

latter charge is, however, evident from the fact, that with the exception of a requisition for some shoes and great-coats, no contribution was exacted from Soria, and no pillage took place at all; and with respect to the former accusation, a better explanation may be found in the peculiar disposition of this extraordinary man, who was notoriously indolent, and unlearned in the abstract science of war. It was necessary for him to see, in order to act, and his character seemed to be asleep until some imminent danger aroused all the marvellous energy and fortitude with which nature had endowed him.

The success at Tudela fell short of what Napoleon had a right to expect from his previous dispositions, yet it sufficed to break the Spanish strength on that side, and to lay open Aragon, Navarre, and New Castile, as the northern part of Spain had before been opened by the victory of Espinosa. From the frontiers of France to those of Portugal, from the sea-coast to the Tagus, the country was now overwhelmed; Madrid, Zaragoza, and the British army, indeed, lifted their heads a little way above the rising waters, but the eye looked in vain for an efficient barrier against the flood, which still poured on with unabated fury. And as the divided, weak state of the English troops led the Emperor to conclude that Sir John Moore would instantly retire into Portugal, he ordered Lasnes to pursue Palafox—to seize the important position of Monte Torrero—to summon Zaragoza, and to offer a complete amnesty to all persons in the town, without reservation, thus bearing testimony to the gallantry of the first defence. His own attention was fixed on Madrid. That capital was the rallying point of all the broken Spanish, and of all his own pursuing divisions, and it was the centre of all interests; a commanding height from whence a beneficial stream of political benefits might descend to allay, or a driving storm of war pour down to extinguish the fire of insurrection.*

* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

CHAPTER II.

Napoleon marches against the capital; forces the pass of the Somosierra—St. Juan murdered by his men—Tumults in Madrid—French army arrives there; the Retiro stormed—Town capitulates—Remains of Castaños' army driven across the Tagus; retire to Cuença—Napoleon explains his policy to the nobles, clergy, and tribunals of Madrid—His vast plans, enormous force—Defenceless state of Spain.

THE French patrols sent towards the Somosierra ascertained, on the 21st, that above six thousand men were intrenching themselves in the gorge of the mountains; that a small camp at Sepulveda blocked the roads leading upon Segovia; and that General Heredia was preparing to secure the passes of the Guadarama. Napoleon having, however, resolved to force the Somosierra, and reach the capital before Castaños could arrive there, ordered Ney to pursue the army of the centre without intermission, and directed the fourth corps to continue its march from Carrion by Palencia, Valladolid, Olmedo, and Segovia. The movement of this corps is worthy of the attention of military men. We shall find it confusing the spies and the country people—overawing the flat country of Leon and Castile—protecting the right flank of the army—menacing Galicia and Salamanca—keeping the heads of Moore's and Baird's columns from advancing, and rendering it dangerous for them to attempt a junction—threatening the line of Hope's march from the Tagus to the Guadarama—dispersing Heredia's corps, and finally turning the pass of Somosierra, without ever ceasing to belong to the concentric movement of the great army upon Madrid.

But the time lost in transmitting intelligence of the victory at Tudela was productive of serious consequences.* The officer despatched with these fresh instructions, found Ney and Monecy (Lasnes was sick at Tudela) each advanced two days' march in the wrong direction. The first, as we have seen, was at Mallen, preparing to attack Zaragoza; the second was at Almunio, near Calatayud, pursuing Castaños. They were consequently obliged to countermarch, and during the time thus lost, the people of Zaragoza, recovering from the consternation into which they were at first thrown by the appearance of the flying troops, made arrangements for a vigorous defence. Castaños also escaped to Sigüenza, without any further loss than what was inflicted in a slight action at Burvieca, where General Maurice Mathieu's division came up with his rear-guard.

* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

The Emperor quitted Aranda on the 28th with the guards, the first corps, and the reserve, and marched towards Somosierra. Head-quarters were at Boucequillas on the 29th, and a detachment being sent to attack the camp at Sepulveda, was beaten, with a loss of fifty or sixty men; yet the Spaniards, struck with a panic after the action, quitted their post, which was very strong, and fled in disorder towards Segovia. The 30th, the French advanced guard reached the foot of the Somosierra, where General St. Juan, whose force now amounted to ten or twelve thousand men, was judiciously posted. Sixteen pieces of artillery, planted in the neck of the pass, swept the road along the whole ascent, which was exceedingly steep and favorable for the defence; the infantry, advantageously placed on the right and left, were in lines, one above another, and some intrenchments, made in the more open parts, strengthened the whole position.

PASSAGE OF THE SOMOSIERRA.

At daybreak, three French battalions attacked St. Juan's right, three more assailed his left, and as many marched along the causeway in the centre, supported by six guns. The French wings, spreading over the mountain side, commenced a warm skirmishing fire, which was as warmly returned, while the frowning battery at the top of the causeway was held in readiness to crush the central column, when it should come within range. At that moment Napoleon rode into the mouth of the pass, and attentively examined the scene before him; the infantry were making no progress, and a thick fog mixed with smoke hung upon the ascent; suddenly, as if by inspiration, he ordered the Polish cavalry of his guard to charge up the causeway, and seize the Spanish battery. In an instant the foremost ranks of the first squadron were levelled with the earth by the fire of the great battery, and the remainder were thrown into confusion, but General Krazinski as suddenly rallied them, and covered by the smoke and the morning vapor led them sword in hand up to the mountain. As these gallant horsemen passed, the Spanish infantry on each side fired and fled towards the summit of the causeway, and when the Poles, cutting down the gunners, took the battery, the whole army was in flight, abandoning arms, ammunition and baggage.

This surprising exploit, in the glory it conferred upon one party, and the disgrace it heaped upon the other, can hardly be paralleled in the annals of war. It is indeed almost incredible, even to those who are acquainted with Spanish armies, that a position, in itself nearly impregnable, and defended by twelve thousand men, should, without any panic, but merely from a deliberate sense

of danger, be abandoned, at the wild charge of a few squadrons, which two companies of good infantry would have effectually stopped: yet some of the Spanish regiments so shamefully beaten here, had been victorious at Baylen a few months before, and General St. Juan's dispositions at Somosierra were far better than Reding's at the former battle! The charge itself, viewed as a simple military operation, was extravagantly rash; but taken as the result of Napoleon's sagacious estimate of the real value of Spanish troops, and his promptitude in seizing the advantage offered by the smoke and fog that clung to the side of the mountain, it was a most felicitous example of intuitive genius. The routed troops were pursued towards Buitrago by the French cavalry. St. Juan himself broke through the French on the side of Sepulveda, and gained the camp of Heredia at Segovia; but the cavalry of the fourth corps approached, and the two Generals crossing the Guadarama, united some of the fugitives from Somosierra on the Madrid side of the mountains, and were about to enter that capital, when the appearance of a French patrol terrified the vile cowards that followed them; the multitude once more fled to Talavera de la Reyna, and there consummated their intolerable villany by murdering their unfortunate General, and fixing his mangled body to a tree, after which, dispersing, they carried dishonor and fear into their respective provinces.*

The Somosierra being forced, the imperial army came down from the mountains; the sixth corps hastened on from the side of Alcala and Guadalaxara; the Central Junta fled from Aranjuez, and the remnant of the forces under Castaños, being intercepted on the side of Madrid, and pressed by Ney in the rear, turned towards the Tagus. The Junta, flying with indecent haste, spread a thousand false reports, and with more than ordinary pertinacity, endeavored to deceive the people and the English General; a task in which they were strongly aided by the weak credulity of Mr. Frere, the British plenipotentiary, who accompanied them in their flight toward Badajos; Mr. Stuart, however, being endowed with greater discretion and firmness, remained at Madrid until the enemy had actually commenced the investment of that town.

Castaños, after the combat of Burvieca, had continued his retreat unmolested by Ney, who never recovered the time lost by the false movement upon Mallen; but although the Spaniards escaped the sword, their numbers daily diminished, their sufferings increased, and their insubordination kept pace with their privations. At Alcazar del Rey, Castaños resigned the command to General La Peña, and proceeded to Truxillo himself, with an escort of thirty

* Colonel Graham's Correspondence.

infantry and fifteen dragoons, a number scarcely sufficient to protect his life from the ferocity of the peasants, who were stirred up and prepared, by the falsehoods of the Central Junta, and the villainy of the deserters, to murder him.* Meanwhile Madrid was in a state of anarchy seldom equalled. A local and military junta were formed to conduct the defence, the inhabitants took arms, a multitude of peasants from the neighborhood entered the place, and the regular forces, commanded by the Marquis of Castellar, amounted to six thousand men, with a train of sixteen guns; the pavement was taken up, the streets were barricadoed, the houses were pierced, and the Retiro, a weak irregular work, which commanded the city, was occupied in strength. Don Thomas Morla and the Prince of Castelfranco were the chief men in authority; the people demanded ammunition, and when they received it, discovered, or said, that it was mixed with sand, and as some person accused the Marquis of Perales, a respectable old general, of the deed, a mob rushed to his house, murdered him, and dragged his body about the streets; many others of inferior note also fell victims to this fury, for no man was safe, none dared assume authority to control, none dared give honest advice; the houses were thrown open, the bells of the convents and churches rung incessantly, and a band of ferocious armed men traversed the streets in all the madness of popular insurrection. Eight days had now elapsed since the first preparations for defence were made, and each day the public effervescence had increased, the dominion of the mob had become more decisive, their violence more uncontrollable; the hubbub was extreme, when, on the morning of the 2d of December, three heavy divisions of French cavalry suddenly appeared on the high ground to the north-west, and like a dark cloud overhung the troubled city.

At twelve o'clock the Emperor arrived, and the Duke of Istria, by his command, summoned the town, but the officer employed was upon the point of being massacred by the irregulars, when the Spanish soldiers, ashamed of such conduct, rescued him. This determination to resist was, however, notwithstanding the fierceness displayed at the gates, very unpalatable to many of the householders, numbers of whom escaped from different quarters;† deserters also came over to the French, and Napoleon, while waiting for his infantry, examined all the weak points of the city.

Madrid was for many reasons incapable of defence. There were no bulwarks; the houses, although strong and well built, were not, like many Spanish towns, fire proof; there were no outworks, and the heights on which the French cavalry were posted, the palace,

* Castaños' Vindication.

† Fourteenth Bulletin.

and the Retiro, completely commanded the city; the perfectly open country around would have enabled the French cavalry to discover and cut off all convoys, and no precaution had been taken to provide subsistence for the hundred and fifty thousand people contained within the circuit of the place. The desire of the Central Junta, that this metropolis should risk the horrors of a storm, was therefore equally silly and barbarous; their own criminal apathy had deprived Madrid of the power of procrastinating its defence until relieved from without, and there was no sort of analogy between the situation of Zaragoza and this capital. Napoleon knew it well; he was not a man to plunge headlong into the streets of a great city, among an armed and excited people; he knew that address in negotiation, a little patience, and a judicious employment of artillery, would soon reduce the most outrageous to submission, and he had no wish to destroy the capital of his brother's kingdom.*

In the evening the infantry and artillery arrived, and were posted at the most favorable points. The night was clear and bright, and in the French camp all was silent and watchful, but a tumultuous noise was heard from every quarter of the city, as if some mighty beast was struggling and howling in the toils.† At midnight a second summons was sent through the medium of a prisoner, and the Captain-General Castellar attempted to gain time by an equivocal reply; but the French light troops stormed the nearest houses, and one battery of thirty guns opened against the Retiro, while another threw shells from the opposite quarter, to distract the attention of the inhabitants. This building, situated on a rising ground, was connected with another range of buildings erected on the same side of the Prado, which is a public walk nearly encircling the town, and into which some of the principal streets opened, upon the above-mentioned range. In the morning a practicable breach was made in the Retiro wall, and the difference between military courage and ferocity became apparent; for Villatte's division, breaking in, easily routed the garrison, and, pursuing its success, seized all the public buildings connected with it, and then crossing the Prado, gained the barriers erected at the entrance of the streets, and took possession of the immense palace of the Duke of Medina Celi, which was in itself the key to the city on that side.

Such a vigorous commencement created great terror; the town was summoned for the third time, and in the afternoon, Morla and another officer came out to demand a suspension of arms, necessary, they said, to persuade the people to surrender. The Emperor addressed Morla in terms of great severity, reproaching him for

* Appendix, No. 3.

† Fourteenth Bulletin.

his scandalous conduct towards Dupont's army. "Injustice and bad faith," he exclaimed, "always recoil upon those who are guilty of either." A saying well applied to that Spaniard, and Napoleon himself confirmed its philosophic truth in after times. "The Spanish ulcer destroyed me!" was an expression of deep anguish which escaped from him in his own hour of misfortune.

Morla returned to the town, his story was soon told: before six o'clock the next morning Madrid must surrender or perish! Dissensions arose. The violent excitement of the populace was considerably abated, but the armed peasantry from the country and the poorest inhabitants still demanded to be led against the enemy, and a constant fire was kept up from the houses in the neighborhood of the Prado, by which the French General Maison was wounded, and General Bruyères killed. Nevertheless the disposition to fight became each moment weaker, and finally Morla and Castelfranco prepared a capitulation; the Captain-General Castellar, however, refused to sign it, and as the town was only invested on one side, he effected his escape with the regular troops during the night, carrying with him sixteen guns. The people then sunk into a quiescent state, and at eight o'clock in the morning of the 4th, Madrid surrendered.

That Morla was a traitor there is no doubt, and his personal cowardice was excessive; but Castelfranco appears to have been rather weak and ignorant than treacherous, and certainly the surrender of Madrid was no proof of his guilt; that event was inevitable. The boasting uproar of the multitude, when they are permitted to domineer for a few days, is not enthusiasm; the retreat of Castellar with the troops of the line during the progress of the negotiation was the wisest course to pursue, and proves that he acquiesced in the propriety of surrendering. That the people neither could nor would defend the city is quite evident; for it is incredible that Morla and Castelfranco should have been able to carry through a capitulation in so short a period, if the generals, the regular troops, the armed peasantry, and the inhabitants, had been all, or even a part of them, determined to resist.

Napoleon, cautious of giving offence to a population so lately and so violently excited, carefully provided against any sudden reaction, and preserved the strictest discipline; a soldier of the imperial guard was shot in one of the squares for having a plundered watch in his possession; the infantry were placed in barracks and convents, the cavalry were kept ready to scour the streets on the first alarm, and the Spaniards were all disarmed. The Emperor then fixed his own quarters at Chamartin, a country house four miles from Madrid, and in a few days everything presented

the most tranquil appearance, the shops were opened, the public amusements recommenced, and the theatres were frequented. The inhabitants of capital cities are easily moved, and easily calmed; self-interest and sensual indulgence unfit them for noble and sustained efforts; they can be violent, ferocious, cruel, but are seldom constant and firm.

During the operations against Madrid, La Peña, after escaping from the sixth corps, arrived at Guadalajara with about five thousand men; on the 2d, the Dukes of Infantado and Albuquerque leaving the capital, joined him; and, on the 4th, Venegas came up with two thousand men. While these generals were hesitating what course to pursue, Napoleon, apprised of their vicinity, directed Bessières with sixteen squadrons upon Guadalajara, supporting him by Ruffin's division of the first corps; at the approach of this cavalry, the main body retired through the hills by Sancto-rcas towards Aranjuez, and the artillery crossed the Tagus at Sacedon; Ruffin's division immediately changed its direction, and cut the Spaniards off from La Mancha by the line of Ocaña. Meanwhile a mutiny among the Spanish troops forced La Peña to resign, and the Duke of Infantado was chosen in his place. The Tagus was then crossed at several points, and after some slight actions with the advanced cavalry of the French, this miserable body of men finally saved themselves at Cuença, where many deserters and fugitives, and the brigades of Cartoajal and Lilli, which had escaped the different French columns, also arrived, and the Duke proceeded to organize another army.

On the French side, the fourth corps reached Segovia, passed the Guadarama, dispersed some armed peasants assembled at the Escorial, and then marched toward Almaraz, to attack General Galluzzo, who, having assembled five or six thousand men to defend the left bank of the Tagus, had, with the usual skill of a Spanish general, occupied a line of forty miles.* The first French corps entered La Mancha at the same time, and Toledo immediately shut its gates; but, although the Junta of that town publicly proclaimed their resolution to bury themselves under the ruins of the city, at the approach of a French division, they betrayed a most contemptible cowardice. Thus, six weeks had sufficed to dissipate the Spanish armies; the glittering bubble was burst, and a terrible reality remained. From St. Sebastian to the Asturias, from the Asturias to Talavera de la Reyna, from Talavera to the gates of the noble city of Zaragoza, all was submission, and beyond that boundary, all was apathy or dread. Ten thousand French soldiers

* Sir John Moore's Papers.

could safely, as regarded the Spaniards, have marched from one extremity of the Peninsula to the other.

After the fall of Madrid, King Joseph remained at Burgos, issuing proclamations, and carrying on a sort of underplot, through the medium of his native ministers; the views of the latter naturally turned towards the Spanish interests as distinct from the French, and a source of infinite mischief to Joseph's cause was thus opened, for that monarch, anxious to please and conciliate his subjects, ceased to be a Frenchman without becoming a Spaniard. At this time, however, Napoleon assumed and exercised all the rights of conquest, and it is evident, from the tenor of his speeches, proclamations, and decrees, that some ulterior project, in which the King's personal interests were not concerned, was contemplated by him. It appeared as if he wished the nation, in imitation of the old King, to offer the crown to himself a second time, that he might obtain a plausible excuse for adopting a new line of policy by which to attract the people, or at least to soften their pride, which was now the main obstacle to his success.

An assemblage of the nobles, the clergy, the corporations, and the tribunals of Madrid, waited upon him at Chamartin, and presented an address, in which they expressed their desire to have Joseph among them again.* The Emperor's reply was an exposition of the principles upon which Spain was to be governed, and offers a fine field for reflection upon the violence of those passions which induce men to resist positive good, and eagerly seek for danger, misery, and death, rather than resign their prejudices.

"I accept," said he, "the sentiments of the town of Madrid. I regret the misfortunes that have befallen it, and I hold it as a particular good fortune that I am enabled, under the circumstances of the moment, to spare that city, and to save it from yet greater misfortunes.

"I have hastened to take measures fit to tranquillize all classes of citizens, knowing well that to all people, and to all men, uncertainty is intolerable.

"I have preserved the religious orders, but I have restrained the number of monks; no sane person can doubt that they are too numerous. Those who are truly called to this vocation by the grace of God will remain in their convents; those who have lightly or from worldly motives adopted it, will have their existence secured among the secular ecclesiastics, from the surplus of the convents.

"I have provided for the wants of the most interesting and useful of the clergy, the parish priests.

"I have abolished that tribunal against which Europe and the

* *Moniteur*.

age alike exclaimed. Priests ought to guide consciences, but they should not exercise any exterior or corporal jurisdiction over men.

"I have taken the satisfaction which was due to myself and to my nation, and the part of vengeance is completed. Ten of the principal criminals bend their heads before me; but for all others there is absolute and entire pardon.

"I have suppressed the rights usurped by the nobles during civil wars, when the kings have been too often obliged to abandon their own rights to purchase tranquillity and the repose of their people.

"I have suppressed the feudal rights, and every person can now establish inns, mills, ovens, weirs, and fisheries, and give free play to their industry; only observing the laws and customs of the place. The self-love, the riches, and the prosperity of a small number of men, was more hurtful to your agriculture than the heats of the dog-days.

"As there is but one God, there should be in one state but one justice; wherefore, all the particular jurisdictions having been usurped, and being contrary to the national rights, I have destroyed them. I have also made known to all persons that which each can have to fear, and that which they may hope for.

"The English armies I will drive from the Peninsula. Zaragoza, Valencia, Seville, shall be reduced either by persuasion or by force of arms.

"There is no obstacle capable of retarding for any length of time the execution of my will. But that which is above my power, is to constitute the Spaniards a nation, under the orders of the King, if they continue to be imbued with the principles of division, and of hatred towards France, such as the English partisans and the enemies of the continent have instilled into them. I cannot establish a nation, a King, and Spanish independence, if that King is not sure of the affection and fidelity of his subjects.

"The Bourbons can never again reign in Europe. The divisions in the royal family were concerted by the English; it was not either King Charles or his favorite, but the Duke of Infantado, the instrument of England, that was upon the point of overturning the throne. The papers recently found in his house prove this; it was the preponderance of England that they wished to establish in Spain. Insensate project! which would have produced a land war without end, and caused torrents of blood to be shed.

"No power influenced by England can exist upon the continent; if any desire it, their desire is folly, and sooner or later will ruin them. I shall be obliged to govern Spain, and it will be easy for me to do it by establishing a viceroy in each province. However, I will not refuse to concede my rights of conquest to the King, and

to establish him in Madrid, when the thirty thousand citizens assemble in the churches, and on the holy sacrament take an oath, not with the mouth alone, but with the heart, and without any jesuitical restriction, 'to be true to the King, to love and support him.' Let the priests from the pulpit and in the confessional, the tradesmen in their correspondence and their discourses, inculcate these sentiments in the people; then I will relinquish my rights of conquest, then I will place the King upon the throne, and I will take a pleasure in showing myself the faithful friend of the Spaniards.

"The present generation may differ in opinions; too many passions have been excited; but your descendants will bless me as the regenerator of the nation; they will mark my sojourn among you as memorable days, and from those days they will date the prosperity of Spain. These are my sentiments; go consult your fellow citizens, choose your part, but do it frankly, and exhibit only true colors."

The ten criminals were the Dukes of Infantado, of Híjar, Medina Celi, and Ossuna; Marquis Santa Cruz; Counts Fernan, Miñez, and Altamira; Prince of Castello Franco, Pedro Cevallos, and the Bisop of Santander, who were proscribed, body and goods, as traitors to France and Spain.

Napoleon now made dispositions indicating a vast plan of operations. It would appear that he intended to invade Galicia, Andalusia, and Valencia, by his lieutenants, and to carry his arms to Lisbon in person. Upon the 20th December the sixth corps, the guards, and the reserve, were assembled under his own immediate control. The first corps was stationed at Toledo, and the light cavalry attached to it scoured the roads leading to Andalusia, up to the foot of the Sierra Morena. The fourth corps was at Talavera, on the march towards the frontier of Portugal. The second corps was on the Carrion river, preparing to advance against Galicia. The eighth corps was broken up: the divisions composing it were ordered to join the second, and Junot, who commanded it, repaired to the third corps, to supply the place of Marshal Moncey, who was called to Madrid for a particular service,—doubtless an expedition against Valencia. The fifth corps, which had arrived at Vittoria, was directed to reinforce the third, then employed against Zaragoza. The seventh was always in Catalonia.

Vast as this plan of campaign appears, it was not beyond the Emperor's means; for, without taking into consideration his own genius, activity, and vigor, there were on his muster rolls above three hundred and thirty thousand men, and above sixty thousand horses. Two hundred pieces of field artillery followed the corps to battle, and as many more remained in reserve. Of this monstrous

army, two hundred and fifty-five thousand men and fifty thousand horses were actually under arms, with their different regiments, while thirty-two thousand were detached or in garrisons, preserving tranquillity in the rear and guarding the communications of the active force. The remainder were in hospital, and so slight had been the resistance of the Spanish armies, that only nineteen hundred prisoners were to be deducted from this multitude. Of the whole host, two hundred and thirteen thousand were native Frenchmen; the residue were Poles, Germans, and Italians; thirty-five thousand men and five thousand horses were available for fresh enterprise, without taking a single man from the service of the lines of communication. What was there to oppose this fearful array? What consistency or vigor in the councils? What numbers? What discipline and spirit in the armies of Spain? What enthusiasm among the people? What was the disposition, the means, what the activity of the allies of that country? The answers to these questions demonstrate that the fate of the Peninsula hung at this moment upon a thread, and that the deliverance of that country was due to other causes than the courage, the patriotism, or the constancy of the Spaniards.

First, with regard to their armies. The Duke of Infantado resided with, rather than commanded, a few thousand wretched fugitives at Cuença, destitute, mutinous, and cowed in spirit. At Valencia there was no army; for that which belonged to the province was shut up in Zaragoza, and dissensions had arisen between Palafox and the local Junta in consequence.* In the passes of the Sierra Morena were five thousand raw levies, hastily made by the Junta of Seville, after the defeat of St. Juan. Galluzzo, who had undertaken to defend the Tagus with six thousand timid and ill-armed soldiers, was at this time in flight, having been suddenly attacked and defeated at Almarez, by a detachment of the fourth corps. Romana was near Leon, at the head of eighteen or twenty thousand runaways, collected by him after the dispersion at Reynosa; † but of this number only five thousand were armed, and none were subordinate, or capable of being disciplined; for, when checked for misconduct, the Marquis complained that they deserted. In Galicia there was no army, and in the Asturias the local government were so corrupt, so faithless, and so oppressive, that the spirit of the people was crushed and patriotism reduced to a name. ‡

The members of the Central Junta had at first thought of going to Badajos, but, being terrified, fled to Seville, and their inactivity

* Infantado's Letters. Narrative of Moore's Campaign. Stuart's and Frere's Letters.

† Sir John Moore's Papers.

‡ Appendix, No. 13, § 5.

was more conspicuous in this season of adversity than before, contrasting strangely with the pompous and inflated language of their public papers: all their promises were fallacious, their incapacity glaring, their exertions ridiculous, abortive, and the Junta of Seville, still actuated by their own ambitious views, had now openly reassumed all their former authority. In short, the strength and spirit of Spain were broken; the enthusiasm was null, except in a few places; and the Emperor was, with respect to the Spaniards perfectly master of operations. He was in the centre of the country; he held the capital, the fortresses, the command of the great lines of communication between the provinces; and on the wide military horizon no cloud intercepted his view, save the heroic city of Zaragoza on the one side, and a feeble British army on the other. Sooner or later, he observed, and with truth, that the former must fall, as it was an affair of artillery calculation. The latter he naturally supposed to be in full retreat for Portugal; but as the fourth corps was nearer to Lisbon than the British General, a hurried retreat alone could bring the latter in time to that capital, and consequently no preparations for defence could be made sufficient to arrest the sixty thousand Frenchmen which the Emperor could carry there at the same moment. The subjugation of Spain appeared inevitable, when the genius and vigor of Sir J. Moore frustrated Napoleon's plans at the very moment of execution. The Austrian war breaking out at the instant, drew the master-spirit from the scene of contention, and England then put forth her vast resources, which being fortunately wielded by a general equal to the task of delivering the Peninsula, it was delivered. But through what changes of fortune, by what unexpected helps, by what unlooked-for and extraordinary events, under what difficulties, by whose perseverance, and in despite of whose errors, let posterity judge; for in that judgment only will impartiality and justice be found.

CHAPTER III

Sir John Moore arrives at Salamanca; hears of the battle of Espinosa—His dangerous position; discovers the real state of affairs; contemplates a hardy enterprise; hears of the defeat at Tudela; resolves to retreat; waits for General Hope's division—Danger of that General; his able conduct—Central Junta fly to Badajoz—Mr. Frere, incapable of judging rightly, opposes the retreat; his weakness and levity; insults the General; sends Colonel Charmilly to Salamanca—Manly conduct of Sir John Moore; his able and bold plan of operations.

OPERATIONS OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

WHILE at Madrid, Napoleon heard that Sir John Moore, having relinquished his communication with Lisbon, was menacing the French line of operations on the side of Burgos. This intelligence obliged him to suspend all his designs against the south of Spain and Portugal, and to fix his whole attention upon that General's movements. The reasons which induced Moore to divide his army, and to send General Hope with one column by the Tagus, while the other marched under his own personal command, by Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, have been already related; as likewise the arrangements which brought Sir David Baird to Coruña, without having permission to land his troops, and without money to equip them, when they were suffered to disembark.

The 8th of November, Sir John Moore was at Almeida, on the frontier of Portugal; his artillery was at Truxillo, in Spanish Estremadura, and Sir David Baird's division was at Coruña. General Blake, pursued by fifty thousand enemies, was that day flying from Nava to Espinosa; Castaños and Palafox were quarrelling at Tudela. The Conde de Belvedere was at Burgos with thirteen thousand bad troops, and Napoleon was at Vittoria with one hundred and seventy thousand good troops.

At this time the letters of Lord William Bentinck and Colonel Graham, exposing all the imprudence of the Spanish generals, were received, and disquieted the English General. He already foresaw that his junction with the other divisions of his army might be impeded by the result of an action, which the Spaniards appeared to be courting, contrary to all sound policy; but as no misfortune had yet befallen them, he continued his march, hoping "that all the bad which might happen, would not happen."

The 11th he crossed the frontier of Spain, and marched to Ciudad Rodrigo; on that day Blake was completely discomfited at Espinosa, and the Estremaduran army, beaten the day before at Gamonal, was utterly ruined and dispersed.

The 13th, the head of the British columns entered Salamanca, at the moment when Blake's fugitive force was finally disorganized at Reynosa, leaving the first, second, and fourth French corps, amounting to near seventy thousand men, free to act against any quarter.

Sir John Moore participated at first in the universal belief that the nation was enthusiastic, and fixed in a determination to dispute every step with the invaders; and after he had detected the exaggerations of the military agents, and perceived the want of capacity in the Spanish generals and rulers, he still trusted that the spirit of the people would compensate for their deficiency of skill. What then was his surprise to find, that the defeat of the Conde de Belvedere, an event which laid Castile open to the incursions of the enemy, which uncovered the march of the British, and compromised their safety, had created no sensation among the people; that the authorities had spread no alarm, taken no precautions, delivered out no arms, although many thousands were stored in the principal towns, and neither encouraged the inhabitants by proclamations, nor enrolled any of them for defence!* He himself was not informed of this important occurrence until a week after it happened, and then only through a single official channel.

Valladolid, where the enemy's cavalry were, was but three marches from Salamanca, and as not more than four thousand of Moore's infantry had come up to the latter town, it was evident that if the French advanced in force, the British must fall back towards Ciudad Rodrigo. Nevertheless the General, assembling the local authorities, explained the nature of his position, endeavored to excite their ardor, and, notwithstanding the apathetic state of the public mind, resolved not to retire unless forced back by superior numbers; he even hastened the arrival of his rear divisions, but sent orders to both Hope and Baird to concentrate their troops and be prepared for a retreat. His exhortations produced no effect upon the Junta or the people; the former were stupefied and timid, the latter, although declaring their hatred of the invaders, would not stir in defence; the first feeling of indignation against the French was exhausted, and there was nothing to supply its place; the fugitives from the armies passed daily without shame, and unrebuked by their countrymen. In this state the English General remained until the 18th; his army was closing up, and the French cavalry withdrew from Valladolid to Palencia, when the news of Blake's defeat reached Salamanca, not by rumor, or by any direct communication from the Montaña Santander, but through Mr. Stuart, eight days subsequent to the date of the action; the Central Junta did not even inform the minister pleni-

* Appendix, No. 14.

potentiary until thirty hours after having received official intelligence of it themselves.*

Want of transport and supplies had obliged the British to march in small and successive divisions; it was, therefore, the 23d of November before the centre, consisting of twelve thousand infantry, and a battery of six guns, was concentrated at Salamanca. On that day, Castaños and Palafox being defeated at Tudela, and their armies scattered without a chance of rallying again in the field, the third and sixth French corps became disposable. The Emperor also, victorious on both flanks, and with a fresh base of operations fixed at Burgos, was then free to move, with the guards and the reserve, either against Madrid or in the direction of Salamanca; detachments of his army were already in possession of Valladolid, the very town which, a few days before, the Spanish government had indicated for the base of Sir John Moore's operations, and the formation of his magazines.† The 26th, the head of Sir David Baird's column was in Astorga, but the rear extended beyond Lugo, while the head of Hope's division was at the Escorial, and the rear at Talavera. But the second French corps was on the Deba, threatening Leon and the Asturias; the cavalry covered the plains; the fourth corps was descending by Carrion and Valladolid, to seize the pass of the Guadarama; the Emperor himself was preparing to force the Somosierra.

From this summary of contemporary events, it is evident that, notwithstanding Sir John Moore had organized, equipped, and supplied his army, and marched four hundred miles, all in the space of six weeks, he was too late in the field; the campaign was decided against the Spaniards before the British had, strictly speaking, entered Spain as an army. And it is certain that if, instead of being at Salamanca, Escorial, and Astorga, on the 23d, the troops had been united at Burgos on the 8th, such was the weakness of the Spanish forces, the strength of the enemy, and such the skill with which Napoleon directed his movements, that a difficult and precarious retreat was the utmost favor that could be expected from fortune by the English.

Sir John Moore's situation on his arrival at Salamanca, gave rise to serious reflections. He had been sent forward without a plan of operations, or any data upon which to found one; his instructions merely directed him to open communication with the Spanish authorities, for the purpose of "framing the plan of campaign." But General Castaños, with whom he was desired to correspond, was superseded immediately afterwards, and the Marquis of Ro-

* Mr. Frere's Letter to the Junta.

† Sir John Moore's Papers.

mana, his successor, was engaged in rallying the remains of Blake's force in the Asturias, at a distance of two hundred miles from the only army with which any plan of co-operation could be formed, and of whose proceedings he also was ignorant. No channel of intelligence had been pointed out to Moore, and, as yet a stranger in the country, and without money, he could not establish any certain one for himself.* It was the will of the people of England, and the orders of the government, that he should push forward to the assistance of the Spaniards, and he had done so, without magazines, and without money to form them; trusting to the official assurance of the minister, that above a hundred thousand Spanish soldiers covered his march, that the people were enthusiastic and prepared for any exertion to secure their own deliverance, but he found them supine and unprepared; the French cavalry, in parties as weak as twelve men, traversed the country, and raised contributions, without difficulty or opposition. This was the state of Castile, and the letters of Mr. Stuart and Lord William Bentinck amply exposed the incapacity, selfishness, and apathy of the supreme government at Aranjuez.† The correspondence of Colonel Graham painted in the strongest colors the confusion of affairs on the Ebro, the jealousy, the discord of the generals, the worse than childish folly of the deputy Palafox and his creatures. Sir David Baird's experience proved, that in Galicia the people were inert as in Castile and Leon, and the authorities more absurd and more interested. General Hope expressed a like opinion as to the ineptitude of the Central Junta; and even the military agents, hitherto so sanguine, had lowered their tone of exultation in a remarkable manner.

Napoleon's enormous force was unknown to Sir John Moore, but he knew that it could not be less than eighty thousand fighting men, and that thirty thousand more were momentarily expected, and might have arrived; he knew that Blake and the Conde de Belvedere were totally defeated, and that Castaños must inevitably be so if he hesitated to retreat. The only conclusion to be drawn from these facts was, that the Spaniards were unable, or unwilling, to resist the enemy, and that the British would have to support the contest alone, unless they could form a junction with Castaños, before the latter was entirely discomfited and destroyed; but there was no time for such an operation, and the first object was, to unite the parcelled divisions of the English army.

From Astorga to Salamanca was five marches; from Salamanca to the Escorial was six marches; but it would have required five days to close up the rear upon Salamanca, six days to enable Hope to concentrate at the Escorial, and sixteen to enable Baird to assemble at Astorga. Hence twenty days were required for the

* Appendix, No. 13, §§ 1 and 4.

† Ibid. §§ 5 and 6.

English army to unite and act in a body; and to have advanced in their divided state, would have been equally contrary to military principle and to common sense. A retreat, although it was prescribed by the rules of scientific war, and in unison with the instructions of the government, which forbade the General to commit his troops in any serious affair before the whole were united, would have been, while the Spanish army of the centre still held the field, ungenerous: the idea was repugnant to the bold and daring spirit of Moore. Rather than resort to such a remedy for the false position his government had placed him in, he contemplated a hardy and dangerous enterprise, such as none but great minds are capable of. He proposed, if he could draw the extended wings of his army together in good time, to abandon all communication with Portugal, and throwing himself into the heart of Spain, to rally Castaños' army, if it yet existed, upon his own, to defend the southern provinces, and trust to the effect which such an appeal to the patriotism and courage of the Spaniards would produce.*

But Moore also considered that the question was not purely military; the Spanish cause was not one which could be decided by the marches of a few auxiliary troops; its fate rested on the vigor of the rulers, the concert of the generals, the unity of the exertions, and the fixed resolution of the people to suffer all privations, and die rather than submit; to him it appeared doubtful that such a spirit, or the means of creating it, existed, and more doubtful that there was capacity in the government to excite or to direct it when aroused; no men of talent had yet appeared, and good-will was in itself nothing if improperly treated. Wherefore, he turned to the English plenipotentiary, who had just superseded Mr. Stuart near the Central Junta; for he had been directed by the ministers to communicate with him upon all important points,—to receive with deference his opinion and advice; and the present was an occasion to which those instructions were peculiarly applicable. Mr. Frere had come fresh from the English government; he was acquainted with its views; he was in the most suitable position to ascertain what degree of elasticity the Spanish cause really possessed, and the decision of the question belonged as much to him as to the General, because it involved the whole policy of the English Cabinet with respect to Spain; it was likewise the more proper to consult him because, as a simple operation of war, the proposed movement was rash. All the military, and many political reasons, called for a retreat upon Portugal, which would take the army back upon its own resources, insure its concentration, increase its strength, protect British interests, and leave it free either to return to Spain, if a favorable opportunity should

* Appendix, No. 14.

occur, or to pass by sea to Andalusia, and commence the campaign in the south.

Such were the reflections that induced Sir John Moore to solicit Mr. Frere's opinion upon the general policy of the proposed operation. But in so doing he never had the least intention of consulting him upon the mode of executing the military part, of which he conceived himself to be the best judge; and while awaiting the reply, he directed Sir David Baird, if the enemy showed no disposition to molest him, to push the troops on to Salamanca as fast as they should arrive at Astorga. Sir David was proceeding to do so, when Blake advised him that a considerable French force was collecting at Rio Seco and Ampudia, with a view of interrupting the march; this arrested his movement; he was even preparing to fall back, when he was stopped by Moore, whose information led him to believe that Blake's report was false. Valuable time was thus lost, but it was the march of the fourth corps, then traversing the line from Carrion to the Guadarama, that gave rise to this contradictory intelligence, for the many various changes in the French positions, and the continual circulation of their light cavalry through the plains, bewildered the spies and the peasants. The force of the enemy on different points also confused the higher agents, who, believing the greatest amount of the invading army to be from a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousand men, could never reconcile the reports with this standard, and therefore concluded that Napoleon exaggerated his real numbers to create terror.

Moore had written to Mr. Frere on the 27th of November, Baird was to march by Benevente on the 1st, and Hope by Tordesillas, the troops at Salamanca by Zamora and Toro; and all the arrangements for the execution of the project were completed when, in the night of the 28th, a despatch from Mr. Stuart made known the disaster at Tudela. This again changed the aspect of affairs; the question proposed to Mr. Frere was no longer doubtful. The projected movement had been founded upon *the chance of rallying the Spanish armies behind the Tagus*, a hazardous and daring experiment when first conceived, but now that Castaños had no longer an army—now that the strength of Spain was utterly broken—to have persisted in it would have been insanity; the French could be over the Tagus before the British, and there were no Spanish armies to rally.* The defeat at Tudela took place the 23d of November; Baird's brigades could not be united at Astorga before the 4th of December, and to concentrate the whole of the army at Salamanca required a flank march of several days over an open plain; an operation not to be thought of, within a few marches of a skilful

* Appendix, No. 14.

enemy, who possessed such an overwhelming force of artillery and cavalry.

As long as Castaños and Palafox kept the field, there was reason to believe that the French stationed at Burgos would not make any serious attempt on the side of Astorga, but that check being now removed, an unmilitary flank march would naturally draw their attention, and bring them down upon the parcelled divisions of the English troops. The object of succoring the Spaniards called for great, but not for useless sacrifices. The English General was prepared to confront any danger and to execute any enterprise which held out a chance of utility, but he also remembered that the best blood of England was committed to his charge; that not an English army, but the very heart, the pith of the military power of his country was in his keeping; it was intrusted to his prudence, and his patriotism spurned the idea of seeking personal renown by betraying that sacred trust. The political reasons in favor of marching towards Madrid scarcely balanced the military objections before the battle of Tudela; and after that event, the latter requiring double force, left no room for hesitation in the mind of any man capable of reasoning at all, and Sir John Moore resolved to fall back into Portugal.

He ordered Sir David Baird to regain Coruña or Vigo, and to carry his troops by sea to Lisbon; yet wishing, if possible, to unite with Hope before the retrograde movement commenced, he directed Baird to show a bold front for a few days in order to attract the enemy's attention. The negligence, the false intelligence, the frauds, the opposition approaching to hostility, experienced by Sir David Baird during his march from Coruña, had so reduced that General's hopes, that he prepared for this retreat without reluctance; he was in direct communication with Romana, but the intercourse between them had rather confirmed than weakened the impression on Baird's mind, that it was impossible to depend upon the promises, the information, or the judgment of any Spanish general.* In the mean time, Napoleon forced the Somosierra, and summoned Madrid; the Supreme Junta fled towards Badajoz; St. Juan was murdered at Talavera, the remnant of Castaños' army was driven towards the Tagus; the fourth corps approached Segovia, and Sir John Hope's situation became very critical.

His column, consisting of three thousand infantry, nine hundred cavalry, the artillery, and the great parc of ammunition, had been obliged, from the want of money and supplies, to move in six divisions, each being a day's march behind the other.† At Almaraz he endeavored to discover a way across the mountains to

* Appendix, No. 13, § 5.

† Sir John Moore's Papers. Hope's Letters.

Ciudad Rodrigo, and a road did exist, but the peasants and muleteers declared it to be impracticable for carriages, and consequently unfit for the convoy; the truth of their assertions was much doubted, but Sir John was daily losing horses from the glanders, and with a number but just sufficient to drag his guns and convoy along a good road, he feared to explore a difficult passage over the sierras.

When his leading division had reached Talavera, Don Thomas Morla, then Secretary of War, anxious to have the troops more minutely divided, proposed that the regiments should march through Madrid in ten divisions on as many successive days, the first to reach the capital on the 22d of November, which would exactly have brought the convoy into the jaws of the French army.* Hope immediately repaired in person to Madrid, held a conference with Morla, and quickly satisfied himself that everything was in confusion, and that the Spanish government had neither arranged a general plan, nor was capable of conducting one.† Convinced of this unfortunate truth, he paid no attention to Morla's proposition, but carried his troops at once by the road of Naval Carnero to the Escorial, where he halted to close up the rear, and to obtain bullocks to assist in dragging the parc over the Guadarama. The 28th, he crossed the mountain, and entered the open flat country; the 28th and 29th the infantry and guns were at Villa Castin and St. Antonia, the parc was at Espinar, and the cavalry advanced on the road to Arevalo. General Heredia was then at Segovia, but the Duke of Dantzic was at Valladolid and Placentia, and his patrols were heard of at Coca, only a few miles from Arevalo, and in the course of the day a despatch from Mr. Stuart announced the catastrophe at Tudela, and the dispersion of the camp at Sepulveda; at the same time the outposts of cavalry in the front reported that four hundred French horse were at Olmedo, only twelve miles from Arevalo, and that four thousand others were in the neighborhood; the scouts at St. Garcia, on the right, also tracked the French again at Anaya, near Segovia.

Hope's situation was now truly embarrassing. If he fell back to the Guadarama, the army at Salamanca would be without ammunition or artillery.‡ If he advanced, it must be by a flank movement of three days, with a heavy convoy, over a flat country, and within a few hours' march of a very superior cavalry. If he delayed where he was, even for a few hours, the French on the side of Segovia might get between him and the pass of Guadarama, and then, attacked in front, flank, and rear, he would be reduced to

* Lord W. Bentinck's Letters.

† Appendix, No. 13, § 6.

‡ Gen. Hope's Reports, MS.

the shameful necessity of abandoning his convoy and guns to save his men in the mountains of Avila. A man of less intrepidity and calmness would have been ruined. Hope, as enterprising as he was prudent, without any hesitation ordered the cavalry to throw out parties cautiously towards the French, and maintain a confident front if the latter approached; then moving the infantry and guns from Villacastin, and the convoy from Espinosa by cross roads to Avila, he continued his march day and night until they reached Peneranda. Meanwhile the cavalry to cover this movement closed gradually to the left, and finally occupied Fontiveros on the 2d of December. The infantry and the draught animals were greatly fatigued; but the danger was not over; the patrols reported that the enemy, to the number of ten thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and forty guns, were still in Olmedo; this was the eternal fourth corps, which, thus traversing the country, continually crossed the heads of the English columns, and seemed to multiply the forces of the French at all points. Hope immediately drew his infantry and cavalry up in position, and obliged the artillery and the convoy to proceed without rest to Alba de Tormes, where a detachment from Salamanca met them, and covered their march to that town. This vigorous and skilful march was thus concluded, for the division remaining at Peneranda collected its stragglers, and pushed outposts to Medina del Campo, Madrigal, and Torecilla, while the fourth corps unwittingly pursued its march to the Guadarama.

Sir John Moore's resolution to retreat upon Portugal created a great sensation at Madrid and at Aranjuez. The Junta feared, and with reason, that such a palpable proof of the state to which their negligence and incapacity had reduced the country, would endanger their authority and perhaps their lives;* and although they were on the point of flying to Badajos themselves, they were anxious that others should rush headlong into danger. Morla, and those who, like him, were prepared to abandon the cause of their country, felt mortified at losing an opportunity of commemorating their defection by a single act of perfidy; and the English plenipotentiary was surprised and indignant that a general of experience and reputation should think for himself, and decide upon a military operation without a reference to his opinion.

Mr. Frere, although a person of some scholastic attainments, was very ill qualified for the duties of his situation, which at this moment required temper, sagacity, and judgment. Greatly overrating his own talents for public affairs, he had come out to Spain impressed with false notions of what was passing in that

* Mr. Stuart's Correspondence.

country, and tenaciously clinging to the pictures of his imagination, resented the intrusion of reason, and petulantly spurned at facts. The defeat of the Conde de Belvedere at Gamonal, a defeat that broke the centre of the Spanish line, uncovered the flank and rear of Castaños' army, opened a way to Madrid, and rendered the concentration of the British divisions unsafe, if not impossible, he curiously called the "unlucky affair of the 10th at Burgos." After the battle of Tudela he estimated the whole French army on the side of Burgos and Valladolid at eleven thousand men, when they were above one hundred thousand; and yet, with information so absurdly defective, he was prompt to interfere with, and eager to control the military combinations of the General, which were founded upon the true and acknowledged principles of the art of war.*

Moore, while anxiously watching the dangerous progress of Sir John Hope, was suddenly assailed by the representations and remonstrances of all these offended, mortified, and disappointed persons; and as the question of retiring was, by the defeat of Tudela, rendered so purely military, and the necessity of it so palpable, the General, although anticipating some expressions of discontent from the Spanish government, was totally unprepared for the torrent of puerile impertinences with which he was overwhelmed.

Morla, a subtle man, endeavored first to deceive Mr. Stuart, by treating the defeat of Castaños lightly, and stating officially that he had saved the greatest part of his army at Siguenza, and was on the march to join St. Juan at the Somosierra; † to this he added, that there were only small bodies of French cavalry in the flat country of Castile and Leon, and no force on that side capable of preventing the junction of Sir John Moore's army. This was on the evening of the 30th, but the Emperor had forced the pass of the Somosierra on that morning, and the Duke of Dantzic was at Valladolid. The same day Mr. Frere, writing from Aranjuez in answer to the General's formal communication, and before he was acquainted with his intention to fall back, deprecated a retreat upon Portugal, and asserted that the enthusiasm of the Spanish was unbounded, except in Castile and Leon, where, he admitted, they were more passive than they should be. ‡ He even stated that twenty thousand men were actually assembled in the vicinity of the capital, and that Castaños was falling back upon them; that reinforcements were arriving daily from the southern provinces, and that the addition of the British army would form a force greatly

* Narrative of Moore's Campaign.

† Moore's Papers. Mr. Stuart's Correspondence.

‡ Moore's Papers. Frere's Correspondence.

superior to any the French could bring against that quarter, in sufficient time. It was certain, he said, that the latter were very weak, and would be afraid to advance, while the whole country, from the Pyrenees to the capital, was in arms upon their left flank. Rumors also were rife that the conscription had been resisted, and this was the more probable, because every great effort made by France was accompanied by weakness and internal disturbance, and a pastoral letter of the Bishop of Carcassonne seemed to imply that it was so at that time. "Good policy, therefore, required, that the French should be attacked before their reinforcements joined them, as any success obtained at that moment would render a conscription for a third attempt infinitely difficult, if not impracticable; but if, on the other hand," said this inconsiderate person, "the French are allowed, with their present forces, to retain their present advantages, and to wait the completion of their conscription, they would pour into Spain with a number of troops which would give them immediate possession of the capital and the central provinces." Two days after the date of this letter, the Emperor was actually at the capital; and Mr. Frere, notwithstanding the superior Spanish force which his imagination had conjured up, was, with the Junta, flying in all haste from those very central provinces, France remaining, meanwhile, strong, and free from internal dissension.

This rambling epistle was not despatched when the General's intention to fall back upon Portugal was made known to Mr. Frere, but he thought it so admirably calculated to prevent a retreat, that he forwarded it, accompanied by a short explanatory note, which was offensive in style, and indicative of a petulant disposition. At the same time, Augustin Bueno and Ventura Escalente, two generals deputed by the Junta to remonstrate against Sir John Moore's intended retreat, arrived at head-quarters, and they justified the choice of their employers, being in folly and presumptuous ignorance the very types of the government they represented. Asserting that St. Juan, with twenty thousand men under his command, had so fortified the pass of the Somosierra, that it could not be forced by any number of enemies, and that reinforcements were daily joining him, they were proceeding to create immense Spanish armies, when the General stopped their garrulity by introducing Colonel Graham, who had been a witness of the dispersion of Castaños' army, and had just left the unfortunate St. Juan at Talavera, surrounded by the villanous runagates, who murdered him the next day.* It may be easily supposed that such representations, and from such men, could have no weight with the commander of an army; in

* Moore's Papers.

fact, the necessity of retreating was rendered more imperious by these glaring proofs that the Junta and the English plenipotentiary were totally ignorant of what was passing around them.

But Napoleon was now in full career; he had raised a hurricane of war, and, directing his fury as he pleased, his adversaries were obliged to conform their movements to his, and as the circumstances varied from hour to hour, the determination of one moment was rendered useless in the next. The appearance of the French cavalry in the plains of Madrid had sent the Junta and Mr. Frere headlong towards Badajos, yet the people of Madrid, as we have seen, shut their gates, and displayed the outward signs of a resolution to imitate Zaragoza; the neighboring peasants flocked in to aid the citizens, and a military Junta, composed of the Duke of Infantado, the Prince of Castel Franco, the Marquis of Castellar, and Don Thomas Morla, was appointed to manage the defence. Morla, being resolved to make a final effort to involve the British army in the destruction of his own country, easily persuaded the Duke of Infantado to quit Madrid on a mission to the army of the centre; and thus the traitor was left sole master of the town, because the Duke and himself only had any influence with that armed mob which had murdered the Marquis de Perales, and filled the city with tumult.

When the French Emperor summoned the Junta to surrender, Morla, in concert with the Prince of Castel Franco, addressed a paper to Sir John Moore, in which it was stated that "twenty-five thousand men under Castaños, and ten thousand from the Somosierra, were marching in all haste to the capital, where forty thousand others were in arms. Nevertheless, apprehending an increase of force on the enemy's side, the Junta hoped the English army would either march to the assistance of Madrid, or take a direction to fall upon the rear of the French; and not doubting that the English General had already formed a junction with Blake's army," which they well knew had been dispersed, "they hoped he would be quick in his operations." This paper was sent by a government messenger to Salamanca, but ere he could reach that place, Morla, who had commenced negotiations before the despatch was written, capitulated, and Napoleon was in Madrid. This communication alone would not have been sufficient to arrest Moore's retrograde movement, for he was become too well acquainted with what facility Spanish armies were created on paper, to rely on any statement of their numbers; but Mr. Stuart also expressed a belief that Madrid would make a vigorous resistance, and the tide of false information having set in with a strong current, every moment brought fresh assurances that a great spirit had arisen.

On the day that Morla's communication arrived, there also appeared at head-quarters one Charmilly, a French adventurer. This man, who has been since denounced in the British Parliament as an organizer of assassination in St. Domingo, and a fraudulent bankrupt in London, came as the confidential agent of Mr. Frere. He had been in Madrid during the night of the first, and left it immediately after having held a conference with Morla, the next morning. Taking the road to Talavera, he met with the plenipotentiary, to whom he spoke with such enthusiasm of the spirit and preparations of the inhabitants in the capital, that Mr. Frere, readily confiding in him, and imparting his own views, not only intrusted him, a stranger, with letters to the British General, but charged him with a mission to obstruct the retreat into Portugal. Thus instructed, Charmilly hastened to Salamanca, and presented Mr. Frere's first missive, in which that gentleman, after alluding to former representations, and to the information of which Colonel Charmilly was the bearer, viz., the enthusiasm in the capital, made a formal remonstrance, to the effect that propriety and policy demanded an immediate advance of the British to support this generous effort. Charmilly also demanded a personal interview, which was granted; yet Moore, having some suspicion of the man, whom he had seen before, listened to his tale of the enthusiasm and vigorous character displayed at Madrid, with an appearance of coldness that baffled the penetration of the adventurer, who retired under the impression that a retreat was certain.

But for many years so much ridicule had been attached to the name of an English expedition, that weak-headed men claimed a sort of prescriptive right to censure, without regard to subordination, the conduct of their general. It had been so in Egypt, where a cabal was formed to deprive Lord Hutchinson of the command; it had been so at Buenos Ayres, at Ferrol, and in Portugal; it was so at this time in Sir John Moore's army; and it will be found, in the course of this work, that the superlative talents, vigor, and success of the Duke of Wellington, could not, even at a late period of the war, secure him from such vexatious folly. The three generals who commanded the separate divisions of the army, and who were in consequence acquainted with all the circumstances of the moment, were perfectly agreed as to the propriety of a retreat; but in other quarters indecent murmurs were so prevalent among officers of rank as to call for rebuke; and Charmilly, ignorant of the decided character of the general-in-chief, concluding that this temper was favorable to the object of his mission, presented a second letter, which Mr. Frere had charged him to deliver, should the first fail of effect. The purport of it was to desire that if Sir John Moore

still persisted in his intention of retreating, "*the bearer might be previously examined before a council of war;*" in other words, that Mr. Frere, convinced of Sir John Moore's incapacity and want of zeal, was determined to control his proceedings even by force. And this to a British general, of long experience and confirmed reputation, and by the hands of a foreign adventurer!!! The indignation of a high spirit at such a foolish, wanton insult, may be easily imagined. He ordered Charmilly to quit the cantonments of the British army instantly. His anger, however, soon subsided. Quarrels, among the servants of the public, could only prove detrimental to his country, and he put his personal feelings on one side. The information brought by Charmilly, separated from the indecorum of his mission, was in itself important; it confirmed the essential fact, that Madrid was actually resisting, and that the spirit and energy of the country was awaking.

Hitherto his own observation had led Sir John Moore to doubt if the people took sufficient interest in the cause to make any effectual effort; all around himself was apathetic and incapable; his correspondents, with the exception of Mr. Frere, nay, even the intercepted letters of French officers, had agreed in describing the general feeling of the country as subsiding into indifference, and, to use his own words, "*Spain was without armies, generals, or a government.*"* But now the fire essential to the salvation of the nation seemed to be kindling, and Moore, feeling conscious of ability to lead a British army, hailed the appearance of an enthusiasm which promised success to a just cause, and a brilliant career of glory to himself. That the metropolis should thus abide the fury of the conqueror was indeed surprising; it was a great event and full of promise, and the situation of the army was likewise improved. General Hope's junction was accomplished; and as the attention of the French was turned towards Madrid, there was no reason to doubt that Baird's junction could likewise be effected.† On the other hand, there was no certainty that the capital would remain firm when danger pressed, none that it would be able to resist, none that the example would spread; yet without it did so nothing was gained, because it was only by a union of heart and hand throughout the whole country, that the great power of the French could be successfully resisted.

In a matter so balanced, Moore, as might be expected from an enterprising general, adopted the boldest and most generous side. He ordered Baird, who, after destroying some stores, had fallen back to Villa Franca, to concentrate his troops at Astorga, and he himself prepared for an advance; but as he remained without any further information of the fate of Madrid, he sent Colonel Graham

* Appendix, No. 13, § 7.

† Appendix, No. 14.

to obtain intelligence of what was passing, and to carry his answer to Morla. This resolution being taken, he wrote to Mr. Frere, calmly explaining the reasons for his past conduct, and those which actuated him in forming a fresh plan of operation. "I wish anxiously," said this noble-minded man in conclusion, "I wish anxiously, as the King's minister, to continue upon the most confidential footing with you, and I hope, as we have but one interest, the public welfare, though we occasionally see it in different aspects, that this will not disturb the harmony which should subsist between us. Fully impressed as I am with these sentiments, I shall abstain from any remarks upon the two letters from you, delivered to me last night and this morning by Colonel Charmilly, or on the message which accompanied them. I certainly at first did feel and expressed much indignation at a person like him being made the channel of a communication of that sort from you to me. These feelings are at an end, and I dare say they never will be created towards you again."

The plan of operations now occupied his mind. The Somosierra and the Guadarama were both in possession of the enemy, wherefore no direct movement could be made towards Madrid; and as the rear of Baird's troops was still several marches behind Astorga, a general movement on the side of the capital could not commence before the 12th of the month. Zaragoza, the General knew, was determined to stand a second siege, and he had the guarantee of the first that it would be an obstinate stand; he had received from the Junta of Toledo a formal assurance of their resolution to bury themselves under the ruins of the town sooner than submit; and he was informed from several quarters that the southern provinces were forwarding crowds of fresh levies. Romana at this time also was in correspondence with him, and, with the usual exaggeration of a Spaniard, declared his ability to aid him with an army of twenty thousand men. Upon these data Sir John Moore formed a plan, bearing the stamp of genuine talent and enterprise, whether it be examined as a political or military measure.

He supposed the French Emperor to be more anxious to strike a heavy blow against the English, and to shut them out of Spain, than to overrun any particular province, or get possession of any town in the Peninsula. He resolved, therefore, to throw himself upon the communications of the French army, hoping, if fortune was favorable, to inflict a severe loss upon the troops which guarded them, before aid could arrive. If Napoleon, suspending his operations against the south, should detach them largely, Madrid would thereby be secured; if he did not detach largely, the British could hold their ground. Moore knew well that a great com-

mander would in such a case be more likely to unite his whole army, and fall upon the troops which thus ventured to place themselves on his line of operations; but, to relieve the Spaniards at a critical moment, and to give time for the southern provinces to organize their defence and to recover courage, he was willing thus to draw the whole of the enemy upon himself. He felt that, in doing so, he compromised the safety of his own army, that he must glide along the edge of a precipice, that he must cross a gulf on a rotten plank; but he also knew the martial qualities of his soldiers, he had confidence in his own genius, and the occasion being worthy of a great deed, he dared essay it even against Napoleon.*

Colonel Graham returned on the 9th, bringing the first intimation of the capitulation of the capital. He had been able to proceed no farther than Talavera, where he encountered two members of the Supreme Junta. By them he was told that the French, being from twenty to thirty thousand strong, possessed the Retiro; that the people retained their arms, and that La Peña, with thirty thousand men of the army of the centre, was at Guadalaxara; that fourteen thousand of St. Juan's and Heredia's forces were assembled at Almaraz; and that Romana, with whom they anxiously desired the English should unite, had likewise an army of thirty thousand fighting men: finally, they assured Colonel Graham that the most energetic measures were in activity wherever the enemy's presence did not control the patriots.

Mortifying as it was to find that Madrid, after so much boasting, should have held out but one day, the event itself did not destroy the ground of Moore's resolution to advance. Undoubtedly it was so much lost; it diminished the hope of arousing the nation, and it increased the danger of the British army, by letting loose a greater number of the enemy's troops; but as a diversion for the south it might still succeed, and as long as there was any hope, the resolution of the English General was fixed, to prove that he would not abandon the cause, even when the Spaniards were abandoning it themselves.

* Appendix, No. 14.

CHAPTER IV.

British army advances towards Burgos—French outposts surprised at Rueda—Letter from Berthier to Soult intercepted—Direction of the march changed—Mr. Stuart and a member of the Junta arrive at head-quarters—Arrogant and insulting letter of Mr. Frere—Noble answer of Sir John Moore—British army united at Mayorga; their force and composition—Inconsistent conduct of Romana; his character—Soult's position and forces; concentrates his army at Carrion—Combat of cavalry at Sahagun—The British army retires to Benevente—The Emperor moves from Madrid, passes the Guadarama, arrives at Torde-sillas, expects to interrupt the British line of retreat, fails—Bridge of Castro-Gonzalo destroyed—Combat of cavalry at Benevente—General Lefebvre taken—Soult forces the bridge of Mansilla; takes Leon—The Emperor unites his army at Astorga; hears of the Austrian war; orders Marshal Soult to pursue the English army, and returns to France.

THE forward movement of the British army commenced on the 11th of December. Moore's first intention was to march with his own and Hope's division to Valladolid, with a view to cover the advance of his stores and to protect the junction of Sir David Baird's troops, the rear of which was still behind Astorga; nevertheless preparations for a retreat upon Portugal were continued, and Sir David was ordered to form magazines at Benevente, Astorga, Villa Franca, and Lugo, by which arrangement two lines of operation were secured, and a greater freedom of action obtained.

The 13th head-quarters were at Alaejos; two brigades and Lord Paget's cavalry at Toro; General Hope at Torrecilla; General Charles Stewart's horsemen at Rueda, having the night before surprised there fifty infantry and thirty dragoons, who declared that in the French army it was believed that the English were retreating to Portugal.

At Alaejos an intercepted despatch of the Prince of Neufchâtel was brought to head-quarters, and the contents were important enough to change the direction of the march. It was addressed to the Duke of Dalmatia, and described Madrid as perfectly tranquil, the shops open, and the public amusements going forward as in a time of profound peace. The fourth corps of the army was said to be at Talavera, on its way towards Badajos, and this movement, it was observed, would force the English to retire to Portugal, if, contrary to the Emperor's belief, they had not already done so. The fifth corps was on the march to Zaragoza, and the eighth to Burgos. Soult was therefore directed to drive the Spaniards into Galicia, to occupy Leon, Benevente, and Zamora, and to keep the flat country in subjection; for which purpose his two divisions of infantry, and the cavalry brigades of Franceschi and Debelle, were considered sufficient.