

CHAP.

X.

1808.

June.

of some legal authority for their future proceedings. The courage, and perhaps the disposition, of the magistrates was doubted; but the *Juiz do Povo* was an officer whom tumultuous times had heretofore forced into importance, and the *Juiz do Povo* was now called for. José Pedro de Jesus, a cooper by trade, who held the office, happened to possess a rare union of upright character, activity, and good sense. He came forward, assumed a power which was willingly recognized, and exercised it in a manner which at once gratified the populace and satisfied the wishes of cooler minds. First he lodged the French safely in prison, then distributed among the people the arms of those cavalry regiments belonging to the northern provinces, which Junot had disbanded. In the depôt with these weapons a flag was found with the royal arms. It was carried in triumph through the streets, while the exulting people hastened to uncover the shield of Portugal upon the public buildings. The bells from all the colleges and convents and churches of that populous city pealed in with the acclamations of the people, and heightened the excitement and agitation of their spirits. Bonfires were kindled, as in old times, in defiance of Junot's prohibition: the night of St. John's had always been a festival in Coimbra, but never before had it been celebrated with such uproar and overflowing joy. Some barks on the river, laden with provisions for the French in Figueira, were seized during the night; and in the morning it was deemed prudent to march off the prisoners to Porto, under a strong escort, lest the magistracy, in their fear, should release them, and again reduce the city to submission.

*Neves, iii.*  
214—217.

*Order re-*  
*st red in*  
*Coimbra*

This apprehension, however, was ill founded. The *Juiz de fora* came forward to act in the national cause; the students and lecturers formed themselves into an academical corps; and the Vice-Rector of the university, Manoel Paes de Aragam Trigoso, took upon himself the civil authority, in compliance with the wish of

the inhabitants. They would have vested the military command in General Bernardim Freire de Andrade, whom the Prince, before his departure for Brazil, had appointed to the command at Porto. Not choosing to exercise it under the intrusive government, he was living privately at Coimbra; but being now summoned by the Bishop and Junta of Porto to his proper station, he declined for that reason the present nomination. The people next thought of D. Miguel Pereira Forjas, but he chose rather to follow Bernardim as his quarter-master general. They then chose Bernardim's brother, Nuno Freire de Andrade, making him, however, subordinate to Trigo. The men who thus accepted offices of authority discharged a most perilous duty to their country. They were not, like their countrymen in Tras os Montes and between the rivers, secured in some degree by distance from the French, and within reach of assistance from Spain, or, if need were, of an asylum in that kingdom. Nor would Coimbra be like some of the smaller towns, overlooked as unworthy of vengeance. Next to the capital itself there was no place in Portugal where a terrible example would so deeply impress and intimidate the nation: it was within easy reach of the enemy, from Almeida as well as from Lisbon, and all military means of defence were wanting: a few pounds of powder were all that could be found in the city, and not one piece of cannon.

On the other hand, more talents and enterprise, such as the times required, might reasonably be expected in Coimbra than in any other of the Portugueze towns. It was a populous and flourishing university, the only one in the kingdom: here therefore the flower of the Portugueze youth would be found, just at that age when they would be most willing and fit for service; and of that rank, and in that place, where national and generous feelings would have their strongest influence. If any where heads to plan and hands to execute might be found, it would be

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June.*Neves, iii.*  
219—223.*Prepara-  
tions for  
defence.*

CHAP. here. Accordingly no exertions were wanting. Chemists made  
 X. gunpowder, geometricians directed works of defence, old sol-  
 1808. diers were employed, some in making cartridges, others in train-  
 June. ing volunteers; mechanics were set to work in whatever manner  
Neves, iii. they might be most useful; bridges were broken down, roads  
 223—225. broken up, means made ready for defending the streets, if the  
 enemy should enter the city, and a strict police established.

*Successful  
 expedition  
 against Fi-  
 gueira.*

June 25.

When one day had been passed in these arrangements and preparations an expedition was planned against Figueira da Foz, a small town and fort at the mouth of the Mondego, on the right bank, seven leagues from Coimbra. The French had a garrison of an hundred men there. Forty volunteers, who were almost all students, under the command of Bernardo Antonio Zagalo, a student also, set out at evening, in hope of capturing this important point: they relied upon increasing their numbers on the way, and they took with them authority from the governor to raise the country as they went. Zagalo, with four horsemen, took the right bank, the rest of the party the left: they met at Monte-mor o Velho, and marching all night, appeared with the reinforcements which they had gathered, now some 3000 in number, before Figueira, at seven in the morning. The enemy were taken by surprise; they were dispersed about the town, when they saw this multitude approach; but immediately retiring into the fort, they prepared for defence. The place might have been easily defended against a crowd of peasants, more of whom were armed with pikes and reaping-hooks than with fowling-pieces, and who were likely, upon the slightest loss or disgust, to abandon their enterprise as precipitately as they had engaged in it. But the French, relying too confidently upon the submission of the Portuguese, had neglected to store the fort with provisions; and Zagalo summoned them, saying he knew they had not food for more than four-and-twenty hours,

and that if they did not surrender they should all be put to the sword. Contrary to his usual policy, Junot had given the command of this fort to a Portugueze lieutenant of engineers; this person demurred at surrendering, because his family were at Peniche, in the power of the French. But, wanting either the will or the ability to exert himself in the enemy's service, he remained inactive and confounded, till the following day, when Zagalo received positive orders from Coimbra to return immediately with all his people. This enabled the commander to obtain terms which might be pleaded to save his credit; and he capitulated on condition that the garrison should be allowed to cross the river with their arms and knapsacks, but without powder and ball; and to march unmolested to Peniche, the nearest strong place in possession of the French. Upon these terms the fort was given up; but the peasantry searched the men when they were embarking, and finding that some of them had concealed a few cartridges, declared that the conditions were broken: they themselves were desirous of breaking them, and therefore gladly found this pretext; and the French would have been massacred if the students had not exerted themselves to protect them, and lodged them safely as prisoners at Coimbra.

A report of Loison's sudden approach had occasioned the order for recalling Zagalo. General Count Loison had been sent in the latter end of May, with 4000 troops, to Almeida, in pursuance of positive and repeated instructions from Murat when exercising the command in Madrid. He was to concert his movements with Bessieres, and, if necessary, to join him; he was to observe Salamanca, and secure Ciudad Rodrigo, if that were practicable. But the Spaniards were too much awakened to be again deceived or surprised by the French; and Loison having remained at Almeida from the 5th of June till the 16th, received orders from Junot to march upon Porto, take the command in

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June.Neves, iii.  
226—233.*Loison ordered to march from Almeida to Porto.*

CHAP. that city, and keep the northern provinces in subjection. He  
 X. had previously got possession of Fort Conceiçam. Each party  
 1808. seems at this time to have been strangely ignorant of the move-  
 June. ments and means of the other; Loison apprehended that an  
 enemy's force might render it impossible for the French to  
 maintain this fort; he therefore directed General Charlot, whom  
 he left with the command at Almeida, to remove thither the guns  
 from Conceiçam, keep it as long as he could, and destroy the  
 works if he should be forced to evacuate it. He then began his  
 march with two regiments of light infantry, fifty dragoons, and  
 six pieces of artillery. A battalion of light infantry was to set  
 out from Torres Vedras, and reach Porto at the same time.

June 17.

Thiebault,  
148—150.

He turns  
back from  
Mezam-frio

On the fourth day he reached Lamego without the slightest  
 resistance, and on the following morning crossed the Douro by  
 the ferry at Regoa, and reached Mezam-frio, meaning to sleep  
 there. His advanced guard was on the way to Amarante, which  
 is only forty miles from Porto, when news was brought him while  
 he was at dinner that the mountaineers were defending the pass  
 at Os Padroens da Teixeira; and presently a second ill mes-  
 senger arrived with intelligence that his baggage was attacked  
 at Regoa. These operations had been ably planned by Silveira,  
 and were well executed. In so strong a country he deemed it  
 better to turn back than to proceed at the risk of being sur-  
 rounded by an armed population. An ambuscade among the  
 vineyards at Santinho annoyed him greatly on his way toward  
 the Douro, and he himself was slightly hurt. The Portugeze,  
 when they were dislodged, retreated to the heights; the French  
 took up a position for the night, and in the morning sacked the  
 villages of Pezo and Regoa, where neither age, nor infirmity,  
 nor sex, nor childhood, were spared by them; for Loison was one  
 of those men after Buonaparte's own heart, who, being equally  
 devoid of honour and humanity, carried on war in the worst

spirit of the worst ages, plundering and massacring without shame and without remorse. He now understood that Porto, which he had expected to find discontented indeed, but passive and in subjection, had thrown off the yoke; that a Portuguese officer, with whom he maintained a secret correspondence, had been fain to abscond from that city; that the disbanded soldiers had reassembled; and that the insurgent peasantry, in such numbers as to be truly formidable, were moving against him from all parts of the two northern provinces. The news of his retreat was presently known throughout the whole country between the Tua and the Cavado; expresses and telegraphs could not have communicated it more rapidly than it was spread by the voluntary bearers of good tidings. One column came from Villa Real, one from Amarante, a third from Guimaraens; a motlier assemblage had never taken the field; . . . the commonest weapons were pikes and long poles armed with reaping-hooks at the end; and there were as many abbots, monks, friars, and parochial clergy in command, as officers. The three columns united at Regoa, too late to impede or molest the French in their passage of the river. The enemy halted for part of the night at Lamego, and resumed their retreat at two in the morning. The Portuguese came up with them that day at Juvantes, and harassed them during three days. The total want of discipline, order, and authority, rendered their great superiority of numbers unavailing; and after they had reached Castro d'Airo, dispersing as irregularly as they had collected, they gave up the pursuit, less in consequence of the loss which they sustained in a few brisk encounters, than because they were too numerous to find sustenance, and every man was eager to report the retreat of the enemy and the share he had borne in the success. F. José Joaquim de Assumpçam, a friar of orders gray, distinguished him-

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*The peasantry harass his retreat.*

*Neves, iii.  
235—248.  
Thiebault,  
150-1.*

CHAP. self in this expedition, by his activity, his strength, and his un-  
 X. erring aim.

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June.

*He goes to  
Viseu.*

*Alarm at  
Coimbra in  
consequence  
of his move-  
ments.*

*Thiebault,  
152.*

*Neves, iii.  
217.*

The loss on either side, in this pursuit, appears not to have been great; the pursuers were too disorderly and too ill armed to make any serious impression upon the enemy, and the French were not strong enough to act upon the offensive with effect. They lost two pieces of artillery, and some of their ammunition and baggage; and a few rich uniforms which fell into the hands of the Portugueze, were suspended as trophies in the churches of N. Senhora da Oliveira at Guimaraens, and of S. Gonçalo de Amarante, in the town which was under his peculiar patronage. Being freed from his pursuers, Loison, sending part of his force by the road of Moimenta da Beira, which was the shorter but rougher line to Almeida, took himself the way of Viseu. This was the movement which alarmed the people at Coimbra, and induced them to recall Zagalo from Figueira. It was not improbable that his intention was to march upon that important city, and there place himself in communication with Lisbon: his own judgement would dispose him to this, and indeed no fewer than five-and-twenty dispatches, instructing him so to do, had been sent, not one of which had reached him. But he had received an exaggerated report of the proceedings in Coimbra, brought by some partizans of the French, who had fled to save their lives, on the night of the insurrection, when their houses were broken open, during the suspension of all order and authority. Their testimony concerning the temper and unanimity of the inhabitants could not be doubted; it was added, that they were busy in constructing formidable works of defence, and that an auxiliary force of 12,000 Spaniards was expected there. Such strange events were now every day occurring, that nothing seemed too extraordinary to be believed;

and Loison, it is thought, in consequence of these rumours, judged it best to change his purpose, and return to Almeida. The Portuguese general who commanded in Beira resided at Viseu; upon the approach of the French he summoned the magistrates and members of the *Camara*, and they determined not to oppose a premature and unavailing resistance. Loison, though notorious for rapacity, in the most rapacious army that ever disgraced its profession and its country, was at this time sensible how desirable it was, if possible, to obtain a character for moderation and equity. He encamped his troops for the night without the city, in the open space where the fairs were held, took up his own lodging in the general's house, and on his departure the next day, paid for every thing with which the men had been supplied. He also released three or four prisoners, who, in the late skirmishes, had fallen into his hands. At Celorico, where an insurrectionary movement had commenced, it was suspended by the prudence of the magistrates and the just fears of the people, till the enemy had passed by. The peasantry of the adjacent country were less cautious; they appeared in arms upon the heights, and Loison therefore sent two companies to burn the village of Souropires. Being now within easy reach of Almeida, and knowing that the country about Trancoso and Guarda was in a state of insurrection, his intention was to employ himself in reducing it to submission; but here the only one of the numerous dispatches from Lisbon which reached its destination found him, and, in pursuance of its orders to draw nearer the capital, he hastened to Almeida, to make the necessary arrangements for his march. On the way he began to sack the city of Pinhel, which the inhabitants had deserted at his coming; but upon the tidings that a corps from Tras os Montes had arrived at Trancoso, and that Viseu was

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*June.**He returns  
to Almeida.**Thiebault,  
152.**Neves, iii.  
249—253.*



CHAP. now in arms, he hastened forward, and on the 1st of July  
 X. re-entered Almeida.

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June.

*Insurrec-  
tion at Ol-  
ham.*

When Loison, upon the first apprehension of danger, was sent to occupy Porto, General Avril was instructed, at the same time, to take possession of Estremoz and Evora, for the purpose of holding Alem-Tejo in subjection, and to give orders for securing Algarve. General Maurin commanded for the French in this kingdom, as it is designated, the smallest but richest province in Portugal: owing to his illness the command had devolved upon Col. Maransin, who received instructions to occupy Mertola as well as Alcoutim, for guarding the Guadiana against the Spaniards; and to protect the coast from Faro, the greatest port in that province, to Villa Real, the frontier town, at the mouth of the river. Maransin, however, was not left at leisure to do this. Junot's proclamation, announcing the seizure of the Spanish troops, expressing his satisfaction with the Portugueze for their peaceable deportment, and promising to instruct them in the art of war, had been fixed upon the church door at Olham, a small fishing village about four miles from the city of Faro. The governor of Villa Real, Col. José Lopes de Sousa, happening to be in that village on the day of the Corpo de Deos, as he was going into the church stopped to see what the people were reading. The language of that proclamation proved how little Junot understood the character of the nation to which it was addressed; it wounded that high sense of national honour for which the Portugueze are remarkable, and Lopes, giving way to an honourable feeling of indignation, tore the paper down, and trampled upon it; then turning to the bystanders, exclaimed, "Ah, Portugueze, we no longer deserve that name . . . we are nothing now!" But they answered, that they were still Portugueze, and swore that they were ready to lay down their lives for their