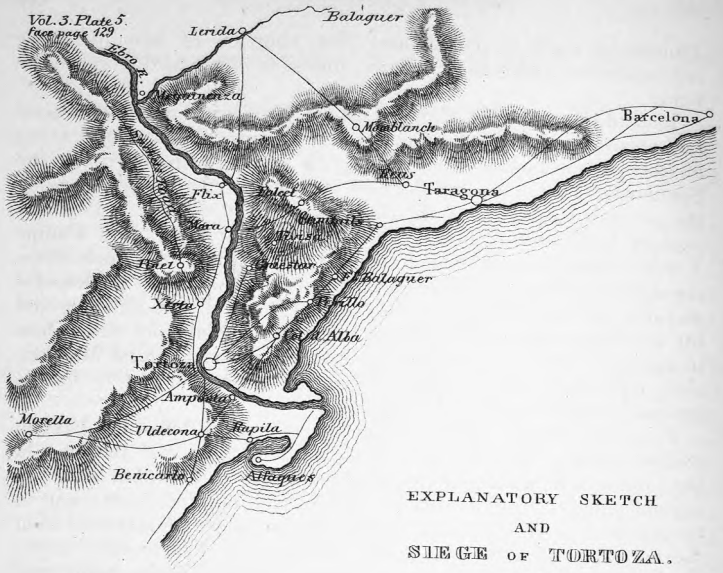
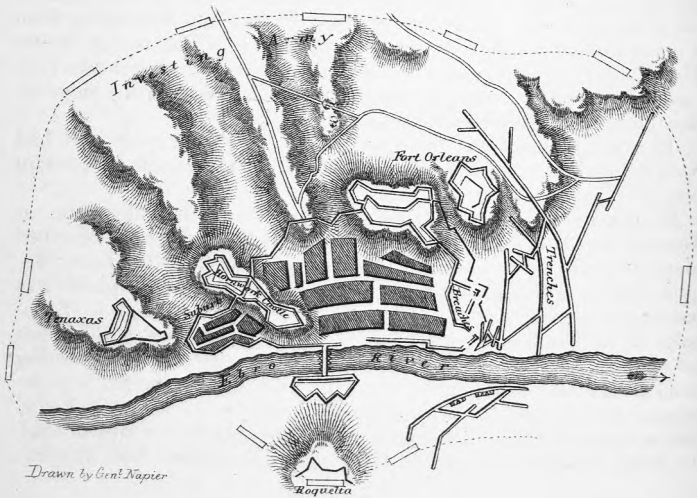




Vól. 3. Plate 5.
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EXPLANATORY SKETCH
AND
SIEGE OF TORTOZA.
1811.



Drawn by Genl. Napier

Paneda or plain of Tarragona; thus showing of how little use it is to destroy roads as a defence, unless men are also prepared to fight.

Instead of occupying Reus as before, Macdonald now took a position about Momblanch, having his rear towards Lerida, but leaving all the passes leading from Tarragona to the Ebro open for the Spaniards; so that Suchet derived no benefit from the presence of the seventh corps, nor could the latter feed itself, nor yet in any manner hinder the Catalans from succoring Tortosa. For Campo Verde, coming from Montserrat and Igualada, was encamped above the defiles between the French position and Tarragona, principally at Lilla, on the road from Valls; and O'Donnell, who still directed the general movements, although his wound would not suffer him to appear in the field, sent parties into the Gariga behind Macdonald's right flank to interrupt his foraging parties, and to harass Suchet's communications by the Ebro.

From the strong heights at Lilla, the Catalans defied the French soldiers, calling upon them to come up and fight, and they would have done so if Macdonald would have suffered them, but after ten days of inactivity he divided his troops into many columns, and in concert with Abbé's brigade of the third corps, which marched from Xerta, endeavored to inclose and destroy the detachments in the Gariga; the Spaniards however disappeared in the mountains, and the French army only gained some mules and four thousand sheep and oxen. With this spoil they united again on the left bank of the Ebro, and were immediately disposed on a line extending from Vinebre, which is opposite to Flix, to Masos, which is opposite to Mora, and from thence to Garcia and Gniestar. Suchet was thus enabled to concentrate his troops about Tortosa, and the siege of that place was immediately commenced.

The operations of the third corps during the five months it had been dependent upon the slow movements of the seventh corps shall now be related.

Suchet, by resigning the plain of Urgel and the magazines at Monzon for Macdonald's subsistence in September, had deprived himself of all the resources of the left bank of the Ebro from Mequinenza to Tortosa, and the country about the latter place was barren; hence he was obliged to send for his provisions to Zaragoza, Teruel, and other places more than one hundred miles from his camp; and meanwhile the difficulty of getting his battering train and ammunition down the river from Mequinenza was increased because of the numerous bars and weirs which impeded the navigation when the waters were low: moreover Macdonald, by going to Cardona, exposed the convoys to attacks from the left

bank by the Spanish troops, which being stationed between Tarragona, Momblanch, and Falcet, were always on the watch. Considering these things, Suchet had, while the seventh corps was yet at Lerida, and the waters accidentally high, employed the Neapolitan brigade of the seventh corps to escort twenty-six pieces of artillery down the river. This convoy reached Xerta the 5th of September, and the Neapolitans were then sent to Guarda; General Habert was placed at Tivisa; Mas de Mora was occupied by a reserve, and the Spaniards again took post at Falcet. At this time General Laval died, and his division was given to General Harispe, a person distinguished throughout the war by his ability, courage, and humanity.

Meanwhile the Valencian army had again concentrated to disturb the blockade of Tortosa, wherefore Suchet strengthened Bousard's detachment at Uldecona, and gave the command to General Musnier, who was replaced at Zaragoza by General Paris. At the same time Colonel Kliski was sent to command the detachments on the side of Montalvan, Teruel, Daroca, and Calatayud, where a partisan warfare was continued with undiminished activity by Villa Campa, who had contrived to open secret communications, and to excite some commotions, even in Zaragoza. On the 7th of August he had beaten a French foraging detachment near Cuevas, and recaptured six thousand sheep, and at Andorra had taken both convoy and escort. On the side of Navarre also, Mina coming down into the Cinco Villas destroyed some detachments, and impeded the foraging parties. Thus the third corps also began to suffer privations, and no progress was made towards the conquest of Catalonia.

In September, however, Villa Campa, having increased his forces, advanced so near Suchet that General Habert attacked and drove him over the frontier in dispersion, and recaptured all the sheep before lost, and Suchet then brought down the remainder of the battering train, and the stores for the siege; but as the waters of the Ebro were low, the new road was used for the convoys, which thus came slowly and with many interruptions and considerable loss; especially on the 17th of September, when a whole Neapolitan battalion suffered itself to be taken without firing a shot.

In this manner affairs dragged on until the 28th of October; but then Macdonald (O'Donnell having meanwhile captured Swartz and raised the Ampurdan) returned to Gerona, whereby Suchet's hopes of commencing the siege were again baffled. And, as it was at this moment that the assembling of the Cortes gave a new vigor to the resistance in Spain, and the Regency's plan of sending secret juntas to organize and regulate the proceedings of the par-

tidas, was put in execution, the activity of those bands became proportioned to the hopes excited, and the supplies and promises thus conveyed to them. One of those secret juntas, composed of clergy and military men having property or influence in Aragon, endeavored to renew the insurrection formerly excited by Blake in that province, and for this purpose sent their emissaries into all quarters and combined their operations with Mina. They, also, diligently followed a plan of secretly drawing off the provisions from Aragon, with a view to starve the French, and General Carbajal, one of the junta, joining Villa Campa, assumed the supreme command on that side; while Captain Codrington, at the desire of Bassecour, carried a Valencian detachment by sea to Peniscola to fall on the left flank of Suchet, if he should attempt to penetrate by the coast road to Valencia. Thus, at the moment when Macdonald returned to the Ampurdan, the Aragonese became unquiet, the partidas from Navarre and the district of Montalvan and Calatayud closed in on Suchet's communications, the Valencians came up on the one side towards Uldecona, and on the other, Garcia Navarro, moving from Tarragona with a division, again assumed the position of Falçet.

To check this tide of hostility, the French General resolved first to crush the insurrection project, and for this purpose detached seven battalions and four hundred cavalry against Carbajal. Chlopiski, who commanded them, defeated the Spaniards the 21st at Alventosa on the route to Valencia, taking some guns and ammunition. Nevertheless Villa Campa rallied his men in a few days on the mountain of Fuente Santa, where he was joined by Carbajal, and having received fresh succors, renewed the project of raising the Aragonese. But Chlopiski again defeated him the 12th of November, and the Spaniards fled in confusion towards the river Libras, where, the bridge breaking, many were drowned. The French lost more than a hundred men in this sharp attack, and Chlopiski then returned to the blockade, leaving Kliski with twelve hundred men to watch Villa Campa's further movements.

The Ebro having now risen sufficiently, the remainder of the battering train and stores were embarked at Mequinenza, and on the 3d dropped down the stream; but the craft outstripped the escort, and the convoy being assailed from the left bank, lost two boats; the others grounded on the right bank, and were there defended by the cannoneers, until the escort came up on the one side, and on the other, General Abbé, who had been sent from Guarda to their succor. The waters, however, suddenly subsided, and the convoy was still in danger until Suchet reinforced Abbé, who was thus enabled to keep the Spaniards at bay, while Habert, with fifteen

hundred men, made a diversion by attacking the camp at Falcet. On the 7th, the waters again rose, and the boats with little loss reached Xerta on the 9th, and thus all things were ready to commence the siege, but the seventh corps still kept aloof.

Suchet was now exceedingly perplexed; for the provisions he had with so much pains collected, from the most distant parts of Aragon, were rapidly wasting; forage was every day becoming scarcer, and the plain of Urgel was by agreement given over to the seventh corps, which thus became a burthen instead of an aid to the third corps. The latter had been, since the beginning of the year, ordered to supply itself entirely from the resources of Aragon, without any help from France; and the difficulty of so doing may be judged of by the fact, that in six months they had consumed above a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and twelve hundred bullocks.

To obviate the embarrassments thus accumulating, the French General called the notables and heads of the clergy in Aragon to his head-quarters, and with their assistance reorganized the whole system of internal administration, in such a manner, that, giving his confidence to the natives, removing many absurd restrictions of their industry and trade, and leaving the municipal power and police entirely in their hands, he drew forth the resources of the provinces in greater abundance than before; and yet with less discontent, being well served and obeyed, both in matters of administration and police, by the Aragonese, whose feelings he was careful to soothe, showing himself in all things an able governor, as well as a great commander.

Macdonald was now in march from Barcelona towards Tarragona, and Suchet to aid this operation attacked the Spanish troops at Falcet. General Habert fell on their camp in front on the 19th, and to cut off the retreat, two detachments were ordered to turn it by the right and left; but Habert's assault was so brisk, that before the flanking corps could take their stations the Catalans fled, leaving their General Garcia Novarro and three hundred men in the hands of the victors. But while Suchet obtained this success on the side of Falcet, the Valencian General Bassecour, thinking that the main body of the French would be detained by Novarro on the left bank of the Ebro, formed the design of surprising General Musnier at Uldecona. To aid this operation, a flotilla from the harbor of Peniscola attacked Rapita, and other small posts occupied by the French, on the coast between the Cenia and the Ebro; and at the same time the governor of Tortosa menaced Amposta and the stations at the mouth of the Ebro.

Bassecour moved against Uldecona in three columns, one of

which, following the coast-road towards Alcanar, turned the French left, while another passing behind the mountains took post at Las Ventallas, in rear of Musnier's position, to cut him off from Tortosa. The main body went straight against his front, and in the night of the 26th the Spanish cavalry fell upon the French camp outside the town; but the guards, undismayed, opened a fire which checked the attack, until the troops came out of the town and formed in order of battle.

At daylight the Spanish army was perceived covering the hills in front, and those in rear also, for the detachment at Ventallas was in sight; the French were thus surrounded, and the action immediately commenced;* but the Valencians were defeated with the loss of sixteen hundred men, and the detachment in the rear seeing the result made off to the mountains again. Bassecour then withdrew in some order behind the Cenia, where in the night Musnier surprised him, and at the same time sent the cuirassiers by the route of Vinaros to cut off his retreat, which was made with such haste and disorder that the French cavalry, falling in with the fugitives near Benicarlo, killed or took nine hundred. Bassecour saved himself in Peniscola, and thither also the flotilla, having failed at Rapita, returned.†

Suchet having thus cleared his rear, sent his prisoners to France by Jaca, and directed a convoy of provisions, newly collected at Mequinenza, to fall down the Ebro to the magazines at Mora: fearing however that the current might again carry the boats faster than the escort, he directed the latter to proceed first, and sent General Abbé to Flix to meet the vessels. The Spaniards in the Garriga, observing this disposition, placed an ambuscade near Mequinenza, and attacked the craft before they could come up with the escort; the boats were then run ashore on the right side, and seventy men from Mequinenza came down the left bank to their aid, which saved the convoy, but the succoring detachment was cut to pieces. Soon after this the seventh corps having scoured the Garriga took post on the left bank of the Ebro, and enabled the third corps to commence the long delayed siege.

* Suchet's Memoirs.

† Official Abstract of Mr. Wellesley's Despatches, MS.

CHAPTER III.

Tortosa—Its governor feeble—The Spaniards outside disputing and negligent—Captain Fane lands at Palamos—Is taken—O'Donnell resigns and is succeeded by Campo Verde—Description of Tortosa—It is invested—A division of the seventh corps placed under Suchet's command—Siege of Tortosa—The place negotiates—Suchet's daring conduct—The governor surrenders—Suchet's activity—Habert takes the fort of Balagner—Macdonald moves to Reus—Sarsfield defeats and kills Eugenio—Macdonald marches to Lerida—Suchet goes to Zaragoza—The confidence of the Catalans revives—The manner in which the belligerents obtained provisions explained—The Catalans attack Perillo, and Campo Verde endeavors to surprise Moujuic, but is defeated with great loss—Napoleon changes the organization of the third and seventh corps—The former becomes the army of Aragon, the latter the army of Catalonia.

TORTOSA, with a population of ten thousand souls, and a garrison of from eight to nine thousand regular troops, was justly considered the principal bulwark of both Catalonia and Valencia, but it was under the command of General Lilli, Conde d'Alacha, a feeble man, whose only claim was, that he had shown less incapacity than others before the battle of Tudela in 1808. However, so confident were the Spaniards in the strength of the place that the French attack was considerably advanced ere any interruption was contemplated, and had any well considered project for its relief been framed, it could not have been executed, because jealousy and discord raged amongst the Spanish chiefs. Campo Verde was anxious to succeed O'Donnell in command of the Catalonian army; Bassecour held unceasing dispute with his own officers, and with the members of the Junta or Congress of Valencia; and Villa Campa repelled the interference both of Carbajal and Bassecour.

At this critical time therefore everything was stagnant, except the English vessels which blockaded Rosas, Barcelona, and the mouths of the Ebro, or from certain head-lands observed and pounced upon the enemy's convoys creeping along from port to port: they had thrown provisions, ammunition, and stores of all kinds into Tarragona and Tortosa, and were generally successful, yet at times met with disasters. Thus Captain Rogers of the Kent, having with him the Ajax, Cambrian, Sparrow-hawk, and Minstrel, disembarked six hundred men and two field pieces under Captain Fane at Palamos, where they destroyed a convoy intended for Barcelona; but as the seamen were re-embarking in a disorderly manner, the French fell upon them and took or killed two hundred, Captain Fane being amongst the prisoners.

The Catalan army was thirty thousand strong, including garrisons, and in a better state than it had hitherto been;* the Valen-

* Official Abstract of Mr. Wellesley's Despatches, MS.

cians, although discouraged by the defeat at Uldecona, were still numerous, and all things tended to confirm the Spaniards in the confident expectation that whether succored or unsuccored the place would not fall. But O'Donnell, who had been created Conde de Bispal, was so disabled by wounds, that he resigned the command soon after the siege commenced, and Campo Verde was by the voice of the people raised in his stead; for it was their nature always to believe that the man who made most noise was the fittest person to head them, and in this instance, as in most others, they were greatly mistaken.

Tortosa, situated on the left of the Ebro, communicated with the right bank by a bridge of boats, which was the only Spanish bridge on that river, from Zaragoza to the sea; and below and above the place there was a plain, but so narrowed by the juttings of the mountains at the point where the town was built, that while part of the houses stood close to the water on flat ground, the other part stood on the bluff rocky points shot from the hills above, and thus appeared to tie the mountains, the river, and the plains together.*

Five of these shoots were taken into the defence either by the ramparts or by outworks. That on the south of the town was crowned by the fort of Orleans, and on the north another was occupied by a fort called the Tenaxas. To the east a horn-work was raised on a third shoot, which being prolonged, and rising suddenly again between the suburbs and the city, furnished the site of a castle or citadel; the other two, and the deep ravines between them, were defended by the ramparts of the place, which were extremely irregular, and strong from their situation rather than their construction.

There were four fronts:

1. *The northern, defending the suburb.* Although this front was built on the plain, it was so imbedded between the Ebro, the horn-work, the citadel, and the Tenaxas, that it could not even be approached without first taking the latter fort.

2. *The eastern. Extending from the horn-work to the bastion of San Pico.* Here the deep ravines and the rocky nature of the ground, which was also overlooked by the citadel and flanked by the horn-work, rendered any attack very difficult.

3. *The south-eastern. From the bastion of San Pico to the bastion of Santa Cruz.* This front, protected by a deep narrow ravine, was again covered by the fort of Orleans, which was itself covered by a second ravine.

4. *The southern. From the Santa Cruz to the Ebro.* The

* Vacani. Rogniat. Suchet.

ground of approach here was flat, the soil easy to work in, and the fort of Orleans not sufficiently advanced to flank it with any dangerous effect; wherefore against this front Suchet resolved to conduct his attack.

The Rocquetta, a rising ground opposite the bridge-head on the right bank of the Ebro, was fortified and occupied by three regiments, but the other troops were collected at Xerta; and the 15th, before daybreak, Suchet crossed the Ebro by his own bridge at that point, with eight battalions, the sappers, and two squadrons of hussars. He marched between the mountains and the river upon the fort of Tenaxas, while General Habert, with two regiments and three hundred hussars, moved from the side of Perillo, and attacked a detachment of the garrison which was encamped on the Col de Alba eastward of the city. When Suchet's column arrived in sight of the works, the head took ground, but the rear, under General Harispe, filed off to the left, across the rugged shoots from the hills, and swept round the place, leaving in every ravine and on every ridge a detachment, until the half circle ended on the Ebro, below Tortosa. The investment was then perfected on the left bank by the troops from Rocquetta; and during this movement Habert, having seized the Col de Alba, entered the line of investment, driving before him six hundred men, who hardly escaped being cut off from the place by the march of Harispe.* The communication across the water was then established by three, and afterwards by four flying bridges, placed above and below the town; a matter of some difficulty and importance, because all the artillery and stores had come from Rocquetta across the water, which was there two hundred yards wide, and in certain winds very rough.

The camps of investment were now secured, and meanwhile Macdonald, sending the greatest part of his cavalry, for which he could find no forage, back to Lerida by the road of Lardecans, marched from Mas de Mora across the hills to Perillo, to cover the siege. His patrols discovered a Spanish division in position resting upon the fort of Felipe de Balaguer, yet he would not attack them, and thinking he could not remain for want of provisions, returned on the 19th to Gniestar; but this retrograde movement was like to have exposed the investing troops to a disaster, for as the seventh corps retired, a second Spanish division coming from Reus reinforced the first. However, Macdonald seeing this, placed Frere's division of six thousand infantry and a regiment of cavalry at Suchet's disposal, on condition that the latter should feed them, which he could well do. These troops were immediately stationed

* Suchet. Official extract of Mr. Wellesley's despatches, MS.

behind the investing force, on the road of Amposta, by which the Spaniards from Tarragona could most easily approach; and the remainder of the seventh corps encamped at Gniestar, a strong position covering the siege on the side of Falcet, only fifteen miles distant from Tortosa. In this situation it could be more easily fed from Lerida, and could with greater facility send detachments up the Ebro, to protect the convoy of the third corps coming from Mequinenza.

The Catalan army was now divided, part being kept on the Llobregat, under General Caro, part under General Yranzo at Momb Blanch, and part under Campo Verde on the hills watching Frere's covering division.* O'Donnell had before directed two convoys upon Tortosa, but the rapidity with which the investment had been effected prevented them from entering the place; and while he was endeavoring to arrange with Bassecour and Campo Verde a general plan of succor, his wounds forced him to embark for Valencia, when the command, of right, belonged to Yranzo, but the people, as I have before said, insisted upon having Campo Verde.

SIEGE OF TORTOSA.

The half bastion of San Pedro, which was situated in the plain, and close to the river, was the first object of the French attack, and to prevent the fire of Fort Orleans from incommoding the trenches, the line of approach was traced in a slanting direction, refusing the right, and pushing forward the left; and to protect its flanks on the one side, Fort Orleans was masked by a false attack. while, on the other side of the Ebro, trenches were opened against the bridge-head, and brought down close to the water.

The 19th, the posts of the besieged were all driven in, and an unfinished Spanish work, commenced on the heights in advance of Fort Orleans, was taken possession of. In the night, a flying sap was commenced upon an extent of three hundred and sixty yards, and at a distance of only one hundred and sixty from the fort; but in the following night, the true attack was undertaken in the plain, during a storm of wind which, together with the negligence of the Spaniards, who had placed no guards in the front of their covered way, enabled the besiegers to begin this work at only one hundred and fifty yards from the half bastion of San Pedro. This parallel was above five hundred yards long, extending from the false attack against Fort Orleans down to the bank of the river; two communications were also begun, and on the left bank ground was broken against the bridge-head.

* Wimpfen's Memoir.

The 21st, at daybreak, the Spaniards, perceiving the works, commenced a heavy fire, and soon after made a sally; but they were overwhelmed by musketry from the false attack of Fort Orleans, and from the trenches on the right bank of the Ebro.

In the night of the 21st, the communication in the plain was extended to fourteen hundred yards, nine batteries were commenced, and bags of earth were placed along the edge of the trenches, whence chosen men shot down the Spanish artillery men.

On the 23d, a night sally, made from the bridge-head, was repulsed; and on the 24th, the second parallel of the true attack was commenced.

In the night of the 25th, at eleven o'clock and at one o'clock, separate sallies were made, but both were repulsed, and the works were advanced to within twenty-five yards of the palisades; a tenth battery was also commenced, and when day broke the Spanish gunners quailed under the aim of the chosen marksmen.

In the night of the 26th, the besieged fell upon the head of the sap, which they overturned, and killed the sappers, but were finally repulsed by the reserve, and the approach was immediately pushed forward to the place of arms. Thus, on the seventh night of open trenches, the besiegers were lodged in the covered way, before a shot had been fired from either breaching or counter batteries; a remarkable instance of activity and boldness, and a signal proof that the defence was ill-conducted.

The night of the 27th, the works were enlarged as much as the fire of the place which was untouched would permit; but the Spaniards, seeing the besiegers' batteries ready to open, made a general sally through the eastern gates against the false attack at Fort Orleans, and through the southern gates against the works in the plain. General Habert drove them back with slaughter from the former point, but at the latter they beat the French from the covered way, and arriving at the second parallel, burnt the gabions and did much damage ere the reserves could repulse them.

The night of the 28th, the batteries were armed with forty-five pieces, of which seventeen were placed on the right bank, to take the Spanish works at the main attack in reverse and to break the bridge. At daybreak all these guns opened, and with success, against the demi-bastion, on the left bank of the river; but the fire from the castle, the bridge-head, the hornwork, and the quay, overpowered the French guns on the right bank, and although the bridge was injured, it was not rendered impassable.

On the 30th, the Spanish fire was in turn overpowered by the besiegers, the bridge was then broken, and in the following night an attempt was made to pass the ditch at the true attack; but two

guns which were still untouched and flanked the point of attack, defeated this effort.

In the morning of the 31st, the Spaniards abandoned the bridge-head, and the French batteries on the right bank dismounted the two guns which had defended the half bastion of San Pedro. The besiegers then effected the passage of the ditch without difficulty, and attached the miner to the scarp.

In the night of the 31st, the miner worked into the wall, and the batteries opened a breach in the curtain, where a lodgment was established in preparation for an assault. At ten o'clock in the morning the besieged, alarmed at the progress of the attack, displayed the white flag. The negotiations for a surrender were, however, prolonged until evening by the governor, without any result, and the miner resumed his work in the night.

At seven o'clock on the 1st of January, two practicable breaches beside that in the curtain were opened by the artillery, and the mine was ready to explode, when three white flags were seen to wave from different parts of the fortress; nevertheless the disposition of the garrison was mistrusted, and Suchet demanded as a preliminary the immediate possession of one of the forts,—a necessary precaution, for disputes arose among the besieged, and General Lilli intimated to Suchet that his own authority was scarcely recognized.

In this critical moment, the French General gave proof that his talents were not those of a mere soldier, for suddenly riding up to the gates with a considerable staff, and escorted only by a company of grenadiers, he informed the Spanish officer on guard that hostilities had ceased, and then, leaving his grenadiers on the spot, desired to be conducted to the governor who was in the citadel. Lilli, still wavering, was upon the point of renewing the defence, in compliance with the desires of the officers about him, when the French General thus came suddenly into his presence, and, although the appearance of the Spanish guards was threatening, assumed an imperious tone, spoke largely of the impatience of the French army, and even menaced the garrison with military execution if any further delay occurred. During this extraordinary scene General Habert brought in the grenadiers from the gate, and the governor then signing a short capitulation, gave over the citadel to the French.

When this event was known in the city, the Spanish troops assembled, and Alacha, in the presence of Suchet, ordered them to lay down their arms. Four hundred French and about fourteen hundred Spaniards had fallen during the siege; and many thousand prisoners, nine standards, one hundred pieces of artillery, one thou-

sand muskets, and immense magazines, enhanced the value of the conquest, which by some was attributed to General Lilli's treachery, by others to his imbecility, and it would seem that there was reason for both charges.

The fall of Tortosa, besides opening the western passage into Catalonia, and cutting off the communication between that province and Valencia, reduced the Spanish army to twenty thousand men, including the garrisons of the towns which still remained in their possession. Campo Verde immediately retired from Falcet to Momblanch, and Suchet, always prompt to make one success the prelude to another, endeavored in the first moment of consternation and surprise to get possession of the forts of Peniscola and of Felipe de Balaguer: nor was he deceived with respect to the last, for that place, in which were five guns and a hundred men, was taken on the 9th by Habert; but at Peniscola his summons was disregarded and his detachment returned.

Meanwhile Macdonald, leaving the Neapolitan brigade still on the Ebro, passed by Falcet to Reus, where he encamped the 11th, as if to invest Tarragona; but without any real intention to do so, for his cavalry and field artillery were left at Lerida and Tortosa, and his actual force did not exceed twelve thousand men. Campo Verde, who had retreated before him, then posted Sarsfield with six thousand men at Valls, from whence he made incursions against Macdonald's foragers, and also surprised at Tarega, on the other side of the mountains, a regiment of Italian dragoons, which would have been destroyed but for the succor of a neighboring post.

On the 14th, Macdonald having marched towards Valls, Sarsfield retired to Pla, and was pursued by General Eugenio with two thousand Italian infantry. This officer, being of a headstrong intractable disposition, pushed into the plain of Pla, contrary to his orders, and was nearing that town, when a strong body of cavalry poured out of it; and on each side the Spanish infantry were seen descending the hill in order of battle. Eugenio, instead of retiring, attacked the first that entered the plain, but he fell mortally wounded, and his men retreated fighting: meanwhile, the firing being heard at Valls, Palombini marched to his assistance, but was himself beaten and thrown into confusion, and Sarsfield at the head of the Spanish horse was preparing to complete the victory, when the French Colonel Delort bringing up some squadrons charged with great fury, and so brought off the Italians; yet Delort himself was desperately wounded, and the whole loss was not less than six hundred men.*

Macdonald would not suffer his main body to stir, and Vacani

* Vacani. Victoires et Conquêtes. General Doyle's despatches, MS.

asserts that it was only by entreaty that Palombini obtained permission to succor Eugenio, which was certainly a great error, for so hot and eager was Sarsfield in the pursuit, that he was come within two miles of Valls, and being on open ground might have been crushed in turn. He, however, returned unmolested to the pass of the Cabra, leaving his cavalry as before in Pla, whence through bye-roads they communicated with Tarragona.

A few days after this fight Sarsfield came out again in order of battle, and at the same time Campo Verde appeared with a division on the hills in rear of Valls. Macdonald was thus surrounded, but Palombini's brigade sufficed to send Campo Verde back to Tarragona, and Sarsfield refused battle; then the French Marshal, who had resolved to go to Lerida, but wished to move without fighting, broke up from Valls in the night, and, with great order and silence, passed by the road of Fuencalde, between the defiles of Cabra and Ribas, and though both were occupied by the Spaniards, they did not discover his movements until the next day. From thence he marched by Momblanch upon Lerida, where he arrived the 19th, and three days afterwards spread his troops over the plains of Urgel, to collect provisions, money, and transport, and to watch the defiles of the mountains.

On the other hand the Catalan General, who had received stores and arms both from England and Cadiz, renewed the equipment of his troops, and called out all the Migueletes and Somatenes of the hills round the plain of Urgel, to replace the loss sustained by the fall of Tortosa. These new levies were united at Santa Coloma de Querault under Sarsfield, while the regular army assembled at Igualada and Villa Franca, by which the Spaniards, holding a close and concentrated position themselves, cut off Macdonald equally from Barcelona and the Ampurdan; and this latter district was continually harassed by Errolles, Rovira, and the brigade of Martinez, which still kept the mountains behind Olot, Vich, and the Cerdaña.

Meanwhile Suchet being called by the exigences of his government to Zaragoza, carried one division there, and distributed another under Musnier at Teruel, Molina, Alcañitz, and Morella; he also withdrew his troops from Cambril, which Habert had surprised on the 7th of February, but he left that General with a division in command of Tortosa, having two thousand men at Perillo to connect the city with San Felipe de Balaguer. Thus all things seemed to favor the Spanish side, and give importance to their success against Eugenio; for they did not fail to attribute both Suchet's and Macdonald's retreats to fear occasioned by the skirmish with that General, and with some show of reason as regarded the

latter, seeing that his night march had all the appearance of a flight.

Macdonald, while gathering provisions at Lerida, and stores and guns at Tortosa, also repaired the works of Balaguer near Lerida, to serve as a pivot for the troops employed to forage the country watered by the Noguera, Cinca, and Legre rivers. However, Sarsfield and Campo Verde kept about Cervera and Calaf, watching for an opportunity to fall on the French detachments, and meanwhile the organization of the province went on.

It may appear extraordinary that the war could have been continued by either side under such difficulties, but the resources were still great.* A patriotic junta had been formed in Catalonia to procure provisions, and although the English orders in council interfered with the trade of neutral vessels bringing grain, bread could be bought at the rate of 12 lbs. to the dollar, while with Lord Wellington's army in Castile it often cost half a dollar a pound. When the French foraging parties came out from Barcelona, their march could be always traced by the swarms of boats, loaded with people and provisions, which, shooting out from the coast-towns, would hover for a while under the protection of the English vessels, and then return when the danger was over; and the enemy did never meddle with these boats lest they should remove the cover to their own supplies. Suchet however armed Rapita, and other small places at the mouth of the Ebro, with a view to afford shelter to certain craft, which he kept to watch for provision vessels sailing from Valencia for Tarragona, and to aid French vessels engaged in a like course coming from France.

To feed Barcelona, Maurice Mathieu at times occupied the head-lands from St. Filieu to Blanes with troops, and thus small convoys crept along shore; a fleet loaded with provisions and powder, escorted by three frigates, entered it in February, and a continual stream of supply was also kept up by sailing boats and other small vessels, which could not be easily detected amidst the numerous craft belonging to the people along the coast. And besides these channels, as the claims of hunger are paramount to all others, it was necessary for the sake of the inhabitants to permit provisions sometimes to reach Barcelona by land; the Spanish generals winked at it, and Milans and Lacy have even been charged with permitting corn to pass into that city for private profit, as well as from consideration for the citizens. By these and like expedients the war was sustained.

No important event occurred after the skirmish in which Eugenio fell, until the 3d of March, when the Spaniards having observed that the garrison of Tortosa was weakened by the detachment at

* Appendix 4, § 2.

Perillo, endeavored to cut the latter off, intending if successful to assault Tortosa itself.* At the same time they also attacked the fort of San Felipe, but failed, and the French at Perillo effected their retreat, although with a considerable loss. This attempt was however followed by a more important effort. On the 19th of March, Campo Verde having assembled eight thousand men at Molinos del Rey, four thousand at Guisols, and three thousand at Igualada, prepared to surprise the city and forts of Barcelona, for he had, as he thought, corrupted the town-major of Monjuic. Trusting to this treason, he first sent eight hundred chosen grenadiers in the night by the hills of Hospitalette, to enter that place, and they descended into the ditch in expectation of having the gate opened; but Maurice Mathieu, apprised of the plan, had prepared everything to receive this unfortunate column, which was in an instant overwhelmed with fire.

Napoleon now changed the system of the war. All that part of Catalonia west of the upper Llobregat, and from Igualada by Ordal to the sea, including the district of Tortosa, was placed under Suchet's government, and seventeen thousand of Macdonald's troops were united to the third corps, which was thus augmented to forty-two thousand men, and took the title of the "*Army of Aragon.*" It was destined to besiege Tarragona, while Macdonald, whose force was thus reduced to twenty-seven thousand under arms, including fifteen thousand in garrison and in the Ampurdan, was restricted to the upper part of Catalonia. His orders were to attack Cardona, Berga, Seu d'Urgel, and Montserrat, and to war down Martinez, Manso, Rovira, and other chiefs, who kept in the mountains between Olot and the Cerdaña; and a division of five thousand men, chiefly composed of national guards, was also ordered to assemble at Mont Louis, for the purpose of acting in the Cerdaña, and on the rear of the partisans in the high valleys. By these means the line of operations for the invasion of Catalonia was altered from France to Aragon, the difficulties were lessened, the seventh corps reduced in numbers became, instead of the principal, the secondary army; and Macdonald's formal method was thus exchanged for the lively vigorous talent of Suchet. But the delay already caused in the siege of Tortosa could never be compensated; Suchet had been kept on the Ebro, when he should have been on the Guadalaviar, and this enabled the Murcians to keep the fourth corps in Granada, when it should have been on the Tagus aiding Massena.

* Official Abstract of Mr. Wellesley's Despatches, MS.

CHAPTER IV.

Suchet prepares to besiege Tarragona—The power of the partidas described—Are dispersed on the frontier of Aragon—The Valencians fortify Saguntum—Are defeated at Uldecona—Suchet comes to Lerida—Macdonald passes from thence to Barcelona—His troops burn Manresa—Sarsfield harasses his march—Napoleon divides the invasion of Catalonia in two parts—Sinking state of the province—Rovira surprises Fort Fernando de Figueras—Operations following that event—Suchet's skilful conduct—His arrangements for the siege of Tarragona—Marches to that place.

WHEN the troops of the seventh corps were incorporated with the army of Aragon, the preparations for the siege of Tarragona were pushed forward with Suchet's usual activity; but previous to touching upon the subject, it is necessary to notice the guerilla warfare which Villa Campa and others had carried on against Aragon during the siege of Tortosa. This warfare was stimulated by the appointment of the secret juntas, and by the supplies which England furnished, especially along the northern coast, from Coruña to Bilbao, where experience had also produced a better application of them than heretofore. The movements of the English squadrons in that sea being from the same cause better combined with the operations of the partidas, rendered the latter more formidable, and they became more harassing to the enemy as they acquired something of the consistency of regular troops in their organization, although irregular in their mode of operations; for it must not be supposed that because the guerilla system was in itself unequal to the deliverance of the country, and was necessarily accompanied with great evils, that as an auxiliary it was altogether useless. The interruption of the French correspondence was, as I have already said, tantamount to a diminution on their side of thirty thousand regular troops, without reckoning those who were necessarily employed to watch and pursue the partidas. This estimate may even be considered too low, and it is certain that the moral effect produced over Europe by the struggle thus maintained was very considerable.

Nevertheless, the same number of men under a good discipline would have been more efficacious, less onerous to the country people, and less subversive of social order. When the regular army is completed, all that remains in a country may be turned to advantage as irregulars, yet they are to be valued as their degree of organization approaches that of regular troops; thus militia are better than armed bodies of peasantry, and these last, if directed by regular officers, better than sudden insurrections of villagers. But the Spanish armies were never completed, never well organized;

and when they were dispersed, which happened nearly as often as they took the field, the war must have ceased in Spain, had it not been kept alive by the partidas, and it is there we find their moral value. Again, when the British armies kept the field, the partidas harassed the enemy's communications, and this constituted their military value; yet it is certain that they never much exceeded thirty thousand in number; and they could not have long existed in any numbers without the supplies of England, unless a spirit of order and providence, very different from anything witnessed during the war, had arisen in Spain. How absurd, then, to reverse the order of the resources possessed by an invaded country, to confound the moral with the military means, to place the irregular resistance of the peasants first, and that of the soldiers last, in the scale of physical defence.*

That many of the partida chiefs became less active after they received regular rank, is undeniable; but this was not so much a consequence of the change of denomination as of the inveterate abuses which oppressed the vigor of the regular armies, and by which the partidas were necessarily affected when they became a constituent part of those armies; many persons of weight have indeed ascribed entirely to this cause the acknowledged diminution of their general activity at one period. It seems, however, more probable that a life of toil and danger, repeated defeats, the scarcity of plunder, and the discontent of the people at the exactions of the chiefs, had in reality abated the desire to continue the struggle; inactivity was rather the sign of subjection than the result of an injudicious interference by the government. But it is time to support this reasoning by facts.

During the siege of Tortosa, the concentration of the third and seventh corps exposed Aragon and Catalonia to desultory enterprises at a moment when the partidas, rendered more numerous and powerful by the secret juntas, were also more ardent, from the assembly of the Cortes, by which the people's importance in the struggle seemed at last to be acknowledged. Hence no better test of their real influence on the general operations can be found than their exploits during that period, when two French armies were fixed as it were to one spot, the supplies from France nearly cut off by natural difficulties, the district immediately around Tortosa completely sterile, Catalonia generally exhausted, and a project to create a fictitious scarcity in the fertile parts of Aragon diligently and in some sort successfully pursued by the secret juntas. The number of French foraging parties, and the distances to which they were sent, were then greatly increased, and the facility of cutting them off proportionably augmented. Now the several operations

* Appendix 4, § 2

of Villa Campa during the blockade have been already related, but although sometimes successful, the results were mostly adverse to the Spaniards; and when that chief, after the siege was actually commenced, came down on the 19th December, 1810, towards the side of Daroca, his cavalry was surprised by Colonel Kliski, who captured or killed one hundred and fifty in the village of Blancas. The Spanish chief then retired, but being soon after joined by the Empecinado from Cuença, he returned in January to the frontier of Aragon, and took post between Molina and Albaracin.

At this period Tortosa had surrendered, and Musnier's division was spread along the western part of Aragon, wherefore Suchet immediately detached General Paris with one column from Zaragoza, and General Abbé with another from Teruel, to chase these two partidas. Paris fell in with the Empecinado near Molina, and the latter then joined Villa Campa, but the French General forced both from their mountain position near Frias, where he was joined by Abbé; and they continued the pursuit for several days, but finding that the fugitives took different routes, again separated; Paris followed Villa Campa, and Abbé pursued the Empecinado through Cuença, from whence Carbajal and the secret Junta immediately fled. Paris, failing to overtake Villa Campa, entered Beleta, Cobeta, and Paralejos, all three containing manufactories for arms, which he destroyed, and then returned; and the whole expedition lasted only twelve days, yet the smaller partidas in Aragon had taken advantage of it to cut off a detachment of fifty men near Fuentes; and this was followed up on the side of Navarre by Mina, who entered the Cinco Villas in April, and cut to pieces one hundred and fifty *gens d'armes* near Sadava. However, Chlopiski pursued him also so closely that he obliged his band to disperse near Coseda in Navarre.

During this time the Valencians had been plunged in disputes; Bassecour was displaced, and Coupigny appointed in his stead. The notables, indeed, raised a sum of money for recruits, but Coupigny would not take the command, because the Murcian army was not also given him; and that army, although numerous, was in a very neglected state, and unable to undertake any service. However, when Tortosa fell, the Valencians were frightened, and set about their own defence. They repaired and garrisoned the fort of Oropesa, and some smaller posts on the coast, along which runs the only artillery-road to their capital; they commenced fortifying Murviedro, or rather the rock of Saguntum overhanging it, and they sent fifteen hundred men into the hills about Cantavieja. These last were dispersed on the 5th of April, by a column from Teruel; and on the 11th, another body having attempted to surprise

Uldecona, which was weakly guarded, were also defeated and sabred by the French cavalry.

These different events, especially the destruction of the gun-manufactories, repressed the activity of the partisans, and Suchet was enabled to go to Lerida, in the latter end of March, to receive the soldiers to be drafted from the seventh corps. Macdonald himself could not, however, regain Barcelona without an escort, and hence seven thousand men marched with him on the 29th of the month, not by Igualada, which was occupied in force by Sarsfield, but by the circuitous way of Manresa; for neither Macdonald nor Suchet wished to engage in desultory actions with the forces destined for the siege. Nevertheless Sarsfield, getting intelligence of the march, passed by Calaf with his own and Errolles' troops, and waited on Macdonald's flanks and rear near the Cardenera river, while a detachment barricading the bridge of Manresa opposed him in front. This bridge was indeed carried, but the town being abandoned, the Italian soldiers wantonly set fire to it in the night; an act which was immediately revenged, for the flames being seen at a great distance, so enraged the Catalans, that in the morning all the armed men in the district, whether regulars, Migueletes, or Somatenes, were assembled on the neighboring hills, and fell with infinite fury upon Macdonald's rear, as it passed out from the ruins of the burning city. The head of the French column was then pushing for the bridge of Villamara, over the Llobregat, which was two leagues distant; and as the country between the rivers was one vast mountain, Sarsfield, seeing that the French rear stood firm to receive the attack of the Somatenes, while the front still advanced, thought to place his division between, by moving along the heights which skirted the road. Macdonald, however, concentrated his troops, gained the second bridge, and passed the Llobregat, but with great difficulty and with the loss of four hundred men, for his march was continually under Sarsfield's fire, and some of his troops were even cut off from the bridge, and obliged to cross by a ford higher up. During the night, however, he collected his scattered men, and moved upon Sabadel, whence he pushed on alone for Barcelona, and on the 3d of April, Harispe, who commanded the escort, recomended the march, and passing by Villa Franca, Christina, Cabra, and Momblanch, returned to Lerida the 10th.

The invasion of Catalonia was now divided into three parts, each assigned to a distinct army.

1. Suchet, with that of Aragon, was to take Tarragona and subdue the lower part of the province.

2. Macdonald, with that part of the seventh corps called the active army of Catalonia, was to break the long Spanish line extend-

ing from Tarragona through Montserrat to the Cerdaña, and the high mountains about Olot.

3. Baraguay d'Hilliers, having his head-quarters at Gerona, was to hold the Ampurdan with the troops before assigned to his charge, and to co-operate, as occasion might offer, with Macdonald, under whose orders he still remained; and the division of five thousand men before mentioned as having been collected near Mont Louis, at the entrance of the French Cerdaña, was to act on the rear of the Spaniards in the mountains, while the others attacked them in front. Nor did the success appear doubtful, for the hopes and means of the province were both sinking. The great losses of men sustained at Tortosa in the different combats; the reputation of Suchet; the failure of the attempts to surprise Barcelona, Perillo, and San Filipe de Balaguer; the incapacity of Campo Verde, which was now generally felt, and the consequent desertion of the Migueletes, would probably have rendered certain the French plans, if at the very moment of execution they had not been marred by Rovira, who surprised the great fortress of Figueras, the key of the Pyrenees on that side of Catalonia. This, the boldest and most important stroke made by a partida chief during the whole war, merits a particular detail.

SURPRISE OF FERNANDO DE FIGUERAS.

The governor of the place, General Guillot, enforced no military discipline, his guards were weak, he permitted the soldiers to use the palisades for fuel, and often detached the greatest part of the garrison to make incursions to a distance from the place; in all things disregarding the rules of service.* The town, which is situated below the hill upon which the great fortress of Fernando stands, was momentarily occupied by the Italian General Peyri, with about six hundred men, who were destined to join Macdonald, and who, trusting to the strength of the fortress above, were in no manner on their guard. And the garrison above was still more negligent; for Guillot had on the 9th of April sent out his best men to disperse some Somatenes assembled in the neighboring hills, and this detachment having returned at night fatigued, and being to go out again the next day, slept while the gates were confided to convalescents, or men unfit for duty: thus the ramparts were entirely unguarded. Now there were in the fort two Catalan brothers named Palopos, and a man called Juan, employed as under-store-keepers, who being gained by Rovira had, such was the negligence

* Vacani. Official Abstract of Mr. Wellesley's despatches, MS. General Campbell's MSS. General Doyle's MSS. Capt. Codrington's MS. Mr. Stuart's Papers, MS.

of discipline, obtained from the head of their department the keys of the magazines, and also that of a postern under one of the gates.

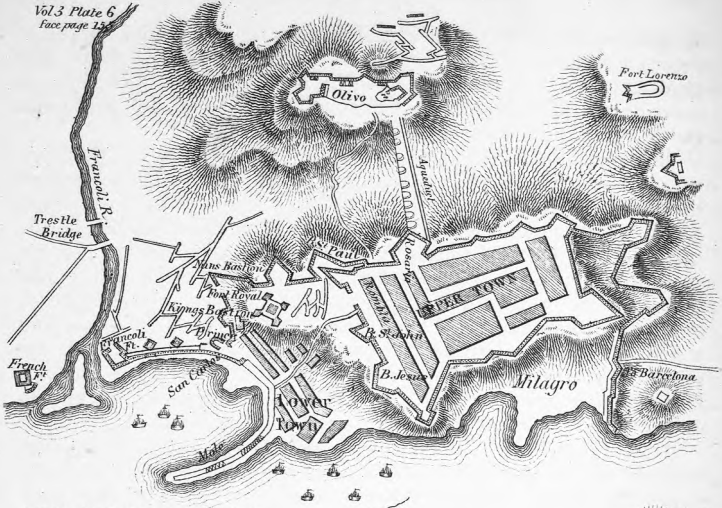
Rovira, having arranged his plan, came down from the mountain of St. Lorens de Muga in the night of the 9th, and secretly reached the covered way with seven hundred chosen men of his own *partida*. General Martinez followed in support with about three thousand *Migueletes*, and the Catalan brothers, having previously arranged the signals, opened the postern, and admitted Rovira, who immediately disarmed the guard and set wide the gates for the reserve; and although some shots were fired, which alarmed the garrison, Martinez came up so quickly that no effectual resistance could be made. Thirty or forty men were killed or wounded, the magazines were seized, the governor and sixteen hundred soldiers and camp followers were taken in their quarters, and thus in an hour Rovira mastered one of the strongest fortresses in Europe: three cannon-shot were then fired as a signal to the *Somatenes* in the surrounding mountains, that the place was taken, and that they were to bring in provisions as rapidly as possible. Meanwhile General Peyr. alarmed by the noise in the fortress and guessing at the cause, had collected the troops, baggage, sick men, and stores in the town below, and sent notice to Gerona, but he made no attempt to retake the place, and at daylight retired to Bascara. For having mounted the hills during the night, to observe how matters went, he thought nothing could be done, an opinion condemned by some as a great error; and indeed it appears probable that during the confusion of the first surprise, a brisk attempt by six hundred fresh men might have recovered the fortress. At Bascara five hundred men detached from Gerona, on the spur of the occasion, met him with orders to re-invest the place, and Baraguay d'Hilliers promised to follow with all his forces without any delay. Then Peyri, although troubled by the fears of his troops, many of whom were only national guards, returned to Figueras, and driving the Spaniards out of the town took post in front of the fort above; but he could not prevent Martinez from receiving some assistance in men and provisions from the *Somatenes*. The news of Rovira's exploit spread with inconceivable rapidity throughout the Peninsula, extending its exhilarating influence even to the Anglo-Portuguese army, then not much given to credit or admire the exploits of the Spaniards; but Baraguay d'Hilliers with great promptness assembled his dispersed troops, and on the 13th invested the fort with six thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry; and this so quickly that the Spaniards had not time, or more probably neglected, to remove sixteen thousand muskets which were in the place.

Martinez remained governor, but Rovira was again in the moun-

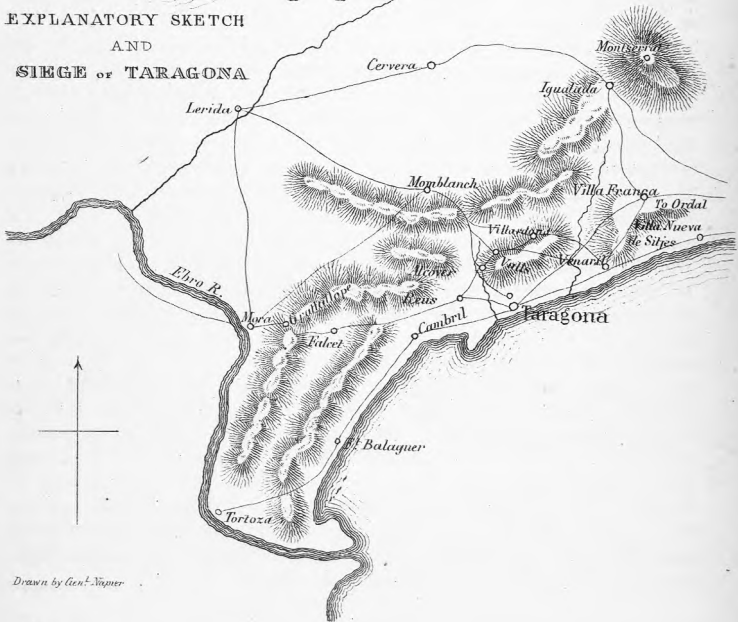
tains, and all Catalonia, animated by the Promethean touch of this partida chief, seemed to be moving at once upon Figueras. Campo Verde came up to Vich, intending first to relieve Figueras, and then in concert with the English and Spanish vessels to blockade Rosas by land and sea. Rovira himself collected a convoy of provisions near Olot. Captain Bullen with the Cambrian and Volontaire frigates, taking advantage of the French troops having been withdrawn from Gerona, drove out the small garrison from San Filieu and Palamos, destroyed the batteries, and made sail to join Captain Codrington at Rosas. A Spanish frigate, with a fleet of coasting-vessels loaded with supplies, anchored at Palamos; and Francisco Milans, after beating a small French detachment near Arenas de Mar, invested Hostalrich; Juan Claros hovered about Gerona, and Eroles and Manso coming from Montserrat reduced Olot and Castelfollit. Sarsfield however remained in the Seu d'Urgel, and directed the mountaineers to establish themselves at Balaguer, but they were driven away again with great loss by a detachment from the garrison of Lerida.

On the 3d of May, Rovira having brought his convoy up to Besalu, Campo Verde, who had arranged that Captain Codrington should make a diversion by an attack on Rosas, drew Milans from Hostalrich, and having thus united eleven thousand men marched in several columns from Avionet and Villa Fan against the town, hoping to draw Baraguay d'Hilliers to that side, and to beat him, while Rovira, forcing a small camp near Llers, at the opposite quarter, should introduce the convoy and its escort into the fortress. The circuit of investment was wide, and very difficult, and therefore slightly furnished of men; but it was strengthened by some works, and when the Spanish columns first advanced, the French General reinforced the camp near Llers, and then hastened with four thousand men against Campo Verde, who was already in the valley of Figueras, and only opposed by one battalion. Baraguay d'Hilliers immediately fell on the right flank of the Spaniards and defeated them; the French cavalry, which had been before driven in from the front, rallied and completed the victory, and the Spaniards retreated with a loss of fifteen hundred including prisoners. This affair was exceedingly ill-managed by Campo Verde, who was so sure of success that he kept the sheep of the convoy too far behind to enter, although the way was open for some time, hence the succor was confined to a few artillery-men, some tobacco, and medicines. Meanwhile the English ships landed some men at Rosas, but neither did this produce any serious effect, and the attempt to relieve Figueras having thus generally failed, that place was left to its own resources, which were few; for the French with





EXPLANATORY SKETCH
AND
SIEGE OF TARAGONA



Drawn by Genl. Wagner

an unaccountable negligence had always kept a scanty supply of provisions and stores there. Martinez, who had now above four thousand men, was therefore obliged to practise the most rigorous economy in the distribution of food, and in bearing such privations the peninsular race are unrivalled.

Macdonald was so concerned for the loss of Figueras, that, setting aside all his own plans, he earnestly adjured Suchet to suspend the siege of Tarragona, and restore him the troops of the seventh corps; Maurice Mathieu also wrote from Barcelona in a like strain, thinking that the possession of Upper Catalonia depended upon one powerful effort to recover the lost fortress. But Suchet, who had no immediate interest in that part of the province, whose hopes of obtaining a marshal's staff rested on the taking of Tarragona, and whose preparations were all made for that siege—Suchet, I say, whose judgment was unclouded, and whose military talent was of a high order, refused to move a step towards Figueras, or even to delay, for one moment, his march against Tarragona.

He said that, "his battalions being scattered in search of supplies, he could not reunite them and reach Figueras under twenty-five days; during that time the enemy, unless prevented by Baraguay d'Hilliers, could gather in provisions, receive reinforcements, and secure the fortress. A simple blockade might be established by the nearest troops, and to accumulate great numbers on such a sterile spot would not forward the recapture, but would create infinite difficulties with respect to subsistence. It was probable Napoleon had already received information of the disaster, and given orders for the remedy; and it was by no means reasonable to renounce the attack on Tarragona, the only remaining bulwark of Catalonia, at the very moment of execution, because of the loss of a fort; it was in Tarragona the greatest part of the forces of Catalonia would be shut up, and it was only in such a situation that they could be made prisoners; at Lerida, Mequinenza, and Tortosa, eighteen thousand men and eight hundred officers had been captured, and if ten or twelve thousand more could be taken in Tarragona, the strength of Catalonia would be entirely broken. If the Spaniards failed in revictualling Figueras, that place, by occupying their attention, would become more hurtful than useful to them; because Campo Verde might, and most probably would, march to its succor, and thus weaken Tarragona, which was a reason for hastening rather than suspending the investment of the latter; wherefore he resolved, notwithstanding the separation of his battalions and the incomplete state of his preparations, to move down immediately and commence the siege." A wise determination, and alone sufficient to justify his reputation as a general.

Macdonald was now fain to send all the troops he could safely draw together, to reinforce Baraguay d'Hilliers. In June, when a detachment from Toulon and some frontier-guards had arrived at Figueras, the united forces amounting to fifteen thousand men, he took the command in person and established a rigorous blockade, working day and night, to construct works of circumvallation and contravallation; his lines, six miles in length, crowning the tops of the mountains and sinking into the deepest valleys, proved what prodigious labors even small armies are capable of. Thus with incessant wakefulness Macdonald recovered the place; but this was at a late period in the year, and when Suchet's operations had quite changed the aspect of affairs.

When Tortosa fell, that general's movable column traversing the borders of Castile, the eastern district of Valencia, a portion of Navarre, and all the lower province of Catalonia, protected the collection of supplies, and suppressed the smaller bands which swarmed in those parts; hence, when the siege of Tarragona was confided to the third corps, the magazines at Lerida and Mora were already full; and a battering train was formed at Tortosa, to which place the tools, platforms, and other materials, fabricated at Zaragoza, were conveyed. Fifteen hundred draft horses, the greatest part of the artillery-men and engineers, and ten battalions of infantry were also collected in that town, and from thence shot and shells were continually forwarded to San Felipe de Balaguer. This was a fine application of Cæsar's maxim, that war should maintain itself, for all the money, the guns, provisions, and materials, collected for this siege, were the fruits of former victories; nothing was derived from France but the men. It is curious, however, that Suchet so little understood the nature and effects of the English system of finance, that he observes, in his memoirs, upon the ability with which the ministers made Spain pay the expense of this war by never permitting English gold to go to the Peninsula; he was ignorant that the paper money system had left them no English gold to send.

The want of forage in the district of Tortosa, and the advantage of the carriage-road by the Col de Balaguer, induced the French General to direct his artillery that way; but his provisions, and other stores, passed from Mora by Falcet and Momblanch to Reus, in which latter town he proposed to establish his stores for the siege, while Mora, the chief magazine, was supplied from Zaragoza, Caspe, and Mequinenza. Divers other arrangements, of which I shall now give the outline, contributed to the security of the communications, and enabled the army of Aragon to undertake the great enterprise for which it was destined.

1. Detachments of *gens d'armes* and of the frontier guards of France, descending the high valleys of Aragon, helped to maintain tranquillity on the left bank of the Ebro, and occupied the castles of Venasque and Jaca, which had been taken by Suchet in his previous campaign.

2. The line of correspondence from France, instead of running as before through Guipuscoa and Navarre by Pampeluna, was now directed by Pau, Oleron, and Jaca to Zaragoza; and in the latter city, and in the towns around it, four or five battalions, and a proportion of horsemen and artillery, were disposed, to watch the *partidas* from Navarre and the Moncayo mountains.

3. Four battalions with cavalry and guns were posted at Daroca under General Paris, whose command extended from thence to the fort of Molino, which was armed and garrisoned.

4. General Abbé was placed at Teruel with five battalions, three hundred cuirassiers, and two pieces of artillery, to watch Villa Campa, and the Valencian army which was again in the field.

5. Alcañitz and Morella were occupied by fourteen hundred men, whereby that short passage through the mountains from Aragon to Valencia was secured; and from thence the line to Caspe, and down the Ebro from Mequinenza to Tortosa, was protected by twelve hundred men; Tortosa itself was garrisoned by two battalions, the forts at the mouth of the Ebro were occupied, and four hundred men were placed in Rapita.

This line of defence from right to left was fourteen days' march, but the number of fortified posts enabled the troops to move from point to point, without much danger; and thus the army of the great and rich province of Valencia, the division of Villa Campa, the *partidas* of New Castile and Navarre, including Mina and the Empeinado, the most powerful of those independent chiefs, were all set at nought by twelve thousand French, although the latter had to defend a line of one hundred and fifty miles. Under cover of this feeble chain of defence, Suchet besieged a strong city which had a powerful garrison, an open harbor, a commanding squadron of ships, and a free communication, by sea, with Cadiz, Valencia, Gibraltar, and the Balearic islands. It is true that detachments from the army of the centre, acting on a large circuit round Madrid, sometimes dispersed and chased the *partidas* that threatened Suchet's line of defence, but at this period, from circumstances to be hereafter mentioned, that army was in a manner paralyzed.

While the French General's posts were being established, he turned his attention to the arrangements for a permanent supply of food. The difficulty of procuring meat was become great, because he wisely refrained from using up the sheep and cattle of Aragon,

lest the future supply of his army should be anticipated, and the minds of the people of that province alienated by the destruction of their breeding flocks; to avoid this, he engaged contractors to furnish him from France, and so completely had he pacified the Aragonese, through whose territories the flocks were brought, and with whose money they were paid for, that none of his contracts failed. But as these resources were not immediately available, the troops on the right bank of the Ebro made incursions after cattle beyond the frontiers of Aragon; and when Harispe returned from Barcelona, eight battalions marched upon a like service up the higher valleys of the Pyrenees.

It was in this state of affairs that Suchet received intelligence of the surprise of Figueras, which induced him to hasten the investment of Tarragona. Meanwhile, fearing that Mina might penetrate to the higher valleys of Aragon, and in conjunction with the partidas of Upper Catalonia cut off all correspondence with France, he detached Chlopiski with four battalions and two hundred hussars to watch the movements of that chief only, and demanded of the Emperor that some troops from Pampeluna should occupy Sanguessa, while others, from the army of the north, should relieve the detachments of the army of Aragon, at Soria and Calatayud.

The battalions sent up the high valleys of Catalonia returned in the latter end of April. Suchet then reviewed his troops, issued a month's pay and six days' provisions to each soldier, loaded many carriages and mules with flour, and, having first spread a report that he was going to relieve Figueras, commenced his march to Tarragona by the way of Momblanch. Some Migueletes, entrenched in the pass of Ribas, were dispersed by Harispe's division on the 1st of May, and the army descended the hills to Alcover; but four hundred men were left in Momblanch, where a post was fortified, to protect the line of communication with Lerida, and to prevent the Spanish partisans on that flank from troubling the communication between Mora and Reus. The 2d, head-quarters were fixed at Reus, and the 3d, the Spanish outposts were driven over the Francoli; meanwhile Habert, sending the artillery from Tortosa by the Col de Balaguer, moved himself with a large convoy from Mora by Falcet to Reus.

CHAPTER V.

State of Tarragona—Description of that place—Campo Verde enters the place—Suchet invests it—Convention relative to the sick concluded between St. Cyr and Reding faithfully observed—Sarsfield comes to Mombianch—Skirmish with the Valencians at Amposta and Rapita—Siege of Tarragona—Rapita and Mombianch abandoned by Suchet—Tarragona reinforced from Valencia—The Olivo stormed—Campo Verde quits Tarragona, and Senens de Contreras assumes the chief command—Sarsfield enters the place and takes charge of the Port or lower town—The French break ground before the lower town—The Francoli stormed—State of affairs—Francisco Milans' proceedings—Campo Verde's plans to succor the place—General Abbé is called to the siege—Bad conduct and duplicity of Contreras—Sarsfield quits the place—The lower town is stormed—The upper town attacked—Suchet's difficulties increase—Campo Verde comes to the succor of the place, but retires without effecting anything—Colonel Skerrett arrives in the harbor with a British force—Examines the state of the defences, and determines not to land—Gallant conduct of the Italian soldier Bianchini—The upper town is storméd with dreadful slaughter.

IN Tarragona, although a siege had been so long expected, there was a great scarcity of money and ammunition, and so many men had, as Suchet foresaw, been drawn off to succor Figueras, that the garrison commanded by Colonel Gonzales was not more than six thousand, including twelve hundred armed inhabitants and the seamen of the port. The town was encumbered with defensive works of all kinds, but most of them were ill-constructed, irregular, and without convenient places for making sallies.

Tarragona itself was built upon rocks, steep on the north-east and south, but sinking gently on the south-west and west into low ground. A mole formed a harbor capable of receiving ships of the line, and beyond the mole there was a roadstead. The upper town was surrounded by ancient walls crowning the rocks, and these walls were inclosed by a second rampart with irregular bastions which ran round the whole city. On the east, across the road to Barcelona, there was a chain of redoubts connected by curtains, with a ditch and covered way; and behind this line there was a rocky space called the Milagro, opening between the body of the place and the sea. The lower town, or suburb, was separated from the upper by the inner ramparts of the latter, and was protected by three regular and some irregular bastions with a ditch; a square work, called Fort Royal, formed a species of citadel within, and the double town presented the figure of an irregular oblong, whose length, lying parallel to the sea, was about twelve hundred yards.

On the east, beyond the walls, a newly constructed line of defence was carried along the coast to the mouth of the Francoli,

where it ended in a large redoubt, built to secure access to that river when the ancient aqueducts which furnished the city with water should be cut by the French. This line was strengthened by a second redoubt, called the Prince, half-way between that near the Francoli and the town; and it was supported by the mole which, being armed with batteries, and nearly in a parallel direction, formed as it were a second sea-line.

The approach on the side of the Francoli river was of a level character, and exposed to the fire of the Olivo, a large outwork on the north, crowning a rocky table-land of an equal height with the upper town, but divided from it by a ravine nearly half a mile wide, across which the aqueducts of the place were carried. This Olivo was an irregular horn-work, four hundred yards long, with a ditch twenty-four feet deep and forty wide, but the covered way was not completed, and the gorge was only closed by a loopholed wall; neither was this defence quite finished, as the steepness of the rock and the fire of the city appeared to render it secure. The bastion on the left of the Olivo was cut off by a ditch and a rampart from the body of the work, and on the right also, within the rampart, there was a small redoubt of refuge, with a high cavalier or bank, on which three guns were placed that overlooked all the country round. The ordinary garrison of the Olivo was from twelve to fifteen hundred men, and it contained fifty out of three hundred pieces of artillery which served the defence of Tarragona.

The nature of the soil combined with the peculiarities of the works, determined Suchet's line of attack. On the north and east side the ground was rocky, the fronts of defence wide, the approaches unfavorable for breaching-batteries; and as all the guns and stores would have to be dragged over the hills on a great circuit, unless the Olivo was first taken, no difficulty could be avoided in an attack. Wherefore, on the side of the lower town the French resolved to approach, although the artificial defences were there accumulated, and the ground between the town and the Francoli river taken in reverse by the Olivo, which rendered it necessary first to reduce that outwork. But this part was chosen by the French because the soil was deep and easily moved, their dépôts and parcs close at hand, the ground-plot of the works so salient that they could be easily embraced with fire, and because the attack would, it was supposed, cut off the garrison from fresh water; yet this last advantage was not realized.

On the 4th of May the French, passing the Francoli, drove in the outposts, took possession of two small detached redoubts, situated on the northern side, called the forts of Loretto, and invested the place. However, the Spanish troops, supported by the fire of