

## CHAPTER XIII.

Isolation of Great Britain.—Hostility of Europe.—Bonaparte's Continental System.—His plans for becoming master of the Peninsula.—French invasion of Portugal.—The Regent of Portugal flies to the Brazils.—Charles IV. of Spain abdicates.—He, and Ferdinand his son, entrapped by Napoleon at Bayonne.—Sympathy of the English people.—Sir Arthur Wellesley sent with troops to Portugal.—Successes of the Spaniards.—Zaragoza.—Victory of Wellesley at Vimiero.—Convention of Cintra.—Sir John Moore marches into Spain.—Napoleon takes the command of his army in Spain.—Moore's retreat.—Battle of Corunna.—Death of Sir John Moore.—Sufferings of his army.—National gloom.—Charges against the duke of York.—Parliamentary inquiry.—The Duke resigns.—Lord Cochrane's enterprise in Aix Roads.—Austria declares war against France.—Sir Arthur Wellesley takes the command at Lisbon.—Passage of the Douro.—Intelligence of important events.

THE Royal Speech, delivered by Commissioners, on the opening of the Session of Parliament on the 21st of January, 1808, was of greater length, and bore upon more important points of Foreign Affairs, than any similar document during the most stirring years since 1793. The view of our position with relation to the rest of the world was not cheering. Britain seemed to have reached that extremity of isolation which the Roman poet described, and which the French emperor desired to establish as a political fact. The treaty of Tilsit, said the Speech, confirmed the influence and control of France over the powers of the continent; and it was the intention of the enemy to combine those powers in one general confederacy against this kingdom. For this purpose, the whole of the naval force of Europe was to be brought to bear upon various points of the British dominions, and specifically the fleets of Portugal and Denmark. It was an indispensable duty to place these fleets out of the reach of such a confederacy. Painful but necessary measures of force were successful with regard to Denmark. The fleet of Portugal had been secured from the grasp of France, and was then employed in conveying to its American dominions the hopes and fortunes of the Portuguese monarchy. The determination of France to excite hostilities between Great Britain and Russia, Austria, and Prussia, had been too successful. These powers had withdrawn their ministers from London. The machinations of the enemy had prevented the war with Turkey being brought to a con-

clusion. The king of Sweden alone had resisted every attempt to induce him to abandon our alliance. The government of the United States had refused to ratify a treaty of amity and commerce agreed upon in 1806, and was making pretensions inconsistent with our maritime rights. In consequence of the decree by which France declared the whole of the British dominions in a state of blockade, subjecting the manufactures and produce of the kingdom to seizure and confiscation, his majesty resorted to a measure of mitigated retaliation; but that being ineffectual, other measures of greater rigour had been adopted by Orders in Council. This was, indeed, a catalogue of ills. In spite however, said the Speech, of the difficulties endeavoured to be imposed by the enemy upon the commerce of this country, its resources had during the last year been so abundant as to produce a great increase of revenue.

Gloomy as was the prospect arising out of this frank explanation—England without one ally but the young king of Sweden, whom some deemed chivalrous and others deemed mad—France, whose territory was extended far beyond the wildest ambition of her old race of kings, under an emperor who was the real suzerain of Naples, of Italy, of Switzerland, of Holland, of Germany—America subject to the will of a President who had ever been a hater of England, and was now anxious for open war,—gloomy as was this prospect, was there any ray of hopes to illumine the darkness? The historian of the French empire points to this single ray in a brief sentence. To the universal dominion of Napoleon there was only one thing to be desired—nothing more, than “the submission of *peoples* to this gigantic edifice.”\* During fifteen years of war, England, in her system of subsidies and coalitions, had seen only Kings as allies. The time, was coming when she was to look upon Nations for her friends. During that year of 1808 she found out the chink in her enemy's armour, and she soon proved that he was not invulnerable.

The hatred of the people of many countries to the domination of Napoleon received an immense impulse from the tyrannical enforcement of the Decrees which constituted what is called his Continental System. The eulogists of Napoleon's glory, and the believers in the vocation of France to rule the world, are compelled to admit that the decay of his power may be dated from the attempt to destroy England by shutting out her commerce from every port of Europe. “If this interdict had been maintained some years, England would probably have been obliged to yield,” says M. Thiers. “Unhappily, the continental blockade was to add to the

\* Thiers, “Le Consulat et l'Empire,” tome xvii. p. 869.



exasperation of peoples obliged to bend to the exigencies of our policy."\* It was not enough to exasperate many populations by handing over ancient States to new masters; by creating kings out of the many sons of the lawyer of Ajaccio; by endeavouring to amalgamate communities wholly different in their laws, their customs, and their creeds; to play with the masses as if they were the pawns of the chessboard. He must cut off the sources of their industrial wealth; he must forbid to mankind, whether enemy, or subject, or allied, or neutral, that interchange of produce and manufactures which were necessary to the prosperity, and even to the existence, of producer and consumer. The defence of the continental blockade was, that it was the retaliation of a measure of the British government in May, 1806, when all the ports between Brest and the Elbe were declared in a state of blockade. Napoleon, in the preamble to the Berlin decree, proclaimed that the places declared by England in 1806 to be in a state of blockade were ports before which she had not a single vessel of war. This was wholly untrue. It was not a paper blockade—" *blocus sur le papier, imaginé par l'Angleterre.*" † So far from being a paper blockade, there was a sufficient force to maintain it—a principle recognized by all publicists as constituting the validity of an interference with the right of neutrals to trade with a hostile country. On the contrary, the Berlin decree declared the British islands in a state of blockade, when France had no ships on the sea to make the blockade real instead of nominal. But this decree went much further. It not only prohibited all commerce and correspondence with the British islands, but it declared every English subject to be a prisoner of war who was found in a country occupied by the troops of France or of her allies. It declared all property belonging to an English subject to be lawful prize. It prohibited all trade in British manufactured goods. It declared all merchandise coming from Great Britain or her colonies to be lawful prize. It shut out every vessel that had touched at any port of Britain or her colonies. By the Milan decree of December, 1807, the British dominions *in all parts of the world* were declared to be in a state of blockade; and all countries were prohibited from trading with each other, in any articles produced or manufactured in the countries thus placed under interdict. This latter decree was alleged to be in retaliation of the British Orders in Council of November, 1807. Of the impolicy of these Orders of the British government we shall have to speak in another chapter. We have at present to confine ourselves to that first decree of Napoleon, whose attempted enforcement

\* "Le Consulat et l'Empire," tome xvii. p. 868.

† *Ibid.*, tome vii. p. 223.

upon Portugal in August, 1707, was the alleged cause of the French invasion of that kingdom. It thus led to the great series of events which terminated in the deliverance of Europe from the crushing despotism of the man who was at the height of his power, when he made the extravagant attempt by rash decrees to fetter the freedom of human action, in the indispensable supply of human wants—by decrees which, carrying with them a natural impossibility of execution, rendered the tyrannical machinery by which they were vainly attempted to be enforced, not only odious but despicable, and produced a conviction that the "gigantic edifice" was built upon the sands. Bourrienne, who in 1807 was the *chargé d'affaires* of France at Hamburg, says that the emperor having ordered him to provide an immense supply of clothing for the armies in Prussia, he authorized a house at Hamburg, in spite of the Berlin decree, to bring cloth and leather from England. Had the decrees, he states, relative to English merchandize been observed, the French troops would have perished with cold. Licences, he tells us, for the disposal of English goods were procured at a high price by those who were rich enough to pay for them. Smuggling on a small scale was punished with death, whilst the government carried it on extensively. Under Davoust's rule at Hamburg a poor man had nearly been shot for having introduced a loaf of sugar for the use of his family, whilst Napoleon was perhaps signing a licence for the introduction of a million of sugar loaves. Bourrienne sums up many such instances, by saying, "It is necessary to witness, as I have, the numberless vexations and miseries occasioned by the unfortunate Continental System, to understand the mischief its author did in Europe, and how much that mischief contributed to Napoleon's fall."\*

Whenever the emperor of the French was reposing after the fatigues of battle fields, the world might be assured that new schemes of aggrandizement were shaping themselves in his mind into some decided course of action. He was passing the summer of 1807 in the pleasant shades of Fontainebleau, revolving various devices for making himself master of Spain. The fate of Portugal was presumed to be determined by a secret treaty—the treaty of Fontainebleau—between Napoleon and Charles IV. of Spain, by which a partition was made of that kingdom, and by which Godoy, the favourite of the Spanish court, should be endowed with a portion of the spoil, and be prince of Algarves. But Napoleon had far higher objects in lending his ear to the petty intrigues and disgraceful quarrels of the king of Spain and his son

\* See "Memoirs of Napoleon,"—translation published in 1830—vol. iii. chap. xxv.



Ferdinand—in propitiating Godoy, and pretending to make family alliances with the Spanish Bourbons. He intended to eject the House of Bourbon from their throne; but this project required to be worked by tentative approaches. Fraud was to go before violence. The dethronement of the House of Braganza was an easier process. It should precede the more difficult operation of entrapping the king of Spain and his son, and holding them in durance, before he could write to his brother Joseph, "I destine this crown for you."\* The ejection of the prince-regent of Portugal was to be accomplished by a simple exercise of military force.

On the 12th of August, 1807, the French ambassador at Lisbon presented a note to the Portuguese government, requiring, by the 1st of September, the prince-regent of Portugal to emancipate himself from English influence by declaring war, confiscating all English merchandise, closing his ports against English vessels, and uniting his squadrons to the navies of the Continental Powers. Unless he did so, the ambassador would demand his passports. Lord Strangford, our ambassador at Lisbon, knew the force that was put upon the Portuguese government, and did not resent the declaration of war that the prince-regent was compelled to make. The prince, however, refused to confiscate English property. Useless as he knew his remonstrances would be, they gave him a breathing time; and he advised the English merchants to sell their goods and depart the kingdom. On the 19th of October the French general Junot crossed the Bidassoa, with orders to march across Spain, and make himself master of Lisbon and of the fleet by the 30th of November. "On no account halt in your march even for a day," wrote Napoleon on the 2nd of November. The urgency of his orders made Junot disregard every obstacle presented by the violence of the rains, the badness of the mountain roads, and the difficulty of procuring subsistence. After crossing the Portuguese frontier, and before reaching Abrantes, this army was almost wholly disorganized. Its wretched condition was not known in Lisbon—a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants—or resistance would probably have been made before the court yielded to the fear of some impending calamity. The apathy of the government and the people has been stated as the result of the conviction that the army of Junot was only an advanced guard of the legions that were collected at Bayonne; and that another course than that of open resistance was necessarily determined upon. As the French advanced, the Portuguese government sequestered, or made a show of sequestering, the property of the

\* Letter of May 11, 1803.

few merchants that remained in Lisbon. Lord Strangford then withdrew on board the English fleet in the Tagus. It is generally stated by historians, French, Portuguese, and English, that our ambassador, having received a copy of the 'Moniteur' of the 13th of November, which contained these words, "The House of Braganza has ceased to reign," transmitted the newspaper to the prince-regent, who immediately decided on flight to the Brazils. M. Thiers maintains that no such words appear in any 'Moniteur' of that date, or near it. But he states that in the 'Moniteur' of the 13th of November is an article, evidently dictated by Napoleon, on the four English expeditions in 1807—those of Copenhagen, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Buenos Ayres—which article contains this passage: "After these four expeditions, which so well determine the moral and military decline of England, let us speak of the situation in which they leave Portugal at this day. The prince-regent of Portugal loses his throne. He loses it, influenced by the intrigues of England. He loses it, because he has not been willing to seize the English merchandise at Lisbon. What does England do, this ally? She regards with indifference what is passing in Portugal. . . . The fall of the House of Braganza will remain a new proof that the destruction of whatever power attaches itself to England is inevitable."\* There is little to choose between the meaning of the pithy sentence and of the lengthened argument. The prince-regent now took his resolution. The British ambassador returned on shore to aid him in carrying out his purpose. The sailors of our fleet made the most strenuous exertions to fit out the Portuguese fleet of eight sail of the line, three frigates, and twenty-three other vessels. On the 29th of November, the archives of Portugal, the treasure, the plate and other valuable effects having been got on board, a train of carriages moved to the quay of Belem, conveying the prince-regent, his mother the queen who had been many years insane, and the two princesses of the family. A crowd of attendants and other court fugitives accompanied them. Altogether, fifteen thousand persons left Lisbon on the 29th of November. They were going to the great dependency which Portugal had held uninterrupted by any hostility for a hundred and two years—a land of vast natural riches, but one which the parent state governed upon the narrowest principles of monopoly. From the time when the seat of government was transferred from Lisbon to Brazil, the colony prospered in a new life. In 1815 it became a constituent part of the Portuguese empire. As the British fleet saluted the Portu-

\* *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, tome viii. p. 340, note.



guese squadron as it passed down the Tagus, the sun became eclipsed; and a superstitious dread came over the population. The French, as the last of the royal fleet cleared the bar, came within sight of the Tagus—a ragged and starving remnant of a great army. The prey that they were to seize was gone. They were enough for the occupation of the city—enough to levy contributions on the country—enough to induce the belief that Portugal would never be separated from its French masters. The delivery of Portugal from the thraldom of Napoleon was to turn upon the speedy manifestation of popular resistance to his fraud and oppression in Spain.

Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, the heir of the Spanish crown, was just entering upon the twenty-fourth year of his age, when he addressed a letter to Napoleon which produced very memorable consequences. His wife had died in 1806—a woman of firm mind, who had endeavoured to rescue her imbecile husband from the wretched state of pupillage in which he had been kept by his infamous mother and her paramour Godoy. Ferdinand solicited the protection of Napoleon; described the humiliation to which his father and himself were reduced by the favourite; and expressed his wish to be united to a princess of Napoleon's family. Godoy discovered what was passing, and having persuaded Charles IV. that Ferdinand was conspiring against his life, the prince was arrested. With the weakness of his character, he was terrified into the acknowledgment of a conspiracy to dethrone his father—a confession for which it is believed there was no foundation, except in the secret correspondence with Napoleon. Meanwhile Portugal was in the occupation of Junot. French soldiers were constantly crossing the Bidassoa, and planting themselves in frontier fortresses. The Court became alarmed; and Godoy persuaded the king to follow the example of the prince-regent of Portugal, and seek in the rich possessions of Spain in the New World that security which the revolutions of the Old World denied to crowned heads. Ferdinand was hesitating what to do; when the people of Madrid, who had always felt a compassionate affection for the prince of Asturias, resolved that he should not be removed by force; and the guards at Aranjuez revolted, and would have taken the favourite's life, had not the prince interfered to save him. This was on the 17th of March. On the 19th, Charles IV. abdicated in favour of his son, who took the title of king of Spain and the Indies. The king, in the decree which transferred the crown, asserted that his abdication was his spontaneous act. In a letter to Napoleon he said that he had been forced to abdicate, and had no hope

but in the support of his magnanimous ally. The exiled emperor said to O'Meara, "When I saw those *imbécilles* quarrelling and trying to dethrone each other, I thought that I might as well take advantage of it, and dispossess an inimical family."\* No Englishman would have thought it a calamity that this miserable race should have been set aside by the will of a misgovered people. But that the father and the son should have been lured out of Spain by devices such as kidnappers could not have excelled, and then compelled to deliver up the proud Spanish people to the rule of an insolent foreigner, filled up the measure of the English wrath against the inordinate rapacity of the man who did not conquer this land of historic renown; but whom they regarded as "a cutpurse,"

"That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
And put it in his pocket."

On the 21st of April, Ferdinand was in the hands of the betrayer at Bayonne. On the 30th the old king and queen were in the same clutches. Godoy had been previously seized by Murat, and sent under a guard to Napoleon, who had reached Bayonne on the 14th of April. On the 2nd of May there was an insurrection at Madrid, upon the people learning that Ferdinand was entrapped into the power of the French emperor. On the 6th of May Napoleon wrote to his brother Joseph, "King Charles has yielded up to me his right to the throne, and he is about to retire to Compiègne with the queen and some of his children. A few days before this treaty was signed, the prince of Asturias abdicated; I restored the crown to king Charles. . . . There was a great insurrection at Madrid on the 2nd of May; between thirty and forty thousand persons were collected in the streets and houses, and fired from the windows. Two battalions of fusileers of my guard, and four or five hundred horse, soon brought them to their senses. More than two thousand of the populace were killed."† Five days after, he again writes to Joseph,—“The nation, through the Supreme Council of Castile, asks me for a king, I destine this crown for you.” What the nation was really asking for was,—help from England. The insurrection at Madrid was quickly followed by popular agitations throughout the country. Provincial juntas were established in many districts. The supreme junta of Seville proclaimed Ferdinand VII., and declared war against France. The new king came to Bayonne, and proposed a Constitution to a junta there assembled of submissive nobles. The people flew to arms.

\* "Voice from St. Helena," vol. ii. p. 167—edit, 1827.

† "Correspondence with King Joseph," vol. i. p. 317.



The British nation was not slow to manifest its deep sympathy with the Spanish patriots. Two deputies from Asturias had left Gijon in an open boat, and were picked up at sea by one of our frigates, "They were received with open arms," said Malmesbury. The veteran diplomatist wanted some grander envoys to arrive than an Asturian hidalgo and an Asturian attorney. "Canning would not listen," he says. Canning wanted no better assurance of the spirit of the people than those chosen by the people could afford him. On the 15th of June, Sheridan, in the House of Commons, made a speech which electrified the country. He was convinced that there never existed so happy an opportunity for Great Britain to strike a bold stroke for the rescue of the world. He would do nothing by driblets. If a co-operation with Spain were expedient it should be an effectual co-operation. "Bonaparte has hitherto run a most victorious race. Hitherto he has had to contend against princes without dignity and ministers without wisdom. He has fought against countries in which the people have been indifferent as to his success. He has yet to learn what it is to fight against a country in which the people are animated with one spirit to resist him." \* Sheridan moved for papers, which Canning said would be inconvenient to produce; but Canning's answer left no doubt as to the intentions of the Cabinet: "There exists the strongest disposition on the part of the British government to afford every practicable aid in a contest so magnanimous. In endeavouring to afford this aid it will never occur to us to consider that a state of war exists between Spain and Great Britain." There were a few expressions of doubt and despondency in Parliament; but it was impossible to resist what Wilberforce described as the universal feeling. "Every Briton joined in the enthusiastic prayers to the great Ruler of events, to bless with its merited success the struggles of a gallant people, in behalf of everything dear to the Christian, the citizen, and the man." † When the Parliament was prorogued on the 4th of July, the government was pledged by the royal Speech to "make every exertion for the support of the Spanish cause." On that day an Order in Council announced that hostilities against Spain had ceased. There had been great promptitude in the action of the British government. On the 14th of June, sir Arthur Wellesley had received from the duke of York his appointment to the command of a detachment of the army, "to be employed upon a particular service;" and, on the 30th of June, were sent his full instructions from lord Castlereagh for the employment of a body of troops, to afford "to the Spanish and Portuguese

\* "Hansard," vol. xi. col. 889.

† *Ibid.*, vol. xi. col. 1145.

nations every possible aid in throwing off the yoke of France." \* He was told in these instructions that "his majesty is graciously pleased to confide to you the fullest discretion to act according to circumstances for the benefit of his service." And yet sir Arthur Wellesley's "fullest discretion" was left at the absolute command of two superior officers. He sailed from Cork for Corunna on the 12th of July. On the 15th, lord Castlereagh writes to him that the command of the troops is entrusted to sir Hew Dalrymple, and to sir Harry Burrard as second in command. Nevertheless, lord Castlereagh points out to sir Hew Dalrymple the great hero of the Mahratta war as "an officer of whom it is desirable for you, on all accounts, to make the most prominent use which the rules of the service will permit." † The "rules of the service" subjected the man who had given the best evidence of his great military genius to the command of two generals, whose exploits were better known in the private records of the Horse Guards than in the annals of their country. Sir Arthur Wellesley's division comprised nine thousand men. Another corps, under sir John Moore, which had just arrived from the Baltic, numbered eleven thousand men. These two detachments were to co-operate. But their united efforts were to be directed by sir Hew Dalrymple and sir Harry Burrard. Moore had shown in Egypt of what metal he was made. When he waited on lord Castlereagh to receive his instructions, he was apprised that he was to go to Portugal, where he would find sir Arthur Wellesley; but that, if sir Hew Dalrymple had not arrived from Gibraltar, the operation would be undertaken by sir Harry Burrard. "It was thus indirectly notified to sir John Moore, that, after commanding in chief in Sicily and Sweden, he was now to be placed subordinate to two officers, the first of whom had never served in the field as a general." ‡ Moore expressed his feelings in somewhat strong terms. He had not to endure the bitter mortification which Wellesley experienced, when, in the moment of victory, he was compelled to leave his triumph incomplete, at the bidding of "an ordinary general in opposition to a great captain." §

"The character of the Spaniard," writes lord Malmesbury, "is to let everything be done for him, if he finds any one disposed to do it, and never to act till obliged to do so." || Before anything was done for the Spaniard by England, he was obliged to act, and in many things he acted well. There were great difficulties in his acting at all. The provincial juntas, who directed the course of

\* "Dispatches," vol. iv. p. 160.

† *Ibid.*, p. 31.

‡ "Life of Sir John Moore," vol. ii. p. 104.

§ Napier.

|| "Diaries," vol. iv. p. 415.



hostilities to the French, were independent bodies, acting each for its own province; not having a federal unity which would be content to place those executive powers which were in a temporary desuetude under some authority competent to represent the monarchy, which, as the Spaniards expressed its condition, was in a state of widowhood. England had abundantly provided arms, ammunition, and pay for large native armies. But there was no one governing power to direct their employment in masses against the enemy, who would seek to overwhelm them by the magnitude of his forces. Still, in the early stages of the conquest, the Spaniards well employed the means which they possessed. In June, the French general Dupont had marched from Madrid to Andalusia; given Cordova up to pillage; and committed atrocities which roused the people to fury. The Spanish general Castanos, with an army sent against Dupont by the Junta of Seville, won the battle of Baylen, and compelled the French to surrender at discretion on the 21st of July. Aragon was defended by its people under the command of Palafox. The siege of Zaragoza, the capital of the province, was commenced by the French on the 15th of June. They carried some of the outer works, but on forcing their way into the city were encountered with a heroism such as the conscripts of Napoleon had rarely beheld in the standing armies of the continental monarchies. The exploits of Augustina, the amazon of Zaragoza, inspired as much courage into the besieged as Joan of Arc had inspired at the siege of Orleans. The trenches were open for forty-nine days. The city was bombarded for twenty-one days. But nothing could shake the courage of its defenders. The French raised the siege on the 4th of August. A fortnight before this termination, Napoleon had written to the new king Joseph, who was beginning to despond, "Do not doubt for an instant that everything will end sooner and more happily than you think." \* He adds—"All goes well at Zaragoza." On the 24th of July, Joseph is still more alarmed. He writes to Napoleon, "Your glory will be shipwrecked in Spain. My tomb will be a monument of your want of power to support me." The confident emperor replies: "To die is not your business, but to live and conquer; which you are doing and shall do. I shall find in Spain the pillars of Hercules, but not the limits of my power." † On the 9th of August he gives him the comfortable assurance that before the autumn Spain will be inundated with troops. "The English are of little importance. They have never more than a quarter of the

\* "Correspondence with King Joseph," vol. i. p. 333.

† *Ibid.*, p. 339.

troops that they profess to have. Lord Wellesley \* has not four thousand men, and, besides, I believe that they are directed towards Portugal."

On the 1st of August, sir Arthur Wellesley was on shipboard, off the Mondego river. He was landing his troops at Figuera, a difficult task on an iron coast. He had heard, from the letter of lord Castlereagh, of general officers, senior to him, being sent out, and sir Hew Dalrymple to take the command. To the duke of Richmond he writes, "I hope that I shall have beat Junot before any of them shall arrive, and then they will do as they please with me." † On the 7th, major-general Spencer's corps joined the army. With ten thousand British and five thousand Portuguese, sir Arthur Wellesley then prepared to march towards Lisbon. On the 17th he defeated at Roliça the French under Laborde. The numbers of the enemy were much smaller than our numbers, but Laborde had the advantage of position. Sir Arthur the next day writes to the duke of Richmond: "The action was a most desperate one between the troops engaged. I never saw such fighting as in the pass by the 29th and 9th, or in the three attacks made by the French in the mountains. These were in their best style." ‡ On the 20th he was at Vimiero, having been joined by general Anstruther and general Acland with their corps. He had now an army of seventeen thousand men. Junot had joined Laborde and Loison at Torres Vedras, and their united force was about fourteen thousand men, of whom sixteen hundred were cavalry. Early in the morning of the 21st, the French attacked the British in their position. Sir Harry Burrard had arrived on the night of the 20th. "He did not land," sir Arthur writes to his friend, the duke of Richmond, "and as I am the most fortunate of men, Junot attacked us yesterday morning [the 21st] with his whole force, and we completely defeated him." § The principal attack on the British was on the centre and left; the sea being in their rear, and the French still pursuing their favourite delusion of driving the English into the ocean over which they tyrannized. The attack was repulsed. Kellermann then attacked with the French reserve, and he also was driven back. "Broken by these rough shocks, the French, to whom defeat was amazement, retired in confused masses." || Junot's left wing and centre were discomfited. The road of Torres Vedras, the shortest road to Lisbon, was uncovered. The French general, Brennier, was taken prisoner, and having

\* *Sir* and *Lord* seem equivalents to the French.

† "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 95.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. vi. p. 119.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

|| Napier.



asked a question with reference to the reserve being engaged, which implied that the attacks had all been in vain, "the English general, judging the French power exhausted, and the moment come for rendering victory decisive, with the genius of a great captain, resolved to make it not only decisive on the field, but of the fate of Portugal." \* When the action was nearly over, sir Harry Burrard had landed. There was a powerful force in hand for further operations. Not more than one half of the British army had been engaged. Ferguson's division was close upon the retreating force of Solignac when Burrard commanded him to halt. Sir Arthur designed to push on to Torres Vedras, which if he had reached before Junot, he would have cut him off from Lisbon. When Ferguson was interrupted, Solignac joined Junot, who regained his position at Torres Vedras. The great project of the British general "was stifled as soon as conceived." Sir Arthur's superior officer "could not comprehend such a stroke of war." In a private letter, he pours out his griefs. "The French got a terrible beating on the 21st. They did not lose less, I believe, than four thousand men, and they would have been entirely destroyed, if sir H. Burrard had not prevented me from pursuing them. Indeed, since the arrival of the great generals, we appear to have been palsied, and everything has gone on wrong." † The great generals! Seldom, indeed, was this equably minded man stirred into even a mild expression of contempt. He had, however, more to endure. He had to bear his share of public indignation at the Convention of Cintra for the evacuation of Portugal by the French. An indefinite suspension of hostilities was agreed upon, with a view to this evacuation. On the 23rd of August, sir Arthur Wellesley wrote to lord Castlereagh: "Although my name is affixed to this instrument, I beg that you will not believe that I negotiated it, that I approve of it, or that I had any hand in wording it." ‡ He thought it right to allow the French to evacuate Portugal, "as soon, and at as little cost of honour as we can." Sir John Moore had arrived with his corps on the 21st, and his troops were nearly all landed when hostilities were suspended. They were ordered to re-embark. Had sir Arthur's plan of operations been persevered in, and Moore's troops had not been re-embarked, we should have been in a situation, he says, "to have refused the French any capitulation, excepting on the terms of their laying down their arms." No wonder that the people of England were indignant that twenty-six thousand soldiers should have been landed

\* Napier.

† "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 127.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

in France, at the expense of the English government. They should have bestowed their indignation upon those who deserved it.

Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived in London at the beginning of October. On the 5th of September, he had written to lord Castlereagh, "It is quite impossible for me to continue any longer with this army; and I wish, therefore, that you would allow me to return home and resume the duties of my office." \* Dalrymple, Burrard, and Wellesley were all recalled home. Sir John Moore remained at Lisbon, having been appointed to command the army. Sir Arthur rejoices to find that he was placed under the command of Moore, "than which nothing," he says, "can be more satisfactory to me. I will go to Corunna immediately, where I hope to find you." But a Court of Inquiry was ordered on the subject of "the late transactions in Portugal;" and Wellesley was detained to be examined. He had to bear much before the publicity of these proceedings was to set him right in public opinion. He was accused, he heard, of every crime of which a man can be guilty, excepting cowardice. "I have not read one word that has been written on either side; and I have refused to publish, and don't mean to authorize the publication, of a single line in my defence." † The inquiry took place in November; and it ended in a formal disapprobation of the armistice and convention, on the part of the king, being communicated to sir Hew Dalrymple. Neither of the two "great generals" was again employed. One advantage was gained by the Convention. The Russian fleet in the Tagus was delivered up to the British.

Sir John Moore, late in October, began his march into Spain, "to co-operate," as his instructions set forth, "with the Spanish armies in the expulsion of the French." He was to lead the British forces in Portugal; and to be joined by sir David Baird, with ten thousand men, to be landed at Corunna. On the 11th of November, Moore had crossed the boundary between Portugal and Spain, and his advanced guard had reached Ciudad Rodrigo. Two days after, he was at Salamanca. Instead of finding Spanish armies to co-operate with, he learnt that the French had routed and dispersed them. Napoleon had himself come to command his troops; and had arrived at Bayonne on the 3rd of November. Moore was separated from Baird by a wide tract of country. He had divided his own army, having received false information that the direct northern road was impassable for artillery, and having consequently sent sir John Hope by a circuitous route. He

\* "Despatches," vol. iv. p. 147.

† "Supplementary Despatches," vol. vi. p. 151.