

came out to intercede for it. The people were disarmed, the adjoining country was kept down by military force, and deputies from Valladolid, Segovia, and Palencia were sent to Bayonne to solicit the Emperor's clemency, and pledge themselves for the allegiance of their fellow-citizens. Two detachments under Generals Merle and Ducos were then ordered into the Montañas de Santander by different routes. The patriots, consisting almost wholly of untrained volunteers, were beaten at Lantueño, at Soncello, and at Venta del Escudo. The two detachments entered the city on the same day, and Santander also was compelled to send deputies with promises of submission to Bayonne. By these operations Marshal Bessieres kept Navarre and the three Biscayan provinces in subjection, and, for the time, reduced the Montaña and the greater part of Old Castile.

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VIII.

1808.

June.

*They enter
Santander.*

The movements of the French had not been less successful on the side of Aragon. General Lefebvre Desnouettes was ordered to suppress the insurrection in that kingdom. He began by arresting D. Francisco Palafox in Pampluna, who having accompanied Ferdinand to Bayonne as his chief equerry, was on his way through that city with the supposed intention of joining his brother. Lefebvre then marched from Pampluna upon Tudela. Palafox had detached a body of Aragonese from Zaragoza, chiefly armed peasantry, to assist the Tudelans in defending the passage of the Ebro: they were defeated by superior discipline and superior numbers, their cannon were taken, and Lefebvre having entered Tudela, put the leaders of the insurrection to death, following, after Murat's example, the principle of the tyrant whom he served, that the Spaniards who opposed him were to be considered and treated as rebels. The French paid dearly in the end for the insolent barbarity with which they thus began the war: it called forth the revengeful

*G. Lefebvre
Desnouettes
defeats the
Aragonese.*

June 9.

CHAP. spirit of the nation, and the contest assumed a character hateful
 VIII. to humanity, the guilt and the reproach of which must lie mainly
 1808. upon those by whom the provocation was given. Lefebvre then
 June. repaired the bridge over the Ebro, which had been burnt, and
 June 13. advanced to the village of Mallen, where the Marquis de Lazan,
 at the head of ten thousand raw troops, with two hundred dra-
 goons, and eight ill-mounted cannon, had taken a position, with
 the canal of Aragon on the right, and the village on the left,
 and supported by an olive grove. A short but bloody action
 ensued: brave as the Aragonese were, they were in no con-
 dition to oppose flying artillery, well disciplined troops, and a
 powerful cavalry. They were defeated, but not disheartened;
 and on the following day sustained another action with the same
 ill success at Alagon, about four leagues from Zaragoza. The
 French then approached the city, expecting that not more re-
 sistance would be made there than at Valladolid, and that the
 submission or punishment of the capital would intimidate the
 rest of Aragon; this object was to be aided by a movement from
 the side of Catalonia.

*He marches
 against
 Zaragoza.*

*Troops sent
 from Barce-
 lona toward
 Valencia
 and Zara-
 goza.*

There were between three and four thousand Spanish troops at
 Barcelona in the beginning of June; but in a short time there re-
 mained scarcely more than as many hundreds, so rapidly they had
 deserted, some to return home, or seek their fortunes, the greater
 part to serve their country in these stormy times. The French
 secretly encouraged this desertion: so large a force in Barcelona
 would have rendered a stronger garrison necessary, and have
 increased their uneasiness and danger; but in the field they
 cared not what number of Spaniards might be collected against
 them; the more numerous they were in their present state of
 indiscipline, the more easily, and with the greater effect, they
 might be defeated. Being thus rid of their presence, Duhesme
 was able to send out more than half his force in two detachments,

June 3.

under Generals Chabran and Schwartz. The first, who had distinguished himself in Switzerland against the Austrians in the dreadful campaign of 1799, was ordered with 4200 men to enter Tarragona, garrison it with a thousand men, incorporate in his division Wimpffen's Swiss regiment of 1200 men, which was stationed in the city, and then proceed by way of Tortosa to co-operate with Marshal Moncey against Valencia. General Schwartz's orders were to march with 3800 men by Molins de Rey and Martorell upon Manresa, and raise upon that city a contribution of 750,000 francs, to be paid within eight and forty hours, and applied to the service of the division. He was instructed to take means for putting the promoters of sedition to death, but to pardon them upon the plea of the Emperor's clemency. What powder was in the magazines he was to send to Barcelona, and then to destroy the mills; next he was to proceed by way of Cervera to Lerida, and get possession of that city, if it could be done by a sudden attempt; in that case he was to garrison the castle with 500 men, incorporate with his own troops the Swiss who were there, and levy a contribution of 600,000 francs, for the use of Lefebvre's army, with which he was then to co-operate according to sealed instructions, which he was to open at Bujaraloz, on the way to Zaragoza.

The French plans were widely combined and well concerted. Here, however, they failed in execution. The people of Manresa and Igualada received timely intelligence from Barcelona of the intended movements; the Somatenes, or armed population, were called out, and posted to wait for the enemy in the strong positions of Bruch and Casa Masana: powder was served out from those mills at Manresa which Schwartz intended to destroy; and curtain rods were cut into small pieces, and distributed instead of bullets. The French lost a day by halting at Martorell because of the rain: the time which they thus lost was

CHAP.
VIII.

1808.

June.

*G Schwartz
marches
toward
Manresa.*

CHAP. well employed by the Catalans, and when Schwartz arrived at
 VIII. Bruch a fire was opened upon him by an enemy concealed
 1808. among the crags and bushes. Driven from this pass, after a
June. brave defence, some of the Somatenes retreated to Igualada,
 others to Casa Masana; the latter were pursued and again de-
 feated; they fled with all speed to Manresa, and if Schwartz
 had pursued his success he might have reached the city without
 opposition; but having met with more resistance than had been
 looked for, and perceiving how determined a spirit had been
 manifested in the people, he halted, as if doubtful whether to
 advance or retire. Upon discovering this irresolution the Soma-
 tenes again took heart; and being reinforced by the peasantry
 from the plain of Bages, a hardy active race, and excellent
 marksmen, they attacked the vanguard of the enemy at Casa
 Masana, and drove them back upon the main body of the
 column near Bruch.

*He is de-
 feated at
 Bruch, and
 retreats to
 Barcelona.*

An odd accident deceived the French. There was among
 the Somatenes a drummer, who had escaped from Barcelona:
 little as the knowledge was which this lad possessed of military
 manœuvres, it enabled him to assume authority among these
 armed peasants, and he performed the double duties of drummer
 and commander with singular good fortune. For the enemy
 inferred from the sound of the drum, which was regularly
 beaten, that the peasantry were supported by regular troops:..
 there were Swiss in Lerida, and the regiment of Extremadura
 was at Tarrega; the apprehension therefore was not unreason-
 able, and, after a short stand against a brisk fire, Schwartz deter-
 mined upon retreating. The Somatenes, encouraged by success,
 and now increasing in number, pressed upon him; and the news
 of his defeat raised the country behind him, to his greater
 danger. He had to pass through the little town of Esparraguera,
 consisting of one narrow street, nearly a mile in length. The

inhabitants cut down trees, and brought out tables and benches to obstruct the way, and they stored the flat roofs of their houses with beams and stones. The head of the French column, ignorant of these preparations, entered the street at twilight; but having experienced the danger, Schwartz divided them into two bodies, one of which made its way on the outside of the town by the right, the other by the left. From this time the retreat became disorderly; the enemy lost part of their artillery in crossing the Abrera; and had the people of Martorell acted upon the alert like those of Esparraguera, and broken down the bridge over the Noya, the fugitives, for such they were now become, might probably all have been cut off. They entered Barcelona in great confusion and dismay: their loss was less than might have been expected in such a route, for the Spaniards had neither horse nor cannon; they left, however, one piece of artillery in the hands of the pursuers, and about 400 dead, the greater part being Swiss.

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1808.
June.

June 7.

The effects of this action were of great importance. It was the first success which the Spaniards had obtained, and it had been obtained by the people, without any troops to assist them, .. without any military leader. The insurrection became general throughout Catalonia as fast as the tidings spread; the plan of co-operating with Lefebvre against Zaragoza was disconcerted; and Duhesme, perceiving that it would require all his force to repress the Catalans, recalled Chabran from his march toward Valencia. That General had reached Tarragona without opposition on the day when Schwartz's routed division re-entered Barcelona; but receiving orders to return without delay, he could neither secure that fortress, as had been intended, nor venture to incorporate the Swiss, who were more likely to take part with the Spaniards than against them. Meantime the people of the intermediate country, encouraged by the victory at

G. Chabran recalled in consequence of Schwartz's defeat.

CHAP.
VIII.

1808.

June.

*Arbos burnt
by the
French.*

*Chabran
defeated at
Bruch.*

*Duhesme
endeavours
to secure
Gerona.*

Bruch, had risen: they began to harass him at Vendrell, and attempted to maintain a position against him at Arbos, which they brought artillery to defend. Here, however, they were totally defeated; fire was set to the place, a neat and flourishing agricultural town, two-thirds of the houses were destroyed by the flames, and cruelties were committed upon the inhabitants which exasperated the Catalans instead of intimidating them. Even the people of Arbos themselves, who escaped the enemy, when they returned to inhabit their half-burnt habitations, or the hovels which they constructed amid the ruins, instead of repenting the part which they had taken, or bewailing the ruin of their property, prided themselves in the thought that their town should have been the first to suffer the full vengeance of the enemy in so glorious and unquestionable a cause. Duhesme came out to protect the division on its farther retreat; they halted at S. Feliu de Llobregat, and having been reinforced, Chabran was ordered to proceed against Manresa, and punish that city, which was believed to be the centre of the revolution. The fatal pass of Bruch was upon the road, and it was now occupied with some degree of skill. The Catalan Juntas, conceiving a high opinion of the strength of this position, had used great exertions to strengthen it; artillery had been planted there, and the Somatenes were supported by some of the soldiers who had fled from Barcelona, and by four companies of volunteers from Lerida under Colonel Baget. Chabran had a stronger detachment than that with which Schwartz had forced the pass; but after losing some 450 men, and some of his guns, he deemed it advisable to retreat, and was harassed by the Catalans almost to the gates of Barcelona.

Duhesme now perceived, that instead of dispatching troops to assist in the subjugation of Aragon and Valencia, there would be employment enough in Catalonia for all his force. The

French, expecting no resistance from the people after the government was subdued, had thought it sufficient to possess themselves of Figueras and Barcelona: the distance between these places is about fourscore miles, and they had neglected to secure the intermediate posts of Gerona and Hostalrich. Duhesme now learnt, not without some alarm, that Figueras was invested by the peasantry, and that though impregnable to any means which they could bring against it, it was in danger of being reduced by famine; thinking, therefore, by a prompt attack upon Gerona to repair the oversight which had been committed, he drew out a considerable force from the capital, and marched with it in person, with Generals Lecchi and Schwartz, against that city. Intelligence had been obtained of his intention; and the peasantry of Valles, and the inhabitants of the sea-shore, posted themselves to oppose his march on the heights which terminate at Mongat, a small fortress, or rather strong house, with a battery to protect that part of the coast from the Barbary corsairs. An armed vessel sailed from Barcelona to act against this place, in co-operation with the land forces; and Duhesme easily deceiving his unskilful opponents by demonstrations which drew their attention from the real point of attack, defeated them, drove them from the ground, took the strong house, and disgraced his victory by the cruelty which he exercised upon his prisoners, as well the unarmed villagers who fell into his hands as those who were taken in action. The people of Mataro, not intimidated by the enemy's success, defended the entrance of their town: the French general, in revenge for the loss which the head of his column sustained in forcing it, gave up this rich and flourishing place, containing above 25,000 inhabitants, to be sacked by his troops; and the men were not withheld from committing the foulest atrocities by the recollection, that they had recently been quartered during

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VIII.

1808.

*June.**June 17.**Mataro
sacked by
the French.**Cabanes.
1. p. 63.*

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VIII.

1808.

*June.**Failure of
the attempt
on Gerona.*

two months in that very town as allies and guests, among the people who now found no mercy at their hands.

Duhesme proceeded plundering, burning, and destroying as he went along. On the morning of the 20th he appeared before Gerona, sacked the adjoining villages of Salt and S. Eugenia, opened a battery upon the city with the hope of intimidating the inhabitants, endeavoured to force the Puerta del Carmen without success, and was in like manner repulsed from the fort of the Capuchins. A second battery was opened with more effect in the evening, and its fire was kept up during the night, which was so dark that none of the besieger's movements could be distinguished. They attempted to scale the bulwark of S. Clara, and some succeeded in getting upon the wall; these were encountered there by part of the regiment of Ulster, and their fate deterred their comrades from following them. The people of Gerona evinced that night what might be expected from them when they were put to the proof. The clergy were present wherever the fire was hottest, encouraging the men by example as well as by exhortations; and the women, regardless of danger, carried food and ammunition to their husbands, and fathers, and brothers, and sons. Without the city the Somanes collected in such force, that they prevented the French from fording the river Ter, which they repeatedly attempted, with the intention, it was supposed, of proceeding to relieve Figueras. Duhesme employed artifice as well as force: he sent proposals at various times to the Junta; and some of his messengers were seized and detained as prisoners, for endeavouring when they entered the city to distribute proclamations from Bayonne, and from the government of Madrid. Finding, however, that the place was not to be taken by a sudden assault, and not being prepared to undertake a regular siege, he deemed it expedient to return on the following day towards Barcelona,

after no inconsiderable loss in men as well as in reputation. This repulse would have drawn after it the loss of Figueras, if the Catalans could have collected a regular force on that side. They blockaded it with the Somatenes of Ampurdan, assisted by a few troops from Rosas: the garrison consisted of only 1000 men; had they been more, the place must have fallen, for the French had had no time to introduce provisions, and they were reduced to half allowance. Not being strong enough to sally against the besiegers, they revenged themselves upon the town, and laid about two-thirds of it in ruins. At length the relief which their countrymen in Spain could not effect was brought to them from France. General Reille being made acquainted with their distress, collected 3000 men at Bellegarde, and putting the Somatenes to flight with that force, introduced a large convoy of provisions, and reinforced the garrison.

The preservation of Figueras by the French was an event of more importance in reality than in appearance; but at this time appearances and immediate effect were what they stood in need of to maintain that opinion of their power which had been so rudely shaken by this national resistance. It was part of their plans, that, while Lefebvre chastised Zaragoza, and terrified Aragon by the fate of its capital, a similar blow should be struck in the south by Marshal Moncey. For this purpose he collected a force of 12,000 men besides cavalry in the province of Cuenca. The Spaniards were doubtful whether his march would be directed against Murcia, where Count Florida Blanca coming at the age of fourscore from the retirement in which he had hoped to pass the remainder of his honourable age in piety and peace, had proclaimed Ferdinand, and hoisted the standard of independence; or against Valencia, where the inhabitants had reason to expect severe vengeance for the massacre which had been committed there. This uncertainty produced no evil

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1808.

June.

*Figueras
relieved by
the French.*

July 3.

*Movements
of M. Mon-
cey against
Valencia.*