ground was equally  
unfavourable for re-forming; the 43d and part of the 95th regi-  
ments were ordered to form in front of the bridge, and defend it  
as long as they could, while the rest of the troops should pass  
over and take a new position. They obeyed these orders so  
literally, that they defended it all day; three times the enemy  
attempted to force the passage, and each time they were re-  
pulsed at the point of the bayonet; at length, when night closed,  
and every thing had passed over, and the enemy had ceased to  
assail them, these brave men retreated from the post where so  
many of their comrades had fallen: the heaviest loss necessarily  
fell upon these gallant regiments; the total, in killed, wounded,  
and prisoners, amounted to 330\*. Colonel Hall of the 43d, who

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\* Massena's official statement of this action was a masterpiece of impudent falsehood. He asserted that General Craufurd's force consisted of 2000 horse and 8000 foot, and that they were all posted under the guns of the fortress; that they gave way before the French, our cavalry not daring to meet them with the sabre, and the infantry pursued at a running step; that we lost sixty officers, of whom twenty-four were buried in the field of battle; 400 killed, 700 wounded, 400 prisoners, one stand of colours, and two pieces of cannon, while the loss of the conquerors did not amount to 300. He took no colours, and the two pieces of cannon