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# HISTORY

OF THE

## PENINSULAR WAR.

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### BOOK VII.

#### CHAPTER I.

Coruña and Ferrol surrender to Soult—He is ordered, by the Emperor, to invade Portugal—The first corps is directed to aid this operation—Soult goes to St. Jago—Distressed state of the second corps—Operations of Romana and state of Galicia—Soult commences his march—Arrives on the Minho—Occupies Tuy, Vigo, and Guardia—Drags large boats over land from Guardia to Campo Saucos—Attempts to pass the Minho—Is repulsed by the Portuguese peasantry—Importance of this repulse—Soult changes his plan—Marches on Orense—Defeats the insurgents at Franquera, at Ribidavia, and in the valley of the Avia—Leaves his artillery and stores in Tuy—Defeats the Spanish insurgents in several places, and prepares to invade Portugal—Defenceless state of the northern provinces of that kingdom—Bernardin Freire advances to the Cavado river—Silveira advances to Chaves—Concerts operations with Romana—Disputes between the Portuguese and Spanish troops—Ignorance of the generals

HAVING described the unhappy condition of Portugal and given a general view of the transactions in Spain, I shall now resume the narrative of Soult's operations, thus following the main stream of action; for the other marshals were appointed to tranquillize the provinces already overrun by the Emperor, or to war down the remnants of the Spanish armies, but the Duke of Dalmatia's task was to push onward in the course of conquest. Nor is it difficult to trace him through the remainder of a campaign, in which, traversing all the northern provinces, fighting in succession the armies of three different nations, and enduring every vicissitude of war, he left broad marks of his career, and certain proofs that he was an able commander and of a haughty resolution in adversity.

It has been observed, in a former part of this work, that the inhabitants of Coruña honorably maintained their town until the safety of the fleet which carried Sir John Moore's army from the

Spanish shores was secure; they were less faithful to their own cause. Coruña might have defied irregular operations, and several weeks must have elapsed before a sufficient battering train could have been brought up to that corner of the Peninsula; yet a short negotiation sufficed to put the French in possession of the place on the 19th of January, and the means of attacking Ferrol were immediately organized from the resources of Coruña.

The harbor of Ferrol contained eight sail of the line, and some smaller ships of war. The fortifications were regular; there was an abundance of artillery, ammunition, and a garrison of seven or eight thousand men, consisting of soldiers, sailors, citizens, and armed countrymen, but their chiefs were treacherous. After a commotion, in which the Admiral Obregon was arrested, his successor, Melgarejo, surrendered upon somewhat better terms than those granted to Coruña; and thus in ten days were reduced two regular fortresses, which with more resolution might have occupied thirty thousand men for several months.

While yet before Ferrol the Duke of Dalmatia received the following despatch, prescribing the immediate invasion of Portugal:\*

“Before his departure from this place (Valladolid), the Emperor, foreseeing the embarkation of the English army, drew up instructions for the ultimate operations of the Duke of Elchingen and yourself. He orders that when the English army shall be embarked, you will march upon Oporto with your four divisions; that is to say, the divisions of Merle, Mermet, Delaborde, and Heudelet, the dragoons of Lorge and La Houssaye, and Franceschi's light cavalry, with the exception of two regiments that his Majesty desires you to turn over to the Duke of Elchingen, in order to make up his cavalry to four regiments.

“Your ‘*corps d'armée*,’ composed of seventeen regiments of infantry and ten regiments of cavalry, is destined for the expedition of Portugal, in combination with a movement the Duke of Belluno is going to effect. General Loison, some engineers, staff and commissariat officers, and thirteen Portuguese, all of whom belonged to the army formerly in Portugal under the Duke of Abrantes, have received instructions to join you immediately, and you can transmit your orders for them to Lugo. This is the 21st of January, and it is supposed you cannot be at Oporto before the 5th of February, or at Lisbon before the 16th. Thus, at that time, namely, when you shall be near Lisbon, the ‘*corps d'armée*’ of the Duke of Belluno, composed of his own three divisions, of

\* S. MSS.

the division of Leval, and of ten or twelve regiments of cavalry, forming a body of thirty thousand men, will be at Merida, to make a strong diversion in favor of your movement, and in such a mode as that he can push the head of a column upon Lisbon if you find any great obstacles to your entrance, which it is, however, presumed will not be the case.

“General Lapisse’s division of infantry, which is at this moment in Salamanca, and General Maupetit’s brigade of cavalry, will, when you shall be at Oporto, receive the Duke of Istria’s orders to march upon Ciudad Rodrigo and Abrantes, where this division will again be under the command of the Duke of Belluno, who will send it instructions to join him at Merida: I let you know this that you may be aware of the march of Lapisse, on your left flank, as far as Abrantes. Such are the last orders I am charged to give you in the name of the Emperor: you will have to report to the King and receive his orders for your ulterior operations. The Emperor has unlimited confidence in your talents for the fine expedition that he has charged you with.

“ALEXANDER, *Prince of Neufchâtel, &c.*”

It was further intended by Napoleon that, when Lisbon fell, Marshal Victor should invade Andalusia upon the same line as Dupont had moved the year before; and like Dupont he was to have been assisted by a division of the second corps, which was to cross the Guadiana and march on Seville. Meanwhile the Duke of Elchingen, whose corps, reinforced by two regiments of cavalry, and by the arrival of stragglers, amounted to near twenty thousand men, was to maintain Galicia, confine the Asturians within their own frontier line, and keep open the communication with the second corps. Thus, nominally eighty thousand, and in reality sixty thousand men, were disposed for the conquest of Lisbon, and in such a manner that forty thousand would, after that had been accomplished, have poured down upon Seville and Cadiz, at a time when neither Portugal nor Andalusia was capable of making any resistance. It remains to show from what causes this mighty preparation failed.

The gross numbers of the second corps amounted to forty-seven thousand;\* but General Bonnet’s division remained always at Santander, in observation of the eastern Asturian frontier, eight thousand were detached for the service of the general communications, and the remainder had, since the 9th of November, been fighting and marching incessantly among barren and snowy mountains; hence, stragglers were numerous, and twelve thousand men

\* Muster-rolls of the French army, MS.

were in hospital. The force actually under arms did not exceed twenty-five thousand men, worn down with fatigue, barefooted, and without ammunition. They had outstripped their commissariat, the military chest was not come up, the draft animals were reduced in number and attenuated by fatigue, the gun-carriages were shaken by continual usage, the artillery parc was still in the rear;\* and as the sixth corps had not yet passed Lugo, two divisions of the second corps were required to hold Coruña and Ferrol. Literally to obey the Emperor's orders was consequently impossible, wherefore Soult, taking quarters at St. Jago de Compostella, proceeded to re-organize his army.

Ammunition was fabricated from the loose powder found in Coruña; shoes were obtained partly by requisition, partly from the Spanish magazines, filled as they were with stores supplied by England; the artillery were soon refitted, and the greatest part of the stragglers were rallied. In six days, the Marshal thought himself in a condition to obey his orders, and, although his troops were still suffering from fatigue and privation, marched, on the first of February, with nineteen thousand infantry, four thousand cavalry, and fifty-eight pieces of artillery; but, to understand his operations, the state of Galicia and the previous movements of Romana must be described.

When the Spanish army, on the 2d of January, crossed the line of Sir John Moore's march, it was already in a state of disorganization. Romana, with the cavalry, plunged at once into the deep valleys of the Syl and the Minho, but the artillery and a part of his infantry were overtaken and cut up by Franceschi's cavalry; the remainder wandered in bands from one place to another, or dispersed to seek food and shelter among the villages in the mountains. General Mendizabel, with a small body, halted in the Val des Orres, and placing guards at the Puente de Bibey, a point of singular strength of defence, he purposed to cover the approaches to Orense on that side;† but Romana himself, after wandering for a time, collected two or three thousand men, and took post, on the 15th, at Toabado, a village about twenty miles from Lugo. Meanwhile Ney arrived at that place, having detached some cavalry from Villa Franca to scour the valleys on his left, and also sent Marchand's division by the road of Orense to St. Jago and Coruña. Marchand dispersed Mendizabel's troops on the 17th, and after halting some days at Orense, where he established a hospital, continued his march to St. Jago.

The defeat of Mendizabel and the subsequent movements of Marchand's division completed the dispersion of Romana's army;

\* S. Journal of Operations of the Second Corps, MS. † Appendix 2.

the greatest part, throwing away their arms, returned to their homes, and he himself, with his cavalry, and the few infantry that would follow him, crossed the Minho, passed the mountains, and, descending into the valley of the Tamega, took refuge, on the 21st, at Oimbra, a place on the frontier of Portugal, close to Monterey, where there was a small magazine, collected for the use of Sir John Moore's army. In this obscure situation, unheeded by the French, he entered into communication with the Portuguese General Silveira, and with Sir John Cradock, demanding money and arms from the latter; he endeavored also to reassemble a respectable body of troops, but Blake and other officers deserted him, and these events and the general want of patriotic spirit drew from him the following observation:—"I know not wherein the patriotism, so loudly vaunted, consists; any reverse, any mishap, prostrates the minds of these people, and, thinking only of saving their own persons, they sacrifice their country and compromise their commander."

The people of Galicia, poor, scattered, living hardly, and, like all mountaineers, very tenacious of the little property they possess, disregarded political events which did not immediately and visibly affect their interests. They were, with the exception of those of the seaport towns, but slightly moved by the aggression of the French, as long as that aggression did not extend to their valleys; and hence, at first, they treated the English and French armies alike. Sir David Baird's division, in its advance, paid generously for supplies, yet it was regarded with jealousy and defrauded. Soult's and Moore's armies, passing like a whirlwind, were beheld with terror, and the people fled from both. The British and German troops that marched to Vigo, being conducted without judgment, were licentious, and as their number was small, the people murdered stragglers, and showed without disguise their natural hatred of strangers. On several occasions, parties sent to collect cars for the conveyance of the sick, had to sustain a skirmish before the object could be obtained; and five officers, misled by a treacherous guide, were scarcely saved from death by the interference of an old man, whose exertions, however, were not successful until one of the officers had been severely wounded in the head. On the other hand, General Marchand discovered so little symptoms of hostility, during his march to Orense, that he left his hospital at that town without a guard, under the joint care of Spanish and French surgeons, and the duties of humanity were faithfully discharged by the former without hindrance from the people.

This quiescence did not last long: the French generals were obliged to subsist their troops, by requisitions extremely onerous to

a people whose property chiefly consisted of cattle. The many abuses and excesses which always attend this mode of supplying an army soon created a spirit of hatred that Romana labored incessantly to increase, and he was successful; for, although a bad general, he possessed intelligence and dexterity suited to the task of exciting a population. Moreover, the monks and friars labored to the same purpose; and, while Romana denounced death to those who refused to take arms, the clergy menaced eternal perdition;\* and all this was necessary, for the authority of the Supreme Junta was only acknowledged as a matter of necessity—not of liking. Galicia, although apparently calm, was, therefore, ripe for a general insurrection, at the moment when the Duke of Dalmatia commenced his march from St. Jago de Compostella.

From that town several roads lead to the Minho; the principal one running by the coast line crosses the Ulla, the Umia, the Vedra, and the Octaven, and passes by Pontevedra and Redondela, to Tuy, a dilapidated fortress, situated on the Spanish side of the Minho. The second, crossing the same rivers near to their sources, passes by the Monte de Tenteyros, and, entering the valley of the Avia, follows the course of that river to Ribidavia, a considerable town, situated at the confluence of the Avia with the Minho, having a stone bridge over the former, and a barque ferry on the latter river. The third, turning the sources of the Avia, connects St. Jago with Orense, and from Orense another road passes along the right bank of the Minho, and connects the towns of Ribidavia, Salvatierra, and Tuy, ending at Guardia, a small fortress at the mouth of the Minho.

As the shortest route to Oporto, and the only one convenient for the artillery, was that leading by Redondela and Tuy, and from thence by the coast, the Duke of Dalmatia formed the plan of passing the Minho between Salvatierra and Guardia; † wherefore on the 1st of February Franceschi, followed by the other divisions in succession, took the Pontevedra road, and at Redondela defeated a small body of insurgents, and captured four pieces of cannon, after which Vigo surrendered to one of his detachments, while he himself marched upon Tuy, and took possession of that town and Guardia. During these operations La Houssaye's dragoons, quitting Mellid, had crossed the Monte de Tenteyro, passed through Ribidavia, and taken possession of Salvatierra, on the Minho; and General Soult, the Marshal's brother, who had assembled three thousand stragglers and convalescents, between Astorga and Carrion, received orders to enter Portugal by Puebla de Senabria, and thus join the main body.

\* Romana's Manifesto.

† S. Journal of Operations, MS. See Plan 4.



The rainy season was in full torrent, every stream and river overflowed its banks, the roads were deep, and the difficulty of procuring provisions great. These things, and the delivering over to Marshal Ney the administration of Ferrol and Coruña, where the Spanish government and Spanish garrisons were not only retained but paid by the French, delayed the rear of the army so long that it was not until the 15th or 16th that the whole of the divisions were assembled on the Minho, between Salvatierra, Guardia, and Redondela.

The Minho, from Melgaço to the mouth, forms the frontier of Portugal, the banks on both sides being guarded by a number of fortresses originally of considerable strength, but at this time all in a dilapidated condition. The Spanish fort of Guardia fronted the Portuguese fort of Caminha; Tuy was opposed by Valenza, which was garrisoned, and the works in somewhat a better condition than the rest; Lapella, Moncao, and Melgaço, completed the Portuguese line. But the best defence at this moment was the Minho itself, which, at all times a considerable river, was now a broad and raging flood, and the Portuguese *ordenanzas* and militia, who were in arms on the other side, had removed all the boats. Nevertheless Sout, after examining the banks with care, decided upon passing at Campo Saucos, a little village where the ground was flatter, more favorable, and so close to Caminha that the army, once across, could easily seize that place, and the same day reach Viana on the Lima, from whence to Oporto was only three marches.

To attract the attention of the Portuguese, La Houssaye, who was at Salvatierra, spread his dragoons along the Minho, and attempted to push small parties across that river, above Melgaço; but the bulk of the army was concentrated in the neighborhood of Campo Saucos, and a detachment seized the small seaport of Bayona, in the rear. A division of infantry, and three hundred French marines released at Coruña and attached to the second corps, were then employed to transport some large fishing boats and some heavy guns from the harbor and fort of Guardia overland to Campo Saucos. This was effected by the help of rollers over more than two miles of rugged and hilly ground; it was a work of infinite labor, but from the 11th to the 15th, the troops toiled unceasingly, and the craft was launched in a small lake at the confluence of the Tamuga river with the Minho.

In the night of the 15th the heavy guns were placed in battery, and three hundred soldiers being embarked, the boats manned by the marines, dropped silently down the Tamuga into the Minho, and endeavored to reach the Portuguese side of the latter river

during the darkness; yet, whether from the violence of the flood, or want of skill in the men, the landing was not effected before daybreak, and the *ordenanzas* fell with great fury upon the first who got on shore; the foremost being all slain, the others pulled back, and regained their own side with great difficulty. This action was infinitely creditable to the Portuguese, and it had a surprising influence on the issue of the campaign. It was a gallant action, because it might reasonably have been expected that a tumultuous assemblage of half-armed peasants, collected on the instant, would have been dismayed at the sight of many boats filled with soldiers, some pulling across and others landing under the protection of a heavy battery that thundered from the midst of a multitude of troops, who clustered on the heights, or thronged to the edge of the opposite bank in eager expectation. It was an event of leading importance, inasmuch as it baffled an attempt that, being successful, would have insured the fall of Oporto by the 21st of February, which was precisely the period when, General Mackenzie's division being at Cadiz, Sir John Cradock's troops were reduced to almost nothing; when the English ministers only waited for an excuse to abandon Portugal; when the people of that country were in the very extremity of disorder; when the Portuguese army was a nullity, and when the Regency was evidently preparing to receive the French with submission. It was the period also, when Soult was expected to be at Lisbon, following the Emperor's orders, and consequently, Lapisse and Victor could not have avoided to fulfil their part of the plan for the subjugation of Portugal.

The Duke of Dalmatia's situation was now, although not one of imminent danger, extremely embarrassing, and more than ordinary quickness and vigor were required to conduct the operations with success. Posted in a narrow, contracted position, he was hemmed in on the left by the Spanish insurgents, who had assembled immediately after La Houssaye passed Orense, and who, being possessed of a very rugged and difficult country, were, moreover, supported by the army of Romana, which was said to be at Orense and Ribidavia.\* In the French General's front was the Minho, broad, raging, and at the moment impassable, while heavy rains forbade the hope that its waters would decrease. To collect sufficient means for forcing a passage would have required sixteen days, but long before that period, the subsistence for the army would have entirely failed, and the Portuguese, being alarmed, would have greatly augmented their forces on the opposite bank. There remained then only to retrace his steps to St. Jago, or breaking through the

\* See Plan 4.

Spanish insurgents, to ascend the Minho, and open a way into Portugal by some other route.

Soult's attempt to pass the river had been baffled on the 15th of February, and on the 16th he was in full march towards Ribidavia upon a new line of operations, and this promptitude of decision was supported by an equally prompt execution. La Houssaye, with his dragoons, quitted Salvatierra, and keeping the edge of the Minho, was galled by the fire of the Portuguese from the opposite bank; and before evening, he twice broke the insurgent bands, and, in revenge for some previous excesses of the peasantry, burnt the villages of Morentan and Cobreira: meanwhile the main body of the army, passing the Tea river at Salvatierra and Puente d'Arcos, marched, by successive divisions, along the main road from Tuy to Ribidavia.

Between Franquera and Canizar the route was cut by the streams of the Morenta and Noguera rivers, and behind those torrents, eight hundred Gallicians, having barricadoed the bridges and repulsed the advanced parties of cavalry, stood upon their defence. The 17th, at daybreak, the leading brigade of Heudelet's division forced the passage, and pursued the Spaniards briskly, but, when within a short distance of Ribidavia, the latter rallied upon eight or ten thousand insurgents, arrayed in order of battle, on a strong hill, covering the approaches to that town. At this sight the advanced guard halted until the remainder of the division and a brigade of cavalry were come up, and then, under the personal direction of Soult, the French assailed and drove the Gallicians, fighting, through the town and across the Avia. The loss of the vanquished was very considerable; the bodies of twenty priests were found amongst the slain, and either from fear or patriotism, every inhabitant had quitted Ribidavia.

The 18th, a brigade of infantry scouring the valley of the Avia, dispersed three or four thousand of the insurgents, who were disposed to make a second stand on that side; a second brigade, pushing on to Barbantes, seized a ferry-boat on the Minho, close to that place, and being joined the same evening by the infantry who had scoured the valley of the Avia, and by Franceschi's cavalry, on the 19th entered Orense in time to prevent the bridge over the Minho from being cut. La Houssaye's dragoons then took post at Maside, while the remainder of the horse and Laborde's infantry united at Ribidavia; the artillery were however still between Tuy and Salvatierra, under the protection of Merle's and Mermet's divisions. Thus, in three days, the Duke of Dalmatia had, with admirable celerity and vigor, extricated his army from a contracted unfavorable country, strangled a formidable insurrection in its

birth, and at the same time opened a fresh line of communication with St. Jago, and an easy passage into Portugal.

The 20th, a regiment being sent across the Minho, by the ferries of Barbantes and Ribidavia, defeated the insurgents of the left bank, advanced to the Arroyo river, and took post on the heights of Merea. The army, with the exception of the division guarding the guns, was concentrated the same day at Orense; but the efforts of the artillery had been baffled by the difficulties of the road from Tuy to Ribidavia, and this circumstance, viewed in conjunction with the precarious state of the communication, a daily increasing sick-list, and the number of small detachments required to protect the rear, seemed to forbid the invasion of Portugal. A man of ordinary genius would have failed. The Duke of Dalmatia with ready boldness resolved to throw the greatest part of his artillery and the whole of his other encumbrances into Tuy, as a place of arms, then relinquishing all communication with Galicia, for the moment, to march in one mass directly upon Oporto; from whence, if successful, he proposed to re-open his communication with Tuy, by the line of the coast, recover his artillery, and re-establish a regular system of operations.

In pursuance of this resolution, sixteen of the lightest guns and six howitzers, with a proportion of ammunition-wagons, were, with infinite labor and difficulty, transported to Ribidavia; the remaining thirty-six pieces and a vast parc of carriages, carrying ammunition and hospital and commissariat stores, were put into Tuy, where General La Martiniere was left with an establishment of artillery and engineer officers, a garrison of five hundred men fit to carry arms, and nine hundred sick.\* All the stragglers, convalescents, and detachments, coming from St. Jago, and the military chest, which was still in the rear, guarded by six hundred infantry, were likewise directed upon Tuy; the gates were shut, and La Martiniere was abandoned to his own resources.

The men in hospital at Ribidavia were now forwarded to Orense, and the Marshal's quarters were established at the latter town on the 24th, but other obstacles were to be vanquished before the army could commence the march into Portugal. The gun-carriages had been so shaken in the transit from Tuy to Ribidavia that three days were required to repair them; it was extremely difficult to obtain provisions, and numerous bands of the peasants were still in arms, nor were they quelled until combats had taken place at Gurzo, on the Monte Blanco, in the Val d'Ornes, and up the valley of Avia, in which the French wasted time, lost men, and expended ammunition that could not be replaced. Soult endeav-

\* Journal of Operations, MS.

ored to soften the people's feelings by kindness and soothing proclamations; and as he enforced a strict discipline among his troops, his humane and politic demeanor, joined to the activity of his movable columns, abated the fierceness of the peasantry.\* The inhabitants of Ribidavia soon returned to their houses; those of Orense had never been very violent, and now becoming friendly, even lent assistance to procure provisions. It was not, however, an easy task to restrain the soldiers within the bounds of humanity. The frequent combats, the assassination, the torturing of isolated men, and the privations endured, had so exasperated the French troops, that the utmost exertions of their General's authority could not always control their revenge.

While the Duke of Dalmatia was thus preparing for a formidable inroad, his adversaries were a prey to the most horrible anarchy. The Bishop, always intent to increase his own power, had assembled little short of fifty thousand armed persons in Oporto, and commenced a gigantic line of intrenchment on the hills to the northward of that city. This worse than useless labor so completely occupied all persons that the defence of the strong country lying between the Duero and the Minho was totally neglected, and when the second corps appeared on the bank of the latter river, the northern provinces were struck with terror; then it was that the people, for the first time, understood the extent of their danger; then it was that the Bishop, aroused from his intrigues, became sensible that the French were more terrible enemies than the Regency. Once impressed with this truth, he became clamorous for succor; he recalled Sir Robert Wilson from the Agueda, he hurried on the labor of the intrenchments, and he earnestly pressed Sir John Cradock for assistance, demanding arms, ammunition, and a reinforcement of British soldiers. Sir Robert Wilson, as I have already related, disregarded his orders; but the British General, although he refused to furnish him with troops, supplied him with arms, and very ample stores of powder, sending artillery and engineer officers to superintend the construction of the defensive works, and to aid in the arrangements for a reasonable system of operations.†

The people were, however, become too headstrong and licentious to be controlled, or even advised, and the soldiers being drawn into the vortex of insubordination, universal and hopeless confusion prevailed. Don Bernardin Freire was the legal commander-in-chief of the Entre Minho e Douro, but all the generals claimed equal and independent authority, each over his own force; and this was, perhaps, a matter of self-preservation, for general and traitor were at that period almost synonymous; to obey the orders

\* Appendix 9.

† Appendix 32, §§ 1-6. Vol. I.

See Plan 2.

of a superior against the momentary wishes of the multitude was to incur instant death. Nor were there men wanting who found it profitable to inflame the passions of the mob, and direct its blind vengeance against innocent persons adverse to the prelate's faction, which was not without opponents even in Oporto.

Such was the unhappy state of affairs, when the undisciplined gallantry of the peasants, baffling the efforts of the French to cross the Minho at Campo Saucos, obliged Soult to march by Orense. A part of the regular troops were immediately sent forward to the Cavado river, where they were joined by the *ordenanzas* and the militia of the district, but all in a state of fearful insubordination, and there were no arrangements made for the regular distribution of provisions, or of any one necessary supply. Among the troops despatched from Oporto was the second battalion of the Lusitanian legion, nine hundred strong, well armed, well equipped, and commanded by Baron Eben, a native of Prussia, who, without any known service to recommend him, had suddenly attained the rank of Major in the British service. This man, destined to act a conspicuous part in Portuguese tragedy, had been left at Oporto when Sir Robert Wilson marched to Almeida; his orders were to follow with the second battalion of the legion, when its clothing and equipment should be completed; but he retained the troops, to push his own fortune under the prelate's auspices.

General Freire, having reached the Cavado, was joined by fourteen or fifteen thousand militia and *ordenanzas*; fixing his headquarters at Braga, he sent detachments to occupy the posts of Salamonde and Ruivaens, in his front, and, unfortunately for himself, endeavored to restrain his troops from wasting their ammunition by wanton firing in the streets and on the roads. This exertion of command was heinously resented. Freire, being willing to uphold the authority of the Regency, had been for some time obnoxious to the Bishop's faction; already he was pointed to as a suspected person, and the multitude were inimically disposed towards him.

Meanwhile, General Silveira, assuming the command of the Trasmontes, advanced to Chaves, and put himself in communication with the Marquis of Romana, who, having remained tranquil at Oimbra and Monterey since the 21st of January, had been joined by his dispersed troops, and was again at the head of nine or ten thousand men. Silveira's force was about four thousand, half regulars, half militia, and he was accompanied by many of the *ordenanzas*; but here, as elsewhere, all were licentious, insubordinate, and disdainful of their General; moreover, the national enmity between them and the Spaniards having overcome their sense of a common cause and common danger, the latter were evilly treated, and a

deadly feud subsisted between the two armies.\* The generals, indeed, agreed to act in concert, offensively and defensively, yet neither of them was the least acquainted with the numbers, intention, or even the position of their antagonists; and it is a proof of Romana's unfitness for command that he, having the whole population at his disposal, was yet ignorant of everything relating to his enemy that it behoved him to know. The whole of the French force in Galicia, at this period, was about forty-five thousand men, Romana estimated it at twenty-one thousand; the number under Soult was about twenty-four thousand, Romana supposed it to be twelve thousand; and among these he included General Marchand's division of the sixth corps, which he always imagined to be a part of the Duke of Dalmatia's army.

The Spanish General was so elated at the spirit of the peasants about Ribidavia, that he anticipated nothing but victory; he knew also that on the Arosa, an estuary running up towards St. Jago de Compostella, the inhabitants of Villa Garcia had risen, and being joined by all the neighboring districts, were preparing to attack Vigo and Tuy; hence, partly from his Spanish temperament, partly from his extreme ignorance of war, he was convinced that the French only thought of making their escape out of Galicia, and that even in that they would be disappointed. To effect their destruction more certainly, he also, as we have seen, pestered Sir John Cradock for succors in money and ammunition, and desired that the insurgents on the Arosa might be assisted with a thousand British soldiers.† Cradock, anxious to support the cause, although he refused the troops, sent ammunition and five thousand pounds in money, but before it arrived Romana was beaten, and in flight.

The combined Spanish and Portuguese forces, amounting to sixteen thousand regulars and militia, besides *ordenanzas*, were posted in a straggling unconnected manner along the valley of the Tamega, extending from Monterey, Verim, and Villaza, to near Chaves, a distance of more than fifteen miles. This was the first line of defence for Portugal. Freire and Eben, with fourteen guns and twenty-five thousand men, were at Braga, in second line, their outposts being on the Cavado and at the strong passes of Ruivaens and Venda Nova; but of these twenty-five thousand only six thousand were armed with muskets, and it is to be observed that the militia and troops of the line differed from the armed peasantry only in name, save that their faulty discipline and mutinous disposition rendered them less active and intelligent as skirmishers, without making them fit for battle. The Bishop, with his disorderly and furious rabble, formed the third line, occupying the intrenchments that

\* Appendix 2, § 3.

† Cradock's Correspondence, MS.

covered Oporto. Such was the state of affairs, and such were the dispositions made to resist the Duke of Dalmatia; but his army, although galled and wearied by continual toil, and, when halting, disturbed and vexed by the multitude of insurrections, was, when in motion, of a power to overthrow and disperse these numerous bands, even as a great ship, feeling the wind, breaks through and scatters the gun-boats that have gathered round her in the calm.

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## CHAPTER II.

Soult enters Portugal—Action at Monterey—Franceschi makes great slaughter of the Spaniards—Portuguese retreat upon Chaves—Romana flies to Puebla Senabria—Portuguese mutiny—Three thousand throw themselves into Chaves—Soult takes that town—Marches upon Braga—Forces the defiles of Ruivaens and Venda Nova—Tumults and disorders in the Portuguese camp at Braga—Murder of General Freire and others—Battle of Braga—Soult marches against Oporto—Disturbed state of that town—Silveira retakes Chaves—The French force the passage of the Ave—The Portuguese murder their General Vallonga—French appear in front of Oporto—Negotiate with the Bishop—Violence of the people—General Foy taken—Battle of Oporto—The city stormed with great slaughter.

### SECOND INVASION OF PORTUGAL.

THE Entre Minho e Douro and the Tras os Montes, lying together, form the northern part of Portugal; the extreme breadth of either, when measured from the frontier to the Douro, does not exceed seventy miles.

The river Tamega, running north and south, and discharging itself into the Douro, forms the boundary line between them; but there is, to the west of this river, a succession of rugged mountain ridges, which, under the names of Sierra de Gerez, Sierra de Cabrera, and Sierra de Santa Catalina, form a second barrier, nearly parallel to the Tamega, and across some part of these ridges an invader, coming from the eastward, must pass to arrive at Oporto.

Other sierras, running also in a parallel direction with the Tamega, cut the Tras os Montes in such a manner, that all the considerable rivers flowing north and south tumble into the Douro. But as the western ramifications of the Sierras de Gerez and Cabrera shoot down towards the sea; the rivers of the Entre Douro e Minho discharge their waters into the ocean, and consequently flow at right angles to those of Tras os Montes. Hence it follows, that an enemy penetrating to Oporto, from the north, would have to pass the Lima, the Cavado, and the Ave, to reach Oporto; and if, com-



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physician's services. It is the duty of the physician to  
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the circumstances. This duty is not limited to the  
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disease, but extends to the general well-being of the  
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## ARTICLE II

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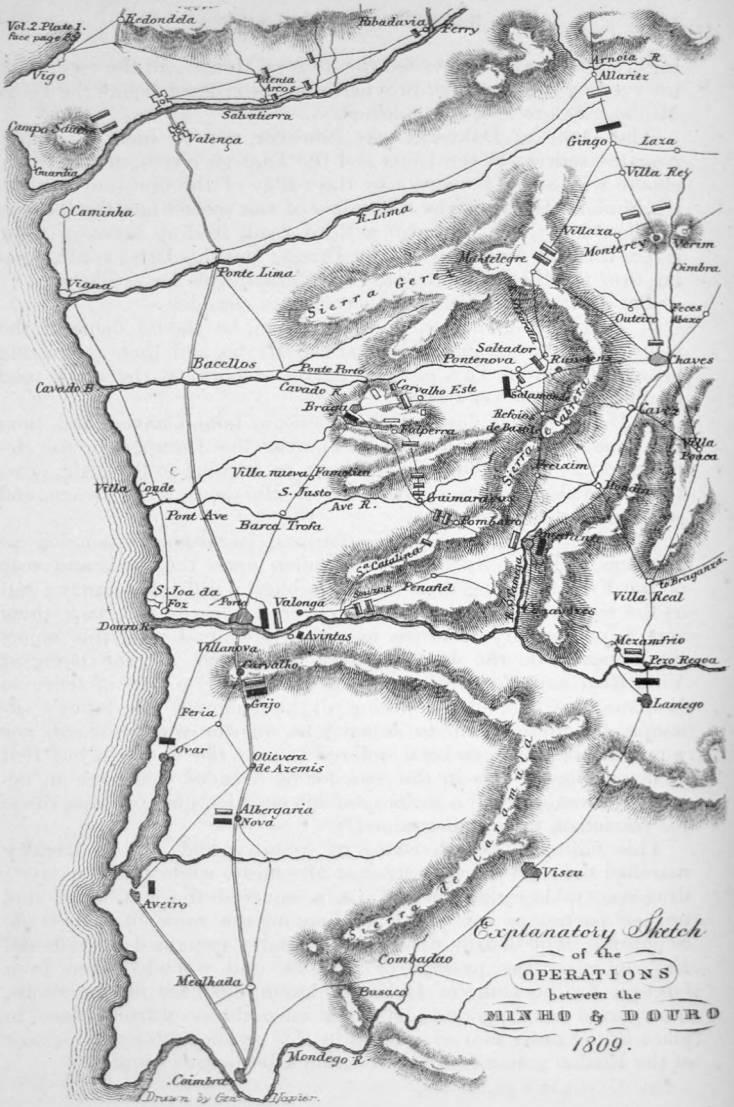
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face page 29



Explanatory Sketch  
of the  
OPERATIONS  
between the  
MINHO & DOURO  
1809.

Drawn by Gen. Napier.

ing from the east, he invaded the *Tras os Montes*, all the rivers and intervening ridges of that province must be crossed, before the *Entre Minho e Douro* could be reached.

The Duke of Dalmatia was, however, now in such a position, near the sources of the Lima and the Tamega rivers, that he could choose whether to penetrate by the valley of the first into the *Entre Minho e Douro*, or by the valley of the second into the *Tras os Montes*, and there was also a third road, leading between those rivers through *Montalegre* upon *Braga*; but this latter route, passing over the *Sierra de Gerez*, was impracticable for artillery.

The French General had, therefore, to consider—

1. If, following the course of the Lima, he should disperse the insurgents between that river and the *Minho*, and then recovering his artillery from *Tuy*, proceed against *Oporto* by the main road leading along the sea-coast.

2. If he should descend the Tamega, take *Chaves*, and then continuing his route to *Villa Real*, near the *Douro*, take the defences of *Tras os Montes* in reverse; or, turning to the right, cross the *Sierra de Cabrera* by the pass of *Ruivaens*, enter *Braga*, and so go against *Oporto*.

The first project was irregular and hazardous, inasmuch as *Romana* and *Silveira* could have fallen upon the flank and rear of the French during their march through a difficult country; but as the position of those generals covered *Chaves*, to attack them was a preliminary measure to either plan, and with this object *Soult* moved on the 4th of March. The 5th, his van being at *Villa Real* and *Peneverde*, he sent a letter by a flag of truce to *Romana* in which, after exposing all the danger of the latter's situation, he advised him to submit; no answer was returned, nor would the bearer have been suffered to pass the outposts, but that *Romana* himself was in the rear, for he dreaded that such an occurrence would breed a jealousy of his conduct, and, perhaps, cause his patriotism to be undervalued.\*

This failing, three divisions of infantry and one of cavalry marched the next morning against *Monterey*, while *La Houssaye's* dragoons, taking the road of *Laza*, covered the left flank, and pushed parties as far as *La Gudina*, on the route of *Puebla de Senabria*. The fourth division of infantry remained at *Villa del Rey*, to cover the passage of the sick and wounded men from *Orense*; for the Duke of Dalmatia, having no base of operations, transported his hospitals and other encumbrances from place to place as the army moved; acting in this respect after the manner of the Roman generals when invading a barbarous country.

\* Sir J. Cradock's papers, MS.

As the French advanced, the Spaniards abandoned their positions in succession, spiked the guns in the dilapidated works of Monterey, and after a slight skirmish at Verim, took the road to Puebla de Senabria; but Franceschi followed close, and overtaking two or three thousand as they were passing a rugged mountain, assailed their rear with a battalion of infantry, and at the same time leading his horsemen round both flanks, headed the column, and obliged it to halt.\* The Spaniards, trusting to the rough ground, drew up in one large square to receive the charge. Franceschi had four regiments of cavalry, each regiment settled itself against the face of a square, and then the whole, with loud cries, bore down swiftly upon their opponents; the latter, unsteady, irresolute, dismayed, shrunk from the fierce assault, and were instantly trampled down in heaps. Those who escaped the horses' hoofs and the edge of the sword became prisoners, but twelve hundred bodies were stretched lifeless on the field of battle, and Franceschi continued his movements on La Gudina.

Romana was at Semadems, several miles in the rear of Verim, when his vanguard was attacked, and there was nothing to prevent him from falling back to Chaves with his main body, according to a plan before agreed upon between him and Silveira;† but either from fear, or indignation at the treatment his soldiers had received at the hands of the Portuguese, he left Silveira to his fate, and made off with six or seven thousand men towards Bragança; from thence passing by Puebla de Senabria, he regained the valley of the Syl. Meanwhile, two thousand Portuguese infantry, with some guns, issuing from the side of Villaza, cut the French line of march at the moment when Franceschi and Heudelet having passed Monterey, Laborde was approaching that place; a slight combat ensued, the Portuguese lost their guns, and were driven down the valley of the Tamega as far as the village of Outeiro, within their own frontier.\* This defeat, and the flight of Romana, had such an effect upon the surrounding districts that the Spanish insurgents returned in crowds to their habitations and delivered up their arms. Some of the clergy, also, changing their opinions, exhorted the people to peace, and the prisoners taken on the 6th, being dissatisfied with Romana's conduct, and moved by their hatred of the Portuguese, entered the French service.

These affairs occupied Soutl until the 9th, during which period his outposts were pushed towards Chaves, Montalegre, and La Gudina, but the main body remained at Verim to cover the arrival of the sick at Monterey, while Silveira, thus beaten at Villaza, and

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

† Appendix 2, § 3.

deserted by Romana, fell back on the 7th to a strong mountain position, one league behind Chaves, from whence he could command a view of all the French movements as far as Monterey; his ground was advantageous, but his military talents were moderate, his men, always insubordinate, were now mutinous, and many of the officers were disposed to join the French. He wished to abandon Chaves, but his troops resolved to defend it, and three thousand five hundred men actually did throw themselves into that town, in defiance of him; for he was already, according to the custom of the day, pronounced a traitor and declared worthy of that death which he would inevitably have suffered, but that some of his soldiers still continued to respect his orders.

The 10th, the convoy of French sick was close to Monterey, and as Romana's movement was known to be a real flight, and not made with a design to create fresh insurrections in the rear, the French troops were again put in motion towards Chaves;\* Merle's division however remained at Verim to protect the hospital, and Franceschi's took the road of La Gudina, as if he had been going towards Salamanca. A report that he had actually entered that town reached Lisbon, and was taken as an indication that Soult would not pass the Portuguese frontier at Chaves; but Franceschi quickly returned, by Osonio and Feces de Abaxa, and being assisted by Heudelet's division, invested Chaves on the left bank of the Tamega, while Laborde, Mermet, La Houssaye, and Lorge, descending the right bank, beat the Portuguese outposts, and getting possession of a fort close under the walls, completed the investment of the town. The place was immediately summoned to surrender, but no answer was returned, and the garrison, like men bereft of their wits and fighting with the air, kept up a continual fire of musketry and artillery until the 12th, when they surrendered on receiving a second summons, more menacing than the first. The 13th the French entered the town, and Silveira retired to Villa Real.

The works of Chaves were in a bad state; few of the fifty guns mounted on the ramparts were fit for service, but there was a stone bridge, and the town was in many respects more suitable for a place of arms than Monterey; wherefore the sick were brought down from the latter place, and a hospital was established for twelve hundred men, the number now unfit to carry arms. The fighting men were reduced to twenty-one thousand, and Soult, partly from the difficulty of guarding his prisoners, partly from a desire to abate the hostility of the Portuguese, permitted the militia and *ordenanzas* to return to their homes, after taking an oath

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

not to resume their arms; to some of the poorest he also gave money and clothes, and he enrolled, at their own request, the few regular troops taken in Chaves.

This wise and gentle proceeding was much blamed by some of his officers, especially by those who had served under Junot.\* They desired that Chaves might be assaulted, and the garrison put to the sword, for they were imbued with a personal hatred of the Portuguese, and being averse to servé in the present expedition, endeavored, as it would appear, to thwart their General; yet the prudence of his conduct was immediately visible in the softened feelings of the country people, and the scouting parties being no longer molested spread themselves, some on the side of Bragança and Villa Real, others in the Entre Minho e Douro.† The former reported that there was no enemy in a condition to make head in the Tras os Montes, but the latter fell in with the advanced guard of Freire's army at Ruivaens, on the road to Braga.

From Chaves Soult could operate against Oporto, either by the Tras os Montes or the Entre Minho e Douro; the latter presented the strongest position, but the road was shorter and more practicable for guns, than that by the valley of the Tamega, and the communication with Tuy could be sooner recovered; hence, when the scouts brought intelligence that a Portuguese army was at Braga, the French General decided to penetrate by that line.‡

The road from Chaves to Braga entered a deep and dangerous defile, or rather a succession of defiles, which extended from Venda Nova to Ruivaens, and re-commenced after passing the Cavado river; Freire's advanced guards, composed of *ordenanzas*, occupied those places, and he had also a detachment under Eben on the road of Montalegre; he, however, recalled the latter on the 14th; on the 16th Franceschi forced the defile of Nova, and the remainder of the French army being formed in alternate masses of cavalry and infantry, began to pass the Sierra de Cabrera; meanwhile Lorge's dragoons, descending the Tamega, ordered rations for the whole army along the road to Villa Real, and then, suddenly retracing their steps, rejoined the main body.

The 17th, Franceschi, being reinforced with some infantry, won the bridge of Ruivaens, and entered Salamonde; the Portuguese, covered by Eben's detachment, which had arrived at St. Joa de Campo, then felt back on the Pico de Pugalados, close to Braga, and Franceschi took post at Carvalho Este, two leagues in front of that city.

\* Noble's Campagne de Galice.

† S. Journal of Operations, MS.

‡ Ibid.

Soult now, expecting to reach Braga without further opposition, caused his artillery, guarded by Laborde's division, to enter the pass of Venda Nova; but the *ordenanzas*, reinforced by some men from the side of Guimaraens, immediately re-assembled, and clustering on the mountains to the left of the column of march, attacked it with great fierceness and subtlety.

The peasants of the northern provinces of Portugal, unlike the squalid miserable population of Lisbon and Oporto, are robust, handsome, and exceedingly brave; their natural disposition is open and obliging, and they are, when rightly handled as soldiers, docile, intelligent, and hardy. They are, however, vehement in their anger; and being now excited by the exhortations and personal example of their priests, they came rushing down the sides of the hills, and many of them, like men deprived of reason, broke furiously into the French battalions, and were there killed. The others, finding their efforts unavailing, fled, and were pursued a league up the mountain by some battalions sent out against them; yet they were not abashed, and making a circuit behind the hills, fell upon the rear of the line of march, killed fifty of the stragglers, and plundered the baggage. Thus galled, the French slowly, and with much trouble, passed the long defiles of Venda Nova, Rui-vaens, and Salamonde, and gathered by degrees in front of Freire's position.\*

That General was no more; and his troops, reeking from the slaughter of their commander, were raging like savage beasts, at one moment congregating near the prisons to murder some wretch within, at another rushing tumultuously to the outposts, with a design to engage the enemy. The *ordenanzas* of the distant districts also came pouring into the camp, dragging with them suspected persons, and adding to the general distraction.†

The unfortunate Freire, unable to establish order in his army, had resolved to retreat, and in pursuance of that design, recalled Eben on the 14th, giving directions to the officers at the different outposts in front of Braga to retire at the approach of the enemy. This, and his endeavor to prevent the waste of ammunition, gave effect to a plan which had been long prepared by the Bishop's faction for his destruction. In passing through Braga, he was openly reviled in the streets by some of the *ordenanzas*; and as the latter plainly discovered their murderous intention, he left the army; he was however seized on the 17th, at a village behind Braga, and brought back: what followed is thus described by Baron Eben, in his official report to Sir John Cradock:

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

† Eben's Report, MS. Sir J. Cradock's Papers.

"I did not reach Braga until nine o'clock in the morning of the 17th. I found everything in the greatest disorder; the houses shut, the people flying in all directions, and part of the populace armed with guns and pikes. Passing through the streets, I was greeted with loud *vivas*. Though the people knew me, I could not guess the meaning of this. At the market-place, I was detained by the rapidly increasing populace, who took the reins of my horse, crying out loudly, that they were ready to do anything to defend the city; requesting me to assist them, and speaking in the lowest terms of their General. I promised them to do all in my power to aid their patriotic zeal; but said that I must first speak to him. Upon this, they suffered me to proceed, accompanied by about a hundred of them; but I had not got far on my way to his quarters, when I saw him on foot, conducted by a great armed multitude, who suffered no one to pass, and on my attempting it, threatened to fire. I was, therefore, obliged to turn my horse, and this the people applauded. Two men had hold of the General's arms, his sword was taken from him, and the people abused him most vehemently. On my way back to the market-place, they wanted to shoot me, taking me for General Freire; but I was saved by a soldier of the legion, who explained the mistake. When I reached the market-place, I found about a thousand men drawn up: I communicated to them my determination to assist them in their laudable endeavors to defend themselves, provided they would first permit me to speak to the General, for whose actions I promised to be answerable as long as I should be with him. I had ordered a house to be got ready for my reception, where the General arrived, accompanied as before; I saluted him with respect, at which they plainly discovered their disapprobation. I repeated my proposal, but they would not listen to it. I perceived the danger of the General, and proposed to take him to my quarters. My adjutant offered him his arm: when I spoke to him, he only replied, 'Save me!'

"At the entrance of my house, I was surrounded by thousands, and heard the loud cry of 'Kill! kill!' I now took hold of him, and attempted to force my way into the house, and a gentleman slightly wounded him with the point of his sword, under my arm. He collected all his strength, rushed through them, and hid himself behind the door of the house. The people surrounded me, and forced me from the house. To draw the attention of the people from the General, I ordered the drummers to beat the alarm, and formed the *ordenanzas* in ranks; but they kept a constant fire upon my house, where the General still was. As a last attempt to save him, I now proposed that he should be conducted to prison, in



order to take a legal trial. This was agreed to, and he was conducted there in safety. I now hoped that I had succeeded, as the people demanded to be led against the enemy, now rapidly advancing, in number about two thousand. I again formed them, and advanced with them; but soon after, I heard the firing again, and was informed that the people had put the General to death with pikes and guns. I was now proclaimed General."

When this murder was perpetrated, the people seemed satisfied, and Eben, announcing the approach of a British force from Oporto, sent orders to the outposts to stand fast, as he intended to fight; but another tumult arose, when it was discovered that an officer of Freire's staff, one Villaboas, was in Eben's quarters. Several thousand *ordenanzas* instantly gathered about the house, and the unhappy man was haled forth and stabbed to death at the door, the mob all the time shouting and firing volleys in at the windows.\* Yet, when their fury was somewhat abated, they obliged their new General to come out and show that he had not been wounded, and expressed great affection for him.

In the course of the night, the legion marched in from Pico de Pugalados, and the following morning a reinforcement of six thousand *ordenanzas* came up in one mass. Fifty thousand dollars also arrived in the camp from Oporto; for the Portuguese, like the Spaniards, commonly reversed the order of military arrangements, leaving their weapons in store, and bringing their encumbrances to the field of battle. In the evening the corregidor and two officers of rank, together with many persons of a meaner class, were brought to the town as prisoners and put in jail, the armed mob being with difficulty restrained from slaying them on the way thither. In this distracted manner they were proceeding when Franceschi arrived at Carvalho on the 17th; and, surely, if that bold and enterprising soldier could have obtained a glimpse of what was passing, or known the real state of affairs, he would have broken into the midst of them with his cavalry; for, of the twenty-five thousand men composing the whole of the Portuguese force, eighteen thousand were only armed with pikes; the remainder had wasted the greatest part of the ammunition, and the powder in store was not made up in cartridges.† But Braga, situated in a deep hollow, was hidden from him, and the rocky and wooded hills surrounding it were occupied by what appeared a formidable multitude; hence Franceschi, although reinforced by a brigade of infantry, was satisfied by feints and slight skirmishes, to alarm his opponents, and to keep them in play until the other divisions of the French army could arrive.

\* Eben's Report, MS.

† Cradock's Papers, MS. S. Journal of Operations, MS.

While these events were passing at Braga, Silveira again collected a considerable force of militia and *ordenanzas* in the *Tras os Montes*, and Captain Arentschild, one of the officers sent by Sir John Cradock to aid the Bishop, also rallied a number of fugitives at Guimaraens and Amarante. In Oporto, however, the multitude, obeying no command, were more intent upon murder than upon defence.

Eben's posts extended from Falperra, on the route of Guimaraens to the Ponte Porto, on the Cavado river; but his principal force was stationed on a lofty ridge called the Monte Adaufé, which, at the distance of six or seven miles from Braga, crossed the road to Chaves. The left or western end, overhanging the river Cavado, covered the detachment guarding the Ponte Porto. The right was wooded and masked by the head of a deep ravine; but beyond this wood the ridge, taking a curved and forward direction, was called the Monte Vallonga, and a second mass of men was posted there, but separated from those on the Monte Adaufé by an interval of two miles, and by the ravine and wood before mentioned. A third body, being pushed still more in advance, crowned an isolated hill, flanking the Chaves road, being intended to take the French in rear when the latter should attack the Monte Adaufé.

Behind the Monte Vallonga, and separated from it by a valley three miles wide, the ridge of Falperra was guarded by detachments from Guimaraens and from Braga.

The road to Braga, leading directly over the centre of the Monte Adaufé, was flanked on the left by a ridge shooting perpendicularly out from that mountain, and ending in a lofty mass of rocks which overhangs Carvalho Esté. But the Portuguese neglected to occupy either these rocks or the connecting ridge, and Franceschi seized the former on the 17th.

The 18th, Soult arrived in person, and, wishing to prevent a battle, released twenty prisoners, and sent them in with a proclamation couched in conciliatory language, and offering a capitulation; the trumpeter who accompanied them was however detained, and the prisoners were immediately slain. The next day Eben brought up all his reserves to the Adaufé, and the Portuguese on the isolated hill in front of Monte Vallonga took possession of Lanhoza, a village half-way between that hill and the rocky height occupied by Franceschi on the 17th.

Two divisions of French infantry being now up, Soult caused one of them and the cavalry to attack Lanhoza, from whence the Portuguese were immediately driven, and, being followed closely, lost their own hill also. The other French division took post, part in Carvalho, part on the rocky headland, and six guns were carried

to the latter during the night. In this position the French columns were close to the centre of the Portuguese, and could, by a slight movement in advance, separate Eben's wings. The rest of the army was at hand, and a general attack was arranged for the next morning.

#### BATTLE OF BRAGA.

The 20th, at nine o'clock, the French were in motion: Franceschi and Mermet, leaving a detachment on the hill they had carried the night before, endeavored to turn the right of the people on the Monte Vallonga.

Laborde, supported by La Houssaye's dragoons, advanced against the centre by the ridge connecting Carvalho with the Monte Adaufé.\*

Heudelet, with a part of his division and a squadron of cavalry, attacked Eben's left, with the view of seizing the Ponte Porto.

The Portuguese opened a straggling fire of musketry and artillery in the centre; but, after a few rounds, the bursting of a gun created a confusion from which Laborde's rapidly advancing masses gave them no time to recover.† By ten o'clock the whole of the centre was flying in disorder down a narrow wooded valley leading from the Adaufé to Braga; the French followed hard, and having discovered one of their men, who had been a prisoner, mutilated in a dreadful manner and still alive, they gave no quarter. Braga was abandoned, and the victorious infantry passing through, took post on the other side, while the cavalry continued the havoc for some distance on the road to Oporto; yet, so savage was the temper of the fugitives that, in passing through Braga, they stopped to murder the corregidor and other prisoners in the jail; then casting the mangled bodies into the street, continued their flight.‡ Meanwhile the centre was forced, and Heudelet, breaking over the left of the Monte Adaufé, descended upon Ponte Porto, and after a sharp skirmish, carried that bridge and the village on the other side of the Cavado.

Franceschi and Mermet found considerable difficulty in ascending the rugged sides of the Monte Vallonga, but having, at last, attained the crest, the whole of their enemies fled, and the two generals crossed the valley to gain the road of Guimaraens, and cut off that line of retreat; but they fell in with the three thousand Portuguese posted above Falperra, and these men, seeing the cavalry approach, drew up with their backs to some high rocks, and

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

† Eben's Report, MS.

‡ S. Journal of Operations, MS.

opened a fire of artillery. Franceschi immediately placed his horsemen on either flank, a brigade of infantry against the front, and, as at Verim, making all charge together, strewed the ground with the dead. Nevertheless, the Portuguese fought valiantly at this point, and Franceschi acknowledged it. The vanquished lost all their artillery and above four thousand men, of which four hundred only were made prisoners. Some of the fugitives, crossing the Cavado river, made for the Ponte de Lima, others retired to Oporto; but the greatest number took the road of Guimaraens, during the fight at Falperra. Eben appears, by his own official report, to have been at Braga when the action commenced, and to have fled among the first, for he makes no mention of the fight at Falperra, nor of the skirmish at Ponte Porto, and his narrative bears every mark of inaccuracy.\*

Braga was at first abandoned by the inhabitants; they returned however the next day, and when the French outposts were established, General Lorge, crossing the Cavado, entered Bacellos; he was well received by the corregidor, for which the latter was a few days afterwards hanged by the Portuguese General Botilho, who commanded between the Lima and the Minho. At Braga provisions were found, and a large store of powder, which was immediately made up in cartridges for the use of the French; the gun-carriages and ammunition-wagons, which had been very much damaged, were again repaired, and a hospital was established for eight hundred sick and wounded. Hence, it may be judged, that the loss sustained in action since the 15th, was not less than six hundred men.

The French General, having thus broken through the second Portuguese line of defence, could either march directly upon Oporto, or recover his communication with Tuy. He resolved upon the former—1. Because he knew, through his spies and by intercepted letters, that Tuy, although besieged, was in no distress; that its guns overpowered those of the Portuguese fortress of Valença on the opposite bank of the Minho, and that the garrison made successful sallies. 2. Because information reached him that sixty thousand men, troops of the line, militia, and *ordenanza*, were assembled in the intrenched camp covering Oporto, and his scouts reported also that the Portuguese were in force at Guimaraens, and had broken the bridges along the whole course of the Ave. It was essential to crush these large bodies before they could acquire any formidable consistency; wherefore Soult put his army again in march, leaving Heudelet's division at Braga to protect his hospitals against Botilho. Meanwhile Silveira struck a great blow; for

\* Sir J. Cradock's Papers, MS.

being reinforced from the side of Beira he remounted the Tamega, invested Chaves on the day of battle at Braga, and the 28th forced the garrison, consisting of one hundred fighting men and twelve hundred sick, to capitulate, after which he took post at Amarante, while Soult, ignorant of the event, continued his march against Oporto in three columns.

The first, composed of Franceschi's and Mermet's divisions, marched by the road of Guimaraens and San Justo, with orders to force the passage of the upper Ave, and scour the country towards Pombeiro; the second, consisting of Merle's, Laborde's and La Houssaye's divisions, was commanded by Soult in person, and moved upon Barca de Trofa; the third, under General Lorge, quitting Bacellos, made way by the Ponte d'Ave.

The passage of the Ave was fiercely disputed, and the left column was fought with in front of Guimaraens, and at Pombeiro, and again at Puente Negrellos. The last combat was rough, and the French General Jardon was killed. The march of the centre column was arrested at Barca de Trofa, by the cutting of the bridge, but the Marshal, observing the numbers of the enemy, ascended the right bank, and forced the passage at San Justo; not however without the help of Franceschi, who came down the opposite side of the river, after the fight at Ponte Negrellos.

When the left and centre had thus crossed, Colonel Lallemand was detached with a regiment of dragoons to assist Lorge, who was still held in check at the Ponte Ave; Lallemand was at first beaten back, but, being reinforced with some infantry, finally succeeded, when the Portuguese, enraged at their defeat, brutally murdered their commander, General Vallonga, and dispersed. The whole French army was now in communication on the left bank of the Ave; the way to Oporto was opened, and, on the 27th, the troops were finally concentrated in front of the intrenchments covering that city.

The action of Monterey, the taking of Chaves, and the defeat at Braga, had so damped the Bishop's ardor that he was, at one time, inclined to abandon the defence of Oporto; but this idea was relinquished when he considered the multitudes he had drawn together, and that the English army was stronger than it had been at any previous period since Cradock's arrival; Beresford, also, was at the head of a considerable native force behind the Mondego, and, with the hope of their support, he resolved to stand the brunt. He had collected, in the intrenched camp, little short of forty thousand men, and among them were many regular troops, of which two thousand had lately arrived under the command of General Vittoria. This officer had been sent by Beresford to aid Silveira,

but when Chaves surrendered, he entered Oporto. The hopes of the people, also, were high, for they could not believe that the French were a match for them; the preceding defeats were attributed, each to its particular case of treason, and the murder of innocent persons followed as an expiation. No man but the Bishop durst thwart the slightest caprice of the mob, and he was little disposed to do so, while Raymundo, and others of his stamp, fomented their fury, and directed it to gratify personal enmities. Thus, the defeat of Braga being known in Oporto, caused a tumult on the 22d, in which Louis D'Olivera, a man of high rank, who had been cast into prison, was, with fourteen other persons, haled forth, and despatched with many stabs; the bodies were then mutilated and dragged in triumph through the streets.

The intrenchments, extending, as I have said, from the Douro to the coast, were complete, and armed with two hundred guns. They consisted of a number of forts of different sizes, placed on the top of a succession of rounded hills, and where the hills failed, the defences were continued by earthen ramparts, loopholed houses, ditches, and felled trees.\* Oporto itself is built in a hollow, and a bridge of boats, nearly three hundred yards in length, formed the only communication between the city and the suburb of Villa Nova; this bridge was completely commanded by fifty guns, planted on the bluff and craggy heights that overhung the river above Villa Nova, and overlooked, not only the city, but a great part of the intrenched camp beyond it. Within the lines, tents were pitched for even greater numbers than were assembled, and the people running to arms, manned their works with great noise and tumult, when the French columns, gathering like heavy thunder clouds, settled in front of the camp.

The Duke of Dalmatia arrived on the 27th. While at Braga he had written to the Bishop, calling upon him to calm the popular effervescence; now, beholding the extended works in his front, and reading their weakness even in the multitudes that guarded them, he renewed his call upon the prelate, to spare this great and commercial city the horrors of a storm. A prisoner, employed to carry this summons, would have been killed, but that it was pretended he came with an offer from Soult to surrender his army; and notwithstanding this ingenious device, and that the Bishop commenced a negotiation, which was prolonged until evening, the firing from the intrenchments was constant and general during the whole of the 28th.

The parley being finally broken off, Soult made dispositions for a general action on the 29th. To facilitate this he caused Merle's division to approach the left of the intrenchment in the evening of

\* Plan 8.

the 28th, intending thereby to divert attention from the true point of attack; a prodigious fire was immediately opened from the works, but Merle, having pushed close up, got into some hollow roads and inclosures, where he maintained his footing. At another part of the line, however, some of the Portuguese pretending a wish to surrender, General Foy, with a single companion, imprudently approached them, when the latter was killed, and Foy himself made prisoner and carried into the town. He was mistaken for Loison, and the people called out to kill "*Maneta*," but with great presence of mind he held up his hands, and the crowd, convinced of their error, suffered him to be cast into the jail.

The Bishop, having brought affairs to this awful crisis, had not resolution to brave the danger himself. Leaving Generals Lima and Pareiras to command the army, he, with an escort of troops, quitted the city, and crossing the river took his station in the Sarea convent, built on the top of the rugged hill which overhung the suburb of Villa Nova, from whence he beheld in safety the horrors of the next day. The bells in Oporto continued to ring all night, and about twelve o'clock a violent thunder storm arising, the sound of the wind was mistaken in the camp for the approach of enemies; at once the whole line blazed with a fire of musketry, the roar of two hundred pieces of artillery was heard above the noise of the tempest, and the Portuguese, calling to one another with loud cries, were agitated at once with fury and with terror. The morning, however, broke serenely, and a little before seven o'clock the sound of trumpets and drums, and the glitter of arms, gave notice that the French army was in motion for the attack.

#### BATTLE AND STORMING OF OPORTO.\*

The feint made the evening before against the left, which was the weakest part of the line, had perfectly succeeded; the Portuguese generals placed their principal masses on that side; but the Duke of Dalmatia was intent upon the strongest points of the works, being resolved to force his way through the town, and seize the bridge during the fight, that he might secure the passage of the river. His army was divided into three columns; of which the first, under Merle, attacked the left of the Portuguese centre; the second, under Franceschi and Laborde, assailed their extreme right; the third, composed of Mermet's division, sustained by a brigade of dragoons, was in the centre. General Lorge was appointed to cut off a body of ordenanza, who were posted with some guns in front of the Portuguese left, but beyond the works on the road of Villa de Conde.

\* S. Journal of Operations, MS.