

blockade of Tortoza should be given up, and the two armies acting on their own peculiar lines, should harass the enemy's flanks and rear alternately if he attacked either, but together if he moved upon Tortoza. To besiege or blockade that place with safety, it was necessary to throw two bridges over the Ebro below, to enable the armies to avoid Suchet by either bank when he should succor the place, as he was sure to do; but as it was essential Copons should not abandon Catalonia, it would be advisable to make Tarragona the point of retreat for both armies in the first instance, after which they could separate and infest the French rear.

Thinking the difficulty of besieging Tortoza insuperable, he desired it should be well considered beforehand, and, if invested, that the troops should be entrenched. All his instructions tended towards defence, and were founded upon his conviction of the weak and dangerous position of the allies; yet he believed them to have more resources than they really had, and to be superior in number to the French: a great error as already shown. Nothing therefore could be more preposterous than Suchet's alarm for the frontier of France at this time; his personal reluctance was the only bar to aiding Soult either indirectly by marching on Tortoza and Valencia, or directly by adopting that marshal's great project of uniting the two armies in Aragon. Indeed, Clinton felt the difficulties of his own situation so strongly, that he only retained the command from a strong sense of duty; and Wellington even recommended that the Anglo-Sicilian army should be broken up and employed in other places. Suchet's inactivity was also the more injurious to the interests of his sovereign, because any reverse or appearance of reverse to the allies would, at this time, have gone high to destroy the alliance between Spain and England; but personal jealousy, and the preference given to local momentary interests before general considerations, hurt the French cause at all periods in the Peninsula, and enabled the allies to conquer.

Clinton had no thoughts of besieging Tortoza, his efforts were directed to the obtaining a secure place of arms; yet despite of his intrinsic weakness, he resolved to show a confident front, hoping thus to keep Suchet at arm's length. In this view, he endeavored to render Tarragona once more defensible, notwithstanding the nineteen breaches which had been broken in its walls; but this work was tedious, because he depended for materials upon the Spanish authorities. Thus immersed in difficulties, he could make little change in his positions, which were generally about the Campo, Sarsfield's division only being pushed to Villa Franca; Suchet, meanwhile, held the Llobregat, and apparently to color his assertion

as to the strength of the allies, suffered Clinton to remain in tranquillity.

Towards the end of October, reports that the French were concentrating, for what purpose was not known, caused the English general, although Tarragona was still indefensible, to make a forward movement. He dared not provoke a battle, but unwilling to yield the resources of Villa Franca and other districts, pushed an advanced guard to the former place. He even fixed his headquarters there, appearing ready to fight; yet his troops were so disposed in succession at Arbos, Vendrills, and Torredembarra, that he could retreat without dishonor if the French advanced in force; or could concentrate at Villa Franca in time to harass their flank and rear if they attempted to carry off their garrisons on the Segre. Suchet then made several demonstrations, sometimes against Copons, sometimes against Clinton, but the latter maintained his offensive attitude with firmness, and even in opposition to Wellington's implied opinion that the line of the Ebro was the most suitable to his weakness; for he liked not to abandon Tarragona, the repairs of which were now advancing, though slowly, to completion. His perseverance was crowned with success; he preserved the few resources left for the support of the Spanish troops, and furnished Suchet with that semblance of excuse which he desired for keeping aloof from Soult.

In this manner, October and November were passed, but on the 1st of December, the French general attempted to surprise the allies' cantonments at Villa Franca, as he had before surprised them at Ordal. He moved in the same order. One column marched by San Sadurni on his right, another by Bejer and Avionet on his left, the main body keeping the great road. He did not, however, find Colonel Adam there. Clinton had blocked the Ordal, so as to render a night surprise impossible, and the natural difficulties of the other roads delayed the flanking columns. Hence, when the French reached Villa Franca, Sarsfield was in full march for Igualada, and the Anglo-Sicilians, who had only three men wounded at one of the advanced posts, were on the strong ground about Arbos, where, being joined by the supporting divisions, they offered battle. Suchet then retired to the Llobregat, apparently so mortified by his failure that he has not even mentioned it in his Memoirs.

Clinton resumed his former ground, yet his embarrassments increased, and though he transferred two of Whittingham's regiments to Copons, and sent Roche's battalions back to Valencia, the country was so exhausted that the enduring constancy of the Spanish soldiers under privations alone enabled Sarsfield to remain

in the field; more than once he was upon the point of re-crossing the Ebro to save his soldiers from perishing of famine. Here, as in other parts, the Spanish government not only starved their troops, but would not even provide a piece of ordnance or any stores for the defence of Tarragona. And when Admiral Hallowell, in conjunction with Quesada, the Spanish commodore at Port Mahon, brought some ship-guns from that place, the minister of war, O'Donoju, expressed his disapprobation; observing with a sneer that the English might provide the guns wanting from the Spanish ordnance moved into Gibraltar by General Campbell, when he destroyed the lines of San Roque!

On the 9th, Suchet pushed a small corps by Bejer, between the Ordal and Sitjes, and on the 10th, surprised, at the Ostel of Ordal, an officer and thirty men of the Anglo-Sicilian cavalry. This disaster was the result of negligence; the detachment had dismounted without examining the buildings of the inn, and some French troopers, concealed within, seized the horses and captured the whole party.

On the 17th, the French troops appeared at Martorel, Ordal, and Bejer, with a view to mask the march of a large convoy coming from Upper Catalonia to Barcelona; they then resumed their former positions, and at the same time Soult's and Wellington's letters announcing the defection of the Nassau battalions arrived. Wellington's came first, and enclosed a communication from Colonel Kruse to his countryman, Colonel Meder, who was serving in Barcelona, and, as Kruse supposed, willing to abandon the French. But when Clinton, by the aid of Manso, transmitted the letter to Meder, that officer handed it to Habert, who had succeeded Maurice Mathieu in the command of the city. All the German regiments, principally cavalry, were immediately disarmed and sent to France; Severoli's Italians were at the same time recalled to Italy, and a number of French soldiers, selected to fill the wasted ranks of the imperial guards, marched with them. Two thousand officers and soldiers were likewise detached to the dépôts of the interior, to organize the conscripts of the new levy, destined to reinforce the army of Catalonia; and besides these drafts, a thousand gens-d'armes, hitherto employed on the Spanish frontier, in aid of the regular troops, were withdrawn. Suchet thus lost seven thousand veterans, yet he had still an overwhelming power compared to the allies.

It was in this state of affairs that the Duke of San Carlos arrived secretly at the French head-quarters, on his way to Madrid, with the treaty of Valençay. Copons knew this, and was only deterred from openly acceding to the views of the French emperor, and con

cluding a military convention, by the decided conduct of the Cortes, and the ascendancy which Wellington had obtained over him in common with the other Spanish officers; an ascendancy which had not escaped Soult's sagacity; for he early warned the French minister that nothing could be expected from them while under the powerful spell of the English general. Clinton, getting information that the French troops were diminished in numbers, especially in front of Barcelona and on the Llobregat, proposed to pass that river and invest Barcelona, if Copons, who was in the mountains, would undertake to provision Sarsfield's division and keep the French troops between Barcelona and Gerona in check. For this purpose, he offered the aid of a Spanish regiment of cavalry, which Elio had lent for the operations in Catalonia; but Copons, influenced by San Carlos' mission, or knowing the enemy were really stronger than Clinton imagined, declared he was unable to hold the French troops between Gerona and Barcelona in check, and could not provision either Sarsfield's division or the regiment of cavalry. He suggested, instead, a combined attack upon some of Suchet's posts on the Llobregat, promising to send Manso to Villa Franca, to confer upon the execution. Clinton's proposal was made early in January, yet it was the middle of that month before Copons replied; and then he only sent Manso to offer the aid of his brigade in a combined attack upon two thousand French, who were at Molino del Rey. It was however at last arranged that Manso should, at daybreak, on the 16th, seize the high ground above Molino, on the left of the Llobregat, to intercept the enemy's retreat upon Barcelona while the Anglo-Sicilians fell upon them from the right bank.

Success depended upon Clinton's remaining quiet until the moment of execution, and he could only use the troops immediately in hand about Villa Franca, in all six thousand men with three pieces of artillery; but with these he made a night march of eighteen miles, and was close to the ford of San Vicente two miles below the fortified bridge of Molino del Rey before daylight. The French were tranquil and unsuspecting, and he anxiously but vainly awaited the signal of Manso's arrival. When the day broke, the French piquets at San Vicente descriing his troops commenced a skirmish, and at the same time a column with a piece of artillery, coming from Molino, advanced to attack him thinking there was only a patrolling detachment to deal with, for he had concealed his main body. Thus pressed he opened his guns per force and crippled the French piece, whereupon the reinforcements retired hastily to the entrenchments at Molino; he could then easily have forced the passage at the ford and attacked the ene-

my's works in the rear; but this would not have ensured the capture of their troops, wherefore he still awaited Manso's arrival, relying on that partisan's zeal and knowledge of the country. He appeared at last, not as agreed upon at St. Filieu, between Molino and Barcelona, but at Papiol above Molino, and the French immediately retreated by San Filieu. Sarsfield and the cavalry, which Clinton now detached across the Llobregat, followed them hard, but the country was difficult, the distance short, and they soon gained a second entrenched camp above San Filieu. A small garrison remained in the masonry-works at Molino; Clinton endeavored to reduce it, but his guns were not of a calibre to break the walls and the enemy was strongly reinforced towards evening from Barcelona: Manso then went to the mountains, and Clinton returned to Villa Franca having killed and wounded about one hundred and eighty French, and lost only sixty-four men, all Spaniards.

Manso's failure surprised the English general, because, unlike the generality of his countrymen, he was zealous, skilful, vigilant, modest, and humane, and a sincere co-operator with the British officers. He however soon cleared himself of blame, assuring Clinton that Copons, contrary to his previous declarations, had joined him with four thousand men, and taking the control of his troops not only commenced the march two hours too late, but without any reason halted for three hours on the way. Nor did Copons offer any excuse or explanation of his conduct, merely observing, that the plan having failed he must return to his mountains about Vich. A man of any other nation would have been accused of treachery, but with the Spaniards there is no limit to absurdity, and from their actions no conclusion can be drawn as to their motives.

The great events of the war began now to affect the struggle in Catalonia. Suchet finding Copons dared not agree to the military convention dependent upon the treaty of Valençay, resigned all thoughts of carrying off his garrisons beyond the Ebro, and secretly instructed the governor of Tortosa, that when his provisions, calculated to last until April were exhausted, he should march upon Mequinenza and Lerida, unite the garrisons there to his own, and make way by Venasque into France. He then increased the garrison of Barcelona to eight thousand men and prepared to take the line of the Fluvia; for the allied sovereigns were in France, and Napoleon had recalled ten thousand men with eighty pieces of artillery from Catalonia, desiring they should march as soon as the results expected from the mission of San Carlos were felt by the allies. Suchet prepared the troops but proposed that instead

of waiting for the uncertain result of San Carlos' mission, Ferdinand should himself be sent to Spain through Catalonia and be trusted on his faith to restore the garrisons in Valencia. Then he said he could march with his whole army to Lyons which would be more efficacious than sending detachments. The restoration of Ferdinand was indeed the emperor's object, but this plausible proposition was only a colorable counter-project to Soult's plan for a junction of the two armies in Bearn, since the emperor was undoubtedly the best judge of what was required for the warfare immediately under his own direction.

It was in the midst of these affairs Clinton attacked Molino del Rey, and would but for the interference of Copons have stricken a great blow, which was however soon inflicted in another manner.

There was at this time in the French service, a Spaniard of Flemish descent called Van Halen, a handsome person, and with a natural genius for desperate treasons.* He was at first attached to Joseph's court, and after that monarch's retreat from Spain was placed by the Duke of Feltre on Suchet's staff; but the French party was now a failing one and Van Halen only sought by some notable treachery to make his peace with his country. Through the medium of a young widow, who followed him without suffering their connexion to appear, he informed Eroles of his object, and transmitted returns of Suchet's force and other matters of interest. At last having secretly opened Suchet's portfolio he copied the key of his cipher, and transmitted that also, with an intimation that he would soon pass over and endeavor to perform some other service at the same time. The opportunity soon offered. Suchet went to Gerona to meet San Carlos, leaving Van Halen at Barcelona, and the latter immediately taking an escort of three hussars went to Granollers where the cuirassiers were quartered. Using the marshal's name he ordered them to escort him to the Spanish outposts, which being in the mountains could only be approached by a long and narrow pass where cavalry would be helpless; in this pass he ordered the troops to bivouac for the night, and when their colonel expressed his uneasiness, Van Halen quieted him and made a solitary mill their common quarters. He had before this, however, sent the widow to give Eroles information of the situation into which he would bring the troops and with anxiety awaited his attack; the Spanish general failed to come, and at daybreak Van Halen still pretending he carried a flag of truce from Suchet, rode off with his first escort of hussars and a trumpeter to the Spanish lines. There he ascertained that the widow had been detained by the outposts; whereupon he delivered

* Notes by Sir William Clinton, MSS.

over his hussars to their enemies, and gave notice of the situation of the cuirassiers with a view to their destruction, but they escaped the danger.

Van Halen and Eroles then forged Suchet's signature, and the former addressed letters in cipher to the governors of Tortosa, Lerida, Mequinenza, and Monzon; telling them that the emperor, in consequence of his reverses, required large drafts of men from Catalonia, and had given Suchet orders to negotiate a convention by which the garrisons south of the Llobregat were to join the army with arms, baggage and followers. The result was uncertain, but if the convention could not be effected the governors were to join the army by force, and they were therefore immediately to mine their principal bastions and be prepared to sally forth, at an appointed time. The marches and points of junction were all given in detail; yet they were told that if the convention took place the marshal would immediately send an officer of his staff to them, with such verbal instructions as might be necessary; the document finished with deploring the necessity which called for the sacrifice of conquests achieved by the valor of the troops.

Spies and emissaries who act for both sides are common in all wars, but in the Peninsula so many pretended to serve the French and were yet true to the Spaniards, that to avoid the danger of betrayal, Suchet used to place a very small piece of light-colored hair in the ciphered paper, the latter was then inclosed in a quill, sealed and wrapped in lead. When received, the small parcel was carefully opened on a sheet of white paper and if the hair was discovered the communication was good; if not, the treachery was apparent because the hair would escape the vigilance of uninitiated persons and be lost by any intermediate examination. Van Halen knew this secret also, and when his emissaries had returned after delivering the preparatory communication, he proceeded in person with a forged convention first to Tortosa; for Suchet has erroneously stated in his Memoirs that the primary attempts were made at Lerida and Mequinenza. He was accompanied by several Spanish officers and by some French deserters dressed in the uniforms of the hussars he had betrayed to the Spanish outposts. The governor, Robert, though a vigilant officer, was deceived and prepared to evacuate the place. During the night however a true emissary arrived with a letter from Suchet of a later date than the forged convention. Robert then endeavored to entice Van Halen into the fortress, but the other was too wary and proceeded at once to Mequinenza and Lerida where he completely overreached the governors and then went to Monzon.

This small fortress had now been besieged since the 28th of

September, 1813, by detachments from the Catalan army and the bands from Aragon. Its means of defence were slight, but there was within a man of resolution and genius, called St. Jacques; a Piedmontese by birth, he was only a private soldier of Engineers, but the commandant, appreciating his worth, was so modest and prudent as to yield the direction of the defence entirely to him. Abounding in resources, he met, and at every point baffled the besiegers, who worked principally by mines, and being as brave as he was ingenious, always led the numerous counter-attacks with which he contrived to check the approaches above and below ground. The siege continued until the 18th of February, when the subtle Van Halen arrived, and by his Spanish wiles obtained in a few hours what Spanish courage and perseverance had vainly striven to gain for one hundred and forty days. The commandant was suspicious at first; but when Van Halen suffered him to send an officer to ascertain that Lerida and Mequinenza were evacuated, he was beguiled like the others, and marched to join the garrisons of those places. Clinton had been informed of this project by Eroles as early as the 22d of January; and though he did not expect any French general would be so egregiously misled, readily promised the assistance of his army to capture the garrisons on their march.

Suchet was then falling back upon the Fluvia, and Clinton, seeing the fortified line of the Llobregat weakened, and being uncertain of Suchet's real strength and designs, renewed his former proposal to Copons for a combined attack, which should force the French general to discover his real situation and projects. Ere he could obtain an answer, the want of forage compelled him to refuse the Spanish cavalry lent to him by Elio, and Sarsfield's division was reduced to its last ration. The French thus made their retreat unmolested, for Clinton's project necessarily involved the investment of Barcelona after passing the Llobregat; and the Anglo-Sicilian cavalry, mounted on small Egyptian animals, the greatest part of which were foundered or unserviceable from sand-cracks, a disease very common amongst the horses of that country, were too weak to act without the aid of Elio's horsemen. Moreover, as a division of infantry was left at Tarragona, awaiting the effect of Van Halen's wiles against Tortosa, the aid of Sarsfield's troops was indispensable.

Copons accepted the proposition towards the end of the month; the Spanish cavalry was then in the rear, but Sarsfield having obtained some provisions, the army was put in movement the 3d of February; and as Suchet was near Gerona, it passed the Llobregat at the bridge of Molino del Rey without resistance. On

the 5th, Sarsfield's piquets were vigorously attacked at San Filieu by the garrison of Barcelona, but he supported them with his whole division, and being reinforced with some cavalry, repulsed the French and pursued them to the walls. On the 7th, the city was invested on the land side by Copons, aided by Manso, and on the sea-board by Hallowell, who, following the movements of the army, blockaded the harbor with the *Castor* frigate, and anchored the *Fame* off Mataro. On the 8th, intelligence arrived of Van Halen's failure at Tortosa, yet the blockade of Barcelona continued uninterrupted until the 16th, when Clinton was informed by Copons of the success at Lerida, Mequinenza, and Monzon. The garrisons, he said, would march upon Igualada, and Eroles who, under pretence of causing the convention to be observed by the somatenes, was to follow in their rear, proposed to undeceive and disarm them at that place. On the 17th, he sent notice that Martorel had been fixed upon in preference to Igualada; and as the French would be at the former place that evening, Clinton was desired to send some of his troops there to insure the success of the project.

This change of plan and the short warning, for Martorel was a long march from Barcelona, together with the doubts and embarrassments which Copons' conduct always caused, inclined the English general to avoid meddling with the matter at all; yet fearing it would fail in the Spaniard's hands, he finally drafted a strong division of troops, and marched in person to Martorel. There he met Copons, who told him the French would not pass Esparaguera that night, that Eroles was close in their rear, and another division of the Catalan army at Bispal blocking the bridge at Martorel. Clinton immediately undertook to pass the Llobregat, meet the French column, and block the road of San Sadurni; and he arranged with Copons the necessary precautions and signals.

About nine o'clock, Isidore la Marque arrived with the garrisons at Martorel, followed at a short distance by Eroles. No other troops were to be seen, and after a short halt, the French continued their march on the right bank of the Llobregat, where the Barcelona road enters a narrow pass between the river and a precipitous hill. When they were completely entangled, Clinton sent an officer to forbid their further progress, and referred them to Copons, who was at Martorel, for an explanation; then giving the signal, all the heights around were instantly covered with armed men. It was in vain to offer resistance, and two generals, having two thousand six hundred men, four guns, and a rich military chest, capitulated; but upon conditions, which were granted, and immediately violated with circumstances of great harshness and insult to the prisoners. The odium of this baseness, which was quite gratuitous, since the

French, helpless in the defile, must have submitted to any terms, attaches entirely to the Spaniards. Clinton refused to meddle in any manner with the convention. He had not been a party to Van Halen's deceit; he appeared only to ensure the surrender of an armed force in the field which the Spaniards could not have subdued without his aid; he refused even to be present at any consultation previous to the capitulation; and notwithstanding an assertion to the contrary in Suchet's Memoirs, no appeal on the subject from that marshal ever reached him.*

During the whole of these transactions, the infatuation of the French leaders was extreme. The chief of one of the battalions, more sagacious than his general, told Lamarque in the night of the 16th at Igualada that he was betrayed; at the same time, he urged him to abandon his artillery and baggage, and march in the direction of Vich, to which place they could force their way in despite of the Spaniards. It is remarkable also that Robert, when he had detected the imposture, and failed to entice Van Halen into Tortosa, did not make a sudden sally upon him and the Spanish officers who were with him, all close to the works. And still more notable is it that the other governors, more especially as Van Halen was a foreigner, did not insist upon the bearer of such a convention remaining to accompany their march: it was well observed by Suchet, that Van Halen's refusal to enter the gates was alone sufficient to prove his treachery.

The troops recalled by Napoleon now moved into France, and in March a second column of equal force was directed upon Lyons, but the arrival of Wellington on the Garonne caused, as we shall hereafter find, a change in its destination. An order of the minister at war then caused Suchet to open a fresh negotiation with Copons, to deliver up all the fortresses held by his troops, except Figueras and Rosas, provided the garrisons were allowed to rejoin the army. The Spanish commander assented, and the authorities generally were anxious to adopt the proposal, but the regency referred the matter to Wellington, who rejected it without hesitation, as tending to increase the force immediately opposed to him. Thus baffled and overreached at all points, Suchet destroyed the works of Olot, Besalu, Bascara and Palamos, dismantled Gerona and Rosas, and concentrated his forces at Figueras. He was followed by Copons, but though he still had twelve thousand veterans, besides the national guards and dépôts of the French departments, he obstinately refused aid to Soult, and yet remained inactive himself. The blockade of Barcelona was therefore maintained by the allies

* Sir William Clinton, MSS.

without difficulty or danger, save what arose from their commissariat embarrassments and the efforts of the garrison.

On the 23d of February, Habert made a sally with six battalions, thinking to surprise Sarsfield; but he was beaten, and Meder, the Nassau officer, was killed. The blockade was thus continued until the 12th of March, when Clinton received orders from Wellington to break up his army, to send the foreign troops to Sicily, and march with the British battalions by Tudela, to join the great army in France. He wished to obey, but Suchet was still in strength, and Copons appeared to be provoking a collision, though he was quite unable to oppose the French in the field, and to maintain the blockade of Barcelona in addition, after the Anglo-Sicilians should depart, was quite impossible. The latter therefore remained, and, on the 19th of March, Ferdinand reached the French frontier.

This event, which, happening five or even three months before, would probably have changed the fate of the war, was now of little consequence. Suchet proposed to Copons to escort Ferdinand with the French army to Barcelona, and put him in possession of that place; but this the Spanish general dared not assent to; for he feared Wellington and his own regency, and was closely watched by Colonel Coffin, who had been placed near him by Clinton. The French general then proposed to the king a convention for the recovery of his garrisons, to which Ferdinand agreed with the facility of a false heart; for his great anxiety was to reach Valencia, because the determination of the Cortes to bind him to conditions before he recovered his throne was evident; the Spanish generals were apparently faithful to the Cortes, and the British influence was sure to be opposed to him while he was burthened with French engagements.

Suchet was to demand securities for the restoration of his garrisons previous to Ferdinand's entry into Spain, but time was precious, and he escorted him at once with the whole French army to the Fluvia, having received his promise to restore the garrisons;* he also retained Don Carlos as a hostage; yet even this security he relinquished when the king, writing from Gerona, confirmed his first promise. On the 24th, in presence of the Catalan and French armies, ranged in order of battle on either bank of the Fluvia, Ferdinand passed that river, and became once more king of Spain. He had been a rebellious son in the palace, a plotting traitor at Aranjuez, a dastard at Bayonne, an effeminate superstitious fawning slave at Valençay, and now, after six years' captivity, he returned to his own country an ungrateful and cruel tyrant; he would have

* Suchet's Memoirs.

been the most odious and contemptible of princes if his favorite brother Don Carlos had not existed. Reaching Clinton's camp the 30th, he reviewed the troops, and then proceeded to Zaragoza and finally to València.* Suchet says the honors of war were paid to him by all the French garrisons, but this was not the case at Barcelona, no man appeared even on the walls.

After this event, the French marshal having repassed the Pyrenees, leaving only a division at Figueras, Clinton designed to break up his army, but was again stopped by the vexatious conduct of Copons, who would not relieve the Anglo-Sicilians at the blockade, nor notice any communications on the subject before the 11th of April. On the 14th, however, the troops marched, part to embark at Tarragona, part to join Wellington. Copons then became terrified, lest Robert, abandoning Tortosa, should come to Barcelona, and enclose him between them and the division at Figueras, wherefore Clinton once more halted. There was reason. For Habert had transmitted to Robert the emperor's orders to break out of Tortosa and gain Barcelona, instead of passing by the valley of Venasque as Suchet had prescribed, and the twelve thousand men thus united were then to push into France. This letter was intercepted, copied and sent on to Robert, whose answer being likewise intercepted, showed he had no inclination for the enterprise; Clinton therefore continued his embarkation and completed his honorable but difficult task. With a force weak in numbers, and nearly destitute of what constitutes strength in the field, he had maintained a dangerous position for eight months; and though Copons' incapacity and ill-will, and other circumstances beyond control, did not permit any brilliant actions, he occupied the attention of a superior army, suffered no disaster, and gained some advantages.

While his troops were embarking, Habert, in furtherance of the emperor's project, made a vigorous sally, and though repulsed with loss, he killed or wounded eight hundred Spaniards. This was a lamentable combat. The war had terminated long before, yet intelligence of the cessation of hostilities only arrived four days later. Habert was now repeatedly ordered by Suchet and the Duke of Feltre to give up Barcelona; but warned by the breach of former conventions, he held it until he was assured that the French garrisons in Valencia had returned to France, which did not happen until the 28th of May, when he marched to his own country.† This event, the last operation of the whole war, released the Duchess of Bourbon. She and the old Prince of Conti had been retained pri-

* Memoirs by Sir William Clinton, MSS.

† Lafaille.

soners in the city during the Spanish struggle, the prince died early in 1814, the duchess survived, and now returned to France.

How little the Spaniards were able of their own strength to shake Napoleon off, was now apparent to all the world. For, notwithstanding Wellington's victories, notwithstanding the invasion of France, six fortresses, Figueras, Barcelona, Tortosa, Morella, Peniscola, Saguntum and Denia were recovered, not by arms, but by the general peace. And but for the deceits of Van Halen, there would have been three others similarly situated in the eastern parts alone; while in the north, Santona was recovered in the same manner; for neither the long blockade nor the active operations against that place, of which some account shall now be given, caused it to surrender.

Santona stands on one of those promontories so frequent on the coast of Spain, which, connected by low sandy necks with the main land, offer good harbors. Its waters, deep and capacious, furnished two bays; the outer one, or roadstead, was commanded by the works of Santona itself, and by those of Laredo, a considerable town lying at the foot of a mountain, on the opposite point of the harbor. A narrow entrance to the inner port was between a spit of land called the Puntal, and the low isthmus on which the town of Santona is built. The natural strength of the ground was very great, but the importance of Santona arose from its peculiar situation as a harbor and fort of support in the Montaña de Santander; by holding it, the French shut out the British shipping from the only place which, being defensible on the land side, furnished a good harbor between San Sebastian and Coruña. Thus they protected the sea-flank of their long line of invasion, obtained a port of refuge for their own coasting vessels, and a post of support for the movable columns sent to chase the partidas, who abounded in that rough district. And when the battle of Vittoria placed the allies on the Bidassoa, there issued from Santona a number of privateers to intercept Wellington's supplies, and interrupt his communication with Coruña, Oporto, Lisbon, and even with England.

To obtain Santona was an object of early interest with both parties. The French seized it at once, and although the Spaniards recovered possession of it in 1810, they were driven out again immediately. The English ministers then commenced deliberating and concocting extensive, and for that reason injudicious and impracticable plans of offensive operations, to be based upon the possession of the place, but Napoleon fortified it and kept it to the end of the war. In August, 1812, its importance was better understood by the Spaniards, and it was continually menaced by the

numerous bands of Biscay, the Asturias and the Montaña. Fourteen hundred men, including the crew of a corvette, then formed its garrison, the works were not very strong, and only forty pieces of artillery were mounted. Napoleon, however, foreseeing the disasters which Marmont was provoking, sent General Lameth to take charge of the defence; he augmented the works, and constructed advanced redoubts on two hills, called the Grumo and the Brisco, which, like San Bartolomeo at San Sebastian, closed the isthmus inland. He also erected a strong redoubt and blockhouse on the Puntal, to command the straits, and sweep the roadstead in conjunction with the fort of Laredo, which he repaired; minor batteries also he made, and having cast a chain to secure the narrow entrance to the inner harbor, he covered the rocky promontory of Santona itself with defensive works.

Some dismounted guns remained in the arsenal, others which had been thrown into the sea by the Spaniards when they took the place in 1810, were fished up, and the garrison, felling trees in the vicinity, made carriages for them; by these means a hundred and twenty guns were finally placed in battery and there was abundance of ammunition. The corvette was not sea-worthy, but Lameth established a flotilla of gunboats and other small craft, which sallied forth whenever the signal-posts on the headland gave notice of the approach of vessels liable to attack, or of French coasters bringing provisions and stores. The garrison had previously lost many men, killed in a barbarous manner by the partidas, and in revenge they never gave quarter to their enemies. Lameth, shocked at this inhumanity, forbade under pain of death any further reprisals, rewarded those men who brought in prisoners, and treated the latter with gentleness; the Spaniards, perceiving this, also changed their system and civilization resumed its rights. From this time military operations were incessant, the garrison sometimes made sallies, sometimes sustained partial attacks, sometimes aided the movable columns employed by the different generals of the army of the north to put down the partisan warfare, which seldom was even lulled in the Montaña.

After the battle of Vittoria, Santona was invested on the land side by a part of the troops composing the fourth Spanish army. It was blockaded also on the sea-board by the English ships of war; but only nominally, for the garrison received supplies, and Lameth's flotilla took many store-ships and other vessels and delayed convoys; the land blockade thus became a nullity and the Spanish officers complained with reason that they suffered privations and endured hardships without an object. These complaints and his own embarrassments, caused by Lord Melville's neglect,

induced Wellington in October, 1813, when he could ill spare troops to think of employing a brigade under Lord Aylmer in the attack of Santona; that project, as already mentioned, was laid aside; but an English engineer, Captain Wells,* was sent with some sappers and miners to quicken the operations of the Spanish officers, and his small detachment has been by a French writer magnified into a whole battalion.

Wells remained six months, for the Spanish generals though brave and willing, were tainted with the national defect of procrastination. The siege therefore made no progress, languishing until the 13th of February, 1814, when Barco the Spanish commander carried the fort of Puntal in the night by escalade, killing thirty men and taking twenty-three prisoners; yet the fort being under the fire of the Santona works, was necessarily dismantled and abandoned the next morning. A piquet was left there, but Lameth embarked a detachment and recovered his fort. In the night of the 21st Barco ordered an attack to be made with a part of his force upon the outposts of El Grumo and Brusco on the Santona side of the harbor, and led the remainder of his troops in person to storm the fort and town of Laredo. He carried the latter and some other defences of the fort, which being on a rock was only to be approached by an isthmus so narrow as to be closed by a single fortified house; in this assault he was killed and the attack ceased; yet the troops retained what they had won and established themselves at the foot of the rock where they were covered from fire. The attack on the other side, conducted by Colonel Llorente, was successful; he carried the smallest of the two outworks on the Brusco, and closely invested the largest after an ineffectual attempt by mine and assault to take it. A large breach was however made and the commandant seeing he could no longer defend his post, valiantly broke through the investment and saved himself in the Grumo; but next day the Grumo itself was abandoned by the French.

Wells, who had been wounded at the Puntal escalade, now strenuously urged the Spaniards to crown the counter-scarp of the fort at Laredo and attack vigorously; they preferred establishing four field-pieces to batter it in form at the distance of six hundred yards, but their guns were dismounted the moment they began to fire, and thus corrected, the Spanish generals committed the direction of the attack to Wells. He opened a heavy musketry fire on the fort to stifle the noise of his workmen, pushed trenches up the hill close to the counterscarp in the night, and was proceeding to burst open the gate with a few field-pieces and cut down the pali-

* *Victoires et Conquetes des Francaise.*

sadly, when the Italian garrison, whose muskets from constant use were so injured that few would go off, mutinied against their commander, and making him a prisoner, surrendered the place. This event gave the Spaniards the command of the entrance to the harbor, and Lameth offered to capitulate in April upon condition of returning to France with his garrison: Wellington refused this proposal, and Santona remained a French fortress until the general cessation of hostilities.

Having now terminated the narrative of all military and political events which happened in the Peninsula, the reader will henceforth be enabled to follow without interruption the events of the war in the south of France, which shall be continued in the next book.

BOOK XXIV.

CHAPTER I.

Napoleon recalls several divisions of infantry and cavalry from Soult's army—Embarrassments of that marshal—Mr. Batbedat, a banker of Bayonne, offers to aid the allies secretly with money and provisions—La Roche Jacquelin and other Bourbon partisans arrive at the allies' head-quarters—The Duke of Angoulême arrives there—Lord Wellington's political views—General reflections—Soult embarrassed by the hostility of the French people—Lord Wellington embarrassed by the hostility of the Spaniards—Soult's remarkable project for the defence of France—Napoleon's reasons for neglecting it put hypothetically—Lord Wellington's situation suddenly ameliorated—His wise policy, foresight, and diligence—Resolves to throw a bridge over the Adour, below Bayonne, and to drive Soult from that river—Soult's system of defence—Numbers of the contending armies—Passage of the Gaves—Combat of Garris—Lord Wellington forces the line of the Bidouze and Gave of Mauleon—Soult takes the line of the Gave de Oleron, and resolves to change his system of operations.

WELLINGTON'S difficulties were great. Those of his adversary were even more embarrassing, because the evil was at the root; it was not misapplication of power, but the want of power itself which paralyzed Soult's operations. Napoleon trusted much to the effect of his treaty with Ferdinand, but the intrigues to retard his journey continued; and though the emperor, after the refusal of the treaty by the Spanish government, permitted him to return without conditions, as thinking his presence would alone embarrass and perhaps break the English alliance with Spain, he did not, as before shown, arrive until March. How Napoleon's views were frustrated by his secret enemies is one of the obscure parts of French history, which time may possibly clear, but probably only with a feeble and uncertain light; for truth can never be expected in the memoirs, if any should appear, of such men as Talleyrand, Fouché, and other politicians of their stamp, whose plots rendered his supernatural efforts to rescue France from her invaders abortive; meanwhile, there is nothing to check or expose the political and literary empirics who never fail on such occasions to poison the sources of history.

Relying on Ferdinand's journey, and pressed by the necessity of augmenting his own weak army, Napoleon now told Soult he must ultimately take from him two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry. The undecided nature of his first battle at Brienne caused

him to enforce this notice in the beginning of February; but he had previously sent imperial commissaries to the different departments of France, with instructions to hasten the new conscription, to form national and urban guards, to draw forth the resources of the country, and aid the operations of the armies by the action of the people. These measures failed generally in the south. The urban cohorts were readily formed as a means of police, and the conscription was successful, but the people remained sullen and apathetic;* and the civil commissaries are said to have been, with some exceptions, pompous, declamatory, and affecting great state and dignity without energy and activity. Ill-will was also produced by the vexatious and corrupt conduct of the subordinate government agents, who, seeing in the general distress and confusion a good opportunity to forward their personal interests, oppressed the people for their own profit. This it was easy to do, because the extreme want of money rendered requisitions unavoidable; and under the confused direction of civilians, partly ignorant and unused to difficult times, partly corrupt and partly disaffected to the emperor, the abuses inevitably attendant upon such a system were numerous, and to the people so offensive, that numbers, to avoid them, passed with their carts and utensils into the lines of the allies. An official letter, written from Bayonne at this period run thus: "The English general's policy and the good discipline he maintains does us more harm than ten battles; every peasant wishes to be under his protection."

Another source of anger was Soult's works near Bayonne, where the richer inhabitants could not bear to have their country villas and gardens destroyed by the engineer, he who spares not for beauty or for pleasure. The merchants, a class nearly alike in all nations, with whom profit stands for country, had been, with a few exceptions, long averse to Napoleon's policy, which, from necessity, interfered with their commerce. And this feeling must have been very strong in Bayonne and Bordeaux; for one Batbedat, a banker of the former place, having obtained leave to go to St. Jean de Luz under pretence of settling the accounts of English officers, prisoners of war, to whom he had advanced money, offered Wellington to supply his army with various commodities, and even provide money for bills on the English treasury. In return, he demanded licenses for twenty vessels to go from Bordeaux, Rochelle and Mants, to St. Jean de Luz; and they were given on condition that he should not carry back colonial produce; but as the English navy would not respect them, the banker and his coadjutors hesitated.

* Soult's MSS.

and thus saved their ships, for the English ministers refused to sanction the licenses, and rebuked Wellington!

During these events, the partisans of the Bourbons, coming from Brittany and La Vendée, spread themselves all over the south of France, and one of the heroic family of La Roche Jacquelin arrived at head-quarters. Bernadotte also sent an agent to those parts, and the Count of Grammont, a captain in the British cavalry, was at the desire of the Marquis de Mailhos, another of the malcontents, sent to England to call the princes of the house of Bourbon forward. Finally, the Duke of Angoulême arrived at head-quarters, and was received with respect in private, though not suffered to attend the army. The English general, indeed, persuaded that the great body of the French people, especially in the south, were inimical to Napoleon's government, was sanguine as to the utility of encouraging a Bourbon party; yet, he held his judgment in abeyance, sagaciously observing he could not come to a safe conclusion merely from the feelings of some people in one corner of France. And as the allied sovereigns seemed backward to take the matter in hand, unless some positive general movement in favor of the Bourbons was made, and there were negotiations for peace actually going on, it would be, he said, unwise and ungenerous to precipitate the partisans of the fallen house into a premature outbreak, and then leave them to the vengeance of the enemy.

That Wellington should think public opinion was against Napoleon is not surprising; it seemed to be so, and a very strong Bourbon party, and one still stronger, averse to the continuation of war, existed; but nothing is more dangerous, more deceitful, than the outward show and declarations on such occasions. The great mass of men are only endowed with moderate capacity and spirit; their thoughts are for the preservation of their families and property, they bend to circumstances; fear and suspicion, ignorance baseness and good feeling, all combine to urge men in troubled times to put on the mask of enthusiasm, for the most powerful and selfish knaves ever shout with the loudest. Let the scene change, and the multitude will turn with the facility of a weathercock. Wellington soon discovered that Viel Chastel, Bernadotte's agent, while pretending to aid the Bourbons, was playing a double part. And one year after this period, Napoleon returned from Elba, when neither the presence of the Duke of Angoulême, nor the energy of the duchess, nor all the activity of their partisans, could raise in this very country more than the semblance of an opposition to him—the tricolor was everywhere hoisted, and the Bourbon party vanished. This was the true test of national feeling. For, in 1814.

the white colors were supported by foreign armies, and misfortune had bowed the great democratic chief to the earth; but when, rising again in his wondrous might, he came back alone from Elba, the poorer people, with whom only patriotism is ever really to be found, and that because they are poor, and therefore unsophisticated, crowded to meet and hail him as a father. Not because they held him entirely blameless. Who born of woman is? They demanded redress of grievances, even while they clung instinctively to him as their stay and protection against the locust tyranny of aristocracy.

There was, however, at this period in France enough of discontent, of passion and intrigue, enough of treason, and enough of grovelling spirit in adversity, added to the natural desire of escaping the ravages of war, a desire carefully fostered by the admirable policy of the English general, to render the French general's position extremely dangerous. Nor is it the least remarkable circumstance of this remarkable period, that while Soult expected relief from Spanish aversion to the English alliance, Wellington received from the French secret and earnest warnings to beware of some great act of treachery meditated by the Spaniards. It was at this period also that the Spanish generals encouraged their soldiers' licentiousness, and displayed their own ill-will by sullen discontent and captious complaints, while the civil authorities disturbed the communications and made war in their fashion against the hospitals and magazines.

Wellington's apprehensions are plainly to be traced in his correspondence. Writing about Copons, he says, "his conduct is quite unjustifiable, both in concealing what he knew of the Duke de San Carlos' arrival and the nature of his mission." In another letter he observes, that the Spanish military people about himself desired peace with Napoleon according to the treaty of Valençay; that they all had some notion of what had occurred, and yet had been quite silent about it; that he had repeated intelligence from the French of some act of treachery meditated by the Spaniards; that several persons of that nation had come from Bayonne to circulate reports of peace, and charges against the British which he knew would be well received on that frontier; that he had arrested a man calling himself an agent of, and actually bearing a letter of credence from Ferdinand. But the most striking proof of alarm was his great satisfaction at the conduct of the Spanish government in rejecting the treaty brought by San Carlos and Palafox. Sacrificing all his former great and just resentment, he changed at once from an enemy to a friend of the regency, supported the members of it against the serviles, spoke of the matter as the most important that had engaged his attention, and when O'Donnel proposed some

violent and decided action of hostility against the regency, which a few weeks before would have been received with pleasure, he checked and softened him, saying, the conduct of that body about the treaty should content every Spaniard: it was not possible to act with more frankness and loyalty, and they had procured honor for themselves and for their nation, not only in England, but all over Europe. Such is the light mode in which words are applied by public men, even by the noblest and greatest, when their wishes are fulfilled. This glorious and honorable conduct of the regency was simply a resolution to uphold their personal power and that of their faction, both of which would have been destroyed by the arrival of the king.

Napoleon, hoping much from the effect of these machinations, not only intimated to Soult that he would require ten thousand of his infantry immediately, but that twice that number with a division of cavalry would be called away, if the Spaniards fell off from the English alliance. The Duke of Dalmatia, then foreseeing the ultimate result of his own operations against Wellington, conceived a vast general plan of action, which evinced his capacity to treat the greatest questions of military policy.

"Neither his numbers nor means of supply, after Wellington had gained the banks of the Adour above Bayonne, would," he said, "suffice to maintain his positions covering that fortress and menacing the allies' right flank; the time approached when he must, even without a reduction of force, abandon Bayonne to its own resources, and fight on the numerous rivers which run with concentric courses from the Pyrenees to the Adour. Leval's and Boyer's divisions of infantry were to join the grand army on the eastern frontier; Abbe's division was to raise the garrison of Bayonne and its camp to fourteen thousand men, but, considering this force too great for a simple general of division, he wished to give it to Reille, whose corps would be broken up by the departure of the detachments. That officer was, however, altogether averse, and as an unwilling commander would be half beaten before the battle commenced, he desired D'Erlon should take Reille's place.

"The active army could not then fight pitched battles, and he recommended the throwing it as a great partisan corps on the left, touching always upon the Pyrenees, and ready to fall upon Wellington's flank and rear, if he should penetrate into France. Clausel, a native of those parts, and speaking the country language, was by his military qualities and knowledge the most suitable person to command. Reille could march with the troops called to the great army; and as there would be nothing left for him, Soult, to do in these parts, he desired to be employed where he could aid the

emperor with more effect. This he pressed urgently, because, notwithstanding the refusal of the Cortes to receive the treaty of Valençay, it was probable the war on the eastern frontier would compel the emperor to recall all the troops designated. It would then become imperative to change from a regular to an irregular warfare; in which a numerous corps of partisans would be more valuable than the shadow of a regular army without value or confidence, and likely to be destroyed in the first great battle. For these partisans it was necessary to have a central power and director, and Clausel was the man most fitted for the task. He ought to have under him the generals who commanded in the military departments between the Garonne and the Pyrenees, with power to force the inhabitants to take arms and act under his directions.

“I am sensible,” he continued, “that this system, one of the least unhappy consequences of which would be to leave the enemy apparently master of the country between the mountains and the Garonne, can only be justified by the necessity of forming an army in the centre of France sufficiently powerful to fend off the multitude of enemies from the capital; but if Paris falls, all will be lost; whereas if it be saved, the loss of a few large towns in the south can be repaired. I propose then to form a great army in front of Paris by a union of all the disposable troops on the different frontiers, and to spread what remains as partisans wherever the enemy threatens to penetrate. All the marshals of France, the generals and other officers, in activity or in retirement, who shall not be attached to the great central army, should organize the partisan corps, and bring those not actively useful as such, up to the great point of union; and they should have military power to make all men able to bear arms find them at their own expense.” “This measure is revolutionary, but will produce important results, while none or a very feeble effect will be caused by the majority of the imperial commissioners already sent to the military divisions. They are grand persons, they temporize, make proclamations, and treat everything as civilians, instead of acting with vigor to obtain promptly a result which would astonish the world; for notwithstanding the cry to the contrary, the resources of France are not exhausted—what is wanted is to make those who possess resources, use them for the defence of the throne and the emperor.” Having thus explained his views, he again requested to serve near the emperor, but declared himself ready to obey any order and serve in any manner; all he demanded was clear instructions with reference to the events that might occur. 1. What he should do if the treaty with Ferdinand had no effect. and the Spanish troops

remained with Wellington. 2. If those troops retired, and the British, seeing the French weakened by detachments, should alone penetrate into France. 3. If the changes in Spain should cause the allies to retire altogether.

This great project was not adopted and the emperor's reasons for neglecting it have not been made known. Nor can the workings of that capacious mind be judged of without a knowledge of all the objects and conditions of his combinations. Yet it is probable that at this period he did not despair of rejecting the allies beyond the Rhine either by force of arms, by negotiation, or by working upon the family pride of the Emperor of Austria. With this hope he would be averse to risk civil war by placing France under martial law; averse to revive the devouring fire of revolution which it had been his object for so many years to quell—and it seems nearly certain, that one of his reasons for replacing Ferdinand on the Spanish throne was his fear lest the republican doctrines which had gained ground in Spain should spread to France. Was he wrong? The fierce democrat will answer, yes! Those who think real liberty was never attained under a single unmixed form of government giving no natural vent to the swelling pride of honor, birth or riches—those who measure the weakness of pure republicanism by the miserable state of France at home and abroad when Napoleon first assumed power to save her;—those who saw America with her militia and licentious liberty, unable to prevent three thousand British soldiers from passing three thousand miles of ocean and burning their capital—those persons will hesitate to condemn him. And this without detriment to the democratic principle which in substance may and should always govern under judicious forms. Napoleon early judged, and the event has proved he judged truly, that the democratic spirit of France was then unable to overbear the aristocratic and monarchic tendencies of Europe; wisely therefore while he preserved the essence of the first by fostering equality, he endeavored to blend it with the other two; thus satisfying as far as human institutions would permit the conditions of the great problem he had undertaken to solve. His object was the reconstruction of the social fabric which had been shattered by the French revolution, mixing with the new materials what remained of the old sufficiently unbroken to build with again; if he failed to render his structure stable it was because his design was misunderstood, and the terrible passions let loose by the previous stupendous explosion were too mighty even for him to compress.

To have accepted Soult's project would have been to save himself at the expense of his system, and probably to plunge France

into the anarchy from which he had with so much care and labor drawn her. But Napoleon's ambition was for the greatness and prosperity of France, for the regeneration of Europe, for the stability of the system which he had formed with that end, never for himself personally. Hence it is that multitudes of many nations instinctively revere his memory; and neither the monarch nor the aristocrat, dominant though they be by his fall, feel themselves so easy in their high places as to rejoice much in their victory.

Soult's project was not adopted, and in February two divisions of infantry and Trielhard's cavalry, with many batteries, were withdrawn; two thousand of the best soldiers were also selected to join the imperial guards, and all the gens-d'armes were sent to the interior. The total number of old soldiers left, did not, including the division of Paris, exceed forty thousand exclusive of the garrison of Bayonne and other posts; the conscripts, beardless youths, were generally unfit to enter the line, nor were there enough of muskets to arm them. It is remarkable also, as showing how easily military operations may be affected by distant combinations, that Soult expected and dreaded at this time the descent of a great English army upon the coast of La Vendée, led thereto by hearing of an expedition preparing in England under Graham, really to aid the Dutch revolt.

While his power was thus diminishing, Wellington's situation was as suddenly ameliorated. First by the arrival of reinforcements, next by the security he felt from the rejection of the treaty of Valençay; lastly by the approach of better weather and the acquisition of a very large sum in gold; which enabled him to put his Anglo-Portuguese in activity, and to bring the Spaniards again into line with less danger of their plundering the country. During the cessation of operations he had prepared the means to enter France with power and security, sending before him the fame of a just discipline and a wise consideration for the people who were likely to fall under his power; for there was nothing he so much dreaded as the partisan and insurgent warfare proposed by Soult. The peasants of Baygorry and Bidarray had done him more mischief than the French army, and his terrible menace of destroying their villages, and hanging all the population he could lay his hands upon if they ceased not their hostility, marks his apprehensions in the strongest manner. Yet he left all the local authorities free to carry on the internal government, to draw their salaries, and raise the necessary taxes in the same mode and with as much tranquillity as if perfect peace prevailed. He opened the ports also and drew a large commerce, which served to support his own army and engage the mercantile interests in his favor; he es-

tablished many sure channels for intelligence political and military, and would have extended his policy further and to more advantage if the English ministers had not so ignorantly interfered with his proceedings. Finally, foreseeing that the money he might receive, would, being in foreign coin, create embarrassment, he adopted an expedient which he had before practised in India.

Knowing that in a British army a wonderful variety of knowledge and vocations, good and bad, may be found, he secretly caused the coiners and die-sinkers amongst the soldiers to be sought out; and once assured that no mischief was intended them, it was not difficult to persuade them to acknowledge their peculiar talents. With these men he established a secret mint and coined gold Napoleons, marking them with a private stamp and carefully preserving their just fineness and weight to enable the French government when peace should be established to call them in again. He thus avoided all the difficulties of exchange, and removed a fruitful graft of quarrels and ill-will between the troops and the shop-keepers; for the latter are always fastidious in taking and desirous of abating the current worth of strange coin, and the former attribute to fraud any declination from the value at which they receive their money. This sudden increase of the current coin tended also to diminish the pressure necessarily attendant upon troubled times.

Nor was his provident sagacity less manifest in purely military matters than in administrative and political operations. During the bad weather he had formed large magazines at the ports, examined the course of the Adour, and carefully meditated upon his future plans. To enter France and rally a great Bourbon party was his wish. This last point depended upon the political proceedings and successes of the allied sovereigns; yet the military operations most suitable at the moment did not clash with it; to drive the French from Bayonne and blockade or besiege that place was the first step in either case. But this required extensive and daring combinations. The fortress and its citadel, comprising in their circuit the confluence of the Nive and the Adour, could not be safely invested with less than three times the number necessary to resist the garrison at any one point; because the latter's communications were short, internal and secure, those of the investors external, difficult and unsafe, and each division should be able to resist a sally of the whole garrison. The forces operating towards the interior would thus be seriously reduced.

How and where to cross the Adour with a view to the investment was also a subject of solicitude. It was a great river with a strong current and well guarded by troops and gun-boats above

Bayonne; still greater was it below the town; there the ebb tide runs seven miles an hour; there also there were gun-boats, a sloop of war, and merchant-vessels which could be armed and employed to interrupt the passage. The number of pontoons or other boats required to bridge the stream across either above or below, and the carriage of them would inevitably give notice of the design and render it abortive unless the French army was first driven away, and then the troops at Bayonne, fifteen thousand, might baffle the attempt. Nevertheless he resolved to pass, the means adopted being proportionate to the greatness of the design.

To throw his bridge above Bayonne involved the carrying of his materials across the Nive and through the deep country on each side, and the driving of Soult entirely from the Adour and all its confluents; but his own convoys between the bridge and the sea-port magazines would then be unsafe and uncertain, having to lend their flank to Bayonne and cross several rivers liable to floods—moreover, his means of transport were unequal to the wear and tear of the deep roads. To throw the bridge below Bayonne would give him the lower Adour for a harbor, and his land convoys could use the royal causeway which led close to that river and was not affected by rain; his line of retreat also would be more secure if unforeseen misfortune forced him to relinquish the investment. But the rapidity and breadth of the river below Bayonne denied the use of common pontoons, and the mouth, six miles from the town, was so barred with sands, so beaten with surges, so difficult of navigation even with land-marks, some of which the French had removed, that it seemed impossible for vessels fit for a bridge to enter from the sea; and a strong defensive force would inevitably bar the construction if they could. These difficulties however Wellington with admirable judgment rendered subservient to his purpose. For judging they would appear insuperable to the French, he thought Soult would readily abandon the care of the lower Adour to defend the rivers beyond the Nive if his left was attacked, and thus the lower Adour would be laid open for his enterprise. Nor did he fear that the French marshal, in retiring before the troops destined to force the rivers near the roots of the Pyrenees, would gain the boundary road and come down on the investing force at Bayonne; because to do so he must enter the sandy wilderness of the Landes, and might be prevented from getting out again. The natural obstacles remained, and to surmount them he made the following arrangements.

Having collected forty large sailing-boats of from fifteen to twenty tons burthen, as if for the commissariat service, he secretly loaded them with planks and other materials for his bridge;

designing that they should be joined by some gun-boats and run up the Adour to a fixed point, on which he would previously direct the troops and artillery, meaning with hawsers and pontoons to form rafts, and pass a force to destroy a small battery near the mouth of the river and cover the operation. At this time, the French trading vessels in the Adour had privately offered to come out upon licenses and serve the commissariat, and their aid would have greatly facilitated his project; but he was compelled to forego the advantage, because of the English ministers' previous folly in refusing to ratify his former passports; and was therefore forced to treat as enemies men willing to be friends, and prepare additional means to burn those vessels which he might have used for his project!

While the English general was secretly arranging this great offensive operation, Soult was diligently increasing his defensive means, and fortified all the principal passages of the rivers crossing the main roads leading against his left; but the diminution of his force in January compelled him to withdraw his outposts from Anglet in front of Bayonne, which enabled Wellington closely to examine the lower Adour and prepare with more certainty for the passage. Soult, however, in pursuance of Napoleon's maxim of covering physical weakness by moral audacity, concentrated troops on his left, renewing the partisan warfare against the allies' right, and endeavored to keep them entirely on the defensive. In the course of these operations, finding that Morillo had assumed a forward post, he, with a view to test the Spanish feeling towards the English, directed Harispe, under pretence of remonstrating, to sound him as to a defection; he did not respond, and Harispe then drove him back with a sharp fight. This warfare, however, could not ultimately check the allies, and the French marshal, seeing Wellington was resolved to gain the line of the Garonne, and that his own retreat must ultimately be parallel to the Pyrenees, proceeded to organize a strong defensive system to cover Bordeaux irrespective of his own operations. In this view he sent Daricau, a native of the Landes, to prepare an insurgent levy in that wilderness, and directed Maransin to the higher Pyrenees to extend the insurrection begun by Harispe in the lower valleys. Jaca was still held by eight hundred men, but they were starving, and a convoy collected for their relief at Navarrens was stopped by snow in the pass. It was an error to retain the place, for though the partidas would have descended on the French side to the very rear of the army, and perhaps have ravaged part of the frontier, if the garrison had been withdrawn, they could have done no essential

harm, and their excesses would have disposed the people of those parts to insurrection.

At Bordeaux there was a small reserve commanded by General L'Huillier, and Soult urged the minister of war to increase it with conscripts from the interior. Meanwhile, he sent artillerymen from Bayonne to aid fifteen hundred national guards as a garrison for the citadel of Blaye, and desired that the Médoc and Paté forts and the batteries along the banks of the Garonne should be put in a state of defence. All vessels fit for the purpose he desired might be armed, and a flotilla of fifty gun-boats established below Bordeaux, with a like number to navigate the river as far as Toulouse. But these orders were feebly executed or entirely neglected, for there was no public spirit, and treason and disaffection were rife in the city.

On the side of the lower Pyrenees he improved the works of Navarrens, and designed an entrenched camp in front of it; the castle of Lourdes in the high Pyrenees was already defensible, and he gave orders to fortify the castle of Pau; thus providing supporting points for the retreat which he foresaw. At Mauleon he put on foot some partisan corps, and the imperial commissary Caffarelli gave him hopes of a reserve of seven or eight thousand national guards, *gens-d'armes*, and artillerymen, at Tarbes. Dax, containing his principal dépôts, was being fortified, and the communication with it was maintained across the rivers by fortified bridges at Port de Landes, Hastings, Pereyhorade, and Sauveterre; but the floods in the beginning of February carried away his permanent bridge at the Port de Landes, and the communication between Bayonne and the left of the army was thus interrupted until he established a flying-bridge.

All these preparations were made in the supposition that Wellington had one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, for Soult knew not of the political and financial crosses which had reduced that general's power. His emissaries told him Clinton's force was actually broken up, and the British part in march to join Wellington; that the garrisons of Carthage, Cadiz and Ceuta were on the point of arriving, and reinforcements coming from England and Portugal. Inferring from this that the war in Catalonia would cease, and all the troops be united to march against him, he again urged that Suchet should join him; that their united forces might form a "dike against the torrent" which threatened to overwhelm the south of France. The real power opposed to him was, however, much below his calculations. The twenty thousand British and Portuguese reinforcements promised, had not arrived, Clinton's army was still in Catalonia; and though

the exact numbers of the Spaniards cannot be stated, their forces available, and that only partially and with great caution on account of their licentious conduct, did not exceed the following approximation.

Freyre had, including España's division, twelve thousand men, Morillo four thousand, O'Donnel six thousand, and the Prince of Anglona eight thousand. The Anglo-Portuguese present under arms were by the morning states on the day the advance commenced, seventy thousand of all arms, ten thousand being cavalry. The whole force, exclusive of Mina's bands which were spread from Navarre to the borders of Catalonia, was therefore one hundred thousand with one hundred guns, ninety-five being Anglo-Portuguese. The French numbers opposed, it is difficult to fix with precision, because the imperial muster-rolls, owing to the troubled state of the emperor's affairs, were not continued beyond December, 1813, or have been lost. But from Soult's correspondence and other documents, it would appear that exclusive of his garrisons, his reserves, and detachments at Bordeaux and in the department of the high Pyrenees, exclusive also of the conscripts of the second levy, which were now beginning to arrive, he could place in line thirty-five thousand soldiers of all arms, three thousand being cavalry, with forty pieces of artillery. But Bayonne alone, without reckoning the fortresses of St. Jean Pied de Port and Navarrens, occupied twenty-eight thousand of the allies; and by this and other drains Wellington's superiority in the field was so reduced, that his penetrating into France, that France which had made all Europe tremble at her arms, must be viewed as a surprising example of courage and fine conduct.

PASSAGE OF THE GAVES.

In the second week of February, the weather set with a strong frost, the roads became practicable, and the English general seized the opportunity to advance; but the clothing so long delayed in England had just then arrived, and the British regiments, being without carriage, were compelled to go for it to the stores in succession. Hence, the first operations were merely to turn the rivers beyond the Nive at their sources with Hill's corps, while Beresford held the French centre in check lower down. This it was hoped would draw Soult's attention from the Adour below Bayonne, where the passage was to be made; but Wellington, uncertain if he could force the tributary rivers with his right, designed in that case, if his bridge was happily thrown, to operate on that line, and turn the French army by the right of the Adour—a fine conception,

by which he would seize Dax and the Port de Landes, and cut off Soult from Bordeaux.

On the 12th and 13th, Hill, having twenty thousand combatants, with sixteen guns, was relieved by the sixth and seventh divisions at Mousserolles and on the Adour, and took post about Urcurray and Hasparen. The 14th, he marched in two columns;* one by Bonloc, to drive the French posts beyond the Joyeuse; another by the great road of St. Jean Pied de Port, to dislodge Harispe, who was at Hellette; this column had the Ursouia on the right, and Morillo marched on the other side of that mountain against the same point. Harispe, who had only three brigades, principally conscripts, retired skirmishing in the direction of St. Palais, and took a position for the night at Meharin; the Joyeuse was thus turned, the direct communication with St. Jean Pied de Port cut, and that place was immediately invested by Mina's battalions.

On the 15th, Hill, leaving the fifty-seventh regiment at Hellette to observe the road to St. Jean Pied de Port, marched through Meharin upon Garris, eleven miles distant; but that road being impracticable for artillery, the guns moved by Armendaritz more to the right. Harispe's rear-guard was overtaken and pushed back fighting, and meanwhile Beresford was directed to send a brigade of the seventh division from the heights of La Costa, across the Gamboury, to the Bastide de Clerence. The line being thus extended from Urt, by Briscons, the Bastide and Isturitz, towards Garris, a distance of more than twenty miles, was too attenuated, and the fourth division occupied La Costa in support of the troops at the Bastide. At the same time, the French weakened their force at Mousserolles, and Wellington, thinking it might be to concentrate on the heights of Anglet, which would have frustrated the casting of his bridge over the Adour, directed Hope secretly to occupy the back of those heights in force, and prevent any intercourse between Bayonne and the country.

Soult knew of the intended operations against his left on the 12th, but hearing the allies had collected boats, had constructed a fresh battery near Urt, and that their pontoons had reached Urcurray, he thought Wellington designed to turn his left with Hill's corps, to press him on the Bidouze with Beresford's, and keep the garrison of Bayonne in check with the Spaniards, while Hope crossed the Adour above that fortress. Wherefore, on the 14th he was near the Bastide de Clerence, making dispositions to dispute the Bidouze and the Gave of Mauleon first, and then the Gave of Oleron. He had four divisions in hand, with which he occupied a

* Plan 2, p. 81

position on the 15th along the Bidouze.* General Paris, who was then in movement with the convoy to relieve Jaca, was recalled to watch Mina between St. Palais and St. Jean Pied de Port, and Jaca capitulated on the 17th, the garrison to return to France, and not serve till exchanged. This condition was broken by the French, but the recent Spanish violation of the convention made with the deluded garrisons of Lerida, Mequinenza, and Monzon, furnished a reply. Harispe, having Paris under his command, and being supported by Pierre Soult with a brigade of light cavalry, now covered the road from St. Jean Pied de Port with his left, and the upper line of the Bidouze with his right; lower down, Villatte occupied Ilharre, Taupin was on the heights of Bergoney below Villatte, and Foy guarded the river from Came to its confluence with the Adour. The rest of the army remained under D'Erlon on the right of the Adour.

Combat of Garris.—Harispe had just taken a position in advance of the Bidouze, on a height called the Garris mountain, which stretched to St. Palais, when his rear-guard came plunging into a deep ravine in his front, closely followed by the light troops of the second division. Upon the parallel counter-ridge thus gained by the allies, Hill's corps was immediately established; and though the evening was beginning to close, his skirmishers descended into the ravine, and two guns played over it upon the French, who to the number of four thousand, were drawn up on the opposite mountain. In this state of affairs, Wellington arrived. He was anxious to turn the line of the Bidouze before Soult could strengthen himself there, and seeing the communication with Paris by St. Palais was not well maintained, sent Morillo by a flank march along the ridge now occupied by the allies towards that place; then, menacing the enemy's centre with Le Cor's Portuguese division, he directed Pringle to attack with the thirty-ninth and twenty-eighth regiments, saying with a concise energy: "*You must take the hill before dark.*"

This expression caught the attention of the troops, and was repeated by Colonel O'Callaghan, as he and Pringle placed themselves at the head of the thirty-ninth, which, followed by the twenty-eighth, rushed with loud and prolonged shouts into the ravine. The French fire was violent, Pringle fell wounded, and most of the mounted officers had their horses killed; yet the troops, covered by the thick wood, gained with little loss the summit of the Garris mountain, on the right of the enemy, who thought, from the shouting, that a larger force was coming against them, and retreated. The thirty-ninth then wheeled to their right, intending to

* Soult's MSS.