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was composed, sent an aide-de-camp, to ask if any change was to be made in the dispositions for battle. St. Cyr's reply was, "We have neither time nor means to make dispositions. In this covered country it would take at least three hours to reconnoitre the enemy well, . . . in less than two, Lazan might arrive to attack us in the rear, and Milans might fall upon our left. We have not a minute to lose; but must bring our whole force to bear upon the centre of their line." Notwithstanding these orders, the first brigade deployed, and attacking the left of Reding's division suffered considerably, and began to give way. St. Cyr, when he saw his orders disobeyed, instructed Pino to execute his original plan with the second brigade, and, changing the direction of Souham's division, sent it to turn General Reding's right. Two battalions were ordered to make a false attack upon the left of the Spanish position. Here the rout began. The centre was forced at the same time; and Vives and his staff, seeing all hope lost on that side, hastened to the right, where the advantage had hitherto appeared to be with Reding. But they carried panic with them; Souham's division decided the battle in that quarter with equal celerity, and the steadiness with which some of the old troops behaved was not supported well enough to save the Spaniards from a total and scandalous defeat. It was eight o'clock when they formed for action, and before nine they were in full flight. General Vives lost his horse, and, escaping on foot across the mountains, reached Mataro, and got on board a vessel. There was an end of all order: officers and men shifted as they could, each for himself. One column alone under Colonel Ybarrola retreated unbroken; and two out of fourteen guns were brought off by a Sub-lieutenant named Uzurrun. Reding, who had been saved by the speed of his horse from close pursuit, fell in with these at Mommalo, rallied what fugitives could be collected, and retreated with them by S. Culgat, across the Llobregat to Molins

de Rey. The artillery had been well served, and the French loss by their own account amounted to 600 men. Of the Spaniards 2000 are said to have been taken, of whom 800 were wounded. Their killed were about 400. The loss in men was trifling, for the fugitives dispersed in all directions, and the conquerors wasted no time in pursuit: but the most favourable opportunity which presented itself to the Spaniards during the whole war was lost, . . . the opportunity of cutting off a second French army, which would have drawn after it the recovery of Barcelona, and a second deliverance of Zaragoza.

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*Cabañes,*  
*p. 3. c. 11.*  
*St. Cyr,*  
*63—70.*

The firing was heard at Barcelona, from whence Duhesme, seeing so large a part of the besieging force drawn off, sallied against the remainder: he was bravely received, and repulsed at all points. But when night came, Caldagues, who had been left in the command, hearing the fatal issue of the battle, withdrew behind the Llobregat, removing almost the whole of his artillery, but leaving copious magazines which Vives, with that want of discretion that characterized all his conduct, had collected at Sarrea, and which it was now impossible to save. The retreat was effected without molestation; but so miserable a scene had not for many generations been witnessed in Catalonia. The country around Barcelona was one of the most flourishing and delightful parts of the whole kingdom, bearing every mark of industry and opulence and comfort. The whole population of that vicinity followed the retreat, men, women, and children carrying upon their backs such effects as they could bear, and leaving all the rest to the spoilers. The nuns of three convents were among the fugitives: about an hundred of these poor women were so advanced in years that they were hardly able to walk, . . . since childhood they had never been beyond the walls of their cloister, and now they were thus driven abroad into the world. Reding had reached Molins de Rey at midnight, and by great exertions

*Retreat of*  
*the Spaniards from*  
*Barcelona to the Llobregat.*

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*St. Cyr  
marches  
against  
them.  
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restoring some order among the troops which he had collected in his flight, took a position upon the heights that command the bridge.

St. Cyr entered Barcelona on the following morning, ill satisfied with Duhesme for not having interposed to cut off the fugitives ; and still more displeased when he found that the distress of the garrison for provisions had been greatly exaggerated, and that in consequence of these false representations he had been compelled to undertake a march so perilous that nothing but the gross incapacity of his opponents could have saved the army from\* destruction. He rested his men three days, and on the fourth took a position on the left bank of the Llobregat in face of the Spaniards, that they might have no time to strengthen themselves in the advantageous post which they occupied, nor to be joined by the troops under Lazan and Milans. But these officers had no intention of joining ; and Reding, upon whom the temporary command had devolved, was less able than a Spaniard would have been to struggle with the difficulties in which he found himself. A Spanish General would neither have foreseen defeat nor have been cast down by it ; he would have thought a change of fortune as likely as a change of weather ; he would have relied upon the Saints and the Virgin, his good cause and

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\* The officers were so aware of their danger, that Cabañes heard one of the staff say they should certainly have believed it was their General's intention to betray them to the enemy, . . . if they had not had the most entire confidence in him. It seems indeed probable that Buonaparte, not foreseeing what the consequences of a defeat in Catalonia would be, would have thought the disgrace or destruction of a general whom he disliked a compensation for the loss of this army.

General Duhesme perished in the flight from Waterloo : the stain of his blood was pointed out to me on the threshold of the inn at Genap, where he was cut down by a Brunswicker.

the insuperable constancy of his countrymen. But Reding saw only the fearful realities of his situation; he knew that his own knowledge of the art of war was of no avail when he could depend neither upon officers nor men; and his sole hope was, that a speedy and honourable death might remove him from the sight of calamities which he deemed it impossible to avert. A more pitiable condition cannot be conceived, . . . except that of the brave and honourable men employed against him, who from a sense of military duty served with their utmost efforts a cause which they knew to be infamously unjust, and acting in obedience to a merciless tyrant with miscreants worthy of such a master, aided and abetted crimes at which their hearts revolted . . . sinning thus against God and man, against the light of conscience and against their own souls.

On the second day after the rout, Vives, who had landed at Sitges, appeared upon the Llobregat, and having approved of Reding's dispositions, left him in the command while he went to Villafranca to take measures with the Junta for calling out the whole peasantry of the country, and for reuniting the dispersed troops. There was the difficult task of providing for the army, . . . their magazines had been abandoned to the enemy, and they were in a country which now for six months had been the immediate scene of war. They were without clothes and without shelter, and a piercing wind from the mountains swept down the valley of the Llobregat. While they were employed in felling trees and erecting huts, the alarm was given that the French were taking a position in front of them. The men were immediately placed under arms, and dispositions were made for maintaining a post strong in itself, and defended by numerous artillery. But it was soon perceived that the attack would not be made that day. St. Cyr fixed his head quarters in the centre at San Feliu, having his left at Cornella and his right at Molins

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*Indecision  
of the Spa-  
niards.  
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de Rey. He saw by the movements of the Spaniards that they expected the main attack would be at that place, by the bridge over which the high road passes to Tarragona, and a little way beyond branches off to Zaragoza. They had in fact made such preparations that it was impossible for the French to debouch there while the point was defended with any resolution. St. Cyr therefore ordered General Chabran to draw their attention thither during the night, and not to make any real attempt till he should see both the centre and the right of the enemy turned: for the river was fordable in several places, and the Spaniards with strange improvidence had taken no means for rendering it impassable in those points. Indeed as soon as they were satisfied that the attack was delayed till the morning, Reding held a council of war in his tent; and all who were present agreed that considering the temper of the troops after their late defeat, it would be imprudent to hazard another engagement... Some were for retreating to Ordal, and occupying a position there; . . . it was not so defensible as that which they proposed to abandon; but to men in their state of mind it seemed better, because it was at a distance: others were for retiring at once to Tarragona, where the army might be re-organized in safety. Reding himself thought it certainly advisable to retreat: but he who had no fear of death was miserably afraid of responsibility; and wanting resolution to act upon his own judgement, dispatched a courier to solicit instructions from General Vives, who was seven leagues off. Night came on; the troops were under arms, exposed to severe cold and snow; the fires of both armies were seen along their whole lines; . . . an alarm was kept up at the bridge by Chabran's division, and from time to time the Spanish batteries fired where they saw any movement on the opposite bank. At midnight no answer from Vives had arrived; and Reding, not

doubting that it would confirm the opinion of the council, issued orders that the troops should be in readiness to commence their retreat as soon as it came. But Vives also sought to shift the responsibility from himself; and when his answer arrived, which was not till four in the morning, its purport was, that Reding was to retire to Ordal if he could not maintain himself on the Llobregat. Reding now felt that the night had been lost in this ruinous indecision, and finding the responsibility which he dreaded thrown back upon him, deemed it better to die where he was than commence a retreat with the certainty of being instantly and closely pursued. He made this determination known to the officers who were about his person, exhorting them to do their duty like true Spaniards, and die in defence of their country: they shook hands with him in pledge of their promise, and in this temper waited for the attack.

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*Cabañes,*  
p. 3. c. 12.

At break of morning on the shortest day in the year, the left wing of the French under General Souham forded the river at St. Juan d'Espi, and ascended the right bank to protect the centre, which in like manner crossed in a line from St. Feliu, opposite to the right of the Spaniards. The first brigade of the centre effected its passage before any such intention was perceived or apprehended by their opponents. The Spaniards could have given no greater proof of negligence than in leaving undefended points which were so easily defensible, and upon which the security of their position depended; but in making dispositions as soon as they discovered the enemy's movements, they evinced a degree of skill which convinced the French that there were officers among them who would have been formidable antagonists had they commanded troops upon whom they could have relied. The first brigade, however, was in time to establish itself with little opposition upon the heights of Llors and S. Coloma; the second followed, and placed itself at the foot of

Dec. 21.  
*The Spaniards routed, and pursued to Tarragona.*

CHAP. those heights, masked, in column, and ready to debouch. Cha-  
XVI. bot's troops crossed at the same ford, and marched to the left of  
1808. the others, with the intention of turning the Spaniards' right.  
December. The effect of these movements was, that the Spanish troops, dismayed, as their officers had anticipated, by the late reverses, easily gave way: the right was driven back behind the centre; that being attacked also, was thrown back upon the left toward the bridge; their retreat upon Villa Franca was cut off by Chabot: a detachment from the French right, which had crossed at a ford above the bridge, intercepted them also on the way to Martorell; and if Chabran had then forced the passage of the bridge, they would have been beset on all sides, and driven together for slaughter like wild beasts at a royal hunt in the East. Chabran, however, not willing to expose his men to a loss which might be spared, waited till Souham's troops arrived on the opposite bank, and then debouched from the bridge. There are no troops in the world except the Spaniards, says St. Cyr, who could have escaped from such a situation. They did it by abandoning every thing, and flying every man his own way. General Reding and the officers who had pledged themselves to die with him in maintaining the position had not even an opportunity of dying afforded them, unless they had sought it like suicides. The country being craggy, wooded, and full of ravines, favoured the fugitives, so that during an active pursuit of fifteen hours not more than some 1100 prisoners were taken. Caldagues was among them, and the good service which he had performed in relieving Gerona did not exempt him now from a suspicion of having betrayed the Spaniards in favour of his countrymen. The pursuit was followed to the very gates of Tarragona, and some of the fugitives did not stop till they reached the Ebro. All the artillery, consisting of 50 pieces of cannon, was taken; and large magazines of ammunition were

found at Villa Franca, to the great relief of the French, who had not enough in Barcelona for a month's consumption. Chabran's division established itself at Martorell, Chabot's at S. Sadurni, Souham's at Vendrell and upon the left bank of the Gaya, Pino's at Villa Franca, Villa Nueva, and Sitjas. St. Cyr fixed his head-quarters at Villa Franca. Thus far he had completely succeeded in whatever he had proposed: . . . there was no longer an army in the field to oppose him; Barcelona was not only relieved, but stored and rendered secure; and Zaragoza (which in a moral if not a military point of view was an object of more importance) was precluded from all succour in that quarter, from whence alone an effectual effort might reasonably have been expected.

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*St. Cyr,*  
82—88.  
*Cabañes,*  
p. 3. c. 12.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MOVEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL ARMY UNDER THE DUKE DEL INFANTADO. BATTLE OF UCLES. RETREAT FROM CUENCA. CARTAOJAL APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND. PROGRESS OF THE FRENCH. SIR ROBERT WILSON ENTERS CIUDAD RODRIGO. NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE ADMISSION OF BRITISH TROOPS INTO CADIZ.

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*The Spaniards not discouraged by their reverses.*

SIR John Moore's movements, fatal as they were to his army and himself, and most injurious to public opinion in England, were not without some good effect, though far inadequate to the price at which it was purchased. They drew into Galicia those forces which would otherwise have taken possession of Lisbon and of Seville, and they afforded the Junta time for raising new levies and bringing new armies into the field. The spirit of the nation was in no degree abated; their numerous defeats, the loss of their capital, and the treachery of chiefs in whom they had entirely trusted, seemed rather to exasperate than dismay them; and there would have been no lack of strength had there been arms for the willing people, officers to discipline them, a government which could have provided for their support, and generals capable of directing their zeal and courage. A memorable instance of the national disposition was displayed in the little town of Luzena. According to a decree of the Junta, four men of every hundred were to be drawn for military service; all who were liable to the lot assembled, 400 in number, and when the magistrate was proceeding to ballot for

sixteen, the whole 400 volunteered, and marched off that same day to join the troops at Seville.

Had the British army made a stand in Galicia, as there was every reason to expect, the Duke del Infantado was to have advanced from Cuenca upon Ocaña and Aranjuez, and in conjunction with the army collected at La Carolina, under the Marques del Palacio, to have pushed for Madrid. The retreat of Sir John Moore frustrated this plan; the Duke was then ordered to remain on the defensive, and new levies were sent to reinforce him as fast as they were raised. But in the miserable circumstances of his army, increase of numbers was no increase of strength. Arms, clothing, and provision were wanting; it was alike without resources, discipline, or system; in want of efficient officers of every rank, and those which there were, were divided into cabals and factions. The province of Cuenca was the best point which could have been chosen for deriving supplies from La Mancha, Murcia, and Valencia, the two latter provinces as yet unexhausted by the war; but it was not a military position. The city stands upon high ground, where the Huecar falls into the Jucar at the skirts of Monte de S. Christobal, and it is completely commanded by the heights. All that the Duke could hope for in case he were attacked was to secure his retreat, and for this purpose he occupied some eminences on the left bank of the Huecar, leaving the road to Valencia by Moya open for his artillery. The van was stationed at Jabaya, four leagues from Cuenca, in the direction of Madrid.

The Duke had acquired some reputation in the former war with France when serving as Colonel of a regiment which he had raised himself. He had now given the highest proof of devotion to his country, in accepting a command under circumstances which rendered success absolutely impossible, and yet where any disaster would compromise his reputation, and

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*Condition of  
Infantado's  
army at  
Cuenca.*

*Infantado,  
Manifesto,  
32—37.*